

TRAVTALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

- Travel trade 'linked-in' at ITB Berlin.....03
- Illuminating Sharjah: 'Culture Capital of the Arab World'06
- ATM takes e-way in 2015.....12



All roads lead to ITB Berlin

ITB Berlin, the world's largest specialist convention for the travel industry has returned, once again at Messe Berlin. The 49th edition of the show scheduled from March 4 to 8, 2015 brings with it excellent prospects for travel trade stakeholders.



SUSMITA GHOSH

More than 10,000 exhibitors from around 190 countries and regions will be showcasing their innovative products and services. Over 100,000 trade visitors will attend the world's leading travel show to find out all about the tourism industry's products and services. This year the focus is on the partner country, Mongolia, which will present new concepts for air, rail, and road transport. Last year, a total of 10,147 companies and organisations from 189 countries exhibited their products and services to 174,000 visitors, including 114,000 trade visitors.

ITB Berlin has observed a large increase in the number of exhibitors from Asia and the Middle East. The range of travel technology products and services exhibited here continues to grow as it is one of the largest and



HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa
Director General, Sharjah
Commerce and Tourism
Development Authority

This year we are delighted to present Sharjah at ITB Berlin as the Arab Tourism Capital

internationally most diverse displays in the world. As the tourism industry stakeholders from across the globe will converge on this platform, Dubai's popular hotel, Gloria



Freddy Farid
Area General Manager
Gloria Hotel and Resorts

Dubai has become more popular among tourists from the European countries and we would like to make the most of this

Hotels and Resorts will be there to announce its latest plans and market its summer holiday packages to attract more online and direct business.



Hind Al Marzooqi
Head of ATDD Marketing and
Promotion Section

The ATDD marketing team will launch new classification systems for three tourism sectors in Ajman

HE Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Director General, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority, said, "Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development



Ittikhar Hamdani
Cluster General Manager
Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman and
Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman

Germans are on our list of top ten nationality mix and we will be presenting excellent deals for this market

Authority is proud of our long association with ITB Berlin. This is the 18th consecutive year of our participation at this leading travel trade show, and this year we are delighted to

present Sharjah at ITB Berlin as the Arab Tourism Capital. ITB Berlin offers the perfect international platform for Sharjah to showcase the diversity of our tourism portfolio and the vibrancy of our rich heritage and culture before the world."

"During the past one year, Dubai as a destination has become more popular among tourists from the European countries and we would like to make the most of this opportunity through our trusted local partners," expressed **Freddy Farid**, Area General Manager, Gloria Hotel and Resorts.

"ITB Berlin has been recognized as the industry's biggest networking events offering an excellent opportunity to meet new and existing business partners and promote our properties and Dubai as unique destination," he added.

Contd. on page 13 ►



Stay at Golden Tulip
Al Barsha Hotel

DUBAI

GOLDEN TULIP
AL BARSHA • HOTEL
International standards, local flavours.

"The ideal choice for business, leisure
& shopping in Dubai"

Tel. No.: 00971 4 341 7750
www.goldentulipalbarsha.com



SUNSET BEACH

with

SOME THAI CHARM

makes everything romantic.

amazing
THAILAND
It Begins with the People...

Railay Beach, Krabi



Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)

Dubai & Middle East Office,
P.O. BOX 450019 Dubai-UAE,

Tel: +971-4-3250184-5, Fax: +971-4-3250187

E-mail: tatdubai@tat.or.th, www.tourismthailand-middleeast.org



Travel trade 'linked-in' at ITB

The 49th edition of the ITB Berlin promises to offer lucrative business prospects in view of high demands and a large increase in numbers from the Arab Emirates.

 DEVIKA JEET

More than 10,000 exhibitors from around 190 countries and regions will be presenting their innovative products and services in the 26 halls on the Berlin exhibition grounds. Over 100,000 trade visitors are expected to attend the world's largest travel trade show this year's in order find out all about the tourism industry's latest products and services. TravTalk gets details from David Ruetz, Head, ITB Berlin.

QWhat do you feel makes ITB different from all other travel and tourism exhibitions?

ITB Berlin is truly the world's leading travel trade show: It has the most balanced and most international portfolio of exhibitors anywhere in the world. We are proud to be able to welcome around 10,000 exhibitors from 190 countries again this year. Only 31 per cent of our exhibitors are from Germany. Over two-thirds travel here from abroad. The show mirrors the industry's entire value chain.

In addition to the wide range of products that it showcases ITB Berlin is also a leader when it comes to innovativeness and providing information about marketplace activities. For more than ten years now it has staged Europe's



David Ruetz
Head, ITB Berlin

ITB Berlin always sees a strong participation from this region. About 5% of the exhibitors at ITB Berlin come from the Middle East & North Africa region

largest and most important travel trade convention.

QHow has the participation been from the Middle East region and GCC countries?

There has been particularly high demand for places at the world's leading travel show from countries in

Asia and the Arab world. The Arab countries will be just as strongly represented as last year. ITB Berlin always sees a strong participation from the region. About 5% of the exhibitors at ITB Berlin come from the Middle East & North

Africa region. At ITB Berlin these exhibitors will meet more decision-makers from all over the world than anywhere else. Nowadays, over 40 per cent of buyers come from abroad. Some exhibitors like the UAE wish to expand their booth space, but we are fully booked up. Etihad Airways will be exhibiting with

QHow can UAE make the most of its presence at this show?

Exhibitors should also download the 'ITB Mobile Guide' app to their mobile phones, which makes it easier to find one's way around the grounds. ITB Berlin offers a wide range of supporting services which exhibitors can employ to improve and implement their market strategy. They include presenting current and anticipated product demand trends at the ITB Berlin Convention, ITB Academy webinar sessions for exhibitors, as well as our ITB advisory services. Many exhibitors have made extensive use of these services already.

QWhat makes the show an ideal platform for this region?

No other place lets you meet the whole world in one place in a single

day. As the world's leading travel trade show the 49th edition of ITB Berlin accurately reflects current economic developments. In addition to the wide range of products that it showcases, ITB Berlin is a leader when it comes to innovativeness and providing information about market place activities. For more than 10 years now it has staged Europe's largest and most important travel trade convention. The show mirrors the industry's entire value chain. Over the years the products and services at the show have changed and it is now a driving force of the travel industry. An exhibitor turnover of around 6,5 billion Euros and 92 per cent of satisfied exhibitors last year are proof that ITB Berlin has successfully combined the forces of supply and demand.



Price | Quality | Service



OUR SERVICES

- Short Term hire to individuals and fleet customers
- Long Term Hire to individuals and fleet customers
- Buses, with or without drivers

JLT Area : 055 233 1454
Al Qus : 04 338 7773
Business Bay : 04 453 9200
Discovery Garden : 04 424 5944
DIFC : 055 632 4301
Emergency (24x7) : 055 472 25 31

أرئيس لتأجير السيارات: 055 233 1454
CARLEASE RENT A CAR L.L.C.
P.O. Box : 19991, Dubai, UAE
Email : info@carlease.ae Web : www.carlease.ae

Arrive ready for business.
Not ready to drop.

With fine dining and a business class seat that transforms into one of the longest fully flat beds in the sky, Upper Class really is the most fabulous way to fly.

To find out more on how we fly in the face of ordinary, visit virginatlantic.com or call +971 4 406 0600



upperclass
to London

virgin atlantic

High demand from exhibitors worldwide

Due to political and economic events like the conflict in Ukraine and the financial crisis, many destinations around the world are facing new challenges. Against this backdrop ITB Berlin 2015 has become an important networking platform and marketing instrument for exhibitors and trade visitors. As the world's leading travel trade show, it accurately reflects economic developments in this sector.

Large increases in numbers from Asia and the Arab states. The prospects are excellent for ITB Berlin, as final preparations are being made for the 49th edition of the show that takes place from March 4 to 8, 2015.

Brazil and Argentina, where tourism is booming, are increasingly making their way onto the market and this year are represented in larger numbers than at any previous ITB Berlin. Newcomers and new hall and stand concepts reflect travel market trends.

The range of travel technology products and services continues to grow apace and at ITB Berlin this is one of the largest and internationally most diverse displays anywhere in the world. Another trend with the potential to change the hospitality industry is the sharing economy. Traveller information is becoming more and more accessible, something that online providers are exploiting by analysing big data. However, the sharing economy is also a big force driving tourism trends.

Mongolia is the Official Partner Country for ITB Berlin 2015, which presents new concepts for air, rail, and road transport. Improvement in transportation connections and infrastructure make travelling in and around Mongolia easier.

More than 10,000 exhibitors from around 190 countries and regions will be presenting their products and services in the 26 display halls on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds.

The topic of sustainable tourism has been a firmly established part of the program of the ITB Berlin Convention for many years. More than 130 exhibitors from 40 countries with information on sustainable tourism and adventure travel are at ITB Berlin.

'Connectivity is the key'

Few industries are as competitive as the airline business, so it's important that carriers stand out from the crowd. These days, passengers expect more and it's up to the airlines to deliver if they want to stay ahead.

We, at Delta Airlines, are taking service to new heights by offering more travel options, on-board WiFi and better airport facilities. It's this commitment of ours, make flying more convenient, productive and enjoyable that keeps our 170 million customers returning.

Delta Airlines has started flying non-stop from Dubai to Atlanta in June 2007 and over the past eight years the trans-Atlantic landscape has grown exponentially. Convenient flight times have and always will be of prime importance. However, that is just one factor when it comes to deciding which airline to fly with. Air travel has become more popular and a necessary means to facilitate international trade and time has become more precious. Gone are the days of flights being used as a time to relax! Today, passengers want and need to be connected throughout their journey, making the aircraft cabin an extension of the office.

Air travel used to be celebrated as the only place where a person could truly "switch off". But changes in technology and customer preferences show that this is no longer the case. Increasingly customers want and expect, to be permanently switched on. It makes a difference to them that they can stay on top of their workload and emails during a flight, rather than arriving at their destination with an overflowing inbox. With Delta rolling out WiFi across our international fleet, will give customers a real choice about how to spend their time in the air. They can reply to e-mails,

enjoy some of the in-flight services on offer - from movies to a good meal - or do both. Now customers can stay in control and decide how best to tailor their journey.

It's not only business travellers who benefit from in-flight WiFi. Leisure passengers have much to gain too, including the ability to stream on-

der Delta's App has been rated the topmost airline application. It's these small innovations that make travelling much easier and less stressful for everyone.

But with time being our most valuable resource, it's not just technology that can make the difference on a long haul flight. The seat is impor-

access, they don't disturb others when moving around the cabin. The seats turn into flat beds at the touch of a button and combined with full-size pillows and luxury duvets created by Westin Hotels and Resorts, help ensure a great night's sleep. These little touches leave passengers feeling refreshed on landing and ready for a day's work.

There's more good news for Dubai. The local economy's pillars of travel, trade and tourism mean that the government and service providers, whether airlines, airports or other industries, are geared up for investing in services that benefit residents and visitors. Customers' journeys start at the airport and when Dubai's upgraded Terminal 1 opens later this year, our alliance, SkyTeam, will open an exclusive lounge in the departures area that will further enhance customers' travel experience. The new lounge will complement the Delta Sky Club at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Connectivity is the key and the changing face of air travel today, but Delta's commitment to offering the latest advancements in technology and enhancements to service, means customers will always be able to make the most of their time in the air.

There's more good news for Dubai. The local economy's pillars of travel, trade and tourism mean that the government and service providers are geared up for investing in services that benefit residents and visitors



demand
entertainment.
From our

On Air Experience

- ◆ Delta rolling out WiFi across its international fleet, will give customers a real choice about how to spend their time in the air
- ◆ Delta App enables customers to manage their onward journey while in the air

tant too, especially when flying overnight. Fully flat-bed seats are the staple in Delta One cabins. These are configured in a one-two-one format and all face forward creating "cubes" of personal space for more privacy and, with each customer enjoying direct aisle



Manoj Kuriakose
Commercial Director - Middle East
Delta Air Lines

Offices:

DELHI: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
Ph.: +91-11-23710793, 23716318
Fax: +91-11-23351503
E-mail: travtalk@ddppl.com

MUMBAI: 504, Marine Chambers, 43, New Marine Lines, Opp. SNDT College, Mumbai - 400 020, India
Ph.: +91-22-22070129, 22070130, Fax: +91-22-22070131, E-mail: mumbai@ddppl.com

UAE: Z1-02, P.O. Box 9348, Saf Zone, Sharjah, UAE
Ph.: +971 6 5528954
Fax: +971 6 5528956
E-mail: uae@ddppl.com

is a publication of Durga Das Publications Private Limited. All information in is derived from sources, which we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. The publisher regret that he cannot accept liability for errors and omissions contained in this publication, however caused. Similarly, opinions/Views expressed by third parties in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared by . However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognised authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Readers

are advised to seek specific advice before acting on information contained in this publication which is provided for general use, and may not be appropriate for the readers' particular circumstances. Contents of this publication are copyright. No part of or any part of the contents thereof may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the permission of the publication in writing. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. An exemption is hereby granted for the extracts used for the purpose of fair review, provided two copies of the same publication are sent to us for our records. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole,

without permission could face legal action.

The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material solicited or unsolicited nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged.

This publication is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific product or services offered. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation.

All advertisements must comply with the Indian and International Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by delayed publication, error or failure of an advertisement to appear.



An outstanding place for a family vacation or luxurious city stay
Offering all the elegance and charm of a private home and opulent
accommodation with a wide array of dining outlets.




GLORIA
HOTELS & RESORTS

T: +971 4 399 6666 | F: +971 4 381 8067 | E: info@gloriahotelsdubai.com
P.O.Box: 502222 | Dubai Internet City | Sheikh Zayed Road | Dubai, U.A.E
gloriahoteldubai.com | yassatgloria.com

Comfort Living

Illuminating Sharjah: 'Culture

Grand preparations are underway to celebrate the honor of Capital of Arab Tourism Award 2015 conferred on the Emirate of Sharjah, in which the impressive Sharjah Light Festival will play a significant role.



 SUSMITA GHOSH

Grand heritage and cultural uniqueness of Sharjah has given an impetus to the tourism diversity of this Emirate. From unmatched hotel facilities, luxury tourism infrastructure, and museums, to leisure and shopping avenues, travellers here dive into an experience second to none.

His Excellency **Khalid Jasim Al Midfa**, Director General, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority draws our attention to Sharjah's colourful calendar of events and festivals. He referred to Sharjah International Book Fair, which is the fourth-largest in the world and is in its 33rd year of existence.

The Sharjah Water Festival, which includes the final round of the Formula One World Powerboat Championship, Sharjah Grand Prix, Sharjah Heritage Days, Sharjah Light Festival and Sharjah Ramadan and Eid Fair make it a leading events destination in the region and the world.

"In addition to being a culture, leisure and tourism



Khalid Jasim Al Midfa
Director General, Sharjah
Commerce and Tourism
Development Authority

Sharjah is also the economic, commercial and educational hub of the region, with nearly half of the UAE's manufacturing sector being based here

destination, Sharjah is also the economic, commercial and educational hub of the region, with nearly half of the UAE's manufacturing sector being based here," Khalid noted.

Sharjah is the only Emirate which has access to the coasts of the Arabian Gulf



Mohamed Ali Al Noman
Chairman
SCTDA

We invite the world to visit Sharjah and discover its glorious heritage and charm. There is no better time to visit the Emirate as it ushers in the Sharjah Light Festival once again

and the Gulf of Oman, besides the Port Khalid in Sharjah city, the Port Khorfakkan on the East Coast and Port Hamriya. The Sharjah International Airport is the first airport in the region.

Sharjah's presence in WTM, London 2014 has truly



been outstanding at various levels, particularly in view of the Emirate's crowning as the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2014. With a host of special cultural activities and grand preparations, the Emirate is to celebrate the honor of the Capital of Arab Tourism Award 2015 with several special events and activities.

Sharjah is an ideal holiday destination for European tourists because of its range of diverse activities and events suiting all ages, cultural, sports and recreational interests. The Emirate boasts about authentic Arab heritage, historical sites, golden beaches and sunny weather throughout the year besides a diverse physi-

cal landscape including mountains, desert and long coastline offers plenty of leisure and recreational options.

European hotel guests occupy the first place in Sharjah's international arrivals. The Emirate attracted 409,585 European hotel guests in the first half of 2014, registering a



Capital of the Arab World'



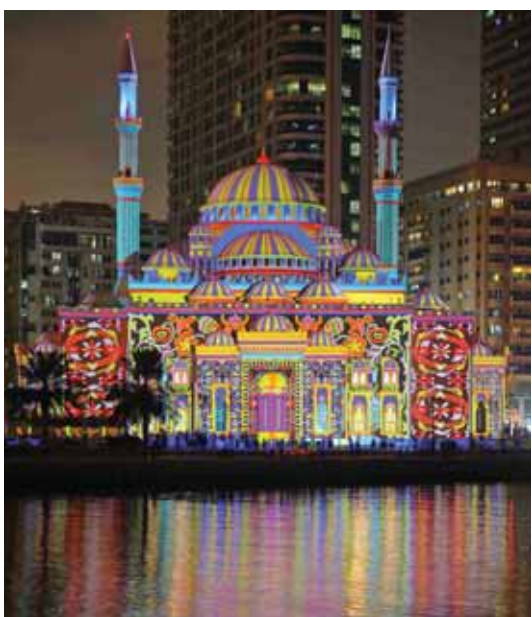
Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) announced the fifth edition of Sharjah Light Festival 2015 during a press conference in the presence of number of heads and representatives of government departments and sponsors of the event

17 per cent increase over the same period last year, which recorded 349,670 hotel guests. Sharjah's hotels received more than one million guests in the first half of the year, up 15 per cent from 2013. This re-affirms the successful and confident steps being taken by the Emirate to attract more guests from around the world.

The Director General highlighted that the London exhibition offers an opportunity to shine the light on the Capital of Arab Tourism Award for 2015 for Sharjah. The Emirate of Sharjah was awarded the Capital of Arab Tourism Award for 2015 at the 15th session of The Arab Council of Tourism ministers in Cairo. Sharjah was chosen for the honour as it met all the criteria for this Award based on its tourism diversity, culture, leisure, the environment, culture, family, educational activities and opportunities.

One of the highlights of the Sharjah Islamic Culture Capital celebrations had been the unique presentation, Clusters of Light, by the German Orchestra Babelsberg with more than 750 artists taking part in the event at Al Majaz Island..

As part of its strategy to promote Sharjah as a major



Sharjah Light Festival 2015 also offers several new features and shows

These include Masjid Al Taqwa at Al Majaz Waterfront, Al Majaz Amphitheatre overlooking the Khalid Lagoon, the Cultural Square in Sharjah city, Masjid Al Muhajerin in Dibba Al Hisn, University of Sharjah campus in Khorfakkan, and Masjid Ammar bin Yasser in Dhaid.

tourism destination in the global market, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) have participated in FITUR International Tourism Trade Fair, for the fourth consecutive year, held in the Spanish capital, Madrid, from January 28 to February 1, 2015. This is the fourth consecutive year that SCTDA is participating in FITUR. At the FITUR, SCTDA aimed to identify new tour operators and raise awareness about Sharjah as a cultural destination. The delegation also explored opportunities to establish new direct flight connections to Sharjah. The participation of SCTDA in FITUR has witnessed great success over the past three years. The fair provides the Authority an opportunity to showcase Sharjah's tourism sector not only in Spain and the Iberian Peninsula but also to tourists from South America who consider FITUR a crucial event to develop their tourism programs. The SCTDA has attracted visitors and tourists from central and South American markets, especially in view of direct flight connectivity from those markets to the UAE.

The Sharjah Light Festival, which is the largest and the fifth edition, first of its



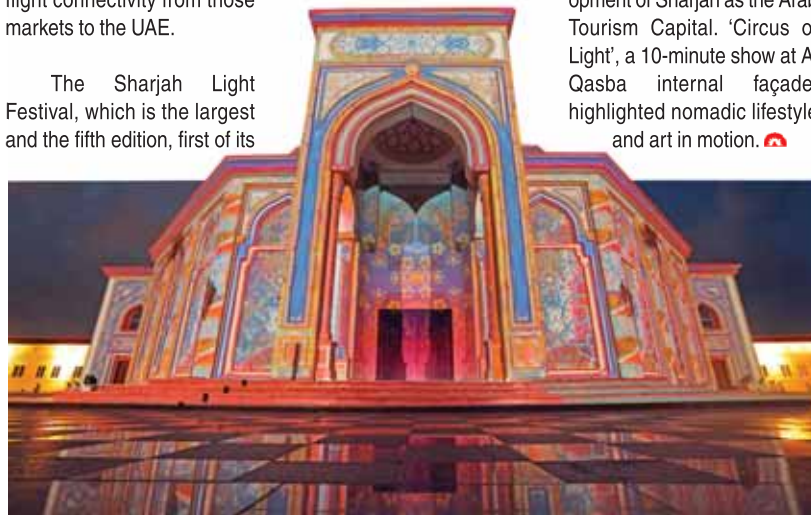
kind in the Middle East event held from Feb 5 to 13. Taking place across 14 locations in Sharjah, the event coincides with the announcement of the Sharjah Arab Tourism Capital for 2015. It also celebrated the SICC Award and Sharjah's Islamic heritage and legacy. It attracts internationally acclaimed artists from around the world who use a mix of 3-dimensional art and modern illumination technology on the facades of Sharjah's landmarks, monuments and tourist attractions to tell the amazing story of this beautiful emirate. The festival offers a unique combination of light and music to create innovative three-dimensional designs using state-of-the-art techniques that consume minimal power.

His Excellency **Mohamed Ali Al Noman**, Chairman of SCTDA, said that "The Year 2015 is truly special for Sharjah and will be celebrated at many levels and in all its festivals and activities this year. We invite the world to visit Sharjah and discover its glorious heritage and

charm. There is no better time to visit the Emirate as it ushers in the Sharjah Light Festival once again."

"We couldn't have done this without the visionary leadership and guidance of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah," he added.

Among the most popular and regular Light Festival attractions, Al Nour Mosque once again stood out with its dazzling beauty and intricate design. Al Qasba Internal and External Facades, University of Sharjah campus in Kalba, Central Souk and Al Majaz Waterfront (along with Masjid Al Taqwa) are other popular SLF sites. Al Qasba internal and external facades have hosted a number of shows as part of the Sharjah Light Festival 2015. 'A Time Travel at the Speed of Light', a 20-minute show at the Al Qasba external façade, presented the spectacular development of Sharjah as the Arab Tourism Capital. 'Circus of Light', a 10-minute show at Al Qasba internal façade, highlighted nomadic lifestyle and art in motion. 📺



Seventh five-star airline in the World

Garuda Indonesia ushered in 2015 with the prestigious recognition of becoming the seventh airline in the world to earn '5-star airline rating' by Skytrax, world's leading airline and airport review specialist.

The 5-Star Airline rating represents "ultimate" quality recognition and approval to front-line quality performance. The rating assess the delivery quality, using more than 800 assessment categories, applied across both the onboard and Airport environments. This exclusive rating is only awarded to airlines achieving the highest quality performance and importantly, this focuses on the airline's ability to deliver on a consistent basis.

Other airlines which have been recognised are Asiana Airlines, Cathay Pacific, Hainan Airlines, All Nippon Airways, Qatar Airways and Singapore Airlines.

Turkish Airlines' double digit growth

Across the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait markets, Turkish Airlines has recorded a double digit growth in 2014 for its premium cabins. Passenger growth in the airline's business class, premium economy cabin and international transfers also increased considerably compared to 2013.



TT BUREAU

During January to December, 2014, total passenger growth in the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait markets increased by 6.44 per cent compared to 2013.

Last year the total number of passengers carried in Dubai market increased by 9 per cent compared to the same period in 2013. Business and Comfort Class passengers increased by 16.8 per cent while international-to-international transfer passengers increased by 0.6 per cent.

Commenting on the significant growth for the airline, **Adem Ceylan**, Vice President Marketing & Sales for Turkish Airlines in Middle East & Cyprus informed, "Last year was comprised of several industry challenges in addition to economic constraints of the



Adem Ceylan
Vice President Marketing & Sales for Turkish Airlines in Middle East & Cyprus

region. However, our GCC market growth reflected our growth internationally where we carried 54.7 million passengers in 2014, up 13.3 per cent from 48.3 million passengers for the same period of 2013."

As for the Abu Dhabi market, total passengers carried in 2014 increased by 3.9 per cent compared to 2013. Business and Comfort Class passengers increased by 13.1

per cent for the same period, while international-to-international transfer passengers increased by 17.4 per cent. Turkish Airlines has scheduled flights to 43 domestic and 218 international

ing the global carrier's Turkish Conventions service, introduce Istanbul as a MICE destination.

"The most effective way of informing people about a

tourism. The event is also a strategic opportunity to connect with key agents in each market and strengthen our relations across the Middle East," Ceylan said. They also hosted 11 Middle East based travel agents on the three-day familiarisation trip to Istanbul to discover the touristic highlights of the Basque country and the appeal of the destination to Arab tourists.

Our GCC market growth reflected our growth internationally where we carried 54.7 million passengers in 2014, up 13.3 per cent from 48.3 million passengers for the same period of 2013

al destinations in total 261 cities and 264 airports in 108 countries worldwide.

The airlines hosted a group of leading travel agents from Cairo, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Jeddah, Riyadh, Amman and Kuwait, on a tour to Istanbul. The familiarisation trip was organised to further highlight-

destination is to give them a visit experience. Middle Eastern countries are important to us given their close proximity and similarities in culture to Turkey. The familiarisation trip is an ideal opportunity to showcase our key offerings and promote Istanbul as a destination for every kind of traveller and to promote MICE

Sky's the limit

- ◆ TA carried 54.7 million passengers in 2014, 3.9% increase from 2013
- ◆ Business and Comfort Class passengers increased by 16.8 per cent
- ◆ International-to-international transfer passengers increased by 17.4%

A growing Network



We take pride in expanding our network to more than 55 branches within a span of only five years.
Contact our nearest branch for all your travel requirements.

Airline Ticketing

Holiday Packages

Visa Assistance

Hotel Bookings

Cruise Packages



cozmo travel
مقر العالم للسفرات

Call: 600 52 44 44
Web: www.cozmotravel.com

Where all journeys begin

Lufthansa flies into S. America

Passengers from the Middle East will soon have more destination choices from November 16, 2015 as the Lufthansa airline will offer year-round flights to Panama City for the first time, subject to government approval.



TT BUREAU

Travellers flying from Dubai and arriving early morning at Frankfurt can now avail an Airbus A340-300 aircraft to reach their destination in Central America.

The flight LH 484 will fly five times a week between Frankfurt and Central America. It will take off from Frankfurt at 10.15 a.m. and arrive in Panama at 4.40 pm (local time) after a flight time of 12 hours and 25 minutes. The return flight LH 485 will depart from Panama City in the early evening as a



Karsten Zang
General Manager, UAE and Director Gulf and Pakistan, Lufthansa German Airlines

night flight and land at Frankfurt Airport the following morning leaving plenty of time to connect back to Dubai.

"This new route is good for both our leisure and business passengers here in the Middle East. With booming trade between the UAE and Panama especially as both countries are important port operators, the new connection via our hub in Frankfurt opens more channels and possibilities to reach South America. Our passengers will also have time to relax at our lounges in Frankfurt during their connecting time," said **Karsten Zang**, General Manager, UAE and Director Gulf and Pakistan, Lufthansa German Airlines. Lufthansa is also expanding its partnership with the Panamanian airline- Copa. Lufthansa passengers will in future be able to easily reach a further 50 destinations in Central and South America and the Caribbean with the partner airline. 

With booming trade between the UAE and Panama, the new connection via our hub in Frankfurt opens more channels and possibilities to reach South America

Etihad grew stronger in 2014

Etihad Airways carried a record number of passengers and cargo in 2014. Almost 14.8 million passengers flew with the airline in 2014 with an increase of 23 per cent as compared to 2013.



TT BUREAU

Etihad Airways carried more than 74 per cent of the 19.9 million passengers who travelled through Abu Dhabi International Airport in 2014. With the addition of the airline's equity partners that operate flights into Abu Dhabi, the combined total rises to 82 per cent of passenger traffic at the airport.

James Hogan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways, said, "Our business model, which focuses on organic network growth, codeshare partnerships and minority equity investments in other airlines, continued to yield positive results in 2014 and surpassed our double-digit targets for passenger and cargo growth."



James Hogan
President and Chief Executive Officer
Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways introduced 10 additional destinations to its global route network in 2014, with new services launched to Medina, Jaipur, Los Angeles and Zurich in the first half of the year, and Perth, Rome, Yerevan, Phuket, San Francisco and Dallas in the second half of the year.

In addition, frequencies were increased on 23

existing routes across the world in 2014.

Building on its organic growth, the airline also expanded its codeshare and equity partnerships in 2014. These partnerships brought over 3.5 million passengers onto Etihad Airways flights, an increase of 40 per

Etihad Airways' existing codeshare with South African Airways, Alitalia and Jet Airways were expanded.

Alitalia is the latest addition to Etihad Airways' equity partners network, which includes Air Berlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Aer Lingus, Jet Airways and Virgin

Our business model continued to yield positive results in 2014 and surpassed our double-digit targets for passenger and cargo growth

cent over the 2.5 million passengers in 2013.

New codeshare agreements were launched with Air Europa, JetBlue, Philippine Airlines, GOL, SAS, Hong Kong Airlines and Aerolineas Argentinas, while

Australia. In addition, Etihad Airways Partners was unveiled in 2014. "We enter 2015 as a stronger, more dynamic airline that will continue to enhance the growth of Abu Dhabi as one of the world's emerging aviation hubs," Hogan added.


Qatar Airways to show A380 First Class, A350 XWB seats


■ Qatar Airways celebrates 10 years of service to Berlin. Its Group Chief Executive, His Excellency **Akbar Al Baker**, will showcase the airline's A380 First Class and A350 XWB Business Class seats at ITB Berlin, scheduled from March 4 to 8, 2015.

Participating in the exhibition for the seventh consecutive year next month, Qatar Airways is looking forward to showcasing the state-of-the-art A380 and A350 XWB business class seats. The five-star airline will hold a press conference, hosted by Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Akbar Al Baker, on the first day of ITB to discuss the airline's participation in the fair and to make a series of updates on the airline's A350 XWB aircraft service.

"We are pleased to be at ITB yet again this year, sharing the airline's latest updates... This year, the airline is showcasing the A380 First Class and A350 XWB Business Class seats and we invite all participants and visitors to the show to visit us to have the opportunity to experience five-star comfort and hospitality," Al Baker said. "By the end of 2015, Qatar Airways will have five A350 XWB aircraft in service. Currently, our A350 flies to Frankfurt; the next A350 XWB to join the fleet in March will also serve Frankfurt, enhancing the A350 XWB service on this route to double-daily, with the next destination for this aircraft to be the popular Singapore route."








The Cove
Rotana
Resort - Ras Al Khaimah

Your Time to Unwind and Relax

The Cove Rotana Resort invites you on a journey to explore a world of relaxation and reflection. You will be transported to a serene oasis by the sea, where unspoiled beauty and nurturing therapies inspire a renewed sense of harmony between body, mind and soul.

Our seaside Gazebo Massage experience will be an everlasting and wonderfully relaxing memory of your visit.

For more information visit rotanatimes.com and for reservation please call us on +971 7 206 6000 or send us an email at cove.resort@rotana.com

Rotana Rewards  Join now at rotanarewards.com

P.O. Box 34429, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE. T: +971 (0)7 206 6000. F: +971 (0)7 206 6200, cove.resort@rotana.com

rotana.com

Chinese certification for Abu Dhabi hotels

■ Twenty hotels, two attractions and a luxury shopping mall in Abu Dhabi have achieved Welcome Chinese certification at an awards ceremony in the UAE capital, setting their sights firmly on the booming Chinese visitor market. Organised by Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, in partnership with China Tourism Academy (CTA), the awarding of the Chinese travel industry's highly sought-after certification marks the hospitality industry's embrace of initiatives to further grow guest numbers and length of stay for visitors from China, now the emirate's fifth largest overseas market. Rotana Hotels and Resorts has identified the Chinese market as one for expansion, with six of the home-grown group's Abu Dhabi and Al Ain properties achieving certification status.

India comes up as vital MICE destination

With expansion in the network of airlines operation on domestic routes, better tourist surface transport systems including the Indian Railways, new centers of information technology, convention centers and hotels, India is undoubtedly a unique Conference Destination.



SUSMITA GHOSH

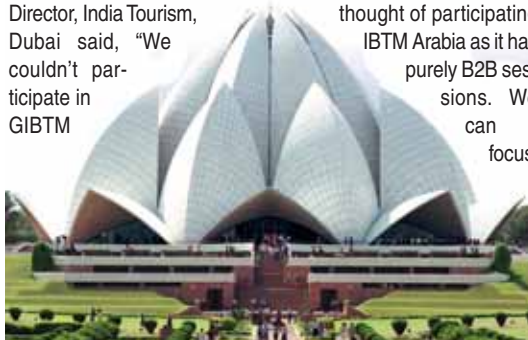
The MICE sector in India is in a continual process of upgradation and there are multiple plans on the anvil to bring up world-class convention centers, airports and efforts to team the famous Indian hospitality with customization as per visitor's requirement.

Discussing IBTM Arabia as a new concept, new venue, change of time and new name I.R.V Rao, Assistant Director, India Tourism, Dubai said, "We couldn't participate in GIBTM



I.R.V Rao
Assistant Director
India Tourism, Dubai

2014. This year with the new concept, new venue, change of time and new name, we thought of participating IBTM Arabia as it has purely B2B sessions. We can focus



more on our business and can promote India as a tourist destination through this platform."

Regarding the prospect observed during the event, Rao asserted, "Various travel

Jordan and Oman, the level of interest has increased, hence I expect more than 20 per cent increase this year."

Amidst the countless ways that India can capture

Destination as it offers cultural and heritage sites, the exotic facilities of beach and adventure holidays which can be combined as pre and post conference tours.

Enchanting India's image as a conference destination is also projected through the chains of hotels providing international standards in facilities and services.

Due to close proximity, good connectivity and announcement of 'Tourist Visa on Arrival' for UAE Nationals, Jordan and Oman, the level of interest has increased, hence I expect more than 20 per cent increase this year

agents are planning to have some conventions in Delhi and Mumbai for their Emirati clients. Some have showed interest in having conventions in hill stations in April 2015. Due to close proximity, good connectivity and announcement of 'Tourist Visa on Arrival' for UAE Nationals,

world attention as a tourist paradise, there also exists a dynamic business opportunity as a splendid venue for international conferences and conventions of no less than global standards.

India is undoubtedly a unique Conference

India calling...

- ◆ Tourist VoA for UAE Nationals, Jordan & Oman encourages travel between two regions
- ◆ India emerging as a strong contender in Conference Destination
- ◆ Combine work with adventure, culture & history in India

The City Resort

Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham Dubai is set in a prime location on The Walk, Jumeirah Beach Residence offering a variety of family-friendly dining and recreational facilities, and spectacular views of the Arabian Gulf. It is a short walking distance to the Jumeirah Beach, Dubai Marina Mall and other major attractions, and a 45-minute drive from the Abu Dhabi, the UAE Capital.

Spacious Rooms

Distinct Location

Great Value

HAWTHORN
SUITES BY WYNDHAM

The Walk / Jumeirah Beach Residence | P.O Box: 120253, Dubai, U.A.E.
Tel: +971 4 399 9979 | Fax: +971 4 399 2661 | www.hawthornsuitesdubai.com
reservations@hsdubai.com | info@hsdubai.com

Al Raha: Rare pearl of luxury hospitality



The Al Raha Beach Hotel – a rare pearl of hospitality where style and elegance are combined with luxury, sophistication and a touch of Arabia. The five-star Al Raha Beach Hotel, operated by Danat Hotels & Resorts is the only five-star property of its kind in the Emirate.

Kamal Zayati, General Manager, Al Raha Beach Hotel, says, "While Al Raha Beach Hotel has drawn considerable interest from European leisure travellers and GCC visitors to fill up our rooms throughout the year, our meeting and business facilities and outdoor impressive venues have captivated the local market. Al Raha Beach Hotel hosted many prestigious events from elegant weddings to high-powered conferences, and the outstanding level of service has always won great praise of our patrons and stakeholders"



While Al Raha Beach Hotel has drawn considerable interest from European leisure travellers and GCC visitors to fill up our rooms throughout the year, our meeting and business facilities and outdoor impressive venues have captivated the local market

Kamal Zayati
General Manager, Al Raha Beach Hotel

He adds, "Developing a competitive edge is the way to go. However, price war is a no. We do careful market segmentation and re-alignment as the initial approach. We focus on modernising our facilities, improve our product and train our staff to deliver superior service and create a unique experience for the customers. Also, building strategic alliances with tour operators create a big help to attract and target group customers".

In 2014, Al Raha achieved excellent results in every aspect and expects this trend to continue for 2015 in spite of the challenges due to the economic and political instability around the world, as well as major currency fluctuation in

Europe. Zayati says, "Strategies are in place to achieve our goals with local and international partners; we are increasing our participation with ADTCA in all major travel trade shows to strengthen our relationships and Al Raha Beach Hotel position on the international markets. We will focus mainly on the GCC market and the advantage of our location nearest to the main attractions like Ferrari World, Yas Waterworld and Yas Mall. The hotel offers a complimentary daily shuttle service to these attractions which are 5 to 10 minutes from the hotel as well as Sheikh Zaid Grand Mosque and other malls in the city."



Etihad Airways to offer jobs to 6000 Emiratis

More than 6,000 UAE nationals will be offered jobs by Etihad Airways that span the spectrum of the airline's operations over the next five years.

The UAE flag carrier will continue to utilise the strategic collaborations it has formed with a range of UAE government, educational and Emiratisation institutions with the aim of offering Emiratis various opportunities to develop a long and rewarding career in the airline business.

One of Etihad Airways' major collaborations is its participation in the Absher initiative which was conceived by the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to support Emiratisation and create new jobs for skilled Emiratis in the UAE labour market.

'Discover Thainess' with Songkran

Thailand Tourism Authority is celebrating 2015 as 'Discover Thainess' year by highlighting its traditional festivals like Songkran and encouraging visitors to explore and share their experiences with local Thai communities.

TT BUREAU

The distinctive character of "Thainess" is the magnet of Thailand, which draws tourists to explore and share their experiences with Thai communities.

"Throughout the year, we have numerous festivities and celebrations that we would like everyone, most



Chalerm Sak Suranant
Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand,
Middle East office

Throughout the year, we have numerous festivities and celebrations that we would like everyone, most especially our visitors from the GCC and the rest of Middle East region to enjoy and experience

especially our visitors from the GCC and the rest of Middle East region to enjoy and experience," said **Chalerm Sak**

Suranant, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Middle East office.

Songkran festival or Thai New Year will be celebrated from April 13 to 15. It was originally celebrated as a way for the Thai people to sprinkle water on their family members and elders for good fortune and pay their respects to images of the Buddha.

The annual Songkran Festival, previously held on dates according to the Thai lunar calendar, is now commemorated on the same 3 days every year. However, the celebration typically begins before and end several days after the official holiday.

"If you're considering traveling to Thailand for Songkran be prepared to get soaked. The Thai New Year always takes place in the hottest time of the year, so it's the perfect time for water play," Suranant added.



Chiang Mai holds the biggest, most recognized Thailand Water Festival parade, which includes statues from local temples being paraded through the streets

as part of the celebrations this time of the year. Hua Hin is the closest seaside location to Bangkok and the perfect place to celebrate the Thailand New Year. "You will find that there are several major Songkran celebrations held around Thailand like Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Hua Hin and Khon Kaen. 2015 is the best time to Discover Thainess so I would like to invite everyone to visit Thailand and discover it for yourself," he said.

Get soaked

- ◆ Songkran or Thai New Year will be celebrated from April 13-15
- ◆ Hua Hin, closest seaside to Bangkok and the perfect place to celebrate this festival
- ◆ Chiang Mai holds the biggest Thailand Water Festival parade

ATM takes e-way in 2015

Increase in the number of online bookings by MENA residents indicates that travel technology will take the centre stage at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) this year.

TT BUREAU

The growing use of technology in the travel industry will be in focus at ATM 2015, with the four-day event set to highlight tech growth within the industry, as online travel bookings in the MENA region increased by 10 per cent last year. According to YouGov data (which surveyed 22,686 online respondents, all MENA residents), 31 per cent of those surveyed had booked all of their travel requirements online, an increase of 10 per cent compared to 2013. Of those surveyed, 25 per cent used their smartphones to book hotels online, while mobile usage to access online travel guides or to book leisure activities rose by six per cent.

"Throughout the region, we are witnessing a major growth in online bookings as airlines, tour operators and

hotels develop ever-more sophisticated digital platforms and social media strategies to ensure they reach out effectively to both existing and potential guests," said



Nadege Noblet, Exhibition Manager of ATM, which is scheduled to be held at the Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, from May 4 to 7, 2015. "The industry as a whole is embracing technology like never before, to compete in a digital market place where accessibility and speed are critical to the demands of today's tech-savvy travellers, especially mobile compatible sites for hotels, tour operators and leisure attractions," Noblet added.

Spontaneity in the decision making process for choosing a destination has increased by 11 per cent, according to the YouGov data. **Paul Richer**, Senior Partner of Travel Technology Consultancy, Genesys, will host two dedicated seminar sessions at this year's exhibition addressing a range of topics including latest developments in mobile, digital marketing and digital distribution issues and how these are impacting the consumer.

The Gen Y market (age group 18-30 years) in the region is placing even further emphasis on the hotel industry's need to offer uninterrupted broadband internet access for guests as well as a consistent social media campaign, marketing a bouquet of hotel services. The technology theme is only a part of a packed agenda being developed for ATM 2015.

Enjoy the Thrill and Fun of
DESERT SAFARI

Proud to be **SAFARI LEADERS**

Safari Trip Includes

Dune Bashing - Sand Boarding & Camel Riding - BBQ Dinner - Arabic Tea & Coffee - Soft Drinks & Refreshments - Photographs in Local Dress - Henna Painting - Tattoos and a lot more entertainment throughout the evening

Timing: Pick up: 3:00 - 3:30pm Drop-off: 9:00 - 9:30pm
Pick-up & Drop-off facility from anywhere in Dubai & Sharjah

Per Person AED 200/-

Oasis Palm
TOURISM L.L.C
ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company

24 Hrs. Reservation
Tel: 04-2686826 / 04-2628832
Web: www.opdubai.com

Berlin: Converging point of travel trade

► Contd. from page 1

In collaboration with Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM), Gloria Hotels and Resorts will hold a series of events and meetings with European and international travel, tourism and hospitality agencies and media partners during the four-day show to promote its leisure services and products among global travellers.

Ajman Tourism Development Department (ATDD) will hold several activities, and announce detailed tourism sector statistics for 2014. "The ATDD marketing team will also launch new classification systems for three tourism sectors in Ajman, plus a manual book for all tourism installation operations," informed **Hind Al Marzooqi**, Head of ATDD Marketing and Promotion Section.

Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman and Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman will also be exhibiting their products

and services as part of Ajman Tourism Development Department, with the aim of tapping new source markets.

Headed by **Iftikhar Hamdani**, Cluster General Manager, Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman and Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman, both the hotels seek to promote not only their offerings, but also the Emirate as an emerging tourist destination in the Middle East. "We are eyeing new partnerships through our participation in ITB Berlin. Germans are on our list of top ten nationality mix and we will be presenting excellent deals for this market. Given the unique propositions of our hotels, we are positive about generating additional leads. In addition, as a global platform for travel professionals, we will also maximise the opportunity to tap other markets like East Europe and Central Asia," Hamdani said.

Rixos Bab Al Bahr will be participating in ITB Berlin 2015 alongside Ras Al Khaimah Tourism. "Year after year ITB



Haytham Omar
General Manager
Rixos Bab Al Bahr, Ras Al Khaimah

Expo 2020 in Dubai will have a ripple effect on other Emirates as well, Ras Al Khaimah not being an exception

Berlin has proven to be a very successful trade show, bringing together exhibitors from over 180 countries. The trade show gives those in the tourism industry a chance to further educate themselves



Samir Arora
General Manager
Ramada Downtown Dubai

We are confident that our participation will yield excellent results, opening doors for new partners in the German and European market

and enhance their knowledge in the industry by networking with individuals from various tourism and hospitality markets," asserted **Haytham Omar**, General Manager, Rixos Bab Al Bahr, Ras Al Khaimah.

In addition, it gives Rixos Bab Al Bahr a chance to showcase the property's unique 'All Inclusive-All Exclusive' concept, and further explore the expectations of international tourists. The hotel has experienced an increased flow of visitors from the top four target markets welcoming 35 per cent of their guests from the Russian Federation, 20 per cent from Germany, 15 per cent from the UAE and 10 per cent from the United Kingdom, expecting a large amount of visitors from the Eastern European market in the coming months. "Needless to say that Expo 2020 in Dubai will have a ripple effect on other Emirates as well, Ras Al Khaimah not being an exception. One of the main objectives of Ras Al Khaimah is to build a sustainable tourism industry, which promotes and preserves Ras Al Khaimah's unique natural and cultural heritage. This philosophy is effectively supported by Rixos Bab Al Bahr as we promote ourselves as an entire package which includes the Emirate that we are situated in. We

are delighted to be at the right place at the right time with the right product and concept," he added.

Ramada Downtown Dubai will participate in ITB to highlight the hotel's prime location and newly-renovated rooms. Situated at Downtown district, Ramada Downtown Dubai hotel boasts convenient access to Dubai's major business, leisure and tourist hubs. **Samir Arora**, General Manager, Ramada Downtown Dubai, said "ITB Berlin is an excellent platform to showcase our latest products and offerings. We are confident that our participation in this year's ITB Berlin will yield excellent results, opening doors for new partners in the German and European market in general."

49th edition offers..

- ◆ More than 10,000 exhibitors from around 190 countries
- ◆ Large number of exhibitors from Asia and the Middle East



Yas Island
Rotana
Abu Dhabi

Amazing Retreat at Yas Island Rotana

Enjoy genuine Arabian hospitality within unique and contemporary settings. Whether you're in Abu Dhabi for business or leisure, Yas Island Rotana Abu Dhabi offers you the ultimate lifestyle.

The hotel is conveniently located on the spectacular Yas Island, a breathtaking destination that will take you beyond your wildest dreams, few minutes away from the Yas Marina Circuit, Yas Links Golf Club, the Yas Marina, Yas Waterworld, Yas Beach, Yas Mall and Ferrari World Abu Dhabi. Yas Island Rotana is 10 minutes from Abu Dhabi International Airport, 20 minutes to Abu Dhabi Business district and 40 minutes from Dubai. The hotel's 308 spacious rooms and suites are designed with international flair to suit guests seeking privacy, personalised service and unparalleled quality. Dining venues suit all tastes from stylish to informal, serving a delightful fusion of International cuisine.

Business can also be a pleasure when you stay in one of our Club Rotana rooms, where you can take advantage of the exclusive lounge facilities that include complimentary breakfast and evening cocktails, in addition to a dedicated meeting room with comprehensive facilities.

For more information visit rotana.com, for reservations, email res.yasisland@rotana.com or call +971 2656 4000.

Terms and conditions apply

Golf plaza, P.O. Box: 131755, Abu Dhabi, UAE, T: +971 (0)2 656 4000, F: +971 (0)2 565 1414, yasisland.hotel@rotana.com

rotana.com



Meliá Hotels score hat-trick in Dubai

The Meliá Hotels International has announced the launch of its third property, Innside Dubai hotel, scheduled to open in 2016.

TT BUREAU

The hotel will be operated under the Innside brand, which becomes the third of the Spanish company's brands to achieve a presence in the destination.

The four-star hotel will be located at the edge of the Jumeirah Lake Towers complex, a major urban development hub which includes numerous residential and commercial buildings, offices, hotels and leisure areas.

It will have 125 rooms, golf course views, two restaurants, a gym, spa, health club, pool and rooftop lounge. The hotel is another milestone for the growth and development of the urban Innside by Meliá,

which in only five years has grown its portfolio from eight hotels in Germany to 36 hotels open or pending opening in different destinations in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia.

The Innside brand is attracting the interest of investors and hotel owners worldwide, thanks to the value the hotels provide to guests and their profitability.

Growth Strategy

- ◆ In only five years Innside has grown its portfolio from eight hotels in Germany to 36 hotels open or pending opening in different destinations in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia

Dubai hosts hospitality stalwarts

The second annual Resort Development & Hospitality Conference was recently held in Dubai and was attended by the MENA region's most influential hotel operators, developers and real estate leaders.

TT BUREAU

The two-day conference was presided over by **Laurent A. Voivenel**, CEO, Hospitality Management Holdings (HMH). He also participated in a panel discussion on 'Enhancing the Owner-Operator Relationship in Building an Empire of Hospitality Properties.'



Laurent A. Voivenel
CEO, Hospitality Management Holdings (HMH)

At HMH, we are eager to penetrate this segment with ECOS Hotels that is a 'no frills' B & B brand tying together a unique economical and ecological concept

Laurent highlighted the significance of the MENA region for the hospitality and tourism industry. "This is one of the fastest growing tourism

and hotel markets in the world. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Middle East was visited by 52

million international visitors in 2013," he stressed.

It is predicted that travel will grow strongly over the next 10 years and the region will see robust demand for accommodation. Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat and Riyadh, the six key cities in the region, represent over 124,000 hotel rooms in development pipeline with most of this new supply only added in recent years. All want to capitalize on the opportunity presented by Dubai Expo 2020 and Qatar FIFA World Cup 2022 as the cities head at breakneck speed into the future. In Qatar, 45,000 new rooms are required to meet FIFA World Cup demand while in Dubai, the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) estimates a need for 160,000 new rooms by 2020.

However, Laurent cautioned, "With this huge opportunity are linked challenges too that we all need to overcome collectively as an industry if we are to deliver on our goals. Most importantly developers are facing the challenge of convincing investors about the viability and return on investments (ROI) on projects. At HMH we are eager to penetrate this segment with ECOS Hotels that is a 'no frills' B & B brand tying together a unique economical and ecological concept."

Hospitality Empire

- ◆ 52 million international travellers visited Middle East in 2013, says UNWTO
- ◆ DTCM estimates a need for 160,000 new rooms in Qatar by 2020



You really matter!

At TIME Hotels, our simple approach to hospitality means that you can always expect to receive the warmest welcome straight from the heart and an uncomplicated yet professional service delivery. Whether for business or leisure, short-stay or long stay, we currently have four different product brands represented across a growing portfolio of properties.

To find out more about our present and future prime locations visit www.timehotels.ae or call 800 HOTELS within the UAE.

TIME
HOTELS

TIME
HOTELS
& RESORTS

TIME
Residence

TIME
EXPRESS
HOTELS

TIME
Hotel Apartments

www.timehotels.ae

Sheraton Creek Dubai gets a facelift

Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel recently renovated its historic property in line with the Dubai Government's decision to rejuvenate the Creek area, giving a fillip to the overall travel experience of visitors who wish to experience the culture and heritage of the region.



TT BUREAU

Dubai emerged as the favourite upscale destination in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, according to a YouGov survey in 2014. Four out of five luxury travellers cited relaxation as the most important element in a luxury holiday, followed by interest in discovery, 58 per cent and adventure, 43 per cent.

A separate survey from American Express showed that 33 per cent of respondents in the UAE expect to spend more on luxury goods and services in 2015, with 59 per cent prioritising luxury experiences, including holidays.

"For 2015, we firmly believe that Dubai will retain its status as the most popular luxury destination in the



This project comes at a fantastic time for our hotel as we recently renovated our historic property. We are very excited what lies in store for what we like to call 'original' Dubai

Stephan Vanden Auweele
General Manager of Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel & Towers

region. Dubai is a truly unique experience, combining old-world charm with the attrac-

tions of a modern city. Travellers want to come to a destination that is both uplift-

ing and enriching and where they can make the most of their stay," says **Stephan Vanden Auweele**, General Manager of Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel & Towers.

According to the YouGov survey, the key aspects respondents sought from their hotel upon arrival are a good view from their bedroom and fine dining restaurants. Popular activities include visiting museums and cultural exhibitions, shopping in malls and traditional markets, sight-seeing and going to the beach, all of which are on hand for guests at Sheraton Dubai Creek.

"In line with the announcement by HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to rejuvenate the Creek and nearby areas,

we are delighted to be at the forefront of the leading culture and heritage centre in the region. This project comes at a fantastic time for our hotel as we recently renovated our historic property. We are very excited what lies in store for what we like to call 'original' Dubai," added Auweele.

Dubai will also benefit from an increased focus on technology in the travel industry, according to Auweele, with online booking and customer loyalty programs becoming increasingly popular.

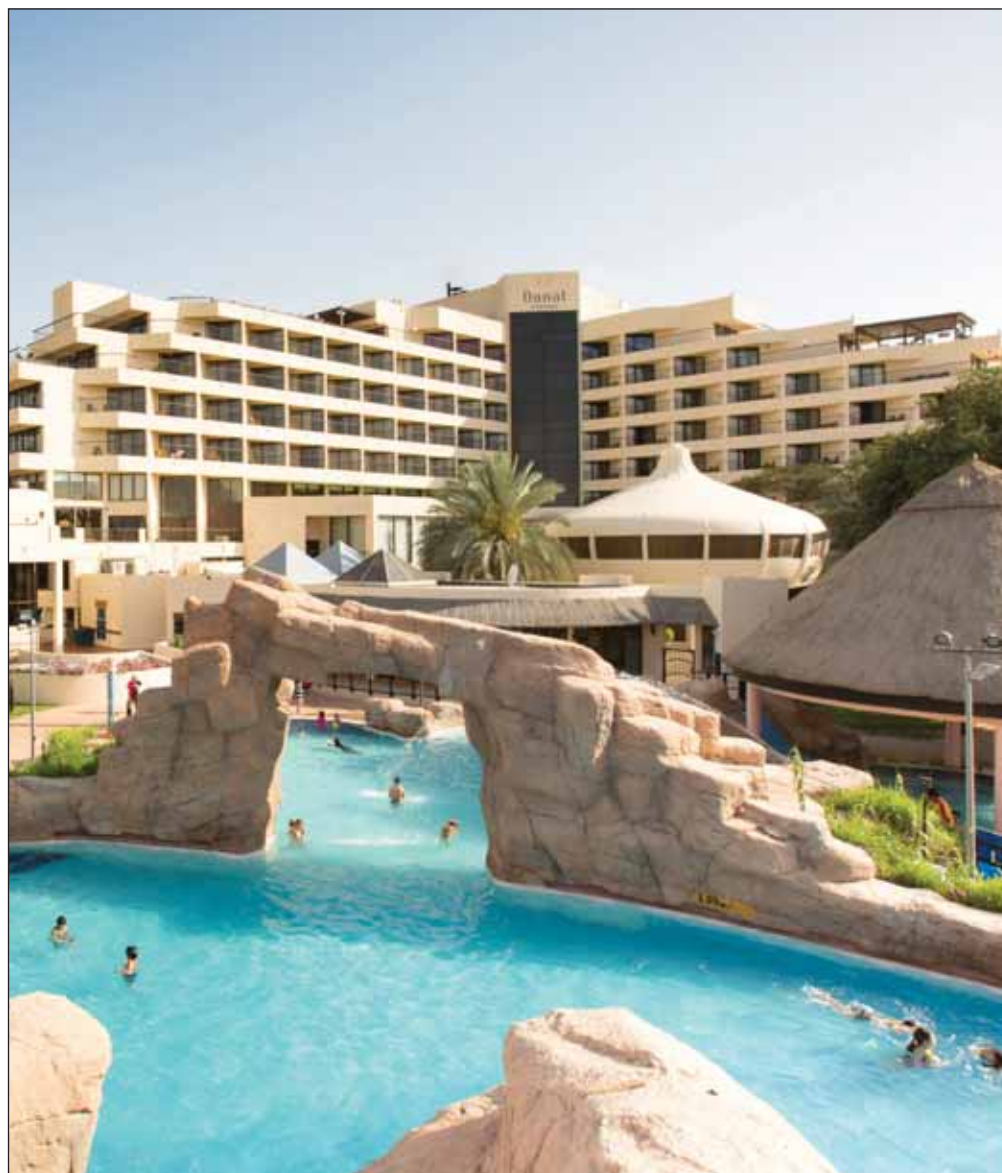
'Original Dubai'

♦ Travellers want to get involved in several activities ranging from visiting museums, going to the beach to shopping in traditional markets and popular malls

Ramada Sharjah gets 2015 Travelers' Choice Award

■ Ramada Sharjah has been awarded the TripAdvisor 2015 Travelers' Choice Award in the category of Top 25 Hotels for Families in the UAE for the second consecutive year. Ramada Sharjah was cited as one of the Top Hotels for Families by TripAdvisor.

Yasser El Sayed, Hotel Manager of Ramada Sharjah said, "Being cited by the world's best travel website is an excellent achievement. This award is a testament to the strong dedication and commitment of our exceptional hotel staff and everyone working at Ramada Sharjah. We will not rest on our achievements but continue on improving our work to give our guests the highest-quality of service possible." Ramada Sharjah is also a recipient of the Best Deluxe Hotel Apartment from Sharjah Tourism Excellence Award for three consecutive years.



YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Experience the magnificent five-star treatment at Danat Al Ain Resort for your extended stay in Al Ain.

- Rates starting from **AED 299***.
- Special tailored long stay packages starting from 14 nights and above.
- Special discounts on hotel's facilities and outlets.
- Wide range of gastronomic experiences; 8 dining restaurants & bars.
- Vast choice of recreation facilities.
- Complimentary Wi-Fi.
- Complimentary car park.
- Nestled amid lush greenery and beautiful landscaped gardens.

For reservations call +971 3 704 6000 or email reservations.alain@danathotels.com.

*Price is subject to 10% service charge & 6% tourism fee.



Managed by Danat Hotels & Resorts,
a Division of National Corporation for Tourism & Hotels
PO Box 16031, Al Ain, UAE
T: +971 3 704 6000 | F: +971 3 704 6009
E: info.alain@danathotels.com | www.danathotels.com

Golden Tulip Al Barsha celebrates successful 2014

Golden Tulip Al Barsha is still adding and updating the services and the facilities as mentioned by General Manager – **Tarek Lotfy**. The hotel is currently preparing the night club to open during March and also will be hosting big event for hotelier and business partner within the month of May, in order to promote the new facilities that the hotel added such as the famous Ristretto Lobby Café, Rooftop SPA, SKY Korean Restaurant, FRESH all day dine-in. The hotel is witnessing the high demand until the year end, due to the quality of service and the friendly staff of the hotel.



Golden Tulip Hotel, Al Barsha



Recently Golden Tulip MENA Regional Teams attended the Management Meeting on Jan 26 held at the Golden Tulip Al Thanyah Hotel, Dubai

Dubai debut for Aloft & Element

Scheduled to open in 2018, Aloft Dubai Raffa and Element Dubai Raffa will bolster Starwood's presence in Dubai. With the debut of both the properties, Dubai will be home to all nine of Starwood's brands.



TT BUREAU

Aloft Dubai Raffa and Element Dubai Raffa will be built simultaneously and operated as a unique complex offering 165 and 96 rooms, respectively, upon its opening in early 2018. Located near Dubai Maritime City, the hotels will be in proximity to Sheikh Zayed Road highway and the heart of Dubai's traditional commercial centre.

"We are very excited to introduce the Aloft and Element brands into Dubai and to expand Starwood's successful relationship with Wasl Hospitality and Leisure," said **Michael Wale**, President, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Europe, Africa and Middle East.

Designed to shake up the traditional mid-market



Michael Wale
President, Starwood Hotels & Resorts,
Europe, Africa and Middle East

hotel sector, Aloft hotels aim at redefining the category by delivering urban-influenced design and a social guest experience at an affordable price point.

"With Dubai government promoting mid-scale hotel development ahead of the Dubai World Expo 2020, we believe the timing is right to widen the reach of our Aloft and Element experiences,

With Dubai government promoting mid-scale hotel development ahead of the Dubai World Expo 2020, we believe the timing is right to widen our reach

revolutionizing the hospitality industry by delivering, urban-style experience at an affordable price," he added.

Element Raffa marks the debut of Starwood's eco-wise brand in the UAE. Inspired by Westin, Element Hotels provides guests with space to live their lives, perfect for the traveller who is visiting for a few days or a few weeks.

Starwood currently operates nearly 50 hotels and resorts across the Middle East under eight of the company's nine distinct lifestyle

brands. The company has plans to further expand its portfolio in the region with a pipeline of over 35 hotels due to open by 2017.

The brand story

- ◆ Aloft & Element: designed to shake up the traditional mid-market hotel sector
- ◆ Starwood currently operates nearly 50 hotels and resorts across the Middle East
- ◆ Over 35 hotels due to open by 2017



Ramada Sharjah



Ramada Plaza JBR



two unique locations, one destination

Call 800 9 8888

Ramada Sharjah

Al Nahda Street 115, Opposite Sahara Centre
P.O. Box 60553, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 6 530 0003 | Fax: +971 6 525 7802
info@ramadasharjah.com | www.ramadasharjah.com

f RamadaSharjah

Twitter RamadaSharjah



Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence

at JBR, Bahar 7, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 4 439 8888 | Fax: +971 4 439 8889
info@ramadaplazajbr.com | www.ramadaplazajbr.com

f RamadaPlazaJBR

Twitter RamadaPlazaJBR

ramadaplazajbr



Hala Abu Dhabi, 45 tour operators together

Hala Abu Dhabi, the destination management division of Etihad Airways, will cooperate with 45 leading tour operators worldwide to promote Abu Dhabi as a tourist destination.



TT BUREAU

Preferred sales agreements have been signed in 23 countries across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australia to expand the reach of Etihad Airways' popular 'Stopover in Abu Dhabi' program, aimed at passengers transiting in the UAE capital.

The program allows guests of Etihad Airways and selected partner airlines to break their journeys in Abu Dhabi and enjoy special privileges, like complimentary visas, overnight hotel accommodation and golf course access, before continuing onto their final destinations.

Now, the incentives can be booked through the 45 tour operators, in addition to Etihad Airways' website and email.



Peter Baumgartner
Chief Commercial Officer
Etihad Airways

We are excited to build on the popularity of our 'Stopover in Abu Dhabi' program with these leading tour operators, which already have a successful track record in selling Etihad Airways flights



The 'Stopover in Abu Dhabi' program includes:

- **Essential Stopover:** Guests enjoy their first night free if staying a minimum of two nights. Rates start at USD 36 per person for two nights on Bed and Breakfast basis.
- **Premium Stopover:** Guests in First Class are entitled to complimentary accommodation for two nights in a five-star hotel in Abu Dhabi. Guests in business class receive one night complimentary stay in a five-star hotel.
- **Transit Golf:** Guests who transit in Abu Dhabi between six to 12 hours can play golf at a nine-hole golf course or access the swimming pool at Yas Links.
- **Complimentary visa stopovers:** For nationals who require a UAE entry visa, Hala Abu Dhabi will facilitate a complimentary UAE visa when booking two nights' accommodation.

A number of Etihad Airways' sales team members from across the world have

also been appointed as destination and 'product champions' by Hala Abu Dhabi. The

first two groups of international champions and tour operators under the preferred sales agreements recently visited Abu Dhabi, where they took part in product, systems and destination training.

Peter Baumgartner, Chief Commercial Officer at Etihad Airways, said, "We are excited to build on the popularity of our 'Stopover in Abu Dhabi' program with these leading tour operators, which already have a successful track record in selling Etihad Airways flights. Our expanded partnerships will increase tourism traffic into Abu Dhabi by showcasing the Emirate as a vibrant holiday destination and offering generous incentives to visitors. It also supports Hala Abu Dhabi's continued growth and we will continue the momentum by partnering with 15 additional tour operators and champions at the end of this year."

Rixos Hotels to expand to 60 properties in the UAE

Rixos Hotels have revealed ambitious growth plans to increase its portfolio of hotels and resorts from its current operating 27, to 60 across 20 destinations by 2020.



Rixos Hotels already operate two resorts in unique locations across the UAE including Rixos The Palm in Dubai, a 230 guest room beach resort located in one on the world's most prestigious locations - on Palm Jumeirah. Rixos Bab Al Bahr in Ras Al Khaimah, which boasts 650 rooms and offers the UAE's only ultra-all-inclusive concept, is owned by Ras Al Khaimah Holdings and operated by Rixos.



DANAT WEEKEND ESCAPE

Indulge in an oasis of luxury and break free from everyday life and venture into a world where each moment is a beautiful memory at the stunning desert hideaway Tilal Liwa Hotel. Spend an adventurous getaway and enjoy thrilling desert experience.

'Danat Weekend Escape' package starting from **Dhs.449*** per night in a Tilal room with desert view and includes:

- Buffet breakfast for two adults and two kids below 12 years
- 10 minutes camel trekking per room
- 20% discount on food and beverage
- 20% discount on massage and beauty treatments

For bookings and information, call +971 2 894 6111 or email reservations.tilal@danathotels.com.

*Terms and conditions apply.



Tilal Liwa Hotel

Managed by Danat Hotels & Resorts,
a Division of National Corporation for Tourism & Hotels
PO Box 112723, Abu Dhabi, UAE
T. +971 2 894 6111 | F. +971 2 894 6112
E. info.tilal@danathotels.com | www.danathotels.com

Qatar Tourism promotes fifth Heritage Festival 2015

■ Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA), along with the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage, Qatar Museum Authority, and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy 2022, represented the State of Qatar in the fifth edition of the Gulf Heritage Village Festival in Kuwait. The festival is being held every year in Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Cultural and Heritage Village, which aims to preserve the Gulf heritage by hosting relevant competitions and exhibitions. Spanning over thousands of kilometres, the village is a unique site having its own cultural and historical characteristics. It features historic museums, competitions and awards, entertainment shows, old popular bazaars, children games, and restaurants and cafes. An

artificial lake was built inside the village to highlight the marine heritage of the people in the Gulf. Camel riding and old car shows are among the activities offered by the village.



Heritage competitions are being organized on a daily basis in the village's outskirts under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, including camel, falcon, horse, bird, and goat competitions. Winners in these competitions are awarded with valuable prizes.

New 'Transfers' tool for ME agents

Gateway has introduced 'Transfers' tool to streamline existing booking services for travel agents in the Middle East. It's an online hotel wholesaler providing Middle East agents with B2B booking solutions.



SUSMITA GHOSH

Gateway's 'Transfers' module integrates multiple rates into one system while it also offers travel agents leverage regarding adding profit mark-ups. It provides a variety of options between private or shared transfer facilities. UAE travel agents, who already have access to the Gateway hotel reservation system, can automatically receive free access to the 'Transfers' tool while new users will have to subscribe through the website or email.

These hotels and transfer rates can all be booked on one booking platform with a user-friendly interface. We also offer local support via phone email and live chat to make sure the booking process runs perfectly for every customer



Shahjahan Sayed
Regional Sales Manager GCC & Middle East, Gateway

"As a content wholesaler we have many direct deals and partner deals for our hotels and transfers.

Those deals allow us to offer large content of 150,000 hotels at a very good rate. These hotels and transfer rates can all be booked on one booking platform with a user-friendly interface. We also offer local support via phone email and live chat to make sure the booking process runs perfectly for every customer," informed **Shahjahan Sayed**, Regional Sales Manager GCC & Middle East, Gateway.

Speaking on the response of the travel trade sector to the introduction of this tool, he said, "Many of them have already reacted with lot of interest as there is a huge demand for transfer services, especially as an additional service to hotel offers. For our transfer content we also work with direct deals and partner deals same as with our hotels. The product

will be further promoted with our prospects via several online marketing channels."

Gateway intends to expand opportunities in Kuwait, Qatar and other Gulf states after the office launched in Dubai in 2013, which has focused mainly on UAE. The company started in Europe 25 years ago and is well known in several European and Asian markets.

Services Available

- ◆ UAE travel agents with access to Gateway hotel reservation system get free access to 'transfers' tool
- ◆ User-friendly interface
- ◆ Offer local support via phone email and live chat for ease of booking

ATM Means business

4 - 7 May 2015 / Dubai

23,600

visitors from 131 countries

\$2.1bn

of new business generated at ATM 2014

2,745

exhibiting companies



Register now
arabiantravelmarket.com

- Fast track entry with your e-badge
- Exclusive updates on new show features
- Regular news on seminar programme
- Access to ATM's online planning tool to plan your visit

DUBAI
Tourism

Emirates

TIME
HOTELS

THE VISION
HOTELS

kerzner

IHG
International Hotel Group



الملتقى
arabian
travel market®

Good days for MICE in Middle East

The future of MICE and business travel from the Middle East is witnessing an upward trend with global attention shifting towards GCC countries. In line with this, the 3rd Annual MICE Arabia Congress was held from Feb 22- 23, 2015 in Dubai.



TT BUREAU

The MICE Arabia Congress is an ideal platform for regional and international travel, hospitality and event providers who have Middle Eastern corporations on their radar. It also emphasizes on the tremendous opportunity for out-bound business and luxury travel from the Middle East.

"What sets this congress apart is its focus on providing a balanced offering in terms of addressing the crucial matters in the MICE industry, while still maintaining a prime focus on the business meetings and networking opportunities," asserted **Sidh N C**, Director, Projects, QnA International, the organizer of MICE Arabia Congress.

In line with the trends of this expanding market, the



What sets this congress apart is its focus on providing a balanced offering in terms of addressing the crucial matters in the MICE industry, while still maintaining a focus on the business meetings and networking

Sidh N C

*Director, Projects, QnA International
the organizer of MICE Arabia Congress*

percentage of first class flights is more in the UAE than in other regions. In addition, the

Middle East is centrally located with one-third of the world's population four hours away,

and two-third within eight hours."

A wide range of industries including finance, banking, oil & gas, retail, telecommunication, IT, FMCG, pharmaceutical, government, insurance, manufacturing and representatives that handle luxury and royal travel had participated in the congress.

It was undoubtedly an enriching platform, which provided an opportunity to discuss relevant industry issues, developments and trends, exchanging knowledge and best practices with like-minded international experts. Moreover, the event served as an opportunity to reflect main challenges and key learning.

The congress featured some of the best MICE venues, destinations and MICE & Luxury Travel providers from various regions around the globe that provided personalized solutions to streamline the process of hosting top class incentive, meetings and events activities.

Giving Impetus

- ◆ The congress revolves around sealing business deals and getting the most out of the pre-arranged business meetings
- ◆ One-to-one meetings to streamline the process of hosting travel events in various regions around the world
- ◆ Creating a link between solution providers and C level executives so as to host MICE & luxury travel related activities around the globe

New website for R Hotels

■ R Hotels announces the launch of its brand new website rhotels.ae. It is an all-inclusive portal for R Hotels and its properties and features a platform which conveniently allows users to book rooms at the properties, namely Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham, Ramada Downtown Dubai, Ramada Hotel and Suites Ajman, and Ramada Beach Hotel Ajman.

The website's main page features the latest promotions from the hotels' restaurants and spas, as well as deals for long-stay guests and meeting rooms. In addition, the site includes a comprehensive description and image gallery of the hotels' rooms and suites.

Samir Arora, VP of Operations for R Hotels, said, "R Hotels has put in an investment to create a comprehensive website which brings together information about the group and all properties. We also plan to create an Arabic version of the website, which is already in the pipeline."

**modern
yet steeped in tradition**



leave the rest to us™

Welcome to the world of true Arabian Hospitality !

Whether you are visiting for business or leisure, **Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman** offers contemporary and sophisticated room stays along with the warmth and comfort of true, traditional Arabian hospitality.

Showcasing a range of impeccable services and facilities, the hotel is situated within close proximity to the international airports and provides easy access to major shopping destinations, business districts and diverse heritage attractions.

For enquiries and reservations:

Tel: +971 6 703 1111
sales@ramadaajman.com
www.ramadaajman.com
www.ramadainternational.com



RAMADA.
HOTEL & SUITES
AJMAN

Ramada Hotel & Suites Ajman is operated by RHotels (a member of R Holding) under a franchise agreement from Wyndham Hotel Group.

Air Seychelles spreads its wings to ME with Etihad

■ In an effort to boost its presence in the Middle East and increase leisure and business traffic in Seychelles, Air Seychelles has added Amman to its codeshare agreement with Etihad Airways.

Air Seychelles has expanded its reach in the Middle East by adding Amman to its codeshare agreement with Etihad Airways.

Effective from 5th February 2015, Air Seychelles will place its HMcode on 14 weekly Etihad Airways' flights between Abu Dhabi and Amman, the capital and largest city of Jordan.

This new route is the seventh codeshare point for Air Seychelles in the region, with the carrier already placing its flight code on Etihad Airways' services to Abu Dhabi

(UAE); Jeddah and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia); Muscat (Oman); Bahrain and Kuwait.

Manoj Papa, Air Seychelles Chief Executive Officer, said the codeshare expansion would enhance the airline's brand visibility in the Middle East and contribute to tourist visits and business trips into Seychelles.

This codeshare will result into offers for residents of Jordan, an appealing travelling proposition based on convenient, one-stop access to Seychelles via Abu Dhabi.

In turn, this will continue to stimulate the number of travellers visiting the archipelago of Seychelles from the Middle East which is an important source market that recorded over 20,000 arrivals in 2014.



Red App connects travel buyers

Sabre's Red App Center, the world's first B2B online travel app marketplace, will be highlighted in 2015 Innovation Product Roadshow in Bahrain. Sabre Travel Network Middle East (STNME) is set to launch this roadshow displaying its latest technologies.



TT BUREAU

Since its global launch in 2012, Sabre Red App Centre has exceeded 1.2 million downloads by travel agencies worldwide. Created by Sabre to meet the evolving needs of travel agencies, the Red App Centre allows developers and agencies to build applications, tools and solutions that extend the capabilities and customize the Sabre Red Workspace, used by agencies to shop, book and manage travel.

Speaking on the occasion, **Daniel Naoumovitch**, Chief Executive Officer, Sabre Travel Network, Middle East said, "We're proud to launch the world's first B2B travel app marketplace, which has become a destination for developers. It generates fresh



Daniel Naoumovitch
Chief Executive Officer
Sabre Travel Network, Middle East

It generates fresh ideas and develops apps that make travel buying easier, more personalised and dynamic. Today it is an important platform to feature and enable innovation in travel and tourism

ideas and develops apps that make travel buying easier, more personalized and

dynamic. Today it is an important platform to feature and enable innovation in travel and tourism. We encourage all developers and agencies in the Middle East to take a look and get involved."

"Supporting our customers' success is the top priority and each year we invest in training and product roadshows help them stay up to

Roadshow is a great way to do this. This year we look forward, showcasing our Red App Centre," said Naoumovitch. Using Red App Centre, agency users can search for Red Apps that fit their needs, look through descriptions, view screen shots of selected Red Apps and provide ratings and reviews. For developers, it is an opportunity to reach a new travel and tourism audience and create apps that contribute to the ongoing innovation in the industry.

It's a First

- ◆ Red App allows developers and agencies to build applications, tools and solutions
- ◆ Ease in travel buying, personalized, and dynamic

WIT MIDDLE EAST 2015 A New Dawn Rises

April 8-9 The Oberoi, Dubai

Everything is *changing* in travel.
The customer is going mobile.
Social becomes mainstream.
OTAs no longer look like just OTAs.
Start-ups are disrupting the market.

**FIND OUT WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO
TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS IN THIS NEW DAWN OF TRAVEL**

Register today at <http://www.webintravel.com/events/witme2015>
For enquiries, please contact: **Alliyah MG** +971 4 298 1775 alliyah@webintravel.com



Dubai's cruising sector creates a landmark

For the first time in history; Mina (Port) Rashid has welcomed five cruise ships at the same time and over 25,000 cruise passengers at its cruise terminals.



TT BUREAU

Mina Rashid recently welcomed over 25,000 cruise passengers during the weekend at its cruise terminals and five cruise ships at the same time. The crew of the Costa Serena, AIDA diva, Amadea, MSC Orchestra and Costa neoRiviera, docked at the port over the weekend.

The busy cruise season also saw another landmark event recently with the arrival of Cunard's Queen Mary 2 on 29 January with over 4,500 passengers joining another vessel already in port.

Dubai's cruise season started in October 2014 with the arrival of the Rotterdam and a major highlight was the opening of the ultra-modern third cruise terminal inaugurated by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed bin



Hamad bin Mejren
Executive Director
Dubai Tourism

We have ambitious targets for cruise visitors as part of the Tourism Vision for 2020 and we expect to welcome 450,000 cruise visitors by 2016

Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai in December.

HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of DP World said, "The success in handling five mega passenger vessels at one time demonstrates Dubai's ability to embrace the growth in cruise tourism and the readiness of the infrastructure at Mina Rashid."

"With the opening of the new Hamdan bin Mohammed Cruise Terminal last month, the efficiency with which we look after thousands of passengers simultaneously was enhanced further, with the support and close cooperation of DTCM, our strategic partner in promoting cruise tourism in Dubai. In line with the vision, of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister

The success in handling five mega passenger vessels at one time demonstrates Dubai's ability to embrace the growth in cruise tourism and the readiness of the infrastructure at Mina Rashid

HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem
Chairman, DP World

and Ruler of Dubai, to make Dubai and the UAE a centre for tourism, we are committed to invest for long-term in the transformation of Mina Rashid into the region's cruise destination of choice," he added.

Hamad bin Mejren, Executive Director, Dubai Tourism said, "This cruise season is in full swing and we are forecasting further growth for the sector. DP World recently opened the newest 28,000 m2 ter-

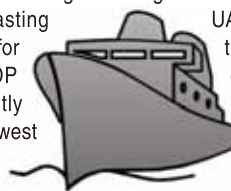
terminal at Mina Rashid and this extra capacity will allow us to welcome even more ships than we did last season. We have ambitious targets for cruise visitors as part of the Tourism Vision for 2020 and we expect to welcome 450,000 cruise visitors by 2016. We are confident these figures are achievable given the new Multiple Entry UAE visa for cruise tourists, which will open new source markets for us like India and China." Other

cruise ships calling at Dubai are from the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, North Africa, India and Sri Lanka, the Far East, Australia, and North America, as well as closer destinations in the Arabian Gulf.

The Hamdan bin Mohammed Cruise Terminal is the world's largest and most modern covered cruise facility, enabling award winning Mina Rashid to serve up to seven cruise vessels at one time and handle more than 25,000 passengers in its cruise terminals.

Sailing with Dubai

- ◆ Over 25,000 passengers in 5 cruises docked at Port Rashid
- ◆ Dubai aims to welcome over 450,000 cruise visitors by 2016





Mother's Day Treat

Pamper your best mother in the world, stay overnight for only AED 600. Net with breakfast for 2! Plus a relaxing body massage at Liwa Hotel, or 30 minutes boat fun ride with a hamper at Mirfa Hotel.

For Reservation, Please Call Tel: 02-8953009 / 3096
Email: res@almarfapearlhotels.com
www.almarfapearlhotels.com

Managed by
AL MARFA PEARL
Hotels Management LLC

Terms & Conditions: Subject to availability and prior reservation is required. Valid from 20 - 21 March 2015



**فندق المرفأ
MIRFA HOTEL**



Benchmark for new style of MICE

Spanning over two days, IBTM Arabia hosted more than 3,000 mutually matched and pre-selected business appointments. **TRAVELTALK** gives a sneak peek.



'Positive growth for ME tourism'

After three successive years of decline, international tourist arrivals to the Middle East grew by 4 per cent and by 1 per cent to North Africa in 2014, according to UNWTO data released at a public consortium jointly organized by UNWTO and Casa Árabe during the Madrid International Tourism Fair in Spain.



TT BUREAU

Depending on peace and stability, future tourism prospects for the Middle East are positive (between 2 per cent and 5 per cent in 2015). According to UNWTO forecasts, by 2030 the MENA region could receive 195 million tourist arrivals (almost triple the present volume of 70 million tourists) benefiting both established and emerging destinations.

Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General said, "Spain has a critical role in bringing Europe and the MENA region closer together, while tourism is one of the most important vehicles for the comeback of the region. This is already happening, creating jobs and eliminating poverty."



Taleb Rifai
Secretary-General
UNWTO

The tourism sector in the Middle East and North Africa has been largely to adapt and recover in recent times and even bounce back over the past year. Against this backdrop, several tourism ministers of the region, Spanish authorities and private sector representatives focused on future tourism prospects at the third

Ministerial Round Table on Tourism Development in the MENA Region, during FITUR.

Tourism potential and challenges

Experts trust in a strong pent up demand

Participating Tourism Ministers pointed precisely to the critical contribution of political stability for tourism to prosper and contribute to socio-economic progress, including the need for political will to support tourism

A more stable political framework is conducive to addressing challenges which include the removal of barriers to growth, strengthening the sector's resilience, adapting to changing consumer patterns and technological changes, and developing new business models and maximizing tourism's social and economic benefits, while minimizing possible negative impacts.

"Spain has a critical role in bringing Europe and the MENA region closer together, while tourism is one of the most important vehicles for the comeback of the region"

for tourism to the region from both intra and inter-regional generating markets, which will continue to be released as uncertainty fades away and consumer confidence returns.

(Morocco), consolidation of democracy (Tunisia), an active civil society (Lebanon), as well as the benefits of trans-border cooperation in the MENA region (Jordan and Oman).

Looking East

- ◆ By 2030 the MENA region could receive 195 million tourist arrivals
- ◆ Seeking political stability for tourism to prosper in the region and contribute to socio-economic progress

Jumeirah Sa'adiyat Island Resort in Abu Dhabi

■ Jumeirah Group, the global hotel company and a member of Dubai Holding, has signed an agreement with His Highness Sheikh Suroor bin Mohammed Al Nahyan to operate a luxury Jumeirah resort on Sa'adiyat Island, Abu Dhabi. Set in a prime location on the north eastern coast of Sa'adiyat Island, the property will be the most luxurious five-star resort in Abu Dhabi. Expected to open in 2017, the hotel will comprise 294 guest rooms. The architecture, interior design, landscape and master planning will be completed by DBI Design Corporation, who also designed Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, Abu Dhabi.

Once complete, the Sa'adiyat Island master-plan development will be made up of seven districts which will house and service a population of 150,000 people.



PARK REGIS
KRIS KIN HOTEL • DUBAI

We Promise To Delight You...



- Located opposite Burjuman Centre • Featuring 390 spacious guest rooms with lavish bathrooms • Diverse range of facilities
- Rooftop pool • Fully equipped gymnasium, sauna and steam room • A choice of dining options • All day dining restaurant Le Metro with specialty grill menu in the evening • Kris Restaurant with its scintillating views combined with contemporary Asian cuisine • A number of function rooms suitable for small meetings through to extravagant banquets for 220 guests • Free Internet / WIFI

Sheikh Khalifah Bin Zayed St, Opp Burjuman Centre Bur Dubai
(P.O. Box 8264) Dubai, U.A.E
Phone: +971 4 377 1111, Fax: +971 4 357 4477
Toll free: 8007171 (All GCC Countries +971)
kriskin@parkregisdubai.com, www.parkregiskriskin.com



fb.com/ParkRegisDubai



twitter.com/ParkRegisDubai

A brand of the **StayWell**
HOSPITALITY GROUP

Emiratis visiting Kyoto up by 139% from Apr-Dec 2014

Based on recent visitor trends, Kyoto Convention & Visitors Bureau is expecting this year's cherry blossom season to attract the largest number of nationals from the GCC to date. From the most recent statistics available, the number of Emirati nationals to visit the city between April through to December 2014 increased by 139 per

cent compared to the same period in 2013. Likewise, Qatari nationals visiting the city over the same period also increased significantly by 1,135 per cent. As the ancient capital of Japan, Kyoto is one of the most famous and popular cities in the country to view the splendour of this natural phenomenon in its full beauty.

Atlantis, The Palm lures with special offers

The iconic Atlantis, The Palm in Dubai has planned a special offer for all the privileged Emirates Skywards members. Through the membership, the guests can avail a number of exclusive offers throughout the resort. The membership designed also includes an additional 15 per cent off on the best available rate on all rooms and suites, plus Triple

Skywards Miles. The hotel is also wooing its members with 15 per cent discount across 23 restaurants and bars run by renowned culinary experts and for complete rejuvenation at the internationally accredited ShuiQi Spa. The bookings are open and can be made till April 30, 2015 and offers can be availed till December 18, 2015.

Italian fiesta for Abu Dhabi

In a bid to further bolster inbound tourism from Italy, Abu Dhabi recently held its inaugural Italian travel trade summit, 'Focus Abu Dhabi,' allowing Italian operators to identify the challenges of their tour operator sector.



TT BUREAU

The Italian delegation discussed business and investment opportunities to further promote the UAE capital through their brochures and boost 2015 arrivals by 10 per cent, while also extending tourists' stays to five nights.

As part of the four-day program, the delegation was

Yas Island. They also visited a number of the capital's popular attractions.

To showcase the Emirates' tourism products, TCA Abu Dhabi partnered with stakeholders including DMC, The Vision, Etihad Airways, Emirates Palace and a number of the Emirate's hotels and attractions to host Chairmen, CEOs, general managers and directors of



Mubarak Al Nuaimi
Director, Promotions and Overseas
Offices, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture
Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi)

Overseas Offices, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) said, "Italy has been a consistently strong European source market, but there remain clear opportunities to grow the sector further."

Abu Dhabi welcomed 55,619 Italian hotel guests in 2014, up 19 per cent over 2013, generating 239,650 guest nights from an average

length of stay of 4.31 nights. So far this year, air capacity from Italy has jumped by 66 per cent in 2015 following strengthened connections between codeshare partners Etihad Airways and Alitalia. Bolstering its aim to entice the Italian markets, an Abu Dhabi delegation will push home the message further during a visit to Milan as part of TCA Abu Dhabi's extended pan-Europe Destination Road Show.

Italy has been a consistently strong European source market, but there remain clear opportunities to grow the sector further

given an overview of Abu Dhabi's future plans for the Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and shown the portfolio of Sir Bani

sales from 14 of Italy's most prominent tour operators, DMCs and retail travel groups.

Mubarak Al Nuaimi,
Director, Promotions and

All eyes on Italy

- ◆ 55,619 Italian guests visited the UAE capital in 2014
- ◆ So far, air capacity from Italy has jumped by 66 per cent in 2015
- ◆ Aim to promote Abu Dhabi through brochures and boost Italian tourist arrivals in 2015 by 10%

YACHT CHARTERS & FISHING

Turn Wonderful Moments into Priceless Memories

Party with Family and Friends
AED 500/- Per Hour Onwards

Contact Us for Tour Operator Rates
Special Discount for Hotel Staff

ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company
www.alwaslyachts.ae

LUXURY PRIVATE CHARTER

DEEP SEA FISHING

SUNSET CRUISE

24 Hrs. Reservation

Tel: 04 2953485 / 04 2953486



COMING SOON

For more information please contact:

Crisna De Guzman: crisna.deguzman@ddppl.com, Mobile: +971-55-4704200 • Devika Jeet: devika@ddppl.com

Movenpick Hotels & resorts

Dubai

Movenpick Hotels & Resorts has announced the appointment of **Amir Lababedi** as Vice President for Development, Middle East and South Asia. Amir graduated from the University of Surrey with a degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management, and holds a Master's degree in Global Banking and Finance from the European Business School in London. His 20 years' experience in the industry covers investment advisory services to many of the world's leading hotel investment stakeholders.



Radisson Blu Resort, Fujairah

Fujairah

The Rezidor Hotel Group has announced the appointment of **Frank Eikeland** as the General Manager of the Radisson Blu Resort, Fujairah. He has graduated from the Norwegian Hotel Management School. With more than two decades in the sales, marketing and management of hotels across the Nordics and the Middle East, Eikeland has a track record of leading hotels and lifting their performance to the optimum level. Prior to this, under his leadership as the general manager of Radisson Blu Resort El Quseir in Egypt.



Etihad Airways

Dubai

Etihad Airways has appointed **Linda Celestino** as the airline's Vice President, Guest Services. Celestino started her career as cabin crew at Ansett Australia, progressing to become a Senior Manager in Guest Services and Guest Experience. She has more than 25 years of experience in the airline industry having held senior positions in her native Australia and the Middle East, as well as being President of the New York-based Airline Passenger Experience Association where she played an important role in setting new standards of guest experience and service on an international level.



Etihad Airways, Japan

Nagoya

Fatima Al Kharousi has been appointed as the first Emirati female Airport Manager in Japan by Etihad Airways. She will be based in Nagoya. Kharousi will be responsible for overseeing the airline's operations at Chubu Centrair International Airport and the smooth operation of its daily service between Abu Dhabi and Nagoya. Kharousi joined Etihad Airways in 2009 as part of the Graduate Management Program and kick started her career as an Airport Duty Manager to a number of outstations across the airline's fast growing global network.



W Doha Hotel & Residences

Doha

Andrea Magnoas has been appointed as the Director of W Doha Hotel & Residences' B&F outlets, including Spice Market and Market inspired by Michelin Starred Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten; La Spiga by Paper Moon, Wahm, Crystal, W Cafe; the property's catering service, and in-room dining. Magnoas brings with him over 15 years of hospitality experience. The Italian-born food and beverage enthusiast has worked at an array of prestigious properties including the Hotel de Russie, Rome as well as Shangri-La, Beijing in 2009.



Park Inn by Radisson, Al Khobar

Al Khobar

The Park Inn by Radisson, Al Khobar has announced the appointment of **Nizar El Ezz** as the new Director of Sales and Marketing. As the new director of sales and marketing, his work will be focused on all aspects of sales for the 148 roomed hotel, preparing marketing budgets and business plans and identifying opportunities to drive revenue. Graduating with a Business Science Degree from Southeastern University in 1998, he started his career with the Marriott International-global sales office in Abu Dhabi.



The Park Inn by Radisson, Al Khobar

Al Khobar

Abdulmoeen Nasser has been appointed as the new Human Resources and Government Relations Manager for The Park Inn by Radisson, Al Khobar in Saudi Arabia. He will be responsible for all aspects of human resources and government relations for the 148 room hotels. After graduating from King Faisal University with a degree in Business - HR Affiliation in 2011, he began his career at the Gosaibi Hotel Al Khobar after which he joined the Abdulaziz Mubarak Group as the director general for the head office.



Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence

Dubai

Sally Mansour Moustafa has been appointed as the new Cluster Marketing and Communication Manager for Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence and Ramada Shajah. An Egyptian national, Moustafa worked as brand manager at Emaar Retail prior to joining the Ramada properties. She will oversee marketing, advertising, public relations and internal and external communications.



Kuoni Business Travel

Dubai

Clevio Monteiro has been appointed as Business Head- Dubai Visa & Marhaba Services, in the Kuoni Business Travel division of Kuoni Travel India. He comes with over 22 years of experience of working with travel, aviation & technology solutions companies in various functions. Monteiro has previously worked with companies such as Air Sahara, InterGlobe Technologies and Suvidha Infoserve. In his last assignment with Go Airlines, he managed a pan India responsibility as General Manager for their online business & consolidators.



Istanbul calling: Agents' time out with Pegasus



On January 30, 2015, Pegasus Airlines along with FRHI Hotels and Resorts, hosted a FAM trip for its Top producing Travel and MICE agents. Agents got the privilege to stay at the brand new Raffles Istanbul for 2 nights. The agents were very excited on the trip as the weather in Istanbul was very pleasant and got to cover all the tourist attractions. It not only gave them an insight about the Pegasus airline product and services, but also promote Turkey as a tourist, leisure and MICE destination all year round.

WE GET YOU



Well-travelled

Well-connected

Alive and Inspired

Get Connected VIDA-hotels.com



VIDA
DOWNTOWN DUBAI

A boutique hotel by Emaar Hospitality Group



مطار الشارقة الدولي
Sharjah International Airport



SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE UAE

Explore the rich heritage and culture, embrace the warmth of Arabian hospitality and revel the year-round sunshine of glorious past and present.

Welcome to Sharjah – the Arab Tourism Capital for 2015.

Visit **Sharjah
International Airport**
at ITB Berlin | 4-8 March 2015,
Stand 104 Hall 22A, Exhibition
Ground, Messe Berlin.

www.sharjahairport.ae

