

## Beyond expectations ITE Hong Kong 2021 held as scheduled amid closed borders

Rather unexpectedly, the first post pandemic edition of **ITE Hong Kong 2021**, the city's only travel fair with strong international presence, was held successfully as scheduled from July 29 to August 1 at halls 1B & C of the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre.

With closed borders almost everywhere including the host city, it is reasonable not to expect ITE this year could be held! In fact, the annual ITE saw its edition in 2020 canceled due to pandemic! That it was able to be held this year with comparative successes, in our view, reflect some in the travel trade and travelers are prepared to take action at the soonest to speed up tourism recovery.

Understandably, ITE2021 is much smaller than in a normal year, but quality maintained. For examples, it has more outside and overseas exhibitors than from locally; presence of destinations popular to the city's travelers; attractively designed stands and special displays; new themes, exhibitors and special displays; and total some 50 seminars many by KOLs, etc.

Hopefully, ITE 2021 can rally for more actions to speed up tourism recovery!



## The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Yau officiated the Opening

Our honor that Mrs. Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive (CE) of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, again sent this year her Message to welcome ITE participants! (Click [HERE](#) for the Message from CE)

Our Guest of Honor, Mr. Edward Yau, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development of Hong Kong SAR officiated the opening of ITE 2021 on July 29. Other honorable guests on the stage included Ms. Vivian Sum, JP, Commissioner for Tourism HKSAR; and the Hon Yiu Si-wing, Legislative Councilor of HKSAR (Tourism sector) etc.



Secretary Yau delivered keynote speech in opening



Ribbon cutting

The opening was well attended by the travel trade and media! Beyond our expectation, there is also a strong presence of the diplomatic corps including 13 Consul Generals from USA, Argentina, Bangladesh, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Panama, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Thailand, Venezuela and Vietnam, who were invited onto the stage for the VIP Group Photo.



VIP Group Photo

ITE Hong Kong 2021, which incorporate the 35th ITE (Leisure) and the 16th ITE MICE, is organized by TKS and continues receiving the strong support from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, with the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong etc. as Supporters.



## Visitors - Quality made up for smaller Quantity

Several factors affecting visitor attendance. Buyers and trade visitors from outside or overseas, who often account for some 40% of visitors in trade days, could not attend this year due to border restrictions. Social Distancing regulations on exhibitions tightened week before opening, so halls could only be half full instead of 75% of the capacity. Many employees in travel trade been on no-pay leave.

ITE2021 has separate admission policy and session for trade and public visitors. In Day 1 and Day 2 morning, admission only by registration and successfully registered buyers and trade visitors given badge allowing unlimited entry in these two whole days. For the remaining sessions and days, visitors can pay for admission.

Attending ITE2021 were 2544 local buyers and trade visitors, among them 63.7% from travel trade and 36.3% from corporation and MICE; and 27106 public visitors.

However, exhibitors satisfied with the traffic flow and also on enquiries, business discussions, sale leads with some even report making deals. In fact, our in-house surveys on ITE trade or public visitors and many public surveys consistently found strong pent up travel demand in Hong Kong.



Both trade and public seminars well attended

## Outside & Overseas Exhibitors outnumber the Locals

This year, ITE exhibitors come from 18 countries and regions, which are **Hong Kong, mainland China, Macau, Taiwan, Japanese prefectures of Hyogo, Tokushima, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Toyama, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, Nagano and Chugoku Region, Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, Iran and Castilla-la Mancha – Spain.**

Contrary to expectation, ITE this year still have more outside/overseas exhibitors than from locally. Of its 103 exhibitors, the locals account only for 36% which about half of those from outside Hong Kong. Also present are pavilions and stands by tourism boards, of which mainland China the largest in scale, Taiwan second, and the group of Japanese prefectures ranked third.



Special design stands in ITE for visitors taking photo

Exhibitors solve border restrictions in different ways! Yellowknife from Canada, an ITE regular, went through 14 days quarantine in Hong Kong! Mainland China work with local travel agents while Japanese prefectures mainly with their local offices! Taiwan incorporate online facilities in stand for real time online communications between stay home Taiwanese travel trade and ITE visitors in the exhibition halls.



Instead of exhibiting, others present in ITE in other formats! Spain broadcast video regularly in ITE seminar sessions. A Pakistan travel agent use panel ads printed with their QR code. Switzerland, Thailand and South Korea conduct seminars onsite. Understandably, ITE welcome supports for tourism recovery.



## Comparing ITE 2021 vs 2019\*

\*ITE 2020 edition canceled due to pandemic

ITEMS	ITE19	ITE21	% Change
# Local trade visitors	7316	2544	-65%
# Overseas trade visitors	4297	Border closed	N/A
# Local exhibitors	84	37	-56%
# Overseas exhibitors	591	66	-89%
Public visitor	73665	27106	-63%

## New Themes, Displays and Seminars

This year, as expected, ITE feature more local exhibitors than before. But beyond expectation, ITE introduce new themes like **Glamorous Camping** and **Theme Restaurant**, and new displays like the “**Greater Bay Area**” and the “**Colorful Hong Kong Photo Competition**”. Also, destination and themed travel seminars for trade and public by exhibitors and a number of KOLs were well attended.

In particular, the organizer of ITE, TKS worked with the following organizations to hold quality seminars., they included **International Live Event Association (ILEA)** seminar on “**Applying local resources for post pandemic MICE**”; the **Hong Kong Discovery** on a series of **Green & Sport tourism** seminars; and the **Hong Kong Extra-curricular Activities Masters’ Association (HKEAMA)** on **Study Tour** seminars.

Post pandemic travel can be complicated. It involves factors like vaccination, test, quarantine and health measures etc. better start discussion early. Hopefully ITE can be a timely platform for exchange and for serving the strong pent up travel demand which identified in many surveys.

The **next ITE Hong Kong**, which incorporate the 36th ITE (Leisure) and the 17th ITE MICE will be held **June 9 to 12, 2022** at Halls 1 of the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, with the first two days for trade and the last two days open to the public.

For details, enquiry of visiting etc., please visit [www.itehk.com](http://www.itehk.com) or contact TKS via Email: [travel@tkshk.com](mailto:travel@tkshk.com) | Wechat: [ite-hongkong](#) | Facebook: [itehk](#) | Tel: +852 31550600.