

Break of the month *Ski tours*

Three swarthy Dutch ski instructors are riding China's growing passion for powder with a new company specialising in ski and snowboarding trips around East Asia. China-based **360 Snow Tours** offers tailor-made and package tours to their favourite skiing sites in China, Japan and Korea. Choose from one of the set packages, which include airport transfers, accommodation, some meals, lift tickets, ski/snowboard rental, skiing lessons, and even childcare and mountain guides. Or email them with your requests and they can devise a special tailor-made itinerary. In January, they are offering package trips to Hakuba, Japan (seven nights from 7,900RMB); Yabuli, China (three days from 2,760RMB); and Wanlong, China (two nights from 1,400RMB). Our favourite, though, is an alternative visa hop to Seoul where you can lodge your application and then hit the slopes while you wait.

See www.360snowtours.com for details.



Snow business 360 Snow Tours offers tailor-made ski trips in Asia

A word with the pro

Jonathan L. Hasson, co-director of Luxury Concierge China



Travel

The big opening *Aman Fayun, Hangzhou*



Monk business The Aman Fayun is beside two working temples

Capital of ancient China during the Southern Song dynasty, Hangzhou is now establishing itself as a modern urban resort city. Following the recent opening of Banyan Tree's 72 water terraces and villas in the Xixi National Wetland Park, this month sees the opening of **Aman Fayun** in its own 'living village', nestled in a rural valley beside Lingyin and Yongfu temples about 20 minutes from

downtown. Built during the Tang dynasty, the 'village' comprises 47 courtyard farmhouses clustered along an ancient stone pathway that monks traverse each morning to get to the nearby temples. In true Aman style, the stellar service extends to intimate cultural experiences, like privileged access to the temples and breakfast cruises on West Lake. See www.amanresorts.com for more details.

Deal of the month *Fairmont Yangcheng Lake*

Now that the hairy crab crowds have dispersed, enjoy the peace of Yangcheng Lake at the swish new Fairmont Yangcheng Lake Hotel. Their 'Nutritious Winter' package offers a two-night recharge retreat including five-star accommodation, free 90-minute spa sessions and meals for two, bike exploration and kite flying for 2,699RMB per couple. Valid until 31 March, 2010. See www.fairmont.com/yangchenglake for more details.



Where are you headed for Chinese New Year?

Taipei and the island's lush countryside.

Why?

I try to visit at least one new place a year. Despite having lived in Asia for almost a decade, I have never set foot in Taiwan and am intrigued to finally discover yet another part of this amazing continent. With easy flights, a pleasant climate in February and an interesting mix of urban life and nature all in close proximity – it's new or never.

How long?

Three nights in Taipei, four in the countryside.

Accommodation picks?

The five-room Villa 32 on the lakeside in Taipei, and The Lalu, Sun Moon Lake, formerly the summer palace of Chiang Kai-Shek (see page 34).

Any other CNY destination tips?

Bali is always a great option, especially with direct flights on China Eastern or Shanghai Airlines. Or head out to Hokkaido for off-piste skiing – the powder is as good as it gets. *Luxury Concierge China* provide bespoke tours of Shanghai and beyond. See www.luxuryconciergechina.com for details.



Made in Taiwan Ingyn Waterfall

Departures board

Airline	Destination	Trip	Price	Until
●● China Airlines	Osaka	RT	2,020RMB	Jan 31
●● Dragonair	New York	RT	4,330RMB	Mar 31

Prices do not include taxes and fees. For the above deals, see www.elongnet.com or call 400 810 1119.