



WHAT

WORDS **TOBY SKINNER**

WILL

TRAVEL

ILLUSTRATIONS **MATT DARTFORD**

LOOK

LIKE

Inspired by the new Blade Runner film, we ask two of the world's leading futurologists what travel might be like in the years to come

IN 2049?

THE FUTURE OF FLYING

NEW ZEALAND WILL BE A WEEKEND DESTINATION

“By 2049, some planes will be supersonic, and some even hypersonic,” says Dr Ian Pearson. “We’ll still have ‘normal’ planes like those currently flying, albeit with much greater fuel efficiency – but by then it should be possible to have hypersonic planes, which means Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, even if it will be very expensive. Certain passengers will be looking at crossing the Atlantic in less than an hour.”

Dr Ian Yeoman is in agreement. “It will change the perception of long-haul flying completely,” he says. “In these faster planes, it will take a few hours to get to Shanghai, and New Zealand could become a weekend destination.”

SPACE TRAVEL WILL BE JUST A DAY TRIP AWAY

“Sub-orbital flights like those planned by Virgin Galactic mean that a trip to space will be the ultimate day trip in 2049,” says Dr Yeoman. “But with developments in technology it should become much cheaper, so that the middle classes could be able to take trips into space, rather than just the super-rich.”

Dr Yeoman is sceptical about lunar and Martian tourism, but Dr Pearson is more bullish. “A hotel on the moon might be possible,” he says. “If so, it will be built in existing underground caves rather



than on the surface, with the entrance sealed – a bit like a futuristic caveman approach.” As for Mars: “A two-way trip is possible, but it will cost tens or hundreds of millions. It will be a once-in-a-lifetime trip for the mega-rich.” A more likely luxury holiday, he believes, will be a trip to a space station. “That’s the next level up from the sub-orbital flight, and we know it’s possible.”

AIRPORTS WILL BE MUCH NICER

This is something our futurists agree on. Dr Yeoman thinks the airport of 2049 “will be more like a hotel, or a leisure experience in itself, with pools and botanical gardens”. And you won’t have to go through security. “With advances in data, the airport will know exactly who you are before you arrive, probably in a self-driving car. It may even get to the stage where they can scan your brain to identify thought patterns, which will help them serve your every need.”

Dr Pearson thinks that we’ll design our own airports, in real time. “With augmented reality, the airport could be a concrete box that we’ll adapt digitally to look however we want it to. You’ll still need a real drink in the bar, but the bar itself could be entirely augmented. And, because security can be done biometrically, airports will need to justify their existence by offering better service.” Both he and Dr Yeoman think advances in augmented reality technology mean we should be able to access this new reality via contact lenses, which will allow us to alter the appearance not just of places, but of people.

Whatever they look like, these future airports will also be clean. “New materials mean you could have self-sterilising surfaces,” says Dr Pearson. “And you might have drones flying around, using ultraviolet to kill bacteria.”

SPACEPORTS WILL BE HUGE

One of Dr Pearson’s more extreme predictions is that some airports could be 30km high. “Two or three airports in bigger countries will double as spaceports.

DOCTOR WHO?



DR IAN YEOMAN

The author of *2050: Tomorrow’s Tourism* and a pioneer futurologist in the travel sector, Dr Yeoman is a senior academic researcher at Victoria University in Wellington, NZ.



DR IAN PEARSON

One of the UK’s top futurologists, Dr Pearson is the main researcher behind Channel 4 programme *Electric Dreams*, in which he details 35 innovations we’ll see over the next 50 years.

“A two-way trip to Mars is possible, but it could cost millions”

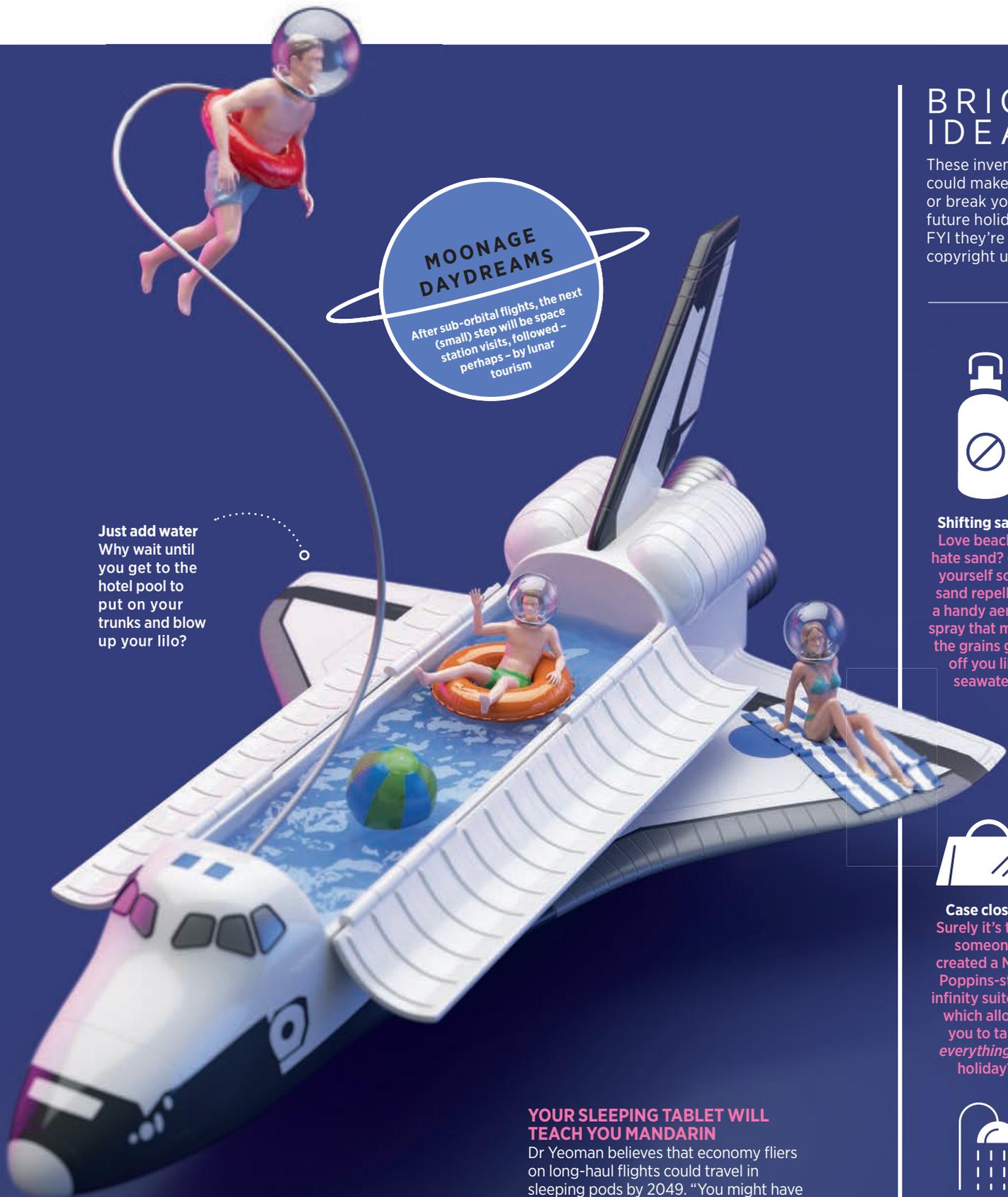
BRIGHT IDEAS

These inventions could make or break your future holiday. FYI they're all copyright us

MOONAGE DAYDREAMS

After sub-orbital flights, the next (small) step will be space station visits, followed – perhaps – by lunar tourism

Just add water
Why wait until you get to the hotel pool to put on your trunks and blow up your lilo?



In which case, it would make sense economically for the craft to start as high as possible. So you'll have tall, narrow columns made of graphene, with the spaceport at the top, which you'll reach via a long elevator ride that will be an experience in itself."

YOUR SLEEPING TABLET WILL TEACH YOU MANDARIN

Dr Yeoman believes that economy fliers on long-haul flights could travel in sleeping pods by 2049. "You might have stacked pods, and all the service will be automated, except maybe in first class. You'll get a pod, take a special sleeping tablet, and wake up in Australia."

Those tablets could be put to good use. "Your tablet might gently wake you at the right time, or even bring you into a mood relevant to where you're going. If things get really advanced, it might teach you Mandarin while you sleep." >



Shifting sands
Love beaches, hate sand? Grab yourself some sand repellent, a handy aerosol spray that makes the grains glide off you like seawater.



Case closed
Surely it's time someone created a Mary Poppins-style infinity suitcase, which allows you to take everything on holiday?



Spray tan
Single travellers know the misery of self-creaming. So how about a sunscreen-spraying shower attachment for those hard to reach bits?

THE FUTURE — — OF HOLIDAYS

THE FUTURE TRAVELLER WILL BE A SINGLE CHINESE WOMAN

To picture the typical global traveller of the future, Dr Yeoman suggests you imagine a single Chinese woman. "There will be more single people, and more independent travellers in 2049," he says. "I also think there will be a growth in female-focused tourism experiences. China will be a big player, with a growing middle class, and more women in particular going to university. So, I think the culturally aware, solo female Chinese traveller will be a key growing target for tourism operators."

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES WILL BE MORE TAILORED

"Niche tourism is already growing," says Dr Yeoman. "You just have to look at cyclists following the Tour de France, or companies like Craft Cruises, which offers knitting cruises. But in the future, that trend will accelerate, with people wanting to do group activities on holiday."

Dr Yeoman also points to a rise in multi-generational holidays, with more active grandparents playing a bigger role in the lives of their grandchildren. "Grandparents will be bigger care-givers, and they might be the ones taking the kids away for half-term. Resorts will increasingly have tailored activities for gran as well as the kids."

NOSTALGIA WILL BE BIG BUSINESS

"Just as today, nostalgia will be an important element to holidays," argues Dr Yeoman. "Paris, for example, will always be Paris, and New York and London will always be attractive destinations because of their history. But there might also be an element to which, in 2049, people actually want to give up on mod cons – to stay in an old-fashioned hotel that is conspicuously lacking home comforts and technology. Any element of authenticity and uniqueness will become more and more prized as the world becomes more globalised and connected."



Body snatchers
By 2049 you might be able to rent an avatar for a night out in Vegas. This will make it easier to argue that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas...

CHINA WILL BE THE WORLD'S HOTTEST DESTINATION

"The rising wealth of China will be a huge driver for its tourism industry," says Dr Yeoman. "Because of its size, you'll have a huge diversity of products and experiences, which will develop really fast. It will become much more of a foodie destination, too. Chinese wine is just starting now, but in 2049 Chinese wines will be the New World wines."

THE CALIFORNIA ROAD TRIP WILL BE ROBOTISED

"You'll be picked up at the airport, and taken to the nearest Hyperloop station in a self-driving car," says Dr Pearson, pondering the future possibilities of the iconic Californian coastal trip. "In LA or San Francisco, androids will be able to

show you everything, and self-driving cars will be able to take you on any route you want, whether you want to go to Big Sur or up to Yosemite."

NIGHTS OUT IN LAS VEGAS WILL GET REALLY WEIRD

It's 2049, and you're having a big night in Vegas, having been met at the airport by a customised android. "At the bar, you'll have disabled your inhibitions or heightened your mood using a tablet," suggests Dr Pearson. "There could be a mix of AIs, humans or imaginary people you've created using augmented reality."

If that sounds bizarre, don't expect much respite during the day. "I imagine you'll have Roman-style gladiatorial competitions in amphitheatres, but it will be androids going at each other with real swords. I think cards, dice and roulette will have had their day, but people will still gamble, on gladiator bouts or drone races."

BUT, THEN AGAIN, YOU MIGHT NOT NEED TO GO ANYWHERE

"You could have a weekend in the Caribbean without leaving London," says Dr Pearson. "You could be at home or in the office with a headset on, but it could be more than that. By 2049, you could be able to occupy a real android in Las Vegas, and change your age or gender. Or by then we might even be able to switch our brains off and swap bodies with other people. That would be the ultimate tourism in some ways."

"The rising wealth of China will be a huge driver for its tourism industry"

SYSTEM UPDATES

Futuristic fads you can check out now



Yotel, New York

At this future-chic hotel in New York's Midtown, from the team behind YO! Sushi, guests check in by touchscreen and drop their luggage off with the YOBOT, a giant robotic arm. And without hefty staff costs, it's reasonably priced, too. yotel.com



eatsa, San Francisco

At San Francisco's eatsa, you order bowls of quinoa with various toppings or salads by touchscreen, before picking it up from a hatch, like a big vending machine. Diners haven't been entirely won over yet – four branches have closed, leaving just two. eatsa.com



ESports Arena, Las Vegas

Witness the sport of the future at the new ESports Arena in the Luxor Hotel and Casino, due to open in spring 2018. The two-storey venue will have gaming stations, a virtual-reality zone and a giant LED wall to watch games. esportsarena.com

THE FUTURE OF HOTELS

ROBOTS WILL POACH EGGS

"Hotels will be highly automated," says Dr Pearson. "By 2049 you'll have robots doing the cleaning and serving breakfast. In my opinion, they'll do a better job than humans – making a decent poached egg is actually a perfect job for a robot."

HOTELS WILL FLOAT (MAYBE)

Light, strong graphene will become a game-changer, says Dr Pearson, with low-density graphene foam allowing physical structures to float: "The millions of bubbles mean the material's density is low enough to make it float. So you might have a hotel that's a floating inverted pyramid, or a floating restaurant."

Hotel windows, meanwhile, could go all sci-fi, too. "You might have plasma force fields as fancy replacements for windows," says Pearson. "They keep the wind and bugs out, but the glowing, ionised gas will look cool, like the force fields you see on *Star Trek*."

ROOM DESIGNS WILL BE PERSONALISED

"We already have mattresses that you can programme to suit your body type," says Dr Yeoman. "With new technology, we may be able to change the structure of matter, so you can adapt the actual size and shape of the bed."

As for the decor, Dr Pearson argues that augmented reality will turn hotel rooms into empty spaces which you can personalise. "All you need is a physical space and a good bed," he says. "Otherwise you can make it look and feel like home. Or you can turn the Travelodge into the Ritz. I don't think people will miss generic hotel rooms." ■

Watch **Blade Runner 2049** onboard now