

iPhone 4 from Vodafone

Vodafone Hungary released the iPhone 4 at midnight on Sunday. The new device is available in 18 countries, but Vodafone's move brings competition to the market here, as T-Mobile has offered the gadget since September. Vodafone is bullish on the new product, claiming that 58% of its customers are looking forward to the release; it is still a question though whether they are eager to buy them as well. The company said that prices, subscriber packages and other details are published on the iphone.vodafone.hu website, with monthly tariffs starting at HUF 6,000 (EUR 21).



Weak harvest costs wine lovers dearly

The cost of Hungarian wine could rise by as much as 12 per cent a bottle next year thanks to a dismal 2010 harvest, the head of a major wine producer said last week. Péter Varga, director of the Varga Cellars, which sells some 7 million bottles on the domestic market annually, estimated that winemakers have produced only around 180 to 210 million litres, compared to an annual average of 3,500 million. In a normal year around 90 million litres are bottled. Some 70 per cent of the remainder, usually the lower quality stuff, is sold in plastic containers for as little as HUF 200 (EUR 0.71) a litre. The price of this staple of low-rent alcoholics has already risen 15 to 20%, Varga said.

Taxman's net grows ever wider, faster

The Hungarian Tax and Financial Control Administration (APEH) will launch a new online system to speed up tax collection, *Magyar Nemzet* newspaper reported last Tuesday. The system, which is expected to be launched within a month, will improve communication between banks and the tax administration. György Várszeghi, head of APEH's tax-enforcement unit, said that although banks are required to inform the tax office immediately if a company opens an account, APEH has had difficulty obtaining information about private individuals because correspondence, which is done by mail, slows down the process. Although APEH is not linked to every bank, it is expecting them all to join the new IT system soon. If private individuals' accounts are empty or do not contain enough to pay tax, APEH will be able to take immediate measures such as confiscation of other assets.

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Auchan fined over cheap imported milk

French hypermarket Auchan has been fined HUF 20.5 million (EUR 73,241) for selling imported milk at below cost price, a practice that is not permitted in Hungary. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MgSZH) said Auchan had been selling Czech skimmed UHT milk at HUF 115 to 145 a litre (EUR 0.41-0.51) while the equivalent domestic product was priced at HUF 170 to 180 (EUR 0.60-0.64). Auchan and competitor Tesco were reported by the Dairy Products Council. A ruling on the allegations against Tesco is expected in December after a review.

Kempinski gets new manager

Marcus van der Wal moving to German property

Budapest's newest five-star hotel general manager is a Dutchman who has arrived from a stint in China and lists love of the arts and cigars among his interests.

Emile Bootsma took over at the Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest last week from Marcus van der Wal, who spent four years at the helm and will continue his career as general manager at the Kempinski Hotel Airport Munich.

History with company

Bootsma spent two years in the Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, managing the 526-room property and almost 900 perma-

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– Emile Bootsma

nent employees. Before that he managed another important Kempinski property, Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Munich, Germany. He also worked for the Arabella Sheraton in Munich and in Cape Town, South Africa, where he was responsible for food and beverage operations.

Well rounded

He holds a degree in hospitality and a European Master of Business Administration, which he completed at Reims Management School. Bootsma is married and describes himself as an avid arts lover and cigar aficionado. He is looking forward to making Budapest his home.

"I am delighted to have arrived in Budapest and am looking forward very much to explore its rich cultural heritage," Bootsma said. "I want to further develop the Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest to new heights along with the experienced and truly warm-hearted people in my team."



Emile Bootsma, left, took over as general manager at the Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest last week with current GM, Marcus van der Wal, right, moving on to the Kempinski Hotel Airport Munich.

Advertising feature

Adina offers a home away from home

Apartment hotels offer a new model for business travellers and tourists

The growing number of apartment hotels in Budapest suggests that many business travellers appreciate the opportunity to make themselves a snack late at night without having to pick up the phone and chivvy room service into action. To say nothing of not being confined to one room after returning from the last meeting of the day. "The first difference our guests notice is the amount of space," says Angéla Gergey, manager of the Adina Apartment Hotel Budapest, in Budapest's District XIII. "All our apartments have a living room, a proper kitchen, a bedroom and a bathroom," she says.

Space and time

The hotel, which lies a 20-minute walk north of the city centre, has 97 apartments. One- and two-bedroom units range in size from 55 to 95 square metres, while there are also a few fully fitted studio rooms of around 35 square metres offering a hotel-like accommodation option. Although a fair number of tourists opt for the convenience of a serviced apartment during a short city break, most of Adina's guests are business travellers. "The majority stay from between two or three weeks up to as long as six months," Gergey says.

Conferences and business events, such as companies launching new production centres or back offices in Hungary, drive much of the hotel's turnover. Budapest's increasing role as a "Hollywood on the Danube", with more and more productions attracted by local tax breaks and new film studios around the capital, has been good for business, too. "We have a good relationship with several studios," Gergey said, although she was tight-lipped on the subject of which film crews have set up base in District XIII in recent months.

"Our guests have privacy and their rooms are equipped with everything they need. Unlike a private apartment rental, however, if they need something, we are here for them," Gergey says. "Because people tend to stay here for longer, our staff get to know them and build up a friendly relationship - something that might not happen in a big hotel," she says.

The market

Although like the hospitality sector as a whole, the Adina Apartment Hotel Budapest has felt the chill winds of the economic crisis, the company behind the hotel is pressing on with a European expansion. The Australian



firm Toga Hospitality is behind the Medina Apartment Hotels and Vibe Hotels brands in its home market, while its Travelodge chain is also present in New Zealand. Adina is the brand that spearheaded the group's expansion into Europe. There are already two Adina Hotels in Berlin, one in Frankfurt and another in Copenhagen. Another German branch is due to open in Hamburg this month and Berlin will get a third Adina Apartment Hotel in February.

"When we opened in 1997, the Adina was the only apartment hotel in Budapest," Gergey explained. Now, however, competition is fierce in all sectors of the hospitality industry. "The occupancy rate is rising now, but room rates are still depressed across the board in Budapest," she notes. What the city needs, Gergey believes, is more events like the recent triathlon world championship (which saw thousands of athletes descend on the capital in September).



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