

The magazine for members of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong



DUTCHCHAM MAGAZINE

2021 – Issue 4

Volume 212

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Ester van Steekelenburg at iDiscover is keeping heritage alive



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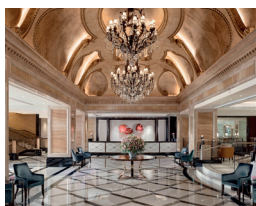
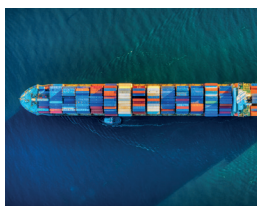
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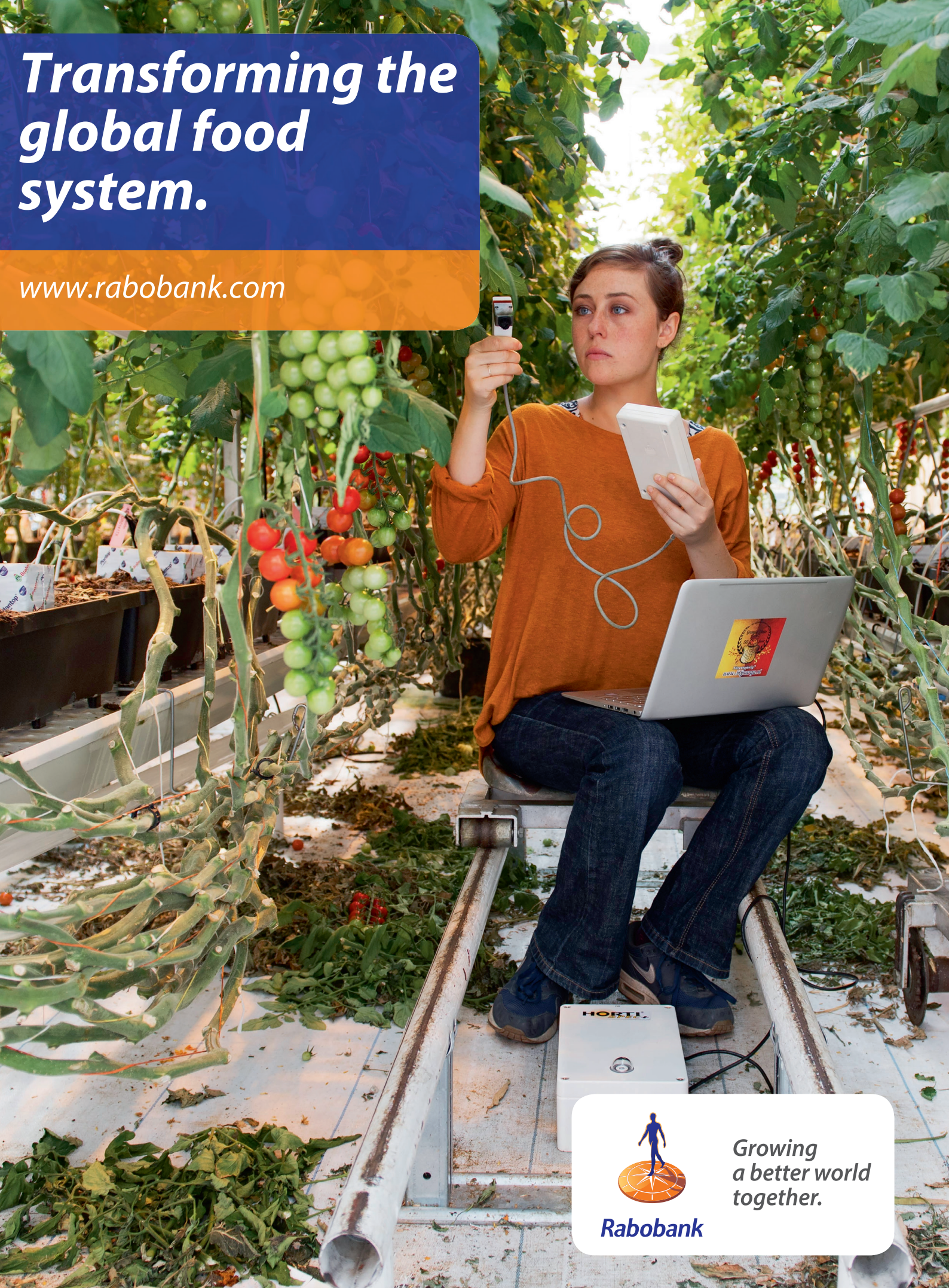


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Travel the new world



The word "travel" is originally the same word as "travail" and meant something like "labour" or "work", which over time turned into "laborious journey" before becoming just "journey" or "moving from one place to another". It seems like we have moved back in time as travel is hard work in these COVID times.

Especially during these summer months, well into the second year of the pandemic, nearly everyone in the international business community in Hong Kong is feverishly monitoring the quarantine requirements, specified places lists, antibody tests exemptions, vaccination roll-out for minors, green lanes and vaccination bubbles. It is great to be safe and Hong Kong is a very pleasant place to be in but my goodness it is difficult not to travel!

Not just for personal reasons such as visiting family and friends overseas and taking a well-deserved holiday in a different environment, but for business reasons. For Hong Kong, possibly more than for any other place in the world, international connectivity and free movement of people and goods are crucial.

So we are going to Travel the New World in this edition of the DutchCham Magazine. We are going to hear from members in the hotel industry, our expat insurer OOM, our local travel guru iDiscover, the Port of Rotterdam, APC Logistics, NLinBusiness - the umbrella organisation of the various Dutch Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations abroad - and more. I hope you enjoy your trip.

We also welcome our new General Manager Tom Bakker (see page 29). We are in safe hands when our GM is brave enough to move to Hong Kong and take on the responsibility to manage our Chamber in these challenging times. Bon travail! Tom has got off to a flying start and will have already met many of you in person but if you have not, please do reach out and talk to Tom. He is very keen to meet you.

I wish everyone a brilliant summer with not too much travail and lots of local or international travel.

Jan Willem Möller

Insuring unusual stories

In this interview with **Marga Purvis, CEO of OOM Verzekeringen**, we talked about how travelling the 'new' world leads to new risks and circumstances. OOM Verzekeringen provides a range of insurances, including those for Dutch people moving abroad. They are here to insure unusual stories.

■ By Zuba Adham-Bos

Please tell us a bit about yourself

As CEO of OOM Verzekeringen, I am Chairman of the Board, responsible for the three operating companies of OOM Verzekeringen. With more than 30 years in the insurance industry, I also play a hands-on role within the management team as Managing Director.

What does OOM Verzekeringen do?

Eighty years ago, the Second World War gripped the world. OOM Verzekeringen was founded on 16 July 1940 as an insurer of war and kindred risk. Since then, we have moved into an insurance provider that covers a range of insurance risks. The COVID-19 pandemic has gripped the world in a different kind of way, but throughout our history, we have focused on insuring unusual risks that are normally difficult to insure.

From our post-war roots through to today, we continue to respond to our customers' needs and we will continue to do so. At OOM Verzekeringen we make a conscious choice every day to speak to customers personally. When a customer calls, they are usually immediately addressed by one of our insurance specialists, who all speak English as well as Dutch. This means our employees often know our customers by name. We cherish these relationships and are constantly working to maintain them.

The world is changing. Communication is multi-modal and runs 24/7. Customers want to be able to contact us whenever it suits them and wherever they are in the world. We are constantly expanding our 24/7 accessibility. A client can communicate with us via Skype, chat, Facebook and Twitter, but will also find us on Instagram and LinkedIn.

The Dutch love a challenge and enjoy working, living and studying abroad or travelling to other countries and regions.

What does Hong Kong mean to your business?

Hong Kong is a metropolis where many Dutch citizens like to work. This applies to lots of cities and countries. The Dutch love



a challenge and enjoy working, living and studying abroad or travelling to other countries and regions. Hong Kong is important to us because we want to be where our customers are.

What are some changes you have noticed in your business since the pandemic?

Because of COVID-19, we were suddenly forced to go digital, something that some of our customers had been doing for some time. Now, over a year later, most of our colleagues are still working from home. The COVID restrictions in the Netherlands have been relaxed and things are going well. We want to maintain this. Not least because we have decided to go hybrid for good, even after COVID-19. Whereas we used to work from home one day a week, we now ask our staff to come to the office at least once a week. How they spend the rest of their time is up to them. We have provided laptops and good desk equipment. The rest is up to the employee.

They can now also choose to take their children to school themselves and log in later. I truly believe that this way of working is here to stay. Before the corona pandemic, I was personally not a fan of working from home. After all, it was difficult to know and measure what someone was doing at home. But our output last



year was higher than ever. The absence of colleagues who distract you from your work from time to time has of course contributed to this.

Now we know even better how our digital nomad customer feels and what they might encounter. This is helping us to stay close to our customers.

During corona, we suddenly had a target group that we would not otherwise serve, namely holidaymakers. Because travel insurers in the Netherlands did not offer cover for COVID-19 related medical expenses, we jumped into that gap in the market. We offer global cover and have no negative travel advice. As a company, we were able to move quickly to provide cover for these travellers and send a policy to them quickly. Because, typically, travel insurance is often the last thing on people's minds. This shows again that our roots are our advantage. At OOM we provide a solution in times of crisis.

Do you think that travelling and moving abroad will be changed forever because of the pandemic?

I think we have proven that, in most professions, you can work anywhere, including abroad. I expect that more people will follow their dream and leave for their ideal country for a short or even longer period. We may fly less, but chasing your dream has never been more important and has now become achievable.

What trends do you expect in the next 5 years in your industry?

We are becoming more and more digital. We're going to be organising our lives more and more via our mobile phones. Reporting a claim and submitting an application for insurance can both be done via a smartphone.

During corona, we suddenly had a target group that we would not otherwise serve, namely holidaymakers. Because travel insurers in the Netherlands did not offer cover for COVID-19 related medical expenses, we jumped into that gap in the market.

Reimbursing claims with the help of algorithms will also become more common. We have increasingly more data at our disposal, which speeds up the claims process considerably.

The corona pandemic has also made it even more important to have good healthcare insurance.

When people go on holiday, I believe they will pay more attention to look for good cover and not just the cheapest price. Our products focus more on the individual. You could almost call it customised. This is no longer a world in which insurers determine the cover. We literally visit OOM customers from New York to Hong Kong and ask them what they are missing in their cover. Personalisation is definitely a trend.

Anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Without our customers, we are nothing. We always appreciate it when customers share their ideas. Never ignore your customers. Start by listening to their needs and work from there.

The perfect storm

The fragile balance between demand and offer.

We all have heard of the difficulties this year for moving containers from China to the USA and Europe. Sometimes, we do not consider how big supply and demand are and how easy it could be to have an imbalance nowadays. We have lived years of over-supply, which has allowed traders to enjoy extremely favourable market conditions (plenty of options and low costs) – the result of an extremely difficult period in Europe and the USA.

Within a decade we experienced the so-called “Sub Prime Loan” crisis in the USA in 2008, we remember Mario Draghi saying “whatever it takes” during the EURO crisis, the era of the so-called “QE”: quantitative easing. The fragile financial market has remained as such until very recently. In 2015-16 even China had its troubles which culminated in July 2015 when more than half of the listed companies in the Shanghai stock exchange asked to hold the trading while one-third of the stock values were lost in three weeks.

In the shipping industry, there were years of struggles in which shipping lines had to decide either to join forces or risk disappearing. We have seen many changes between 2015 and 2020: The bankruptcy of Hanjin, the merger of China Shipping and Cosco with the addition of OOCL just a few months later, then APL being purchased by CMA-CGM, while the three major Japanese carriers became ONE (Ocean Network Express). In 2017 all the major shipping lines created alliances sharing vessels and services. In those five years, the container market changed from at least 20 global players to 10 players clustered into three alliances. This was done and allowed because the supply was too fragile and shipping lines were showing disappointing financial results. They all had to offer a global service, yet the market was able to offer little rates in exchange, so the only solution was to share the burden and work together.

Then COVID-19 came and for some reason this perfectly oiled engine faced a sudden supply deficit for the first time in years. Why, during a period of lockdowns, reduced spending and a sensible drop in GDP, could the shipping industry not cope with the market demand? Where did the space on the vessels go?

The reason is not obvious. The main problem is in the port handling issues. When countries are in lockdown, so are the ports with customs and operations are slowed down,



sometimes reaching a complete stop. This means vessels take much more time to complete their voyages and forces shipping lines to cancel some departures, due to vessels unable to reach the next voyage schedule in time. Where a roundtrip from Asia to Europe normally takes 8 weeks to complete, during the pandemic it increased to 9-10 weeks. If in a year, one route could count on 52 vessels, the number went down to 40-45 departures per year still using all the vessels available. Clearly, this reduces capacity. In addition, as many containers were moving on these slow vessels, the shipping lines had problems preparing enough empty containers in time.

A third problem, which we are experiencing these days, is the impact of reopening in some countries while others are still closed. This means some countries are increasing orders for cargo, while others in lockdown are unable to produce the orders quick enough, creating a stronger demand amid a slow supply. On top of this, recovering from new problems (i.e. Suez Canal issue, Yantian port issue) becomes more difficult and requires more time.

For the future what shall we expect? We are now entering the Christmas season (many Asian-produced products need to be in western shops in October), which combined with Thanksgiving and 11/11 singles-day will drive more and more stress on space and rates. We must be ready for a very hot winter. Could this be avoided? I am not seeing how this storm could be battered in such a short period.



■ By Aldo Soprani
Group CEO at APC Asia Pacific Cargo (HK) Ltd.
www.apclogistics.com

Taking care of people

Businesses, communities and economies around the world have been shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the crisis has also given rise to an opportunity for us to reflect on our vulnerabilities and also to ponder on how to build more resilience in our systems.

For us at The Langham, Hong Kong, being in the hospitality industry of taking care of people, the focus remains to be on our people: our guests, our staff and our local communities.

For our guests, we continue to work on creating different experiences so they will have activities and staycation packages to look forward to and create new memories. For example, to coincide with the school holidays in spring and summer, we offered curated activities, on a complimentary basis, for families and couples to enjoy during their stays with us. These included floral wax table making with a local partner, coffee workshops, culinary classes, craft beer and wine tasting, etiquette classes, face painting and balloon twisting for the younger ones, crafting floral arrangements, gin masterclasses with a local gin maker and personal training classes.

Another example is our partnership with lululemon ambassadors to introduce our 'Rejuvenate. Recharge. Redefine' wellness staycation package. We launched it on June 12th in celebration of global wellness day. The package features a 'mobility class' and a 'gong and singing bowl' mood-elevating class.

When it comes to our staff, we have especially paid more attention to giving each employee a larger voice.

We are also thrilled to partner with a Hong Kong-based Italian painter, Francesco Lietti, on launching a Paint & Stay staycation package, which includes a 2.5-hour painting class with Lietti. It comes complete with a set of paints, paintbrushes and a canvas to paint on.

When it comes to our staff, we have especially paid more attention to giving each employee a larger voice. Our business needs have changed and some team members may need to adopt new knowledge for adapted roles, hence we are equipping them with necessary training and tools to handle new e-commerce channels, for example.



The Langham, Hong Kong - Lobby

We have also been very transparent about all our decision-making. Furthermore, health and safety remain our first and foremost priority.

Finally, working with our staff, we are finding a deeper sense of purpose and are doing more to contribute back to our local communities during this time. As part of International Day of Happiness on 20 March, the hotel delivered sandwiches, pastries and complimentary hotel dining vouchers to doctors, nurses and staff across the six COVID-19 testing centres in Kowloon, complete with customised pink (synonymous with The Langham brand's signature pink) surgical masks embossed with a smiley face and handwritten thank-you notes.

We really wanted to do our part and show our support to healthcare professionals, who have been working tirelessly to keep local communities healthy and safe. Globally, the Langham Hospitality Group continues to expand despite the challenging climate. Langham Place, Changsha opened in April 2021 as the Group's 13th hotel in China and the 25th property in the group's growing global portfolio.

Among the 30 prime future locations for both The Langham and Cordis brands in the pipeline that await the luxury traveler are the beautifully designed hotels and residences in Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, San Francisco, Jakarta, Gold Coast and Chengdu.



■ By Marcel N.A. Holman
Regional Vice President,
Operations at The Langham Hotels & Resorts, China
Managing Director at The Langham, Hong Kong
www.langhamhotels.com

Combining gastronomy and sustainability

At Meat The Sea, Head Chef Patrick Verhoeven aims to give you the ultimate experience where you can explore the taste of modern French cuisine with other European influences.

Using only fresh seasonal and ecological ingredients, the flavours from Europe are combined to create a fusion of tastes and textures. Everything Chef Verhoeven curates is a reflection of and inspired by his personal life and experiences.

With an emphasis on suitability, the European-style deli has its own supply chain directly from Europe enabling access to the freshest and best products available in the market such as mussels, shrimp and soles. Meat The Sea maintains a transparent and ethical supply chain; they make sure that there is no overfishing in their supply chain. Their versatile seafood counter houses seafood from Europe's freshest waters and their sustainably harvested products are delivered to Hong Kong in a short three days by air freight.

Most of the products at Meat The Sea are from Europe but Chef Patrick focuses on wherever he can find the best products and quality. On top of the sustainable European seafood, the deli and restaurant have Alaskan Crab, Tuna from the Philippines, Japanese Scallops, Lobster from the USA and Australia. Everything is brought only in the right seasons and Meat The Sea is famous for its Dutch mussels for which the season just started.



Mussels

Local people in Hong Kong prefer steamed fish and the European approach is more grilled or pan-fried with real butter and salt and pepper. Hence, the welcoming open kitchen is designed so that customers can be educated and see how the food is prepared and they learn how to cook the food at home.



Meat The Sea shop

Chef Patrick pays homage to the country where he was raised by giving the Dutch cuisine a special role: "In my kitchen, I use the best ingredients from several cuisines," says Patrick Verhoeven. Customers can find Dutch herrings, the classic Dutch delicacy on the menu. It is served raw with a side of onion and pickle and has a soft texture with a refreshing and salty flavour. To allow the diners to taste the freshness of the seafood, Chef Patrick steams the fresh mussels in white wine, served with a side of vegetables. Slightly chewy and tender, the mussels often taste sweet with a mild "ocean" flavour and have a palate-pleasing mushroom undertone. He also serves the fresh whole sea bream with seasonal mixed vegetables in either beurre blanc, garlic herb butter or truffle butter sauce. The sea bream is packed with flavour with a wonderfully clean taste and satisfyingly meaty texture.

The interiors and exteriors are a nostalgic reminiscence to the European lifestyle and way of living. The classic wood furnishing and big open glass windows are well thought out architectural details that bring a touch of Europe to Hong Kong. From sustainable practices to mouth-watering food, Meat The Sea has the perfect ambience that welcomes all.



■ By Patrick Verhoeven
Head Chef at Meat The Sea
www.meatthesea.com

Asia calling at Port of Rotterdam

The port of Rotterdam is Europe's largest seaport. It owes its leading position to its outstanding accessibility for sea-going vessels and has direct connections to hundreds of ports worldwide.

For many years already, Rotterdam has been making targeted investments in its network, infrastructure, terminal capacity and services. And thanks to direct connections with over 1,000 ports worldwide, Rotterdam is the best-connected gateway on the continent. The port's vast array of intermodal connections with the hinterland, as well as Europe's largest short sea network, mean that cargo in Rotterdam can be moved to all Europe's foremost industrial centres – and a market of over 500 million consumers – within 24 hours.

Some facts about the port of Rotterdam

- Every year some **30,000 seagoing vessels** and some **100,000 inland vessels** berth in the port of Rotterdam
- Approx. **1,270 employees** work at the Port of Rotterdam Authority located in Rotterdam's city centre
- The port covers **12,500 hectares** (land and water, including ca. 6,000 hectares of industrial sites)
- The port area is more than **40 km long**

This is why the entire top twenty of the world's largest container shipping companies have intercontinental services that call at Rotterdam. Often as their first or last port of call. This generates significant time savings for shippers by comparison with other ports in Northwest Europe. It is no coincidence that from all incoming and outgoing goods almost 50% is shipped from or to Asia. Rotterdam's market share in Europe for container exchanges with Asia is almost 35%.

In the exceptional year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the port of Rotterdam was fully operational, allowing goods and raw materials to continue finding their way to consumers and



Containerterminal Europahaven



Maasvlakte in 2020

businesses. In March of this year, the world faced another major disruption of international trade due to the blockage of the Suez Canal. 64 container vessels blocked in the canal were destined for Rotterdam. Together with various sector organisations such as terminal operators, deep sea carriers, shippers and logistic service providers, the port of Rotterdam has confirmed its role as a reliable partner in the logistics chain.

The Port of Rotterdam Authority aims to strengthen the competitive position of the port of Rotterdam as a logistics hub and a world-class industrial complex in terms of both size and quality. The Port Authority is able and willing to make an impact and so it is focusing on accelerating sustainability in the port and it is a partner in the digitalisation of the port and logistics chains. The Port Authority's core tasks are the sustainable development, management and operation of the port, the maintenance of the smooth and safe handling of shipping and supporting the future resilience of the port of Rotterdam.

We are presenting various initiatives that demonstrate the innovative force of the Rotterdam port and industrial complex. Intensive partnerships with like-minded partners make Rotterdam the perfect place for innovation, particularly with a focus on sustainability and digitisation.

We are very much looking forward to travelling to Hong Kong again and meet face-to-face with our valued customers and business partners again. See you soon!



■ By Anita van der Laan
Sr Business Manager at Port of Rotterdam Authority
www.portofrotterdam.com

SMEs sharing snapshots

The business landscape has inevitably changed a lot since 2020. Hear from our SME chair and committee members how this has impacted SMEs. We'll also look at the future and dream locations!

1. What opportunities have travel restrictions created for SMEs in Hong Kong?
2. If you could travel five years into the future, what would success look like for the DutchCham SME committee or DutchCham SMEs?
3. What is your dream location to set up a second SME and why?

Jeffrey Broer
Venture Advisor at Kohpy Ventures
www.kophy.com

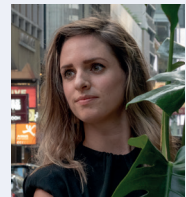


1. The worldwide acceptance of conducting meetings online and not in person opened the opportunity for SMEs to do more new business. In the past, two or three in-person meetings/visits were the norm before even gotten considered to do business. Online meetings save time and travel costs and hence often open up time to explore new business opportunities or finally write that book.

2. A solid foundation of stable Dutch-connected SMEs in Hong Kong that are serving markets all over the world and continues to grow in members as it did last year. With a committee that keeps adding value to its members by constantly listening to their needs and share knowledge amongst each other.

3. Probably Hong Kong. Depending on what type of business it would be, my choice would be highly influenced by the infrastructure needed for it. Infrastructure is the basis for the best business locations because no matter where you are, starting a business is hard work. So you want to make the friction as smooth as possible unless you really, really like the challenge.

Madelon van de Ven
Founder at PLNTY
www.plnty.life



1. Due to travel restrictions, it was not possible for SMEs to travel to (potential) customers. However, this has accelerated digital connections. Many have experienced the positive side of having more collaborations via online channels.

2. In 5 years, success for DutchCham SMEs would look like that they are even more flexible, regardless of what happens on a macro or micro level.

3. I would pick Korea, where the people are very much focused on their looks, but less on their mental well-being. Partly due to COVID, you see more and more people paying attention to their physical and mental health.

Being indoors for 90% of the time, adding plants to indoor spaces would be highly beneficial to their health because it can lead to having lower blood pressure and heart rate, and therefore less stress. I would love to make Korean people aware of the positive impact of embedding nature in their indoor lives.





Bert Bulthuis
CEO & Principal Architect
at Sitec Studio Ltd

www.sitec-architecture.blog



1. Travel restrictions have created both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities have been due to improved online communications platforms, which have ballooned. My firm, Sitec Studio, has been easily able to handle work with clients in Asia and Europe from one location. As a result, we have saved time to work on projects and lost less time travelling. In my view, the effects of this new digital reality are here to stay.

The challenges have surrounded the sourcing of materials which has become harder due to limitations placed on transport around the world. But the silver lining is that we have accelerated our efforts to use more locally sourced sustainable building materials. This considerably reduces the CO2 footprint of our projects.

2. In my experience, what is important within any SME community is the crossover of Business-to-Business benefits that it provides. All smaller companies stand to benefit from the expertise and experiences of their fellow SME members as well as do business together. I think it is important to share these benefits with SME members of other Chambers and expand the Inter-SME. Hopefully, in five years, we will be stronger together.

3. I established the Hong Kong arm of my firm almost nine years ago but had had an architectural practice in The Netherlands for a while - so Hong Kong is actually my second SME. In this new era of online conferences, meetings and presentations, Sitec Studio has found it easy to manage projects across these two firms. One example is our main project in Asia, The Mahasiddha Sanctuary for Universal Peace, in Nepal (+/- 30,000 m²). Other examples include urban renewal and heritage revitalisation projects in The Netherlands. Hong Kong is the perfect spot for my second SME because it is at the centre of Asian building projects, and the city itself has more architectural ambition than ever with all the new cultural buildings arising and the renewed interest in built heritage.

Tom Bakker
General Manager at Dutch
Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
www.dutchchamber.hk



1. Some of our SME members have shown remarkable resilience and creativity in dealing with the pandemic. This could be attributed to the fact that smaller firms are more agile; they can often more quickly change their operations and business models. In contrast, bigger firms have to deal with large sunk costs, a complex decision-making structure and shareholder demands. For example, several of our members in the consultancy and coaching industry successfully switched their services online. This not only expanded their potential market (some went beyond Hong Kong and enlarged their customer base) but also changed their value proposition (clients preferring to talk discretely online, compared to an office visit). Bottom line: travel restrictions created many difficulties for entrepreneurs, but in some cases were turned successfully into new business opportunities.

2. For many of our SME members, their business is not only a source of income/wealth creation but increasingly also a means to realise an ambition or purpose. Success is therefore not only measured in terms of profit or enterprise value (obviously still important), but also in terms of fulfilling a dream or purpose. We have inspiring examples of entrepreneurs active in circularity, heritage, cybersecurity and the arts. In five years I hope to see an increasing contribution of Dutch entrepreneurs towards a more liveable, sustainable and social Hong Kong.

3. Being the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, our home base will obviously stay in Hong Kong. But a second office – beachside, on one of our tropical outlying islands – would be wonderful ;-). Until then, we are very content with our office in Central Plaza (Wan Chai). Please feel free to come over for a coffee and a chat on how we can support your business towards the future!

A level playing field in e-commerce world

As I'm writing this, Thursday 1 July, it is an exciting day. A day, many a brick-and-mortar retail entrepreneur in Europe has been looking forward to. Today we hope the level playing field finally is being restored.

Since 1 July 2021, the threshold of €22 below which no VAT is charged on any online sale coming from outside Europe (something we refer to in e-commerce land as 'low-value goods'), is being abolished for the 27 EU Member States (note: Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the UK are excluded here). For years, online retail shops and platforms facilitating these online sales from outside of Europe selling into Europe have had the advantage of not having to pay the local VAT on their imported goods.

We all know what that has meant; millions upon millions of goods have entered the EU because they were cheap, fake, counterfeit and mostly underdeclared. The EU has calculated that in a normal year the missed Value Added Taxes accumulated to €5 billion. In 2020 when the pandemic caused an exceptional surge for people to shop online, that number was €7 billion.

We all know what that has meant; millions upon millions of goods have entered the EU because they were cheap, fake, counterfeit and mostly underdeclared.

So as from July 1st, that should be history. However, Customs Authorities around the 27 European Member States have been grappling with the various new EU regulations and system implementations.

Even though the newly proposed EU legislation was adopted by the Council back in December 2017 for implementation by 1 January 2021 (yes, we all got a 6-month extension), the EU expert groups advising the EU VAT-board, have been challenged till the very last few days, as it became evident that they still had different interpretations from each other. Even though they have had several years to prepare for this tectonic shift in e-commerce logistics, many authorities are still not ready.

Let's take a look at the user side, taking the average Chinese platform which we shall call "Magic Lamp". Firstly, Magic Lamp will have to appoint an intermediary based in Europe to file



their VAT tax returns on their behalf and based on their monthly Sales Revenues, EU Customs will collect the relevant taxes. Secondly, Magic Lamp will have to update their shopping cart check-out processes (amongst others) to include the VAT percentage as per the country of consumption, meaning: If the buyer lives in Germany add 19%, in Luxembourg add 17%, in Hungary 27% and in the Netherlands 21%. Thirdly, Magic Lamp will have to ensure that the Harmonised System (HS) codes and goods descriptions of the items they are selling online are correct and matching.

These codes are based on the international standardisation system implemented in 1988 by the World Customs Organization (WCO) so that we can compare goods globally like-for-like. The obvious loophole here is that sellers will try and use different HS codes and values to their advantage, as they assume with the sheer volumes coming into Europe, Customs Authorities will be overwhelmed and thus can only physically check less than 1%, if even. Thus, much depends on the dedication and seriousness of the local Customs Authorities who will feel the pressure to clear items swiftly once mountains of goods start to pile up behind them.

All-in-all, it will be a small feat to create this level playing field across Europe between online and physical shops in the short run, but one thing is certain; eventually, it will.



■ By Annabelle Deken
Director Sales Process and Solution at Spring Asia
www.spring-gds.com

Sheraton Hong Kong Tung Chung rallies with its new community partners

Few industries have suffered as much from the pandemic as the business of travel. When thinking about travel, the first sectors that come to one's mind are hotels and airlines. This is just the tip of the iceberg and they certainly felt the first impacts.

However, it is important to realise that many businesses have suffered as much. The domino effect is very much in play. Everyone that contributes to a successful airline or hotel was forced to deal with this global economic earthquake from which there is no quick fix. The tour operators, hotel product suppliers and all other related businesses, which are often smaller, have the hardest time staying afloat.

When we were given the task to open not one, but two hotels in Tung Chung in 2020 we knew it was a tough challenge. Naturally, the first thought that came to mind was "How will we survive?". How would we be able to, at the minimum, run a financially successful business?



Sunset Grill (Terrace)

Difficult times require a creative and collaborative approach that would be significantly different and more dynamic. We noticed that the challenge was not only for us to survive, but also to work with smaller businesses on Lantau Island and understand how we could take up the challenge together.

The other challenge of opening a 1,200-room hotel complex in 2020 was that the world of travel had changed. From expecting to serve primarily airport and business guests, our entire focus pivoted exclusively to a leisure style of business.

Finding our unique selling point was the goal. Along the way, we discovered not just one, but many things we could offer which other hotels in Hong Kong did not or weren't able to. Outdoor activities, green surroundings, exquisite food & beverage offerings were all things that were listed during our brainstorm sessions.

All these ideas would come to nothing without the community around us. The great part of it was that we could include small local businesses. We partnered with artisan bakeries, coffee producers, all types of Lantau farmers and more. When we opened our doors in December 2020 all those creative ideas and partnerships had paid off. Guests loved taking the ride to Lantau for a fabulous staycation that didn't feel like you were in the city. We promoted the 'your new neighbour package' to ensure the Tung Chung residents knew there was a new kid on the block - a hotel that would be an active partner of the Tung Chung community.

The hotel has been open for seven months and whilst the journey wasn't an easy one, we are all extremely proud of what we have achieved. Our restaurants are well known in Tung Chung and beyond as great dining destinations and our hotel has become synonymous for its exciting staycation packages with all types of local partnerships.

Summer is upon us, and we are taking off with our "Runway Dreams" package, which includes a visit to the Hong Kong Airlines training facilities for families to see how pilots and cabin crews are trained, learn to make an inflight meal experience with Gate Gourmet at their kitchens, showcasing the preparing process of in-flight meals.

Whilst we are all eagerly waiting for the borders to open again, we will continue to work on exciting ideas for guests to continue to make the trip to explore our Tung Chung community.

The ride has been tough but filled with lots of fun and challenges. I feel proud of my team for being creative with new ideas as well as outstanding new community ambassadors. This new style of travel is without a doubt here to stay, though we hope we will soon be able to fly again.



■ By Sander Looijen
Cluster General Manager at Marriott International
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Keeping heritage alive

Hong Kong is a city of contrasts, where old and new live side-by-side. However, authentic and quaint places may not always be appreciated – or even noticed. At **iDiscover**, **Ester van Steekelenburg** and her team are keeping heritage throughout Asia alive with their app and maps.

■ By Zuba Adham-Bos

What is iDiscover?

iDiscover is an NGO that creates neighbourhood maps and guides, mainly focused on historic districts. Through workshops with local residents we ask them what makes their neighbourhood unique? Why should we visit? What are the special places and why? We map the spots that matter; people typically mention old buildings, family-run businesses, mom & pop shops, cafes or even local events or people. Then, we put it all together as a package of a printed map with the iDiscover wayfinding app and organise a pop-up event in the neighbourhood. With this we hope to make the place known to a wider public and encourage travellers and locals to go off the beaten path and spend their money locally.

We have a team of three here in Hong Kong. For each mapping project – also in other cities in Asia – we use local resources and work with local freelancers who help with logistics, workshops, photography, content creation and design. We are just the facilitators, providing the platform and the methodology.

iDiscover has won several awards for innovative IT solutions, design, responsible tourism and walkability. The most memorable was the Cathay Pacific Shooting Star Award in 2014 – organised by the Dutch Chamber – which even led to a ticket sponsorship. It was only for a few years, but really helped to us to propel the initiative in Southeast Asia.

Now we know even better how our digital nomad customer feels and what they might encounter. This is helping us to stay close to our customers.

Why did you start iDiscover?

For many years I worked as a consultant on urban renewal and heritage revitalisation projects throughout Southeast Asia. Hong

Kong was a basecamp from where I ran Urban Discovery, a boutique consultancy firm. We worked on interesting projects, but sometimes we thought: “We would have approached that differently”. As a consultant, you have to follow the client’s brief. So about five years ago, we decided to set up iDiscover, as our in-house passion project to give the community a voice in their urban future.

We have now mapped around 60-70 neighbourhoods throughout Asia – some districts even for a second or third time, each time through a different lens. For example, in Aberdeen, we have worked with local youth, the longstanding fishing community, and the Wong Chuk Hang creative community. It’s interesting to see the different perspectives, but also how often the same spots are listed.

It all started with a passion for heritage and historic neighbourhoods, but our methodology has a social impact too. It creates an opportunity for cross-cultural and cross-generational dialogue which does not happen often. The people who join the mapping activities get a sense of pride for their neighbourhood. The iDiscover platform also attracts the interest of people that can make change happen, such as district councillors and real estate developers. We invite these stakeholders to our events and often it’s the first time a bottom-up dialogue, initiated by the local residents, comes about.

What are some memorable moments since you started iDiscover?

There are many memorable moments, but one of the highlights is when we were in Yangon, Myanmar, about a year ago. It is a politically difficult place: Myanmar is a divided country with many ethnic conflicts and different religions. There are Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and Hindus, and they don’t mingle very much. The older generation is particularly rigid in that regard. In one of Yangon’s old neighbourhoods we mapped with a group of young people, all in their early twenties from different cultural and religious backgrounds. We were curious to see if this would act as a divider.

Over the two weekends they together explored the neighbourhood to collect stories of places. We observed something



Ester van Steekelenburg at a workshop in Yangon Sanchaung, Myanmar

Relocation of children amidst a pandemic: legal issues to be aware of

At a time filled with uncertainty, our Family law team has seen an increase in enquiries from parents wishing to permanently relocate from Hong Kong with their children.

The motivations to permanently relocate are myriad and include loss of employment or a desire to be closer to family members. If the parents cannot agree on the terms of a relocation, they must take out a relocation application with the Family Court.

Even before the pandemic, a relocation application is a difficult one. A Judge must carefully balance factors such as whether the relocation application is genuinely made, whether the relocation proposal is realistic and well-researched, whether the other parent's opposition is genuine and how access between the child and the parent 'left behind' will be maintained, and have considered all the factors to decide whether or not the relocation is in the child's best interests. Where a child is of sufficient maturity (generally from 10 to 11 years old and up), their wishes will also be given strong weight.



With the precarious nature of COVID-19, the ever-changing views and opinions of where in the world is considered "most safe" for individuals, and the developing and evolving regulations and restrictions about international travel implemented by different countries, one prevalent concern from parties has been how (if at all) COVID-19 will affect relocation applications.

In 2020, there were a number of relocation cases in which judgment has been given which granted a relocation despite COVID-19 and the uncertainties surrounding travel. Specifically, a recent decision from the Family Court in Hong Kong has addressed concerns about how the pandemic and the resulting difficulties with the global economy should affect how a Judge considers relocation applications.

Practical tips: what can a parent do if they wish to relocate with their child, but there is no consent from the other parent?

- Consider why and when you wish to move. The Court is generally more inclined to grant an order for permanent removal if the requesting parent is moving back to their home country and/or the parent can show that they have a good support system in the home country or new location.
- Consider whether it is the right time to move. Is the intention to move at the end of the academic year or the end of an employment contract or lease expiry? These facts will be looked at by the Court.
- Have a realistic, well-researched and organised plan. Be prepared to inform the Court where you will live, what school the children will attend and what the childcare arrangements are. The Court will also consider earning potential in the target country and travel arrangements.
- Consider options early and have an open and honest discussion with the other parent, including whether mediation is an appropriate means for a resolution to alleviate any concerns the other parent may have. If the other parent does not agree, the process of applying to the Family Court for a relocation order is lengthy and costly. It may take up to 12 months before the application is before a Judge and a trial on the matter can span days or even months.

While COVID-19 and the very practical challenges associated with it, including whether or not the 'left behind' parent can travel to see the children, remains an issue, the Court demonstrated that it will not let the pandemic be a sufficient reason to delay or prevent relocations where applications are genuinely made and well-founded.

A recent change in policy on extensions of stay by the Immigration Department is now permitting applications to be made by applicants who are unable to return to Hong Kong before the expiry of their employment or dependant visas. To be eligible, the applicant must have a visa that is expiring within the next 4 weeks or has expired for not more than 12 months. The caveat is that the applicant must return to Hong Kong within 6 months of the approval of the application.



■ By Joanne Brown
Partner and Head of Family

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Joanne Lam ■
Solicitor, Family

Passing the Pen

Name: Paul Voets

Organisation: HASBRO Global Development & Sourcing Operations



Who am I?

Born and raised in 't Groene Hart' of the Netherlands, a region of green polders between Amsterdam and Rotterdam, I moved to Twente to study Industrial Engineering and Management. In France, I met my wife and we moved together to Singapore in 2002 for a 3-year assignment. Almost twenty years later, we are still in Asia. Our two daughters were born in Singapore and our son in Shanghai.

My professional background is:

I started my career with Philips where I worked for ten years in the Consumer Electronics division in Belgium, France and Singapore. Then I transferred to Philips Lighting in Shanghai where I led the Professional Luminaires factory and embarked on a Lean transformation journey. Running a factory was a great experience and getting insight on how this is done in China was invaluable.

I moved to Hong Kong because:

After 7 years in Shanghai, I got the opportunity to join BISSELL in Hong Kong as their Vice President for Global Operations and General Manager for Asia Pacific. I was very sad to leave my colleagues and friends at Philips after 17 years, but this was a great opportunity. Additionally, the city of Hong Kong, its country parks, beaches and above all the sea were all very attractive to my family and me. I stayed with BISSELL for 5 years, leading their Sourcing, Supply Chain, Manufacturing and Quality while having oversight responsibility for the company's marketing, sales, human resources and finance in the Asia Pacific region.

I work for:

HASBRO Global Development & Sourcing Operations, an

organisation that manages product development, strategic sourcing, supply chain, quality and compliance for the Hasbro toy and game business globally. Team members are located across Hong Kong, China, Vietnam, India, Mexico and the USA. As their Managing Director, I lead and integrate the various functions, locations and teams to enable them to perform at their full potential.

My most remarkable work story is:

Most of you have heard or read about disruptive technologies and their impact on companies, people, and markets. In my career, I experienced it when I moved to Singapore in 2002. I was appointed to lead the procurement of picture tubes for Global Mainstream TV at Philips. The CPO of Philips Consumer Electronics told me that flat displays were a new trend, but it would take several years before these panels would become mainstream. Well, within six months, I was working 100% on flat displays as the price points of these LCD panels came down so drastically that they became affordable for mainstream TV. It had an enormous impact on all aspects of our business line such as product strategy, planning & development, component suppliers & assembly factories, inventory and price & supply chain management.

I find most of my business contacts through:

Existing networks and relationships and hopefully soon in-person meetings and conferences at the Dutch Chamber.

One day I will be:

Sailing is a great passion in our family and we are active sailors in and around Hong Kong. One day, I picture myself sailing across the Atlantic Ocean with my wife.



Travel in (and to) China

“Ping deng hu li” – Equality and mutual benefit, former mandatory text for PRC joint venture contracts

A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step, they say. In my case the step outside my Leiden student house. A short stroll to the Rapenburg for a presentation about studying abroad, signing up to exchange programs in Belgium and Paris where I learned my first Chinese and getting hired by Royal Philips Electronics as a young lawyer for the “China-trajectory” did the rest.

That this trajectory, which earned me a ton of China trips starting with Beijing in 1993, opened up to a young, inexperienced lawyer had less to do with management development programmes than with the waning enthusiasm for China travel among the senior lawyers at Philips Corporate Legal. A new company policy mandating Economy Class on all flights made long-haul travel for tall Dutchmen distinctly less comfortable. There were also no direct flights between Dutch and Chinese ports at the time and a forced stopover in Hong Kong with its hair-raising, sweaty palms “dive in between the high-rises” approach to the old Kai Tak airfield was not everyone’s cup of tea.

In those days, mainland Chinese airlines had the world’s worst safety record, making Dragonair the only realistic option for connecting flights into China. Its Lockheed Tristars operated on those routes must have been the noisiest aircraft of their time though. After a solid 3-4 hours of eardrum-beating by three engines mounted directly above and to either side of the fuselage, landing into Beijing’s Capital or Shanghai’s Hongqiao Airports offered the grim, dark, grubby principal entry points into Deng Xiaoping’s China. Soldiers everywhere, cleaning crews optional or so it seemed.

Today’s network of China’s highways was still “under construction”. Quite literally so, as in the hotel car I travelled in at night having to swerve to avoid a hole the entire width of the (as yet unlit) Shanghai-Nanjing highway’s right-hand lane. Workers had put a sign right in front of the hole, but no advance warning notices, bright flashing lights, nothing. Just a black hole, with an unlit sign.

Another near-death experience was the farmer driving his tractor (no headlights, saving energy) on that same highway – against the direction of traffic. Yet with most highways as yet unbuilt, the biggest scares occurred on the narrow backwater roads. Toll gates in the middle of nowhere set up for no apparent purpose other than to extract more cash out



of unsuspecting travellers. Even the cities were hazardous: A loud bang and fountain of sparks in Chongqing, followed by a wheel bouncing downhill and missing us by inches, being stuck in a Nanjing hotel elevator for hours during a power cut, all in a day’s work...

Yet despite its inconveniences and even outright dangers, Deng Xiaoping’s China held a charm of its own. Elderly people in grey, green or blue “Mao-suits” next to young couples in jeans riding bicycles in swarms, forcing cars and other motorised vehicles to drive slowly; complete strangers, usually students, striking up a conversation in broken English, just to learn and improve; the old hutongs right next to the Forbidden City and the low-rise shophouses in the middle of Shanghai Puxi District (Pudong was still farmland back then); sidewalks featuring outdoors morning baths, haircuts and even tooth extractions. Compared to today’s clean, efficient but intensely boring concrete-steel-and-mirror-glass cityscapes, the China of the early nineties was a friendlier place.

I consider myself fortunate to have caught the tail end of that China, of the “Ping deng hu li” era. Full of ambition but gentler, more cordial. Today’s China strikes a very different tone: Its “wolf warrior” diplomats sound much like the Imperial “kow-tow” demands on foreign embassies; its stated goal of world technology domination takes most “mutual” out of “benefit” and although China travel is now easier than ever before, those feeling the vibes must wonder: “Why bother?”



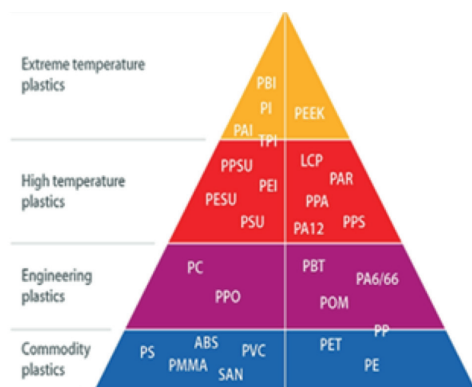
■ By Ralph Ybema
Managing Director at China Law & Tax
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Plastics 101

From a compounder perspective, I will walk you through the basics of plastic recycling/ regenerating. With climate change driving the conversation to change our attitude towards plastics it is good to understand this versatile material better. In turn, consumers can make better choices when it comes to circularity.

Let's start with compounding: melting blending plastics with other additives and making them suitable for re-use. This process changes the properties of a plastic which results in a compound. These are granules or pellets that can be used for injection moulding or extrusion.

A key graphic in the different kinds of plastics is the plastics pyramid. It showcases the more complex plastics at the top where the material is expensive but also very strong and easy to recycle. The lower you go in the plastics pyramid, the materials become what we call 'commodity goods', meaning the mechanical properties are low, not durable and degrade easily when you try to recycle them.



All plastics require the following steps in their first production.

Starting with raw material such as petroleum oil, natural gas or plant-based oil → refined into ethane and propane → these gasses are then treated with high heat (cracking) creating monomers such as ethylene and propylene → monomers are combined with a catalyst to create a polymer → polymer is extruded → forming long tubes as it cools → tubes are cut into small pellets → pellets are then used for further processing by application.



PLASTIC RESIN IDENTIFICATION CODES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PETE	HDPE	PVC	LDPE	PP	PS	OTHER
Polyethylene Terephthalate	High Density Polyethylene	Polyvinyl Chloride	Low Density Polyethylene	Polypropylene	Polystyrene	Other

The Resin Identification Code (RIC), for household use and collection, was developed in 1988 by the Society of the Plastics Industry, now known as the Plastics Industry Association. This system should make it easier for waste collection points and recyclers to identify materials. However, a major fault in this system is that most people do not look so close at their packaging and plastics are usually collected as "plastics". Post-consumer plastics are also often very polluted. Making post-industrial and post-production still far more interesting lines of sources for most recycling companies.

In short:

- The process of making a plastic, either petroleum-based or plant oil-based is very complex and regardless of the base product, it is a polluting process.
- Recycling a plastic is challenging on several levels accountable to collection, pollution and low-quality plastics.

How can a consumer make better decisions on their personal plastic consumption?

- Refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, rot. Simple but effective.
- Learn, understand and dive deep into marketing claims by brands. What are materials like R-pet and PCR? What percentage of those materials is virgin and what is recycled?



■ By Rosien Grasveld – Uiterwijk
Regional Development Manager at Agiplast
www.agiplast-compounding.com

Retiring abroad

Many people consider retiring in a new country for different reasons, such as living in an exotic location, searching for new adventures or having a lower cost of living. There are however different tax implications when retiring in another country. Therefore, one should carefully evaluate the tax implications in both your home country and the retiring country before making any decision.

Dutch retirement pension taxation

It is commonly known that Tax Authorities often provide tax benefits for pension plans and use various methods to facilitate this. Some Tax Authorities allow for a tax deduction of contributions paid towards a certain pension plan; however, they would tax the future pension payments in full.

Other Tax Authorities thereafter exempt the future pension payments from any taxes but will deny a tax deduction of the pension contributions at the same time. The Tax Authorities in the Netherlands use the first method, i.e. contributions paid towards a pension are usually tax deductible and future pension payments are fully taxable.

Double Taxation Agreements & Dutch pensions

The Dutch pension method is also reflected in most double taxation treaties, which the Netherlands has concluded with other countries. For example, if a Belgium or UK resident receives a Dutch (non-government related) pension as a result of past employment for a Dutch company and the contributions associated with the pension have been taken into account for tax relief in the Netherlands, then generally speaking the Tax Authorities in the Netherlands are entitled to subject these pension payments to Dutch personal income tax.

The general exemption on this rule is the situation where the Belgium or UK Tax Authorities would fully tax the pension payments as well, as in that case the Netherlands would provide for a tax exemption.

As Hong Kong would not tax pension benefits received from another country, the Hong Kong – Netherlands double taxation treaty is a perfect example where the Netherlands keeps its taxing rights on Dutch pensions.

According to article 17 of that particular double taxation treaty, Dutch (non-government related) pension payments made under a pension/retirement scheme which is amongst others “a scheme in which individuals may participate to secure retirement benefits and which is recognised for tax purposes

in the Netherlands (read: = tax-deductible), shall only be taxed in the Netherlands”.

Retirement in Thailand & reduce Dutch tax liability at the same time?

The double taxation treaty between the Netherlands and Thailand, concluded in 1975 and effective as of 1976, is however in conflict with the usual pension method used by Dutch Tax Authorities. This as the pension article of that particular double taxation treaty determines that, in general, all Dutch pensions paid by a Dutch private institution shall only be taxable in Thailand.

As a result, a situation is created in which Dutch pension contributions have been deducted at a high Dutch personal income tax rate but the pension payments in itself are taxed at a zero or low Thai personal income tax rate (instead of at a high Dutch personal income tax rate). Please note though that for Dutch Government pensions different rules apply and that these, in general, would always be subject to Dutch personal income tax.



Retirement in Thailand tax case

On the 18th of February 2011, the Netherlands – Thailand double taxation treaty was discussed by a Dutch Lower Tax Court. The subject of discussion in front of the Court was a Dutch national that moved over to Thailand in 2000.

This Dutch national worked during the period 1968-2002 for a public university that was privatized in 1992. As of the year 2002, the Dutch national received a pension from the Dutch Foundation ABP (which normally takes care of Dutch Government pensions) in respect of his past employment. In the year 2006, he received a pension of EUR 25,727 from which EUR 1,117 was withheld by the Dutch Tax Authorities in respect of Dutch personal income tax liability.

The Dutch national disagreed with this particular withholding, as he argued that the pension payment was only fully taxable in Thailand. The Dutch Tax Authorities, however, disagreed and argued that the amount was fully taxable in the Netherlands. The Dutch Lower Tax Court concluded that the relevant pension payment was partly built up during a period that the university belonged to the Dutch Government (1968-1992) and partly during a period that the university was privatised (1992-2002) and that therefore only 24/34 of the EUR 25,727 or EUR 18,160 was taxable in the Netherlands. In other words, the taxing rights of EUR 7,567 were fully allocated to Thailand. Retirement in Thailand is rather attractive for Dutch nationals, not only because of its warm climate and white sandy beaches but obviously also because of its tax advantages. However, to benefit from these tax advantages, one needs to make sure that certain practical steps are being implemented as well, a matter our firm could be of assistance with.

Other popular retirement destinations

Portugal

Portuguese tax residents are subject to taxation on their worldwide income. However, there is a Non-Habitual Residency ("NHR") tax regime under which one's foreign pension income may be taxed at a reduced rate of 10% for up to 10 years if certain conditions are met. In addition, other types of foreign income may also be exempt under the NHR regime.

There is no inheritance tax or gift tax in Portugal. However, the transfer of certain types of properties situated in Portugal is subject to Stamp Duty. For example, the transfer of real estate in Portugal is chargeable to 10% of stamp duty, but such transfer between close relatives can be exempt.



Italy

Tax residents in Italy are subject to income tax on their worldwide income and inheritance tax will also apply to their worldwide assets upon death. However, Italy has introduced a substitute tax regime starting for high-net-worth individuals who transfer their tax residence to Italy. The tax regime provides for the foreign-source income and gains to be subject to a substitute tax of EUR 100,000 per year and foreign assets will not be subject to the wealth taxes, inheritance and gift tax in Italy. The substitute tax regime can be elected for up to a maximum of 15 years.

In addition, Italy recently introduced another 7% Italian Flat Tax regime for promoting the transfer of tax residency in certain municipalities in Southern Italy. This regime allows the qualified tax resident to elect for a 7% flat tax on foreign-sourced income and provides for exemption from wealth taxes on foreign assets. One can elect for such a regime for up to 10 years.

France

In general, if you become a French tax resident, your worldwide income will be subject to French income tax. In addition, inheritance tax may also apply to your worldwide assets upon death.

However, please note that the tax implications of retiring abroad will depend on the facts and circumstances of each case including the location of the individual's home country, his/her personal and economic situations, any double tax treaties in place etc.



■ By Willem Jan Hoogland

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Samuel Fung ■

Pearl of the Orient

As Hong Kong remains closed to non-residents, we can become melancholic remembering the many decades of international travel advertising encouraging travellers to visit the “Pearl of the Orient”. Many of the old posters have become collectors’ items and are worth quite some money today.

Another name sometimes used in travel advertising was “The Riviera of the Orient”, most notably on posters depicting the South Side or the old Repulse Bay Hotel. Almost all posters depict a junk boat sailing in Victoria Harbour, but some are surprisingly different: a TWA (Trans World Airlines an American airline that closed down in 2001) poster from the 1960s shows an elderly white judge with the requisite wig, next to a Cantonese opera singer, presumably to demonstrate the mix of East and West!

While Hong Kong was not a great tourist centre before the Second World War, many ships regularly entered the sheltered waters of its harbour and docked or anchored there to resupply on necessary provisions. The colony thus received a constant stream of visitors and sightseers, on whom many local shopkeepers came to depend (“plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”). During the US involvement in the Vietnam War (1961-1975), the US military made Hong Kong a frequent stop for resting troops in the Asian region. It was considered one of the neutral zones not affected by the communists.

The 1960s was truly a transformational period for Hong Kong, as its golden period of strong economic development

and prosperity started. Hong Kong’s population in the early 1960s was roughly 3 million, (compared to 7.5 million today), with half of that number being 25 or younger. Many low-rise buildings were in the process of being demolished to make way for taller structures (which seem small by today’s standards – as an indication: when Jardine House was built in 1972, it was then the tallest building in all of Asia). Prince’s Building and a luxurious new hotel called the Mandarin Oriental were both built in the 1960s. It is in this period that the tourism industry really started to develop. Hong Kong was exotic but safe, offered great service and was next to the mysterious and closed “Red China”.

It is in this period that the tourism industry really started to develop. Hong Kong was exotic but safe, offered great service and was next to the mysterious and closed “Red China”.



Lin Heung Tea House

Today, Hong Kong only has one remaining licenced rickshaw driver, Mr Hung, who used to work for tourists near the Peak Tower.

A visitor would either arrive by passenger ship, docking at the Victoria Harbour terminal on Tsim Sha Tsui side or land at Kai Tak airport with its hair-raising landing experience between the residential towers. Either way, they would make their way to Hong Kong Island by Star Ferry. The Star Ferry started operations in 1888, before which sampans would transport people and goods across Victoria Harbour. Until the opening of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel in 1972, the Star Ferry remained the main means of public transportation between Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon side.

Once on Hong Kong Island, the tourist could be transported to their hotel by a coolie in a rickshaw, which if one was travelling alone was easier and considerably cheaper than taking a taxi. The average cost of rickshaw rides at that time was 0.50 cents. The first rickshaw appeared in Hong Kong in 1874, a two-passenger model imported from Japan. This form of transport took off, but the wooden wheels damaged the roads, causing them to become very muddy when it rained. Legislation soon followed limiting the rickshaws to single-passenger models, and later mandating wider wheels and rubber tyres. The real competition for the rickshaw started in 1904 with the first electric tram. Nevertheless, the rickshaw remained very popular with locals and tourists alike, until the mid-1970s. Today, Hong Kong only has one remaining licenced rickshaw driver, Mr Hung, who used to work for tourists near the Peak Tower.



Rickshaws in Hong Kong 1930's



Once arrived at the hotel and checked in, the visitor will enjoy some “exotic” local food. The best Hong Kong dishes have not changed over many, many decades: dim sum, wonton noodles and barbecue pork, goose or duck. There are still a few restaurants in existence today that date from that period: Lin Heung Tea House serving dim sum since 1918, Tai Ping Koon serving western dishes since 1937, Gaddi's serving European cuisine in The Peninsula since 1953 and The Peak Lookout serving hungry tourists since 1947 are probably the only ones left. (Sadly, my old favourite Jimmy's Kitchen which opened in 1928, did not survive the last few difficult years and closed last year).

The tourist attractions then were largely the same as today's: the Peak Tram ride to the Peak (operating since 1888, it was the very first funicular railway in Asia), shopping at the markets and sampan tours of Aberdeen and Victoria Harbour.

The description that the Hong Kong Tourism Board uses to describe our Territory was just as applicable in the 1960s as it is today: “A kaleidoscope of life, a sophisticated fusion of East and West, a city of diversity where new and old meet at every turn”. Let us hope that soon we will have a return of international tourists discovering the Pearl of the Orient.



■ By Daniël de Blocq van Scheltinga
Managing Director at Polarwide Ltd
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Doing international business with NLinBusiness

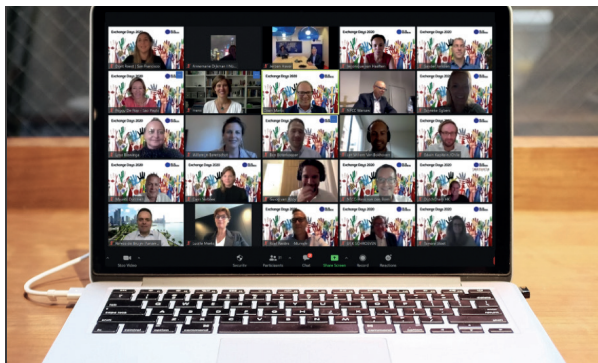
The Dutch Chamber in Hong Kong is a member of NLinBusiness since 2019 and obtained accreditation status in 2020. Being a member provides us with several benefits, such as: being part of a global network of Dutch Chambers, exchange of best practices, additional exposure of our events via their platform and obtaining financial support for the development of new services.

NLinBusiness is the one-stop-shop platform for Dutch entrepreneurs with international ambition. Whether you're looking for a supplier in Hong Kong, need advice on opening new markets in Dubai or you're looking for a specific service: through our international business platform, we match you with the right people and organisations to support you in your ambition to grow your business internationally. NLinBusiness highlights specific business opportunities and connects you with the partners you need to open new markets successfully. Our reliable partners have the capabilities to support you professionally, allowing you to focus on seizing opportunities and building your business.

NLinBusiness helps you to get the most out of your entrepreneurial journey and to grow your business. We achieve this through the services on our platform and by organising local support through our network of NL Business Hubs in our globally selected "Cities of Opportunity". The NL Business Hubs can be found in 40 cities on all continents.

We are proud that the Dutch Chamber of Hong Kong is one of these Hubs and is accredited as a network Partner of NLinBusiness. Together, we inform, inspire and connect international entrepreneurs around the globe.

In order to obtain this quality mark, it is a requirement that the NL Business Hub is a "not-for-profit" organisation with the mission to strengthen the trade relationship between the



Netherlands and foreign markets, such as the Dutch Chamber in Hong Kong. NLinBusiness also assesses the membership composition, governance structure, as well as the quality, transparency and service portfolio of the organisation.

These hubs are of great added value for anyone who needs a reliable international network to gain a foothold in a specific market. From providing a business community where you can connect, share your business experiences and find help in the soft landing from legal aspects to opening a bank account and finding qualified staff.

NLinBusiness is an initiative by the Dutch employers' organisations VNO-NCW and MKB Nederland. We work closely with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate, the trade associations FME, evofenedex and Koninklijke Metaalunie, as well as with other interest groups, top sectors, knowledge institutes and the Dutch business community.



■ By Annemarie Dijkman
International Business Manager at NLinBusiness
www.nlinbusiness.com



Mentorship Programme Closure

27 May 2021



Asparagus Dinner

6 June 2021



Homebase Hong Kong; Still Asia's World City?!

8 June 2021



AGM Election of the DutchCham Board

16 June 2021



SeafoodFriday.hk Herring Party

24 June 2021



The Secrets of Body Language

30 June 2021



Committee Appreciation Drinks

13 July 2021



Tax Breakfast

15 July 2021

New Members corner

New members

Rosien Grasveld - Young Professional Membership

Faye Lam - Young Professional Membership

Graham Wladimiroff - Associate Membership

Michelle Li - Associate Membership

Christy Verheij - Associate Membership

Port of Rotterdam - Overseas Membership

Sr. Business Manager Shippers & Forwarders, Anita van der Laan

Jim Bakker - Young Professional Membership

Introducing the new Dutch Chamber's General Manager

You may have met him already at one of the Chamber's events; **Tom Bakker, General Manager** of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong since June 2021. Get to know him better in this introduction interview.

■ By Zuba Adham-Bos

Please tell us a bit about yourself

Regarding my professional background, I have always worked in roles involving innovation and international cooperation. In the Netherlands, I worked at the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy as Senior Policy Advisor at the department 'Innovation and Knowledge'. At the same time, I was a teacher and researcher at the University of Groningen (RUG) at the Department of Strategy and Innovation. Before that, I worked as a consultant and had my own consultancy agency for five years. I graduated in Business Administration at RUG.



I moved to Hong Kong in November 2020, as my wife got a job here. It is a great opportunity for us to experience living and working in Hong Kong. I had visited Hong Kong before but living here is even better than expected, as it's such a diverse place.

Have you set goals and/or projects for the Chamber?

Yes, I have. The Chamber is in a good condition, both financially and regarding member base, so there is a stable foundation to continue on and further expand.

I have several projects and ambitions in mind. One of them is to further expand one of our recent projects, which we call the Toolkit; our Academy and the Soft Landing Kit. The Academy has received positive feedback so far, not only content-wise but also to meet members in a different setting and learn together. The Soft Landing Kit is for companies and entrepreneurs in the Netherlands who are looking to expand or do business in Hong Kong or the Greater Bay Area (GBA). Our preferred service providers are here to support them and we are the boots on the ground.

I have noticed an increasing number of members are speaking about the GBA. Trade missions to Chambers in the GBA have been on hold but as soon as we can, I'd like to pick this back up. Our members are looking for information, contacts and joint network events, which the Chamber can play a role in.

A more long-term project is to create some sort of industry-university council. There is a lot of local knowledge and innovation projects on key technologies such as artificial intelligence, smart cities, Internet of Things and more. I'd like to make this more accessible and bring knowledge institutions and our members together.

A final and more concrete project is our upcoming 30th anniversary gala on November 11! We want to actively involve our members and organise an event that aligns their interests and offer a platform for exposure. Members can expect our office team to reach out for involvement.

What do you look forward to in your time as GM of the Dutch Chamber?

What drives me, also in my previous roles, is when you hear that a certain event or matchmaking activity has been useful for a member and has led, for example, to a new prospect or client, a business partner, a new idea, and so on. That is what we want to deliver for our members.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I have many hobbies and interests, one of which is discovering Hong Kong, visiting the islands and New Territories, for example, to witness the different sides of this area. I also like cooking and to do sports; kickboxing, walking and swimming. Furthermore, I read and collect books about history, specifically Asian and Chinese history.

A last note

It's great to see we have an active business community, which we appreciate. If you'd like to become more active, we encourage it – for example, to join one of our committees. Our door is always open! If members have questions or ideas, we're here to discuss them.

We are an independent, member-driven, non-governmental, non-profit business association which serves to facilitate business in Hong Kong and Greater China for its members by providing networking, knowledge sharing and company profiling opportunities.

As the representative body of Dutch business in Hong Kong, we maintain close relationships with both the Dutch and the Hong Kong SAR governments.

DUTCHCHAM GOLD MEMBERS



MEMBERSHIP & ANNUAL FEES

• Gold Member	HK\$ 20,000
• Corporate Member	HK\$ 8,500
• SME Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Associate Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Young Professional	HK\$ 750
• Start-up Member	HK\$ 1,750
• Overseas Member	HK\$ 2,500

Joining fee waived for 2021

DUTCHCHAM COMMITTEES

PR & Pub Committee



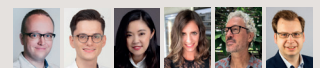
Rinske Kuiper (Chair) • Zuba Adham-Bos (editor) • Monique de Raaij • Annemarelle van Schayik • Nerice Gietel • Annemarijn de Boer • Emily Tunderman

China Committee



Michiel Mak (Chair) • Ewout Stumphius • River Stone • Annemarelle van Schayik • Quinten Kah • Wouter Baan • Graham Wladimiroff • Tom Bakker

SME Committee



Jeffrey Broer (Chair) • Paul Du Long • Jackie To • Madelon van de Ven • Bert Bulhuis • Tom Bakker

Tax Committee



Willem Jan Hoogland (Chair) • Eric Kampman • Jerry Lin • Felix den Ottolander • Tom Bakker

Women in Business Committee



Maike van Meer • Claire Worp • Emily de Bruijn • Sandra Wu • Nerice Gietel • Kashmira Daryanani • Iris Barzilay • Emily Tunderman

Finance Committee



Sander van den Berg (Chair) • Lapman Lee • Rogier Hekking • Hugo Sterkenburgh • Esther Verhoek • Martyn van Wensveen • Edgar Ultee • Tom Bakker

Creative Committee



Marcel Heijnen (Chair) • Anoeshka Krijnen • Annemarijn de Boer • Nina Spoelstra • May Yeung • Emily Tunderman

Young Professional Committee



Thom Schuite • Jerry Lin • Julietta van der Ploeg • Fleur Schreurs • Dennis de Graaf • Pieter Hoppenbrouwers • Romy Kunen • Emily Tunderman

Chamber Ambassadors



Frery Winkel-Pieters (Chair) • Choy Yiu Chan • Romy Kunen • Emily Tunderman



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