

TRAVTALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

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SPECIAL

February 9-11
2016

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Synergy for real partnerships

Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) pointed out that the MICE sector is currently generating \$1.4 billion per annum for Abu Dhabi and is expected to reach \$2.4 billion by 2020. ibtm arabia's 10th edition is testimony to a robust MICE industry.



SHEHARA RIZLY

This year, ibtm arabia celebrates 10 years in connecting elite MICE industry suppliers and buyers in a dynamic three-day event at the Jumeirah Etihad Towers from February 9-11, 2016, with the support of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA), Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau and Etihad Airways.

All Hosted Buyers are handpicked, personally invited and verified against a strict qualification criteria, which requires that they are senior level decision makers with proven budget and business to place in the Middle East. Eighty per cent of the Hosted Buyers confirmed to attend ibtm arabia 2016 have a budget over \$5 million and organise a variety of events; 90 per cent organise conferences and meetings, 80 per cent incentive travel, 71 per cent



Mubarak Al Shamisi
Director
Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau

ibtm arabia has been transformed into a concept that is simple and efficient yet dynamic, designed to meet the demands of the market

business travel, and 59 per cent luxury travel. Confirmed Hosted Buyers this year have also indicated a variety of product interests: 88 per cent indicated



Stefan Fuchs
General Manager
Jumeirah at Etihad Towers

It is our greatest pleasure to be hosting ibtm 2016 at one of the most luxurious conference centres in Abu Dhabi

an interest in hotels, 80 per cent in Destination Management Services, 66 per cent in conferences/meeting venues, and 63 per cent in attractions and entertainment.

Since its opening as the Gulf Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition (GIBTM) in 2006, ibtm arabia and its hosting city, Abu Dhabi, have undergone major growth. "When we first opened our doors in 2007, the regional MICE industry outside of Dubai was only in its infancy. ibtm arabia was the first such event to help establish and build the industry in the Gulf region, and throughout the last decade it has served as a catalyst for expanding and developing the Arabian MICE industry," says **Shinu Pillai**, Exhibition Manager, ibtm arabia.

"The industry in the Gulf region is growing and certainly Dubai 2020 is having an impact on international buyers looking to place business at ibtm arabia. But the focus of this event is about creating a community, providing a one-to-one ratio of buyer to supplier and to mutually match the appoint-

ments, which means both buyers and suppliers can select who they want to meet. ibtm arabia creates a true industry community, where participants stay in the same hotel and attend the same activities, from meetings to lunch, drinks to dinner. This enables genuine ongoing relationships to develop which leads to real business. ibtm events are not about the size of an event, it is about making that event cent per cent valuable to all attendees," he adds

The ibtm arabia event venue – Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau, acts as a one-stop-shop for the Abu Dhabi Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibitions (MICE) industry, offering free advice, help with planning, PR and marketing, and invaluable local knowledge. The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) is Abu Dhabi's premier events venue and a world-class

facility. Recently named among the 'Top 100 Busiest Global Meeting Destinations' by ICCA, it offers 133,000 square metres of event space, within easy reach of the international airport and surrounded by luxury and corporate hotels. "The event has been transformed into a concept that is simple and efficient yet dynamic, designed to meet the demands of an ever-changing market. Foremost in this transformation is that ibtm arabia will be an all-inclusive solution where an innovative meeting pod design customised with the exhibitor's corporate branding will give privacy to meetings between hosted buyers and exhibitors," said **Mubarak Al Shamisi**, Director, Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau.

Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau will be supporting the event as a destination

Contd. on page 2 ►

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Abu Dhabi set to host ibtm

► Contd. from page 1

and cultural partner, and will be using their database to assist RTE to secure the support, services and participation from their main partners and stakeholders (such as Etihad, DMCs, PCOs, hotels and different venues). Apart from that the bureau will be organising a Fam trip called "Discovery Day" for the international Hosted Buyers, international Exhibitors and hosted media.

Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau aims to provide a program that is beneficial to the event, strengthens business relationships within the community and enhances the experience of the event attendees. The objectives of this program is to introduce new, innovative, and viable business events to Abu Dhabi which are in line to the emirate's 2030 Economic Vi-



Shinu Pillai
Exhibition Manager
ibtm arabia

Throughout the last decade ibtm arabia has served as a catalyst for expanding and developing the Arabian MICE industry

sion. The program provides support for potential international business events in order to enhance Abu

Dhabi's global and economic competitiveness.

The host hotel this year is the Jumeirah, Etihad Tower – the business, social and gourmet hub of Abu Dhabi. Located on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, the hotel spans 66 floors and includes 382 guest rooms and suites offering corniche and coastal views. The hotel also features 199 serviced residences, eight restaurants, three bars, Observation Deck at 300, the highest vantage point in Abu Dhabi, and one of the largest and most sophisticated conference centres in the capital offering 13 meeting rooms of different sizes and a grand ballroom able to accommodate up to 1,400 persons depending on the set up.

"It is our greatest pleasure to be hosting ibtm arabia 2016 at one of the most

luxurious conference centres in Abu Dhabi, especially considering that it is the exhibition's 10th anniversary this year. We look forward to three days of great networking opportunities, sharing of experience and best practices and connecting with existing and new clients. ibtm arabia is one of the greatest opportunities to bring meetings, events and incentives industry decision-makers together to explore the opportunities for global business adventures," said **Stefan Fuchs**, General Manager, Jumeirah at Etihad Towers.

As a hotel and conference centre, throughout Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, unique spaces have been especially created to both celebrate and enhance moments in time and everyday human interaction.



There is a steady amount of business from GCC nationals and residents choosing to stay at the Jumeirah at Etihad Towers hotel. GCC and specifically UAE and Saudi Arabia guests continue to play a major role as one of their key source markets in the Middle East. Other key source markets include the United Kingdom, Germany and the USA. In addition to room nights, Jumeirah at Etihad Towers' Conference Centre also saw increased demand both internationally and regionally for the property's luxury facilities.

High Expectations

The combination of the pre-scheduled appointments

and nine networking opportunities at ibtm arabia 2016 including Discovery Day, a Welcome Reception and Gala Evening ensures valuable touch points for everyone to help make meaningful connections.

Post show research from 2015 confirmed that 95 per cent of both exhibitors and Hosted Buyers were satisfied with the event and the business they ensured. So, this year ibtm arabia plans to deliver the same experience, which will continue to deliver maximum return on investment for all suppliers and buyers participating this year. 📈

Best CSR award for Mövenpick

Mövenpick Hotel West Bay Doha was recently awarded the Best CSR Initiative for the Tourism Sector in Qatar in recognition of their efforts to support the local community.



An independent committee comprised of academics, media experts, and representatives from the government and the private sector, all of which study and monitor the initiatives taken by Qatar-based companies carefully selects the recipients of these awards.

The award ceremony took place recently under the patronage of **H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Saud Al-Thani**, the Governor of Qatar Central Bank and Chairman of the Sport & Social Contribution Fund (Da'am), who also presented the award to the hotel's General Manager, **Ghada Sadek**.

Mövenpick Hotel West Bay Doha has many different activities and initiatives, ranging from sustainability, to education and fundraising. In addition to being a driver of sustainability and living green, the property is also focusing on supporting individuals with special



Ghada Sadek
General Manager
Mövenpick Hotel West Bay Doha

needs and has introduced a dedicated training programme for the students of the Shafallah Centre for Children with Special Needs. During the two-month training programme, the students learned about the importance of teamwork and time management, whilst nurturing self-confidence. Currently, there are two full-time employees at the hotel from the centre.

Mövenpick Hotel West Bay Doha also teams up with Right4Children, an organisation supporting disadvantaged young peo-

ple through education and consequently career opportunities. Participants of the programme undergo essential training in the hotel until they are ready for a full-time job. As a result, the hotel has trained and hired 18 employees from Right4Children since 2013.

Commenting on the award, Sadek said, "This award is a reflection of our strong commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility and giving back to the community. We have made a pledge to plant these meaningful principles and have a dedicated Corporate Responsibility team that is active in driving forward new initiatives."

Shine Through

- ◆ Shine, the global sustainability programme of Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts, focuses on supporting education initiatives
- ◆ Shine's practices are grouped around Environment, Employer and Social Sustainability

588-room ibis One Central opens

AccorHotels recently unveiled its third property located at the Dubai World Trade Centre complex and the largest ibis property in the GCC region.



The ibis One Central joins its other existing properties in the vicinity, Novotel World Trade Centre and Economy ibis World Trade Centre. Ibis One Central is designed with the modern, fast-paced guest in mind, with 24-hour check-in and complimentary Wi-Fi access throughout the property. It is within walking distance of Dubai's World Trade Centre metro station and is also in close proximity to the Burj Khalifa, Dubai Mall, Dubai International Financial Centre and Jumeirah Beach, making it an ideal choice for the city's business and leisure travellers.

ibis One Central food and beverage venues include WOK & Co, an Asian fusion restaurant; and Cubano-Lito Bar & Grill, which offers light snacks and live music. Breakfast is served at the hotel from 4 am to mid-day while a 24-hour menu is available in-room. Other features include soundproofed rooms, gym access, under-

MICE Initiatives

- ◆ For business guests there are five, fully-equipped meeting rooms accommodating up to 200 people

ground car park and free shuttle to/from the beach and major shopping malls. Non-smoking rooms are also available.

"With Dubai World Trade Centre hosting a year-round calendar of world-class events, exhibitions and conferences, our strategic location within the bustling district means we can welcome business travellers and event attendees. The MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) sector is only set to grow further in the run-up to Dubai Expo 2020 and our inventory of 588 guest rooms enables us to meet the needs of corporates and exhibitors. What's more, the hotel is close to many of Dubai's tourism hotspots making ibis One Central a perfect choice for budget-

conscious leisure travellers," says **Frederic Gitzner**, Cluster General Manager, Novotel & ibis World Trade Centre and ibis One Central.

"Looking after our guests and ensuring they enjoy a peaceful night's sleep is our top priority, and, with the innovative and supremely comfortable Sweet Bed™ by ibis, we pride ourselves on offering visitors a home away from home, 365 nights a year," adds **Tyrone Lodder**, Hotel Manager, ibis World Trade Centre and ibis One Central. 📈



Connecting 5 continents daily

Pioneer in African aviation, Ethiopian Airlines operates to 91 international destinations connecting five continents with over 200 daily flights.

 SHEHARA RIZLY

Ethiopian Airlines use the latest technology aircrafts such as the B777s and B787s Dreamliner with an average fleet age of five years. They have the largest network in Africa covering over 54 destinations. Ethiopian Airlines operates to 23 destinations in the Middle East and Asia and 14 destinations in Europe and the Americas. Their domestic network covers over 20 destinations. In cargo operations, they have over 24 dedicated freighter destinations across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

"When we come to our operations in the UAE, ET provides three daily passenger flights between Addis Ababa and Dubai with the B777s and B787s Dreamliner aircraft. In addition, we operate four weekly freighter flights between Addis Ababa and Dubai with B-777F air-



Thomas Gabreyohannes
Regional Director-Gulf and Pakistan
Ethiopian Airlines

In the UAE, ET provides 3 daily flights between Addis Ababa and Dubai with the B777s and B787s Dreamliner aircraft

craft," comments **Thomas Gabreyohannes**, Regional Director-Gulf and Pakistan, Ethiopian Airlines.

Vision 2025

Ethiopian Airlines is cur-


rently implementing a 15-year strategic plan called Vision 2025 that will see it become the leading aviation group in Africa with seven business centres: Ethiopian Domestic and Regional Airline; Ethiopian International Passenger Airline; Ethiopian Cargo; Ethiopian MRO; Ethiopian Aviation Academy; Ethiopian In-flight Catering Services; and Ethiopian Ground Service. "In our Vision 2025, we forecast the number of passengers to grow to 18 million from the current figure of over 6 million. Total revenue and profit shall increase to \$10 billion and \$1 billion, respectively. The number of international destinations will also increase to 120 while the fleet size will reach 140," Gabreyohannes says.

Route enhancements

Ethiopian Airlines is planning further long-haul network expansion in 2016 with new destinations in Asia and North America. New

York is in line to become Ethiopian's fourth destination in North America by mid-2016, joining Toronto, Washington Dulles and recently launched Los Angeles. Ethiopian is also looking at Chicago and Houston, which could be launched in 2017. In Asia, Ethiopian is planning to launch services to Chengdu, Ho Chi Minh and Jakarta. Parallel to adding new destinations, they will deepen their existing services through frequency increase and capacity upgrades. Delivery of the first A350 aircraft is expected in May 2016.

Loyalty Programme

Passengers have the option of redeeming miles on any of the Star Alliance member airlines. Apart from earning miles, Ethiopian offers additional benefits such as extra baggage allowance, priority check-in, waitlist priority and priority baggage handling to its members, he concludes. 

More rights in the sky for Cebu Pacific

■ The Philippines' leading carrier Cebu Pacific (CEB) was recently granted additional entitlements for international routes by the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)

designated as an official carrier under the ASEAN Multilateral Agreement on Air Services (MAAS). As soon as the Philippines complete the ratification of the relevant protocols of the MAAS,



from Manila to the United Arab Emirates from various points in the Philippines to Taipei and Kaohsiung in Taiwan and from Manila to key destinations in Russia. CEB's request for rights to operate direct flights to Taipei from Caticlan, Clark, Davao, Puerto Princesa, and Tagbilaran, as well as direct flights to Kaohsiung from Caticlan and Cebu, was likewise granted.

The airline is presently operating 10 times weekly flights between Manila and Taipei, and thrice weekly flights between Cebu and Taipei.

CEB was also designated as an official Philippine carrier to Russia, and was granted thrice weekly flights each from Manila to Moscow and Vladivostok. Civil Aeronautics Board approved Cebu Pacific's request to be

CEB will be able to operate unlimited flights between capital cities within the ASEAN region.

"We sincerely thank and commend the members of the Civil Aeronautics Board for enabling Philippine carriers such as Cebu Pacific to expand operations to key international destinations. We've always maintained that traffic rights are valuable resources that must be rationally allocated to carriers that are willing and able to utilise and operate flights.

"We look forward to mounting additional flights to meet the growing travel demand in communities we serve, and opening new routes to stimulate travel in emerging markets," said **Atty. JR Mantaring**, CEB VP for Corporate Affairs.



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New horizon for trade

The growing niche MICE market of the Middle East, a report from Alpen Capital suggests that international association meetings in the ME have more than tripled over the past 10 years. Supporting this, an Amadeus report shows the GCC MICE industry is witnessing continuous growth and that the ME is set to expand manifold in attracting high-profile global events and state-of-the-art infrastructural investments.

The regional players are capitalising on the huge growth potential, the 2014 visitor figures released by Dubai World Trade Centre Authority (DWTC Authority) show a 10 per cent year-on-year growth in visitor volumes in 2014 compared to the previous year.

Business travellers have a higher average spend which translates into strong economic return for destinations and the wealth of supporting sectors facilitating them from retail to hospitality. According to a World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Economic Impact report, business travel spend was estimated to be worth around \$1,155.5 billion in 2014 and expected to grow 3.7 per cent per year to \$1,661.1 billion by 2024. DWTC Authority put forth a strategy to capitalise and gain new markets to foster growth through investments in expanding capacity, delivering a richer and strategically diversified calendar and attracting international visitors which in turn would drive the impact of the GDP.

DWTC announced plans to increase its indoor complex space to 121.984 square meters by the first quarter of 2016. Abu Dhabi recently opened its purpose-built convention bureau. This year, Oman will unveil its new Exhibition and Convention centre, with tiered seating for 3,200 people and more than 22,000 square metres of column-free exhibition space. Alpen Capital reports that Saudi Arabia is expanding its own exhibition and convention complex in Riyadh.

As the UAE is a hub connecting all continents there are ample opportunities to host events targeted at various segments in different trades. There are new horizons in the offing for trade partners but the success depends on their strength and capacity to go forward.

Hub for creative hospitality

2015 has been an extraordinary year of achievements for ART Rotana, which accomplished tremendous results within a relatively short period of time and raised the bar for the hospitality industry in Bahrain.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has been a significant business and commerce hub in the region and a prime tourist magnet for both its neighboring states and international travellers looking to experience the history, culture and vivacious recreational scene. ART Rotana located at Amwaj Islands is a new property which just completed one year. It features 311 striking sea-view rooms and suits with an inviting, minimalist décor that embraces warm, earthly colour combinations. Comfortable interiors, panoramic views and ample in-room services and amenities making it a haven for business travellers, residents, families and holiday makers looking for the calm, coziness and relaxation of homely living combined with five-star luxury.

We offer eight state-of-the-art meeting rooms and conference facilities, a majestic ballroom, 10 food and beverage outlets, a fully equipped Beach Club with modern fitness and wellness services and a Children's Waterpark that offers plenty of organised activities and attractions for the kids.

ART Rotana boasts award winning Food and Beverage outlets that have been tastefully inspired to suit every palette and provide exciting alternative for smaller, cozier gatherings. In addition, our choice of leisure facilities are equal to none and have been designed to suit all require-

ments, be it the need for some family fun or the desire to relax, rejuvenate and detach.

The hotel features three outdoor swimming pools, a private beach with recreational and water-sport activities, a fun-packed children's waterpark and the kids-only

ART Rotana caters to the growing needs of the global traveller and complements the vibrancy and sophistication of Bahrain's tourism and hospitality sector

supervised Flipper's Club with daily fun group activities for children of all ages.

The property is placed in one of the most popular, trendy water-front locations on the island. Our emphasis is on creative living and this is reflected across the premises, facilities and services; from the buildings' stunning architectural design and embracing interiors right down to the warm and friendly service that greets our guests. With our unique mix of facilities such as the beach, waterpark, range of dining options, extensive business facilities and ballroom, ART Rotana offers families and corporate clients an ideal destination for leisure and business alike, hence our healthy mix of both.

Due to our close proximity to our neighboring GCC countries, we have a large number of guests visit-

ing from the region. However, ART Rotana caters to the growing needs of the global traveller and complements the vibrancy and sophistication of Bahrain's tourism and hospitality sector. The hotel opened its doors to the public in December last year and has since established itself as a hub for creative

hospitality, delivering on its promise for providing a unique offering and unparalleled service within a creatively inspired environment. We will continue to focus our efforts on raising the bar for the industry and provide unparalleled service to our valued guests.

We offer a wide range of corporate promotions that are tailored to suit every occasion. Our elite Rotana Rewards Program is a one-of-a-kind programme that offers three membership packages: Classic, Select and Exclusive, offering a wide array of unique benefits including complimentary dining, recognition and upgrades as well as great rewards.

2015 has been an extraordinary year of achievements for ART Rotana; we have been able to accom-

plish tremendous results within a relatively short period of time and can proudly say that we have exceeded customer expectations, and raised the bar for the hospitality industry in Bahrain. When ART Rotana first arrived in this market, we set off to do something different, unique and inspiring. We exerted great efforts in establishing a prime hotspot for the local community and a destination resort to support the growing needs of the regional and global traveller; we focused on best-in-class hospitality standards, innovative concepts and superior service inspired by the traditions of Bahrain and the welcoming, kind-hearted nature of the Arabian culture. This is the fourth award for ART Rotana in the last 12 months and marks the perfect ending to the perfect year; our efforts have paid off and we look forward to 2016 with ambitious plans to continuously improve ourselves and ensure we stay ahead of the curve and remain the destination of choice for our guests.



Joe Batshoun
General Manager
ART Rotana Amwaj Islands, Bahrain



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Ultra-personalised services for growth

Samir Arora, Cluster General Manager, Ramada Downtown Dubai and Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham at Jumeirah Beach Residence, says targeting the group of travellers who seek ultra-personalised services is the way forward in hospitality and tourism industry.

TT BUREAU

According to some research studies, within the next few years a new category of travellers, known as "millennials" will emerge, which is expected to make up a significant 40 per cent share in the market. The hotel industry will now have to cater to this new segment, where travellers will seek ultra-personalised services.

Arora says, "Hotels are now changing in keeping with the global perspective. Within the next few years the hotels will need to revive their strategies of enticing the guests. Social media cannot just have information on services provided by the property; instead you need to update what is happening around the hotel and within the destination. The new travellers will not want to

spend time in their rooms, but use their time at the lobby with Wi-Fi connectivity, where they can network with their online communities. Hotels need to identify with and cater to this new market segment which will occupy a good 40 per cent of the clientele."

Today, tech-savvy travellers are more likely to book online to save time and expect a lot of rewards on the way. "We need to know our guests even before they come in to the hotel. For example, their likes and dislikes in terms of food and even reading materials, etc should be available to make it an exemplary stay for these travellers. Even the F&B will need to be a grab and go, where the food should be ready at any given time. To keep up with the trend, hotels have to look at various means to interact with this new group



Samir Arora
Cluster GM, Ramada Downtown and
Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham

of travellers and get a better understanding of their needs and demands," he adds.

Technology for the industry

It is time that the industry looked into more updated technology patterns where you can have the whole history of the client even before they enter the hotel. Business cards will be outdated and

the mobile will be the gateway to all transactions whether it is to book a hotel or flight. We have seen an increase in this trend especially

make sure both hotels will be on par as leaders in their respective locations. Recently taking on the lead at Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham, Arora

Hotels are now changing in keeping with the global perspective. Within the next few years the hotels will need to revive their strategies of enticing the guests

in the Middle Eastern market over the past few years and this will dominate the industry very soon.

Arora is entrusted to look into all aspects of the hospitality, finance, guests and employee satisfaction in detail in both Ramada Downtown Dubai and Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham. The dynamic teams in both hotels will look forward to his guidance to

plans to enhance the guest arrival experience, improving the lobby and the car park to create an inviting ambience for the guests.

New feeder markets and trade shows

"Majority of the properties' guests are from the GCC, catering to destinations such as Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, to name a few. We are dry hotels, family-friendly

and cater to the various needs of different travellers. This year, we are looking at tapping more markets and segments. We participate in various travel and tourism trade international exhibitions such as ITB Berlin, Moscow Leisure and road shows in Central Europe and Central Asia.

We have a keen focus this year in the Indian corporate sector and we are currently in the process of partnering with hotel representatives in India to gain a guaranteed business in terms of both leisure and corporate bookings. It is predicted that the travel industry will grow by \$100 billion within the next few years, so it is now time for us as hoteliers to focus attention to the new emerging trends and gain a bigger market share," concludes Arora. 🌟



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A new abode in Ras Al Khaimah

The Tulip Inn Ras Al Khaimah, managed by Golden Tulip and owned by Action Group, is the first hotel of the new generation ready for business and leisure guests.



SHEHARA RIZLY

The property will open in the beginning of April by **Christian Quemener**, pre-opening General Manager, who comes with over 30 years worldwide experience in Hospitality. Currently the management team, headed by **Hani Shahwan**, Hotel Manager, is already on site, adding the final touches. Tulip Inn Ras Al Khaimah will have 102 rooms, suites and apartments.

The categories will be from Classic Rooms to Flamingo Suites; 2 bedrooms and Ambassador Suites; 2-bedroom apartment with full kitchen ideally suited for families. There will be a sports bar "Champs" to meet and follow all sportive events, "Fresh" a new Golden Tulip (GT) restaurant concept, Ristretto Café and lounge another special of

GT, comprehensive fitness centre, along with three fully equipped meeting rooms which can accommodate up to 80 depending on the style of the event.

Many plans are in the pipeline for the property and **Amine E. Moukarzel**, President, Golden Tulip MENA, said, "We take this opportunity to thank Action Hotels for granting us the management opportunity for the new hotel that will be branded as Tulip Inn Ras Al Khaimah.

"We are adding a budget hotel to Ras Al Khaimah to our existing 4 star hotel, Golden Tulip Khatt Springs, offering to the local and incoming businessmen and tourists the opportunity to explore Ras Al Khaimah at their convenient budget, working closely with RAK Tourism Authority to promote this destination



Amine E. Moukarzel
President
Golden Tulip MENA

We are adding a budget hotel to Ras Al Khaimah to our existing 4 star hotel, Golden Tulip Khatt Springs

worldwide by participating to the international road shows and exhibitions. This compliments our pres-



Christian Quemener
Pre-opening General Manager
Tulip Inn Ras Al Khaimah

Two airlines provide passage to the destination, Air Arabia and Qatar Airways, therefore Ras Al Khaimah enjoys a lot of visitors

ence in the UAE to 11 hotels thanking **His Excellency Sheikh Mubarak A. M. Al Sabah**



Hani Shahwan
Hotel Manager
Tulip Inn

We work very closely with the RAK Tourism Board and we are currently making plans to attend ITB Berlin, Moscow and other roadshows

Today, Ras Al Khaimah is a rapidly progressing destination attracting many visitors from various source markets.

As it is centrally located, it is ideal either on a business trip or a weekend with good food and finest wines and drinks, a smooth and relaxed atmosphere.

Quemener commented, "Two airlines provide passage to the destination, Air Arabia and Qatar Airways, therefore Ras Al Khaimah enjoys a lot of visitors which will probably increase when we open our property."

As a new property, Tulip Inn participated for the first time at the World Travel Market last year with the support of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism. **Hani Shahwan**, Hotel Manager, Tulip Inn, stated, "we work very closely with the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Board and we are currently making plans to attend ITB Berlin, Moscow and many other roadshows which will derive business to this property." 🍷

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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Ethiopian Airlines' product seminar for travel agents

A product seminar was organised by Ethiopian Airlines for travel agents recently at the Sheraton Creek hotel in Dubai. The introduction to the event was given by N.G. Shiva Prakash, Manager Sales, followed by presentations by the Regional Director for Gulf and Pakistan Thomas Gabreyhannes. The new Cargo Manager Enquanhone Minyashal presented the wide scope available for Cargo for Ethiopian Airlines.



Kempinski: New luxury landmark

Majid Al Futtaim, the shopping mall, retail and leisure pioneer across the Middle East and North Africa, has unveiled the refurbished Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates following a 368 million dirhams renovation.

TT BUREAU

The renovation work, which kicked off in January 2012, has united world-class interior designers and architects to create innovative and vibrant concepts capable of attracting customers around the world.

The project has seen the refurbishment of all 373 guest rooms and suites, the placement of new state-of-the-art conference and catering facilities, the opening of three new restaurants and lounges, Olea, Salero Tapas & Bodega and Noir, the relaunch of Aspen by Kempinski - the hotel's luxury lobby lounge, and the enhancement of the hotel lobby. The final phase of the renovation programme will launch 20 re-designed luxury Aspen Chateaux overlooking Ski Dubai that are expected to open for guests by early 2016.



Simon Barlow
Chief Executive Officer
Hotels at Majid Al Futtaim Properties

The refurbishment will not only provide our guests with a new level of experience but Dubai with a new luxury landmark

Simon Barlow, Chief Executive Officer, Hotels at Majid Al Futtaim Properties, comments, "Connected to the award-winning Mall of the Emirates, the Kempinski

Hotel is the most successful hotel investment projects for Majid Al Futtaim. In line with our vision to create great moments for everyone, every day and to remain at the top in Dubai's evolving and highly competitive luxury hotel

level of experience but Dubai with a new luxury landmark."

General Manager of Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, **Grant Ruddiman**, adds, "Our key priority during the refurbishment

Our key priority during the refurbishment programme was to maintain our guests' convenience in line with the Kempinski Hotel unique and world-class services

Grant Ruddiman
General Manager
Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates

sector, we always embrace the very latest in design, technology and architecture. We continue to demonstrate commitment to keep all our hotels fresh and relevant through ongoing investment, innovation and property renovation. We believe the refurbishment will not only provide our guests with a new

programme was to maintain our guests' convenience in line with the Kempinski Hotel unique and world-class services. We are looking forward to our new and returning guests visiting to experience our crisp and modern new look and innovative outlets and facilities."

Sharjah calls for sustainable solutions

The third edition of the Hospitality Industry Forum, recently organised by the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), concluded at the Chamber of Commerce in Sharjah. Many industry experts and professionals were part of this event from the economic, hospitality and tourism sectors. The main focus was to support the best practices in tourism to enhance contribution of the sector to the emirate's economy.



Dubai, Oman key inbound markets

Managing portfolios for over 4,500 clients in the Gulf, the Middle East, and Europe with 220 office locations, Kanoo Travel has been providing comprehensive specialised services to the travel industry since 1937.

 SHEHARA RIZLY

Kanoo Travel is the largest travel management firm in the Gulf/Middle East region. The company has over 1,000 travel specialists with over 220 office locations in GCC/Middle East and Europe. Established in the Kingdom of Bahrain at first in trade then diversified to travel and tourism, today it has become one of the largest independent family owned companies in the Gulf region. In 1980, they were the first to set up global partnership with American Express travel apart from many other noteworthy events in their portfolio. Kanoo Travel was the recipient of many awards from Government of Abu Dhabi & Government of Dubai for outstanding services. In 2015, Kanoo Travel was adjudged the best corporate travel company in GCC/Middle East region.



Sunil D'Souza
General Manager for the UAE
Oman, Qatar, Iraq and Afghanistan
Kanoo Travel

We would like to add more markets to our portfolio, especially for inbound business

At Kanoo, they provide equal focus on both outbound as well as inbound business. Inbound business has now been driven via their luxury leisure arm Travel Attaché, whereby they handle around 4,500 plus customers

and outbound is handled via Kanoo Holidays leisure arm where they handle around 18,000 Individual Holiday requests per year. Inbound tourism is picking up in the Middle East in general and GCC in specific. Among the GCC countries, Dubai and Oman are the key inbound destinations which attract 20 million plus visitors.

Their DMC arm travel attaché has inbound holiday packages starting from three nights to 15 nights, each focused on specific group of travellers. From mass market to luxury traveller, they have programmes that are custom built based on the needs of the client. Also they handle 3-4 MICE groups per month via Kanoo Holidays and that accounts to 3,500 plus clients per year. The MICE locations in UAE are spread amongst Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah

and Muscat/Salalah in Oman. Outbound is a massive market with over AED 1.2 billion in travel spend.

"We represent over 25 airlines in various GCC locations in the UAE. Due to the ongoing economic scenario outbound and inbound numbers may fluctuate this year. However at the corporate front the number of groups/MICE business we handle may continue well this year. We would like to add more markets to our portfolio, especially for inbound business. We have long-standing relationship with corporates, some are well into 15 years. Besides Corporate business which is the core of our business we also have retail clients, online distribution channels, and Marine Travel business," stated Sunil D'Souza, General Manager for the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Iraq and Afghanistan, Kanoo Travels. 

Flyin.com partners with Amadeus Saudi Arabia

Flyin.com, the first online travel agency in Saudi Arabia and MENA region, recently integrated Amadeus services into their online booking systems. As part of the partnership, Amadeus Saudi Arabia will provide its advanced solutions to support an updated, newly developed platform hosted by Flyin.com. This platform integrates ancillary services such as: chargeable seats and waitlist seats on



Nashat Bukhari
General Manager
Amadeus Saudi Arabia

The services by Amadeus allow us to perform as efficiently as traditional travel agencies

Faisal Alhomaithi
CEO, Flyin.com

light ticketing carriers. These applications are now updated on the Amadeus ticket changer which also feature other applications such as up-selling with low fares for eligible carriers

Faisal Alhomaithi, CEO, Flyin.com, says, "By incorporating Amadeus' ancillary services, we aim to ensure that travellers will find what fits their needs, and can travel however they want,

with satisfaction and peace of mind. The host of services by Amadeus allows us to perform as efficiently as traditional travel agencies, if not more, with the objective of delivering a convenient and customised travel booking experience."

Nashat Bukhari, General Manager, Amadeus Saudi Arabia, says, "Amadeus prides itself on the ability to understand the needs of our key stakeholders and make the right solutions available that will benefit the travel industry. We are dedicated to helping them alter the shape of the travel industry in the region, by providing them the ability to maintain a competitive edge, coupled with exceptional customer service and ongoing innovations in our products and solutions."

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Maximise revenue for better yield

Reaching out to new feeder markets is a strategy utilised by key players in the trade, diverting their attention from the traditional source markets to new markets to enable earning a better yield. Holiday Inn Dubai-Al Barsha, part of InterContinental Hotels (IHG) Group reaches out to these new markets through its strategy of being a cut above its competition.

TT BUREAU

Last year, many factors contributed to the decline of key feeder markets such as the US and Europe for hotels in Dubai. However, this shortfall for the Holiday Inn was substituted by the GCC and MENA region markets which currently contribute to 65 per cent to their business.

Continually innovating, they remain a leader in market share, below are some ways why Holiday Inn Dubai-Al Barsha is considered a preferential choice of hotel in Dubai.

Unique Location

Located in New Dubai, on Sheikh Zayed Road in Al Barsha, Holiday Inn is less than 100 metres away from the metro station, close to the Mall of Emirates and easily accessible from all airports in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. It is a four star hotel akin to a five star property with 309 rooms, including a new club floor equipped with the latest facilities for both leisure and corporate travellers.

New Club Floor

Despite being a four star property Holiday Inn - Dubai has announced, akin to a 5-star hotel, a new Club floor with a dedicated Club Lounge.



Roxana Jaffer
CEO, Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha and
Director, Sovereign Hotels (BVI)

This is a unique opportunity for all discerning guests who wish to upgrade to the next level of service, so they can enjoy express check-in and check-out services, happy hours and afternoon tea as well take pleasure in special

amenities in all 53 rooms, a turn-down service with special treats, an iPod docking station, a Nespresso machine and fresh orange juice making facilities with complimentary laundry and transfers to the airport.

Business Meetings and Dining Options

The hotel takes pride in being a premier venue not only in its food and beverage offering but boasts seven state of the art meeting rooms serving up to about 80 guests depending on seating style, becoming a preferential choice for the corporate segment.

The dining outlets are popular with both hotel guests and Dubai patrons due to the diversity in cuisine offered. The Gem Garden an all-day dining outlet, with a Sushi counter; to the Royal Budha, a fine dining Thai restaurant; to *Gharana*, a casual dining Indian restaurant boasting an USP of live daily music to Xennya Terrace, Arabic lounge overlooking the Burj; makes Holiday Inn

The transition of GIBTM to ibtm arabia is not in name alone. The new name reflects the change to a grander venue which in turn will reflect in its remit to a wider arena, a wider networking scope and indeed a platform to the wider world web. Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha is proud to participate in this significant transition

International Trade Shows - ibtm arabia 2016

Participation in various international trade shows and exhibitions is important to explore new business opportunities at all the properties. This year Holiday Inn Dubai is excited about ibtm arabia, to be held from February 9-11, 2016 in Abu Dhabi. It is an exclusive event for the elite properties seeking new business opportunities, especially for MICE.

Roxana Jaffer, CEO, Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha, and Director, Sovereign Hotels (BVI), commented, "The transition of GIBTM - Gulf Incentive Business Travel & Meetings Exhibition to ibtm arabia - Incentive Business Travels & Meetings Arabia - is not in name alone. The new name reflects the change to a grander venue which in turn will reflect in its remit to a wider arena, a wider networking scope and indeed a platform to the wider world web. Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha is proud to participate in this significant transition."

Dubai - Al Barsha a favourite choice. Additionally, a coffee shop, the Q Sports Bar, Roof Top Bar and the underground Retro Venue complete the fantastic food and beverage offering.

five core values : 'Do the right thing; Show we care; Aim higher; Celebrate difference and Work better together' are inculcated as part of the mandatory training given to staff.

Service Standards – key to success

In a competitive market Holiday Inn Dubai spears ahead because of the service standards it instils in all the staff. InterContinental Hotels Group's (IHG)

These core values have been the driving force behind their operations, and are a foundation of the success of the hotel and puts it way ahead of those hotels popping up in the market today.

Sustainable green initiatives

At inception eight years ago, it was important to have a mandate for all stakeholders, employees and management to empower every person to understand the necessity of preserving the environment and to help build for a better society. Today, more than ever before, travellers want to stay at establishments that demonstrate care: care for society, care for the environment and care for their people.

Holiday Inn Dubai-Al Barsha is synonymous with care.

Being an official partner with United Nation World Food Programme since December 2013 and till date the hotel has managed by the endeavours of the staff to raise funds to feed over 400,000 hungry children in the world.

"Green Engage" is another part of their agenda to conserve energy in all areas. Last year the hotel's concerted efforts enabled a saving of 7.08% on energy costs, 7.64% on water usage and showed a reduction in carbon footprint by 7.07%. The fruits of this labour earning the hotel 'The Best waste Management Hotel' under Dubai Green Tourism Awards.



Accolades for RezLive.com

RezLive.com, a product of Travel Designer Group, has won "The World's Greatest Brands & Leaders 2015-Asia & GCC" award.



Jaal Shah, Group Managing Director - RezLive.com, says, "Thanks to the efforts of my team at RezLive.com, we have received the coveted 'The World's Greatest Brands & Leaders Award.' It's a great achievement for a hard working team, headed by great sales team and well supported by tech support staff and outstanding operation representatives. To win an award in the Asia & GCC region, showcases our strength and reach in this region."

The World's Greatest Brands & Leaders Awards is a premier award recognition event, which honours the top Brands across different industries. The award facilitated by United World Holdings LLC, URS Media Consulting P.L. and AsiaOne, with Indian Business & Professional



Jaal Shah
Group Managing Director
RezLive.com

It's a great achievement for a hard working team. To win an award in the Asia & GCC region, showcases our strength and reach in this region

Council (IBPC), Dubai as the Associate Partner and

PricewaterhouseCoopers P.L. as the Process Reviewer at a ceremony held in Dubai, UAE.

The Indo-UAE Business Summit and Awards 2015 on the theme Celebrating 44, India UAE a success Story - Strategic Partner - Consulate General India Dubai was held on December 11-12, 2015 at the GoDolphin Ballroom of Jumeirah Emirates Tower Hotel, in Dubai.

RezLive.com is one of the few wholesalers who offer single feed to 175,000+ international rooms around the world, offering real time access to rooms that are available at the best rates. RezLive.com also offers 45,000+ sightseeing items and over 5,000 tours in 500 cities & 5,000+ transfer options in over 900 Airport and City Locations. 🌐

Virtual tours with Rixos

■ In an age when technology grows at a rapid pace, most hotel properties line up to be the first to better position their products and services. Rixos The Palm, Dubai, and Rixos Bab Al Bahr, Ras Al Khaimah, are the first hotels in the UAE to launch virtual tours in partnership with Google. With "Google Street View," guests can take an in depth look across the entire resort, just like in real time.

Alexander Schneider, General Manager, Rixos The Palm, commented, "We are really pleased to have this tool in place and feel that this will revolutionise the hotel booking process. As the first in the country to roll this out, we are setting a standard of pre-arrival experience which we are confident the rest of the industry will aspire." When users of Google type the name of the hotel into

the search engine, they can simply click on the photographs on the right hand information box and 'enter' the resort - clicking through to the areas they want to explore and navigating the resorts at their leisure.

In addition, the hotel is now bookable through Google, making it easier for browsers to make a room booking almost instantaneously.

Gulf Reps Partners Outrigger

■ Outrigger Enterprises Group opened a sales and marketing representation office in Dubai covering the Middle East region. Middle East experts, Dubai-based Gulf Reps Ltd., will be responsible for supporting the development of a Middle East strategy to drive sales for Outrigger Resorts' nine premium beachfront properties across the Indian Ocean, Asia and the Pacific.



Sammy Musa
Managing Director
Gulf Reps

Mark Simmons, Vice President Sales and Marketing for Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean, Outrigger Resorts, stated that strong economic growth rates, an affluent indigenous population and a large expatriate

community were key factors in Outrigger's move into the region. "Gulf Reps have been high level regional hospitality representation experts since 2006 in the Middle East's key source markets. They will offer key strategic and tactical

input to help us build business and promote the Outrigger brand in a very dynamic region," said Simmons.

Outrigger Resorts will work closely with Gulf Reps Managing Director, **Sammy Musa**, and Senior Account Manager, **Francesca Monfero**.

Simmons said that the Middle East was a key market for Outrigger, which opened the Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort in 2014 and the award-winning Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort in 2015. Both destinations have direct access from major Gulf Air Carriers, as does Phuket, Thailand, where Outrigger has two properties.

Ascott eyes 100 mn Chinese tourists

The Ascott Limited (Ascott), will make available its global network of serviced residences on Alitrip, an online travel service platform under Chinese e-commerce giant the Alibaba Group, a first for any serviced residence company.



Ascott already has 24 of its China properties with 4,300 apartment units available for booking by Alitrip users through a directly operated online flagship store. It will list its global network of more than 26,000 apartment units operating in over 60 cities on the one-stop online travel platform by June this year. The partnership will allow Ascott to deepen access to over 100 million Chinese travellers currently served by Alitrip.

Lee Chee Koon, Chief Executive Officer, Ascott, says, "Chinese travellers can look forward to even more travel options on our Alitrip store, when Ascott doubles our portfolio to 80,000 units globally by 2020. China is the world's second largest economy, and rising incomes are driving domestic travel and making it the world's



Lee Chee Koon
Chief Executive Officer
Ascott

Chinese travellers can look forward to even more travel options on our Alitrip store, when Ascott doubles our portfolio to 80,000 units globally by 2020

biggest outbound travel market. "Chinese are amongst Ascott's top customers at our properties globally with

revenue surging by 36 per cent year-on-year. Our serviced residences are ideal for Chinese families who enjoy the privacy of individual bedrooms and the convenience of a kitchen within a spacious apartment. Ascott's partnership with Alitrip follows our recent investment in Tujia.com International, China's largest online apartment sharing platform where our properties outside of China will also be available for booking by first quarter of this year."

Lee elaborated, "With 668 million citizens online, China is home to the world's largest community of Internet users and consumers are increasingly using social channels as well as websites to review, book and pay for their holidays at home or abroad. Our strategic partnerships with Alitrip and Tujia.com International reinforce As-

cott's commitment to create a seamless O2O (Offline-to-Online and Online-to-Offline) experience for our guests as we reach out to these hundreds of millions of Internet and smartphone users in China."

Kevin Goh, Managing Director North Asia, Ascott, added, "Since opening Ascott's online store on Alitrip with our properties in China in August 2015, we have seen high traffic and strong sales. By directly managing Ascott's online store on Alitrip we are able to be nimble in running promotions such as special offers to drive Ascott Online Advantage member sign-ups and the sale of cash vouchers for subsequent reservations. We are positive that the partnership will allow Ascott to tap on the growing segment of tech-savvy, independent travellers." 🌐

Google Street View promotes Jordan

■ For the first time an international campaign was launched by **Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah** in partnership with Google to promote Jordan's wonders such as Petra among others.

Narrated by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, the Petra Street View video was featured on the Google search homepage of different countries around the world for 24 hours at a time. It will subsequently alternate across continents over the next few weeks.

The campaign features a video tour, available globally on YouTube, of the rose-red city and Queen Rania.

Her Majesty wrote a blogpost for Google in order to launch this international campaign, "People all over the world now have a window into our magical kingdom in the heart of the Middle East... Understand more about each other's stories and cultures and histories... realise that we are more alike than we are different," she added.

Since November 23, 2015 360-degree street view imagery of Petra and 30 other landmarks in Jordan became available on Google



Her Majesty Queen Rania
Al Abdullah

People all over the world now have a window into our magical kingdom in the heart of the Middle East

Maps for the first time. This technology lets users explore places around the world like landmarks, natural wonders, as well as culturally and historically significant sites.

The imagery of the 30 of Jordan's historical sites and other sites is now available on Google Maps and can be viewed on g.co/Jordanhighlights and g.co/Petra.

Sharjah Tourism has eyes set

Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) participated at the Fitur International Tourism Trade Fair recently in Madrid, Spain, for the fifth consecutive year with a target of attracting more Ibero-American tourists to the destination.

TT BUREAU

This year the delegation which participated at the Fitur International trade fair led by Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development (SCTDA) board comprised of Cozmo Travel, Sharjah Airport Travel Agency (SATA), Ramada Hotel Sharjah and Golden Tulip. The delegation identified new tour operators and explored opportunities to establish new direct flight connections to Sharjah. The innovative Sharjah stand at Fitur, spread across 70 sq mts, highlighted the emirate's unique cultural identity.

SCTDA has been participating in international forums and exhibitions on an annual basis as part of its efforts to

strengthen the position of Sharjah in the international tourism market. As a global meeting point for tourism professionals and the leading trade fair for inbound and

outbound Ibero-American markets, Fitur provides an ideal platform to exchange experience and discuss opportunities for collaboration with experts, investors

and key players in the field of tourism. It also offers an opportunity to learn the best practices and the latest developments in the international tourism industry.



on Ibero-American markets

During its participation in Fitur over the past four years, SCTDA has been successful in introducing Sharjah as an authentic cultural family tourism destination to visitors from Spain and the Iberian Pen-

insula as well as those from South America.

Central and South America form crucial markets for Sharjah's tourism sector, especially since these regions have direct flight con-

nectivity to the UAE. Recent research has shown that a large number of tourists from South American markets make a stopover in the UAE, especially in Sharjah, on their way to Middle East tourist locations. With its

wide tourism portfolio, ranging from cultural tourism to retail and medical tourism, Sharjah remains a major attraction for these tourists.

Considering that cultural tourism is the main attraction

for visitors from these markets, SCTDA aims to attract more visitors to Sharjah and raise more awareness about the emirate as one of their favourite travel destinations.

At the Madrid fair, SCTDA promoted its various events, including Sharjah Light Festival, which will be held from February 4-13, 2016. The Authority provided visitors

with information and brochures on the tourism sector in Sharjah, and organised a number of activities for visitors. Fitur attracted nearly 9,500 exhibitors and over 220,000 trade participants and potential travellers from 165 countries; it offered SCTDA a major platform to promote Sharjah's tourism products in the Spanish and European markets.



Celebrating success Gatsby style

Yassat Gloria Hotel and Apartments celebrated its third anniversary in December 2015 in the presence of various partners and travel agents. Commenting on the success of the evening, Freddy Farid, Area General Manager, Gloria Hotels and Resorts, congratulated the team at Yassat Gloria Hotel & Apartments for the many successes it has achieved over the years.



ANTA Holidays

UAE

Gaurav Khandelwal joins ANTA Holidays (Destination Management Company – UAE) as its Global Head – Tours. In his new assignment, he will head the tours division encompassing product development, contracting, operations and sales. With almost 20 years of experience in the industry, Khandelwal possesses in depth knowledge of B2B market PAN India, he now takes on the role of promoting UAE across the globe.



Etihad Airways

UAE

Etihad Airways has announced the appointment of **Captain Salah Alfarajalla**, who has been with Etihad Airways since 2007, as Senior Vice President Security and National Pilot Development. In his new role, Captain Salah will be responsible for aviation and corporate security, and will continue to oversee the airline's cadet pilot programme. Captain Salah has 36 years' experience in the aviation industry, incorporating 22 years in the UAE Air Force and Air Defence.



Ghudayer Al Dhaheeri has been appointed as the Vice President Corporate Security by Etihad Airways. Before joining Etihad Airways in 2013, Al Dhaheeri was a UAE Air Force fighter pilot and commander with broad experience both in the UAE and overseas. He was a commandant at the Air Warfare Centre AFAD UAE, and a member of the Royal College of Defense Studies in London, UK. In his new role as Vice President Corporate Security, Al Dhaheeri will provide strategic policy and management guidance for the implementation of protective and proactive security measures.



Hyatt International Southwest Asia

Dubai

Hyatt International Southwest Asia has appointed **Salik Mangrio** in the role of Senior Director of Regional Sales, Hyatt Sales Force GCC. In his new role Mangrio is responsible for leading Regional Sale setup at the Hyatt Sales Force in the GCC countries. He joined Hyatt in November 2007 and had pre and post opening hotel experience as Director of Sales and Marketing at Park Hyatt Abu Dhabi and Hyatt Regency Dushanbe. Prior to joining Hyatt, Mangrio held a Head of Regional Sales role in Pakistan and Afghanistan with the additional responsibility of opening a Kabul property.



Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts

Jordan

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts in Jordan has appointed **Michael Nugent** as its new Regional Director. The former General Manager of Mövenpick Ibn Battuta Gate Hotel Dubai is now set to attract new markets for the company's properties in Jordan. Nugent has more than 35 years of experience in the hospitality industry, having worked at Le Méridien and Mövenpick hotels in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. His journey with Mövenpick spans nine years, during which he served as GM of Mövenpick Hotel & Apartments Bur Dubai and Mövenpick Hotel Deira.



Hawthorn Suites

Dubai

Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham Jumeirah Beach Residence has appointed **Mohamed Saad** as its new Director of Sales & Marketing. Bringing in more than 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Saad is tasked to lead the sales and marketing strategies of the hotel, highlighting its key strengths to thrive in the highly competitive Dubai market. Prior to joining Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham JBR, Saad was the Cluster Assistant Director of Sales of Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach Residence and Ramada Sharjah.



Abu Dhabi Airports goes hi-tech

Abu Dhabi Airports has partnered with global IT provider SITA to introduce its latest technologies across Abu Dhabi International Airports' (AUH) three terminals.

TT BUREAU

The investment in SITA's latest innovations will bring Abu Dhabi International Airport's entire IT infrastructure in line with the systems that SITA is already implementing in the new Midfield Terminal Building, currently under construction. These new technologies will help to improve the airport's operational efficiency while providing a seamless passenger experience across all terminals.

As part of the five year contract, SITA will provide a range of advanced and fully integrated airport systems. One of these includes their Airport Management solution which will allow Abu Dhabi Airports to proactively manage the operation of AUH by providing real-time information from across all facilities. This will enable the operations team to plan for events before they happen, while ensuring resources are fully optimised.

Other key products from SITA include AirportConnect Open, which enables airlines to share check-in areas, kiosks and boarding areas while still having access to their own data,



Hani El-Assaad
President
SITA Middle East, India and Africa

and BagManager which allows bags to be tracked in real-time, providing a clear status on any bag no matter where it is in the baggage system. **Eng. Ahmad Al Haddabi**, Chief Operations Officer, Abu Dhabi Airports, said, "Abu Dhabi International Airport continues to experi-

ence double-digit passenger growth and therefore, we are investing in new airport facilities that will allow us to accommodate the forecast future increase in passengers. In order to achieve this we require a trusted technology partner, such as SITA, to provide one-stop, integrated IT solutions across the airport."

Hani El-Assaad, President, SITA Middle East, India and Africa, said, "We have long admired Abu Dhabi International Airport's ability to meet the rapid growth it has experienced over the past few years without compromising the great service offered to passengers."

"We have worked alongside the team at the airport to provide the technology to manage everything from check-in and airport management systems to self-boarding gates, across the existing terminals."

An escapade in the desert

■ Embark on a romantic journey with your beloved and head to Tilal Liwa Hotel, a secluded hideaway leisure resort, where you can relax and enjoy an elegant and cozy atmosphere away from all strains of the city.

Tilal Liwa Hotel is offering a romantic getaway package which includes a one-night stay in a cozy room complete



with welcome fruit platter and a bottle of bubbly on arrival, a bubble bath and romantic arrangement in your room, sumptuous five-course candlelight dinner with drinks, sunshine breakfast delivered in your room, and complimentary desert activities. Delight your special someone with a memorable romantic desert experience any day of the year.



Nassima Royal: a corporate hub

Rebranded as Nassima Royal, a 51-storey landmark situated along the Sheikh Zayed Road, the hotel is a hub mainly for the business travellers.



The ACICO property features four restaurants, two bars, a gym, an outdoor pool and a spa and is a proud member of the Preferred Hotels and Resorts LVX collection since December 2015. After the recent joint alliance with sister property Nassima Tower Hotel Apartments, it now crafts 600 luxurious guest rooms, suites and luxury apartments which combine elegance with style and technology, creating the ultimate in comfort. ACICO is a listed company with a broad portfolio of activities and interests.

Core clientele for the hotel is mainly corporate (70 per cent) but the leisure segment contributes relevantly due to the vast number of guest services provided. The main feeder markets are the UK and US (35 per cent), where



Adib El Khoury
Director Sales and Marketing
Nassima Royal hotel

2015 was quite profitable with a stable high occupancy, which contributed to re-launch of the property

financial, oil and gas companies have their headquarters or branches, in second place are the KSA and UAE with a share of 20 per cent and 18 per cent respectively.

"Overall last year was quite profitable with a stable high occupancy, which contributed to the successful re-launch of the property under the luxury brand of Nassima Royal. The most important trade exhibitions we participate in are ATM, as it permits us to secure business and strengthen the relationships with clients and important key players within the GCC region: ITB as well MITT, relevant to develop the growing Russian and East European market," stated **Adib El Khoury**, Director Sales and Marketing, Nassima Royal.

The joint alliance with the sister company Nassima Tower Hotel Apartments is surely set to strengthen and extend the current brand identity and reinforce the market position of the property, with a renewal of the hotel lobby. 🌟

Leisure meets business

Combining one of the biggest banqueting and conference facilities in Dubai and catering to different types of travellers truly reflects the great position in the industry.



The Méridien Dubai Hotel and Conference Center is conveniently located close to the Dubai International Airport. The 383-room hotel, designed resort-style, has views of landscaped gardens or the swimming pools; 196 of its rooms are located in the recently opened Le Royal Club. Eighteen distinct restaurants and bars offer a different dining experience. The extensive leisure facility includes a world-class fitness centre, five outdoor temperature-controlled swimming pools, floodlit tennis courts, two luxurious spas and a hair & nail salon.

The Great Ballroom offers the latest in technology and can accommodate 1,750 persons; a majlis-style viewing gallery, a dedicated conference room and bridal suite. The total banqueting



Shaun Parsons
General Manager, Le Meridien Dubai
Hotel and Conference Center

We will be participating in key Starwood and DTCM-led roadshows and exhibitions across the UK, USA and Europe

and conference facilities can accommodate from 12 to 1,750 persons spread across 55,000 sq feet of meeting facilities.

The hotel enjoys a good mix of business and leisure guests, predominantly from GCC, UK or Europe. "There is a rise in business once again after the festive season and corporate travellers are on the move. Business is always stronger in Q1 and we are looking forward to a busy season," stated **Shaun Parsons**, General Manager, Le Meridien Dubai Hotel and Conference Center.

He added, "We will be participating in key Starwood and DTCM-led roadshows and exhibitions across the UK, USA and Europe. We will be targeting Corporate/MICE travellers at the meeting show in the UK, IMEX in Frankfurt and IBTM in Barcelona. In addition, we will participate in ILTM in Cannes to position Royal Club facilities to the niche travellers seeking a luxurious hotel destination." 🌟

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