

TRAUTALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Published from: ★ India ★ Middle East

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Arabian Travel Awards



(L-R): Sumeera Bahl, Shaji Thomas, SanJeet, Matthew Powell, Ankush Nijhawan, Dr. Tanushree Pandey, Dominic Sherry, Gunjan Sabiki and Melwin D'Silva

In a bid to recognise the hard work of tourism stalwarts and encourage new talents in the industry in the Middle East, Durga Das Publications organised the first Arabian Travel Awards on July 4, 2017. The dazzling night of glitz and glamour took place at the JW Marriott Deira in Dubai, which witnessed over 150 travel, tourism and hospitality partners from the Middle East converge on one single platform for a formal black-tie event.

The award statuette 'Maya' were given away by Guest of Honour **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, Gladrag Mrs. India, **Sumeera Bahl**, Director, Durga Das Publications Middle East and the **SanJeet**,

Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards. **Kulwant Singh**, Founder and Managing Director, Lama Tours, was declared 'Face of the Future' the highest award of the evening, whilst **Lakshmi Durai**, CEO, Travel Matrix won the 'Best Cruise Professional' award. The awards were divided into four categories: Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards and Partner Awards. These include awards for Best Business Hotel, Best Family Friendly Hotel, Best City Hotel, Best Green Hotel, Best Leisure Hotel, Best Destination Management Company, Best Hotel Apartments, Best B2B Travel Portal, and Best Luxury Hotel to name a few.

(For detailed coverage, read Arabian Travel Awards supplement)

Dubai takes MICE world by storm

As per the latest International Meetings Statistics Report by Union of International Associations, Dubai has moved up to the 10th spot from its previous rank 14 in the 2015 edition with a total of 180 meetings taking place in 2016. **TRAUTALK** finds out from industry experts what it takes to be a leader in hosting MICE events at a destination.

SHEHARA RIZLY



Ahmed Alkhaja
Senior Vice President-Venues,
Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC)

DWTC has a sterling reputation in the global MICE and business industry, and is a strategic driver of economic growth, posting significant year-on-year increases in international business visitation and participation. With more than 500 events, DWTC's strategy of content-driven growth is closely aligned with the Dubai Plan 2021. In 2016, DWTC hosted 3.03 million business delegates and attendees – including 45 per cent foreign business travellers from 185 countries – and attracted 51,711 exhibitors, of which nearly 70 per cent were international exhibitors. The growth in international participation is a result of DWTC's ability to respond and react to a wide array of industries, event formats and client needs, which in turn results in DWTC events contributing approximately three per cent annually to Dubai's GDP. **„**



Nayab Rafiq
CEO
Pinnacle Middle East

Realising its importance to the region, Pinnacle Middle East had created the MICE Middle East Forum. In this years' MICE Middle East Forum we have 25 leading industry speakers including two international speakers from World Expo & FIFA World Cup Organisation together to deliver 19 powerful sessions allowing our participants to be well equipped with the latest information. **„**

With Dubai successfully winning the bid to host the World Expo in 2020, the growth rate for the MICE industry is expected to pass \$1.39 billion and increase by 7 per cent each year until 2020. Considering these statistics and with Dubai being the leading premier business destination, the MICE sector holds a greater potential to grow further while attracting more foreign investments and creating more value for the economy. **„** With the introduction of our Great Ballroom in 2015, in addition to the two existing ballrooms, we are focusing on MICE business. Events Hub at Le Meridien Dubai features 24 function rooms—all equipped with the cutting edge Audio Visual technology, 579 rooms and over 250 chefs from all over the world offering the versatility and variety sought by international MICE clients. With over 5500 square metres of events space including one of the largest ballrooms in Dubai and an expert brigade of event specialists makes the planning and execution seamless for event planners. Our conference and banqueting business had been in on the growth trajectory since 2015 with an average annual increase of 40 per cent in revenues. Weddings is also our focus area apart from corporate events and MICE moving forward. **„**



Shaun Parsons
General Manager
Le Meridien Dubai Complex

Contd. on page 3 ►



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Dubai: A global MICE hub

► Contd. from page 1

“With these latest UIA rankings, it is once again clear that Dubai is now not only the regional leader in the sector, but also a major destination on the global stage for business events. We will continue to strengthen our business events offering, and strive towards transforming Dubai into a global knowledge hub. **”**



Issam Kazim
Chief Executive Officer
Dubai Corporation for Tourism
and Commerce Marketing



Abdullah Aridi
Director
Sales & Operations MICE
Alpha Tours

“The prospects for the MICE industry are looking very bright. Indeed the changing trends are clearly indicating that this sector is making a steady comeback as the world economy has started picking up. Meetings, exhibitions, events are essentially networking tools and will always be the cornerstones of successful businesses. What is needed here is to recognise the changing way in which the world is conducting business; trends which are influencing global economies; technological revolution which is making its presence felt in the way in which events and meetings are being conducted. Assimilating these changes seamlessly and responding to it with strategic initiatives will only make this industry stronger. **”**

“The emerging trends include catering towards millennials who demand unique and unconventional experiences worthy of sharing on social media. We also need to keep abreast with technology as potential clients now expect information at their fingertips. Like all hospitality companies we face similar challenges such as global slowdown and socio-political instability. Our understanding of the markets and strategic planning means we aren't caught unaware - we can adapt our sales, marketing, social media and PR campaigns to reach into existing and new markets as required. Our first-class MICE facilities attract customers from all over the world - Dubai is a flourishing success story and an ideal destination for meetings and events. **”**



Tahir Ciyanci
Director of Sales Groups
Jumeirah Group

Dubai Way is the right way

Launched by Dubai College of Tourism, Dubai Way is especially for the government and private sector staff who deal with tourists on a daily basis.

TTT BUREAU

Esса Bin Hadher, General Manager, Dubai College of Tourism, explains that this bespoke online training programme is designed for Dubai's consumer-facing tourism and hospitality professionals. "Having the correct knowledge and information about Dubai is a critical part of being able to provide outstanding customer service. Dubai Way provides this information via engaging video lessons and activities. Dubai Way will assist in delivering exceptional visitor experiences, meaning Dubai will be better placed to welcome 20 million visitors by 2020."

He further explains that the entire tourism industry, hoteliers, travel agents, tour guides, retail establishments, taxi drivers, anyone who interacts with a tourist is encouraged to participate



Nabeel Ejaz
Learning & Development Manager
La Ville Hotel and Suites City Walk Dubai

in Dubai Way. The training is completely online and self-paced, allowing partners to embed the learning within their own training schedules.

Hadher shares, "Through training, we are growing the sector, creating jobs and growing our economy. Dubai Way will result in a contingent of best-in-class tourism professionals, equipped with the knowledge to ensure all visitors experience a memorable time in Dubai."

Nabeel Ejaz, Learning & Development Manager, La Ville Hotel and Suites City Walk Dubai, states, "Dubai Way is one of the most unique programs I have come across in learning about Dubai's culture, heritage, current and future vision. It is a fun-filled programme equipped with lots of meaningful content. The usage of video, sound effects give the Dubai Way an edge from the other programs and most importantly the participants leave the sessions more confident, knowledgeable and more in love with Dubai than already before."

"As a partner this program makes my job so much easier to talk about the culture and tourism market of Dubai with the new employees and most importantly, the programme is self-paced so the learners can choose on how soon they want to finish the program," Ejaz says. ☺

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TRAV TALK

EDITORIAL

A MICE city of one's own

Dubai has maintained its supremacy as a MICE destination by constantly upgrading its products and services to cater to the business, corporate and group travellers. Several factors drive different industries to opt for this emirate to host their events and conferences around the year. One of the key factors is air connectivity. Dubai continues with its growth strategy by introducing new programmes, implementing proper practices in order to get the crème-de-la-crème from around the world. This year starting off with the retail sector events, Dubai has been consistent in its achievements hence it drives towards obtaining numbers not just for Expo 2020 but beyond that as well.

Obtaining a record number of visitors is a task on its own. It derives a lot of hard work, dedication and most importantly ensuring that all sectors synergise to achieve a common goal. As Dubai climbs its way to the 10th rank this year in terms of having the most number of events in the emirate, it is by far the only emirate and country in the region which has managed to even reach the top 25. The latest UIA rankings report comes on heels of Dubai's recent announcement to launch the Dubai Association Conference which will be held on December 11-12, 2017, at the Dubai World Trade Centre. A first-of-a-kind in the region, the conference acknowledges the crucial role associations play in Dubai's socio-economic development and its transition to a knowledge-based economy. Guided by the theme of 'Building a Community', the Dubai Association Conference will host association executives from regional and international associations, government representatives, university faculties and students as well as other professionals who are keen to develop associations.

Dubai's current standing reaffirms the city's status of being a premier destination to host business events, and reflects the tremendous growth experienced over the past five years.



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e-Housekeeping does it better

Known for their operational complexity, the housekeeping department in hotels can nonetheless be streamlined into an efficient and cost-effective operation by leveraging the right strategy.

Industry studies have consistently shown that hotel cleanliness is among the leading factors influencing guest satisfaction and a property's reputation. However, the truth is that for many hoteliers, maintaining an effective housekeeping department can prove to be a significant challenge.

This is due to often overstretched resources and the difficulty in keeping track of all the tasks. Since hotels and resorts traditionally rely on a paper-based management strategy, an increase in assignments or responsibilities often means an increased likelihood of overlooked guestrooms and public areas, with a guest's experience and future property revenues ultimately paying the price.

With the constant juggling of numerous tasks that can easily overwhelm a housekeeping department, it pays to implement and automated solution that has the ability to lighten the load. With instant alert notifications, housekeeping management can take advantage of an inspection matrix, for instance, and can always be sure of their ability to review the quality of completed staff tasks in a timely and efficient manner. Housekeeping attendants in turn can also benefit substantially from automated assignments, particularly when it comes to dealing with rooms that require specific needs. Only by allowing employees to focus only on the task at hand, can resources be utilised effectively in a manner that always produces superior results and guest satisfaction.

Keep an eye on the big picture

Housekeeping operations spanning an entire property can often prove daunting when attempting to keep track of each individual room's status. By relying on a platform that can offer an intuitive on-screen room matrix that is updated in real time, housekeeping management can

always rest assured of their ability to oversee any and all room status updates. With the ability to view such data remotely from any location and at any time, supervisors can also make informed and im-

Since hotels and resorts traditionally rely on a paper-based management strategy, an increase in assignments often means an increased likelihood of overlooked guestrooms and public areas, with a guest's experience and future property revenues ultimately paying the price

mediate task adjustment decisions, if necessary. In doing so, they can consistently ensure that housekeeping staff are always aware of which tasks are a priority.

Step up efficiency with full automation

With the constant juggling of numerous tasks that can easily overwhelm a housekeeping department, it pays to implement and automated solution that has the ability to lighten the load. With instant alert notifications, housekeeping management can take advantage of an inspection matrix, for instance, and can always be sure of their ability to review the quality of completed staff tasks in a timely and efficient manner. Housekeeping attendants in turn can also benefit substantially from automated assignments, particularly when it comes to dealing with rooms that require specific needs. Only by allowing employees to focus only on the task at hand, can resources be utilised effectively in a manner that always produces superior results and guest satisfaction.

Properly allocate your resources

The time of the year and varying occupancy levels can often lead to shifts in task prioritization. In again leveraging an intuitive management platform, being able to forecast

factors such as the number of incoming guests or how many staff members are needed for a specific shift, can prove vital in maintaining quality of service. A solution capable of providing forecasts on guestroom

occupancy by specific floor for example, can ensure that such areas are staffed adequately during peak times. Staff rosters that can be viewed in real time also allow supervisors to determine how many staff members are on duty during a particular shift, therefore allowing them to allocate resources accordingly.

Maintain proper inventory

Unsurprisingly, the ability to maintain adequate stock of amenity items can have significant influence on guest satisfaction. However, overstocked supplies can serve as a drain on hotel budgets while taking up unnecessary space. Hence, by taking advantage of a system that actively tracks guest consumption and that alerts staff when replenishment is required using preset levels, hoteliers can ensure that guest needs are always met in a cost-effective manner. Intelligent inventory controls can likewise be utilised to track loaned service items, in order to ensure their return and minimise the need for replacement due to loss or theft.

Maximise communication

Perhaps the most critical element in a housekeeping department's operational strategy is the ability to maintain direct lines of communication between all staff members, regardless of loca-

tion. So, solutions that offer the ability to remotely transmit and update tasks can play a deciding role in whether a department's efforts are ultimately successful. Industry leading platforms for instance will allow employees to leverage the use of personal smart devices in reviewing tasks as they go about their responsibilities. Solutions like allowing attendants to share details of the completed assignments with fellow staff members guarantee maximum efficiency by ensuring resources always go to where they are actually needed. Your guests demand cleanliness in their hotel environment. Be sure to always deliver with FCS e-Housekeeping.

Hotel housekeeping responsibilities can quickly add up, often evolving into a situation that is increasingly difficult to navigate for both attendants and their managers. With FCS e-Housekeeping, hoteliers will always be able to always deliver only the best in service and guest satisfaction. An industry leading platform renowned for streamlining the housekeeping management process, e-Housekeeping works to ensure that tasks are always delivered to the right team member at the right time.

(The views expressed are solely of the author.

The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



Eric Rogers
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INTEREL: Defining next-gen hospitality

Palazzo Versace Dubai has become the first property in the world to take advantage of the new technology solution by INTEREL that helps improve guest experience and operational efficiency through advanced integration.

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Headquartered in Dubai, INTEREL has gained momentum and widespread recognition as an integrated system supplier of online Guest Room Management Systems and energy conservation solutions in the international hospitality industry. INTEREL's strengths across the whole value chain include: design, engineering, manufacturing, supply, supervision commissioning and aftersales service.

Hotels utilise INTEREL to enable their guests to control light and climate, request housekeeping, butler service and more, and can benefit from increased operational automation and an improved ability to service guests more efficiently through an integration to the Amadeus HotSOS platform.

Sandra Tikal, General Manager, Palazzo Versace Dubai, says, "At Palazzo Versace Dubai, we've selected the INTEREL Guest



Sandra Tikal
General Manager
Palazzo Versace Dubai



Florian Gallini
Group CEO
INTEREL



Room Management System and Amadeus HotSOS as the best-in-class solutions for guest-room automation and staff workflow management. The integration between the two systems allows for seamless transition of guest requests in the room into our operational workflow system and enables our staff to work more efficiently, be more attentive and respond to guest needs quicker than ever before."

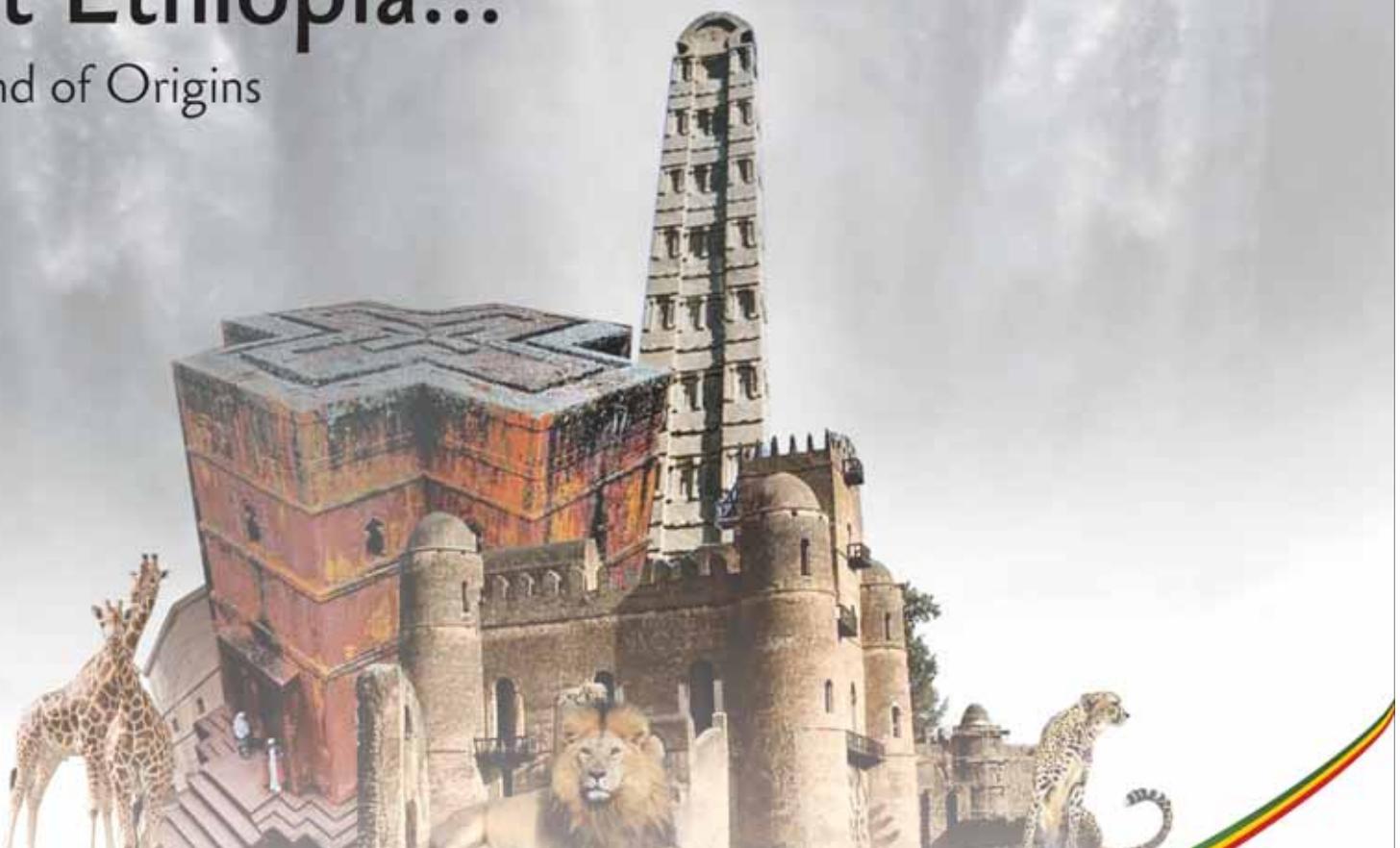
Anytime a guest makes a request via the INTEREL glass panel in the room, it immediately and automatically raises a work order ticket, where the correct member of the staff is assigned to assist. Once the request is in process, the guest can receive feedback on the glass panel in the room to know their query is being attended to, creating a seamless and direct interaction.

INTEREL's Group CEO, **Florian Gallini**, says, "It's been an excellent experience working with the Amadeus team, both from a technical and a strategic perspective. We are glad to debut this new integration at a leading property such as Palazzo Versace Dubai and look forward to enable additional use cases using our connectB-smart infrastructure."



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THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA

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Abu Dhabi-Manila from Oct 31, 2017

Suspended earlier to take route assessment initiatives, Philippine Airlines will resume flights between Abu Dhabi and Manila from Oct 31.

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Effective October 31, 2017, the Philippine Airlines will resume its non-stop thrice weekly service between Abu Dhabi to Manila to cope with the ever-increasing demand. In May 2017, the airline had announced temporary suspen-



sion of its service on the route to pave way for 'route assessment initiatives'.

The airline will resume its PR656/657 flights on their same schedule as before, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and

Saturdays. PR656 will depart from Manila at 11.45 am and arrive in Abu Dhabi at 5.45 pm and PR657 will leave Abu Dhabi at 7.30 pm and land in Manila at 8.50 am the next day. The largest Filipino carrier serving the UAE market also announced that by the end of the year, passengers

Emirates' new lounge at Boston

Emirates opened its 41st lounge at Boston Logan International Airport, in a bid to extend its global network of dedicated airport lounges. It is aimed at providing premium flyers with a seamless and enjoyable journey from start to finish.

TTT BUREAU

The Emirates Lounge, which marked a soft opening in April 2017, is now open to Emirates' First Class and Business Class customers as well as Platinum and Gold members of Skywards, the airline's frequent flyer programme. Passengers in Boston will enjoy a premium offering at every point in their journey, beginning and ending with Emirates' complimentary Chauffeur-drive, a comfortable lounge experience and award-winning in-flight products and services.

Located on the upper level of Terminal E, the lounge will overlook gate E-11. The new Emirates Lounge will offer seating for up to 123 customers, covering an area of 7,481 square feet (695 square metre). The lounge will provide premium passengers with a relaxing ambiance and



Mohammed H Mattar
Divisional Senior Vice President
Airport Services
Emirates'



with complimentary Wi-Fi service within the lounge.

"Emirates' lounges are an integral part of Emirates' product and service offerings for our premium and loyal customers," said **Mohammed H Mattar**, Emirates' Divisional Senior Vice President Airport Services. "This is Emirates' fourth dedicated airport lounge in the US and a demonstration of our ongoing commitment to serving passengers traveling through our US gateways."

Passengers wishing to travel beyond Boston to on-

ward destinations in North America can take advantage of Emirates' interline partnership with JetBlue Airways (B6) that allows increased connection options from Boston to a number of U.S. cities. The codeshare agreement with JetBlue allows customers of both the airlines to enjoy the convenience of a single combined ticket on selected routes, including one-stop check-in and baggage transfer. Emirates offers First Class and Business Class customers with private, chauffeur-drive service to and from Boston Logan International Airport. ☎

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Phuket: 300th for Turkish Airlines

The global carrier launched its direct, four weekly flights from Istanbul to one of the most prominent tourist destinations, Phuket, from July 17, 2017.

TTT BUREAU

The inaugural Turkish Airlines' flight from Istanbul landed at 8.55 AM at the Phuket International Airport (HKT) and was welcomed by a customary water cannon salute. Deputy Chairman and CEO of Turkish Airlines, **Bilal Eksi**, commented at the launch ceremony, "As an award-winning airline that invites people to explore the beauties of our world, it was a natural choice for us to decide on Phuket as our next destination." Introductory round-trip fares for Is-

As an award-winning airline that invites people to explore the beauties of our world, it was a natural choice for Turkish Airlines to decide on Phuket as our next destination

Bilal Eksi
Deputy Chairman and CEO, Turkish Airlines

tanbul to Phuket start from \$569 (including taxes and fees). Direct flights from Istanbul to Phuket will be operated four times per week, on Mondays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Furthermore, Miles&Smiles members will be able to upgrade their paid economy



MICE Middle East forum is back

Covering everything, from event design and sponsorships to social media, technology and more, the fifth annual MICE Middle East Forum 2017 is set to take place on August 23. Organised by Pinnacle Middle East, the event connects leaders from over 300 organisations from the region. **Bulat Mirgarifanov**, Marketing Manager, Pinnacle Middle East, shares the details.

TTT BUREAU

Q What is the objective of MICE Middle East Forum?

We aim to provide a platform where emerging trends are predicted, best practices are explained, some of the biggest case studies are shared and corporates from more than 300 leading organisations of this region can interact and network with marketing, branding and events experts.

Q How many attendees are you expecting this year?

We have invited a delegate audience exclusively for the buyers, owners/operators of the event /MICE industry – specialists like heads of marketing, PR and communications, brand direc-

tors, event, exhibition, conference directors, head of HR, procurement heads, travel professionals handling MICE from retail, brands, FMCGS, banking and financial institutions, oil and gas, telecoms, pharmaceutical, real estate, governments, agencies and associations, NGOs, automotive, event owners, event organiser, healthcare and education. Last event was attended by 310 organisations, 85 per cent local market and multi-nationals with a presence in UAE, and 15 per cent from GCC.

Q Are there any specific MICE markets targeted?

Our top priority is the local market of the UAE and multinationals with a presence in UAE with a secondary priority of other GCC

countries and international without local presence.

Q What will the participants gain by attending the event?

All our participants from delegates, speakers, sponsors to partners will benefit from this event. This event is a great opportunity for our participants to create vital business relationships, share experience, acquire more knowledge and get to know their industry better.

From exploring the future of meetings and events in the region to discussing corporate travel, experiential incentives and the role of events in marketing campaigns, the one-day forum throws light on new market opportunities and challenges for the region's MICE industry.

Q How in your opinion does this event contribute to the Vision 2020, Dubai?

Dubai's Vision 2020 focuses on creating a competitive, knowledge-based economy supported by sustainable environment and infrastructure. The main focus of the event is to create and grow a knowledge-based community that is well equipped with the latest trends, becomes part of the evolution, drives growth for industries and in the long run, uplifts the economy as a whole in alignment with UAE's 2021 vision. The regional events and MICE business have reportedly been witnessing a growth rate of 5.5 per cent annually in meeting attendance since 2000, led notably by

the UAE market. Generating a total of \$653 million per year, the Emirates' MICE industry, as per experts, will be experiencing a growth rate of seven per cent yearly by 2020.

Expo 2020 opens countless significant opportunities for exponential growth, not only for the local MICE business but the entire regional market as well. By the time the World Expo takes place, the value of the local sector is expected to surpass \$1.39 billion.

Fifth MICE Middle East Forum is covering everything from event design and sponsorships, to social media, technology, and more; captivating 20-minute presentations will provide actionable takeaways and great



Bulat Mirgarifanov
Marketing Manager
Pinnacle Middle East

The focus of the event is to create and grow a knowledge-based community that is well equipped with the latest trends, becomes part of the evolution, drives growth for industries

networking opportunities within industry. ☺

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MEDIA PARTNERS



Experience the extraordinary

Pulse Hotels and Resorts, a new entrant in the hospitality industry, offers a range of innovative and contemporary hotels and resorts for discerning travellers keen on exceptional experiences.

TTT BUREAU

Established in 2015 by Deep Blue Private Limited, the Pulse Hotels & Resorts specialises in tourist resorts and related businesses in the Maldives. The company brings over a decade of experience, expertise and insight to Pulse Hotels & Resorts, with a vision to provide exceptional guest experience rooted in responsible and sustainable development. The resort uses the latest technologies to make guests' pre- and

Pulse puts people and relationships at the centre of everything it does - be that guests, employees, partners, local hosts or other stakeholders. Pulse, being a Maldivian brand, will never forget its roots and stay true to the best Maldivian values – being proud and humble, authentic and credible, and respectful and hospitable

Sanjay Maniku
Managing Director, Pulse Hotels and Resorts

post-stay experience seamless and interactive.

Sanjay Maniku, Managing Director, Pulse Ho-

tels and Resorts, says, "Technology will be used in a transparent way to make things easier, not more complex. The hotels will operate in a responsible manner - socially, environmentally, sustainably and ethically. For a lot of brands, this is window dressing; for Pulse, it presents a core value. Pulse puts people and relationships at the centre of everything it does - be that guests, employees, partners, local hosts or other stakeholders. Pulse, being a Maldivian brand,



will never forget its roots and stay true to the best Maldivian values – being proud and humble, authentic and credible, and respectful and hospitable."

Pulse Hotels & Resorts unveiled its first property, Kandima Maldives on March 17, 2017. It is set on a lush tropical island with the presence of a natural lagoon and the first true lifestyle resort in the country. Located in Dhaalu Atoll, Kandima Maldives offers the longest outdoor pool in the

Maldives, an abundance of water-sports, the largest beach club, tennis and basketball courts, snorkeling, diving, a marine biology centre, an art studio, cooking classes, restaurants, bars and events, this resort is anything but ordinary.

Next in line is Hiyafushi, scheduled to open in 2018. This property will continue to set new standards in high-end hospitality in the Maldives, offering



guests a premium luxury experience that is second to none. A stunning island in Maldives has been acquired for this private villa, retreat details of which have not been revealed yet. ↗



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Roda reimagines Arabian hospitality

The Roda Hotels and Resorts is poised to become the region's most prominent home-grown hospitality brand owing to its efforts to promote contemporary Arabian hospitality, reveals **Louay Sarrage**, Corporate Vice President for Strategy and Development, Roda Hotels and Resorts.

 TT BUREAU

In operation since 2014, Roda Hotels and Resorts has espoused the essence of offering personalised and authentic Arabian hospitality in a contemporary setting. Talking about the hotel group's unique identity, **Louay Sarrage**, Corporate Vice President for Strategy and Development for Roda Hotels and Resorts, says, "From a product's perspective, each one of our properties offers a unique experience. From a guest's perspective, our service DNA is all about personalisation and engagement with the guest throughout the journey. From an investor's standpoint, we pride ourselves in being a hotel brand with a strong track record and expertise in asset management and real estate. This expertise originates from our parent company, Dubai International Real Estate, which has been a prominent real-estate and hotel development company for more than 20 years."

Their portfolio includes six properties in Dubai, out of which two prominent hotels are Roda Al Murooj and Roda Al Bustan. A five-star property located in the middle of Dubai's most prominent business and leisure area, Roda Al Murooj Hotel Downtown Dubai is the crown jewel of the hotel group.

The 5-star Roda Al Bustan Hotel Dubai Airport



Louay Sarrage
Corporate Vice President for Strategy and Development
Roda Hotels and Resorts

Given that our restaurants make up a substantial portion of our hotel business, one of the main challenges was to find a new innovative loyalty and rewards approach for our guests who frequent our restaurants and establishments



welcomes guests with warm Arabic hospitality and modern comforts. The property seems ideal for business guests, individual travellers, as well as families as they provide all the ingredients that make travelling for business or leisure an equally enjoyable experience.

In addition, the hotel group's portfolio includes a collection of serviced residences across Dubai. Roda Amwaj Suites is located at the Jumeirah Beach Residences,

one of Dubai's most desirable sea-side locations. Roda Boutique Villas and Roda Beach Resort is situated in the chic central Jumeirah district while Roda Metha Suites is located a few minutes from Dubai's historic trading areas.

Each property has a slightly different business mix when it comes to feeder markets. Saudi Arabia and other GCC countries are the most important feeder markets for the Group as they believe they are better equipped and aware to cater to the specific needs of these travellers. Oth-

er strong feeder markets are Russia/CIS countries as well as China. Besides, the western markets of USA, UK and the EU continue to be strong feeders to Dubai.

"Given that our restaurants make up a substantial portion of our hotel business, one of the main challenges was to find a new innovative loyalty and rewards approach for our guests who frequent our restaurants and establishments. Therefore, we've recently partnered with Plan B solutions, a Dubai-based company that has been pio-

neering in this field. The company's services have rapidly expanded with their successful Elite Club Program which is now active in more than 30 countries. Today, this app-based platform combines over 300 independent and internationally branded hotels and resorts under one loyalty umbrella that offer attractive benefits to more than 23,000 members worldwide. We've recognised the potential benefits from such a sharing-economy platform and decided to adopt this program by curating new memberships within our own restaurants and hotels to drive guest loyalty under the Roda Elite Club programme," Louay says.

In terms of development, the group has various projects in the pipeline including some iconic hospitality and tourism destinations such as the Jewel of the Creek located directly on the Dubai Creek by the Maktoum Bridge. The first phase is due for completion next year and will include a five-star hotel property, four towers of serviced residences and a wide variety of restaurants, entertainment venues, a large marina and an iconic crystal water lagoon. The second phase will include two lifestyle hotels connected to an exciting events pavilion and a twin-tower apartment hotel, purposefully-designed for families and guests from the

GCC region. They also have a 900-key grand beach resort under construction located on Jumeirah Beach Road at the entrance of Dubai's water canal. 



Best Western strings Pearls together

Just a 10-minute drive from the airport, the four-star Best Western Plus Pearl Creek is the new hotel on the block with 202 rooms managed by Pearl Hotels, offering a variety of rooms catering to both leisure and business travellers.

TTT BUREAU

Being a part of an international chain of hotels, Best Western Pearl Creek is at the helm of its growth strategy as it caters to markets from various parts of the world. The property is strategically located in close proximity to various leisure outlets, such as the old gold souk and a major business and shopping district. Apart from that, there are several entertainment and recreational areas such as the Dubai Museum, Traditional Dhow

Cruise and various theaters in proximity to the hotel.

The hotel offers 202 comfortable and modern bedrooms and suites in eight different categories with quality service, free Wi-Fi, a fitness centre and a swimming pool. The Best Western Plus Pearl Creek's friendly team will ensure an enjoyable and comfortable stay for all their guests, says **Ravi K Nair**, General Manager of the property. "Service in the hospitality trade goes a long way and our main focus is to provide



Ravi K Nair
General Manager
Best Western Plus Pearl Creek

During this short span of time we have successfully catered over 50 different nationalities at the property and would be looking at various new feeder markets to get more business

each of our customers a superior and unmatched service. During this short span of time, we have successfully catered



over 50 different nationalities at the property and would be looking at various new feeder markets to get more business," Nair adds.

Pearl Hotels Group (PH) has been in the market for nearly 12 years and their focus is to cater to a wider mar-

ket through their partnership with Best Western. Guests can become a part of the 'Status match... no catch' loyalty programme of Best Western. Long stay and repeat guests are able to avail the many benefits on offer and service-wise they do go beyond barriers in accommodating the many re-

quests the guests may have to make their stay memorable.

In terms of corporate travellers, the modern and spacious conference rooms, which can cater up to 60-120 delegates, is an added advantage for quick meetings or even a smaller size conference. ☎



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Taking Ramada to greater heights in ME

Newly-appointed Cluster General Manager of Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach and Ramada Hotel & Suites Sharjah, **Stefan Thumiger**, shares his vision for the two properties in this competitive and dynamic market to ensure a rise in the hotels' commercial performance and a heightened guest experience.

TTT BUREAU

Having been in the hospitality industry for 35 years, with experience across 11 countries, **Stefan Thumiger** is adept in every aspect of hospitality. "I believe that delivering guest satisfaction is essential for driving both new and repeat business to a hotel. Travellers these days have become extremely savvy, knowing exactly what they want and what they can expect from a property through social media platforms and numerous online review

The focus has to be on the guest and not only meeting their expectations, but exceeding them. Most of all, the success of any company is through its associates, so my priority will be staff development and empowering them to do their jobs



sites. So the focus has to be on the guest and not only meeting their expectations, but exceeding them. Most of all, the success of any company is through its associates, so my priority will be staff development and empowering them."

Ramada Hotels & Suites Sharjah has recently been renovated, which led to it entering the four-star category of hotels. The renovation saw the addition of a new 'Deluxe Room' category, which is very popular with the CIS markets and the Far East, while their apartments have always been popular with families and guests from the GCC.

For Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach, the prime location offers access to numerous entertainment, dining and night-life options available at 'The Walk' JBR and Dubai Marina, while being a stone's throw from



Stefan Thumiger
Cluster General Manager
Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach and
Ramada Hotel & Suites Sharjah

the beach, so it is hugely popular with guests from across the globe.

"As the UAE continues to establish itself as a major commercial hub, it brings with it a huge amount of business-oriented travellers, so we will have to develop along with the destination. With the constant addition of new products, our focus will remain on guest satisfaction and service consistency," Thumiger adds.



Technology plays a vital role in each step of a guest's decision-making, from the initial research phase, to making a reservation, to arrival and even post check-out. "We are constantly implementing technology to streamline operational procedures. Technology cannot replace professional quality service, which is one of the most important pillars of hospitality," he observes. At Ramada Sharjah Hotels and Suites, the recent addition of meeting space and the Executive Lounge certainly makes the property a great choice for business and MICE travellers. ☈



6-8 Nov 2017



Register for WTM London 2017

WTM London, the leading global event for the travel industry, has opened registration to WTM 2017.

WTM London 2017, which takes place between Monday 6 – Wednesday 8 November, is poised to be the most successful yet. The leading global event for the travel industry will again be a three-day event following the overwhelming success of last year's WTM London. WTM London 2016 was three days for the first time and attracted a record 51,500 attendance, including an all-time high of buyers (9,900). A record £2.8 billion of business will be conducted due to last year's event.

It is expected WTM London 2017 will be the catalyst for an even greater amount of business, as an extra speed networking event has been added to the second day of the event, meaning all three days will host a speed networking event.

Monday 6 November will see 200 buyers seated based on the geography they purchase.

Tuesday 7 November will see the buyers

seated by sector, including responsible tourism, gastronomy, adventure tourism and weddings and honeymoons.

Wednesday 8 November will see the renamed Digital Influencers' Speed Networking (formerly called Bloggers' Speed Networking) take place. The event has been renamed to reflect the increase in vloggers and Instagrammers attending WTM London.

Speakers already confirmed include: easyJet CEO Carolyn McCall and Travelogy founder Terry Jones. The WTM Inspire Theatre – a 300-seater amphitheatre – returns to the exhibition floor following last year's successful introduction.

Around 80 conference seminars will take place throughout the three days covering all the key sectors including aviation, hotels, sports tourism, responsible tourism, blogging, social media and travel technology.

Monday 6 November will remain an exhibitor invite-only day, allowing exhibitors to conduct business meetings with key suppliers.

Tuesday 7 November is the new day for the UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit.

Wednesday 8 November is the new day for World Responsible Tourism Day, keeping sustainability at the heart of the event. WTM London 2017 will conclude with the WTM Festivals, which will see a number of exhibitors hosting parties showcasing their culture, music and cuisine.

WTM London, Senior Director, Simon Press said: "WTM London continues to improve every year, with 2017 poised to be the most successful yet."

"With 5,000 exhibitors from 182 countries and regions conducting business deals with almost 10,000 buyers from the WTM Buyers' Club, we expect business deals to reach £3 billion."

To pre-register visit:
london.wtm.com/register

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Your hotel room in your palm

In the first six months of 2017, FlightStats shows that over one in four major airline flights within the Middle East and Africa (130,140 out of 599,150) suffered from some form of disruption. New Travelport technology lets passengers use their mobile to instantly book hotel rooms when flights are cancelled or delayed.

TTT BUREAU

Travelport has launched Travelport Resolve – a new product for airlines that puts travellers first, automating the sourcing and distribution of hotel rooms, air rebooking and integrating meal and transport needs into a single, seamless and paperless experience when flights are cancelled or delayed. Travelport Resolve enables airlines to react to disruptions with speed and accuracy, immediately communicating with passengers after an itinerary change so passengers can use their mobile device to quickly select and book their preferred hotel from available local accommodation options.

Travelport Resolve, developed from an idea generated in

the Travelport Labs Accelerator program, transforms the current labour-intensive, manual hotel sourcing, booking, and payment process that typically plague airlines during disruptive irregular operations (IROPS) situations. By combining Travelport's mobile expertise and its ability to source and book hotel rooms across the globe, allowing airlines to automate and monitor the entire hotel distribution process, Travelport Resolve demonstrates the unique power of Travelport's platform to improve the travel experience for airlines and their customers. "With a few simple touches on their mobile device, Travelport helps dis-

rupted passengers to bypass the frustration of hotel and meal voucher lines and quickly be on their way to a comfortable hotel room," says Derek Sharp,

Travelport Resolve helps carriers improve customer service performance during disruptions, avoiding serious damage to their brand and opportunities

with actionable insights into IROPS, including hotel-related costs, room usage, passengers' status and activity patterns, with up-to-the-minute reporting tools

that analyse the true cost of disruptions to an airline's business and identify improvements an airline can make to its service.



Derek Sharp
Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Air Commerce, Travelport

Technology News

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Travelport 
Redefining travel commerce

Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Air Commerce, Travelport. "For airlines,

to build their relationships with affected customers." Travelport Resolve also provides airlines

will then automatically procure room inventory needed to meet passenger demand.

The product will soon include predictive features, enabling airlines to recognise potential irregular operations/IROPS situations and local conditions or events that may create limited hotel availability. Travelport Resolve

you once they've landed!) #LikeaBoss.

Your banking app

Well, of course, how could anyone survive without money? While they may be somewhere with a different time zone or language, they can still have access to their bank! Just make sure the app is up to date, and bank while they're away.

Apps to ease your holiday hassle

It is that time of year in the Middle East when you're busy booking trips to exotic destinations and your customers are trying to pack as much in their itinerary as possible. Make sure your clients are ready for their vacation by suggesting these five Apps, designed to help take the pressure off the holidaymakers.

TTT BUREAU

Making suggestions on user friendly apps is just one additional service you will provide your client, demonstrating that you are the 'agent with a difference' With apps like these, it's guaranteed: they can make the best out of their hard-earned time off, and even make some money on the side for their next adventure; booked through you.

AirWayBill

With AirWayBill, your clients can choose (or buy) and carry items with their flight and get paid for it. All it takes is for them to download the app, secure some space in their baggage, and voila: extra money! If they're planning on flying somewhere but running a bit low on cash, check out these packing tips here and make sure they use the free space

that will turn up to earn some extra cash.

ServiceMarket

If they don't have the time or the energy to make sure their apartment is ready before they go, ServiceMarket is the app that'll do it for them! For everything from scheduled maintenance, deep cleaning while away, and other similar services,

then this app is the gift that keeps giving.

Washmen

No matter what one does, laundry remains one of the most tiring chores. Getting travel clothes done and ready before they go on vacation, or even during, with the app's "leave at door" option, makes laundry a breeze.

Careem

When traveling to an unfamiliar place, be it abroad or in their own country and they don't know which way to go, having the trusty Careem app to facilitate their commutes is priceless. Use the "Ride Later" feature and have a driver pick and drop off at the airport at the scheduled time (or even be waiting for

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Personality of the month

Wind beneath ibis Styles Jumeira's wings

With a career spanning over 18 years, **Muhammad Haider** has spent 15 years in the hospitality industry and the rest of it in the telecom sector, enterprise solution, and direct sales and facilities management. Haider has been instrumental in ensuring the overall growth of ibis Styles Jumeira as its Hotel Manager.

 TT BUREAU

Muhammad Haider has been an integral part of ibis Styles Jumeira's success story from its inception two years ago in 2015, as the Pre-opening Manager, and thereafter as Hotel Manager. Haider has built a very strong bond with his team besides revelling in the success of the property by securing a good profit margin. Among his many tasks includes to ensure that all members of the staff do everything they can to make guests' stay pleasant and comfortable, whilst making sure that the hotel is profitable and efficient. Haider conducts day-to-day meetings with Head of Departments to maintain brand standards, ensure staff welfare, KPIs and make sure that hotel is achieving its monthly budget for rooms and F&B. He is also involved in hiring, staff training processes and ensures that guest satisfaction and reputation performance scores are achieved.

Riding in the service lane

Haider has spent 15 years of his career in the hospitality industry and only three years in the telecom sector having worked with Telenor Pakistan, and Mobilink. He completed his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1998 from School of Business

& Commerce affiliated by Preston University, based in Wyoming USA. As part of the hospitality industry, Haider previously worked with Hashoo Group, Serena Hotels, Movenpick Hotel & Resort in Sanaa, Yemen in various departments, from front office to reservations, banquet sales to sales and marketing, managing different teams at senior levels. He has played a pivotal role in the opening of both three- and four-star properties under the R Hotels Group as its pre-opening Project Manager and achieved remarkable results. Haider's authoritative and warm attitude and eye for detail have made him a loved and respected figure in the industry today.

Family matters

Essentially a family man, Haider makes sure he brings his values of bonding and devotedness to his workplace. Not only is he successfully running a family hotel ensuring profitability, he makes sure that he spends quality time with his family and believes that their happiness is crucial in achieving his life's career goals. "My achievements starts from my siblings at home. If they are satisfied with the life they have, I count that as an achievement. Professionally if my colleagues and our guests are happy and satisfied with our service, I count that too as an achievement. I believe

that small things make a big difference," Haider says.

Embracing technology

Haider is an ardent technology buff and believes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the next big thing. "AI is a fast-moving technology that enables machines to perform tasks that could previously be done only by humans. It can prove to be an ultimate saving on labour costs, while it also poses a threat to workers whose jobs are 'routine'."

He says that messengers and instant chat applications like Facebook Messenger, WeChat, etc., are here to stay and have a huge impact on the hospitality industry. "Texting guests in response to 'in the moment' needs, safety and security issues that would require immediate and subtle communication or eliminating language barriers are all technologically feasible and available. Sharing Economy or Alternative Lodging, call it what you want, but Airbnb and Uber have created a firestorm in our industry. Uber has virtually put taxis out of business and Airbnb threatens to become a primary lodging force."

Millennials are the future

Haider says today's traveller is heavily dependent on App-based technology because of swift response.



Starting from mobile check in, in-room entertainment experience with customised technology like custom lighting, smart mirrors and in-room tablets, etc. expansion of culinary options beyond standard hotel restaurant because they want an experience at every level when visiting a hotel so food and beverage is no more an af-

Professionally, if my colleagues and our guests are happy and satisfied with our service, I count that too as an achievement. I believe that small things make a big difference

Muhammad Haider
Hotel Manager, ibis Styles Jumeirah

terthought. Future guests will be very much dependent on technology but touch of personalised service will stand out despite of technological advancement in hospitality industry.

Dynamic booking trends

According to Haider, online travel agencies (OTAs) charge high commissions, hence it is imperative to manage the cost of acquisition of each guest and find more ways to educate them to book directly with the hotel. "OTAs have spent hundreds of millions of marketing dollars to condition consumers to think they have the best deals available. In short

'Loyalty Pricing' is vanishing," he warns. Brand loyalty, Haider shares, can be a useful tool to drive more revenue. Educating guests on the benefits of booking directly with the hotel is crucial now more than ever, he says. "Creativity through social media can help the brand get a lot of likes and followers but quantitative success does not always convert to tangible ROI and data and analytics must be mined to measure success. Search engine marketing, optimisation and advertising initiatives are crucial to our hotels' success in this digital age and remember that mobile is king!" he adds. 



India Tourism promotes mango mania

India Tourism's Dubai office together with Four Points Sheraton recently launched a mango campaign to promote the destination to the many summer travellers in Dubai. The campaign kicked off in the Eatery restaurant last month. The promotion included various mango dishes served to the many tourists who love to indulge their tastebuds at the restaurant.



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Indonesia eyes Middle East market

Indonesia conducted its first roadshow in Dubai with top five destination management companies and three leading hotels from Indonesia and over 80 travel and tourism partners from the UAE. The event was graced by **H.E. Arzaf Fachrezy Firman**, Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia and **Nia Niscaya**, Director of International Tourism Promotion in Europe, Middle East, America and Africa.





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Jumeirah Vittaveli**Maldives**

Jumeirah Vittaveli in the Maldives has appointed Christopher Baker as the resort's new Resident Manager. An experienced hospitality professional, Baker brings strong leadership and management skills to his new role. He first joined the Jumeirah Group early on in his career, for the opening of Jumeirah Beach Hotel. Baker has filled managerial positions at hospitality companies like Rosewood, Anantara Hotels & Resorts, Marriott Hotels, and Emirates Hotels & Resorts, in countries including Vietnam, UAE, Jordan, India and the UK. He studied at the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism, & Creative Studies.

**Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach and Ramada Hotel & Suites Sharjah****Dubai and Sharjah**

Wyndham Hotel Group has appointed Stefan Thumiger as the Cluster General Manager for Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach and Ramada Hotel & Suites Sharjah. Thumiger brings over 34 years of hospitality experience from global hotel chains like Banyan Tree, Hilton and Le Meridien. Thumiger previously served as COO of Hospitality Treasure Bay Bintan at Landmark Berhad, Singapore. He holds a degree in Federal Chartered Hotelier/Caterer HF/SHL from the Swiss hotel and catering school in Lucerne, Switzerland.

**Jumeirah Zabeel Saray****Palm Jumeirah Dubai**

Hakan Petek joins Jumeirah Zabeel Saray on Palm Jumeirah as its General Manager. Petek will be taking over from the current General Manager Fernando Gibaja, who has moved on after two successful years. Petek joined Jumeirah in June 2010 as Executive Assistant Manager. Rooms at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa in Kuwait. With over 27 years of experience in the hotel industry, his career highlights include eight hotel openings across several luxury properties in Turkey: Dedeman and the Sheraton in Antalya, Conrad in Istanbul, Swissotel in Istanbul and Izmir, as well as Raffles Browns and Guoman Hotel both in London.

**Kempinski Hotel****Mall of the Emirates Dubai**

Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates Dubai has appointed Steffen Opitz as their new Hotel Manager. Opitz began his hospitality career with Kempinski Hotels two decades ago and has since worked with the luxury hotels in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Opitz began his career in 1998 at the Kempinski Hotel Adlon Berlin, Germany. From here, he moved to work on the pre-opening of Kempinski Hotel Heiligendamm, Germany. His first role in the Middle East was at the Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, managed by Kempinski. He has worked with Kempinski Hotel Dalian, Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Hotel in Dubai, Kempinski Hotel Shenyang and Swissotel The Stamford, Singapore among others.

**Jumeirah Himalayas Hotel****Shanghai**

Jumeirah Himalayas Hotel Shanghai has appointed Violet Wang as the new Director of Marketing & Communications. Wang joined the hotel from InterContinental Hotels Group. In this role, Wang will be responsible for the brand marketing communications of Crowne Plaza and Hotel Indigo. Before IHG, she was responsible for marketing projects of several high-end brands such as Land Rover and Porsche in Shanghai and Hong Kong markets. Wang graduated from Shanghai Fudan University with a Bachelor's degree in Communications and received her Master's degree in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong.

**Niyama Private Islands****Maldives**

Anantara Hotels & Resorts' Niyama Private Islands has appointed Deveeka Nijhawan as the Director of PR & Communications. Nijhawan comes with over five years of experience as the Complex Public Relations and Communications Manager of Le Meridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre. She started her career at Le Meridien Dubai Hotel in June 2012 as a Public Relations and Communications Executive. In her current position, she will be responsible to drive all PR, marketing, partnership, digital communications and social media activities at Niyama Private Islands.



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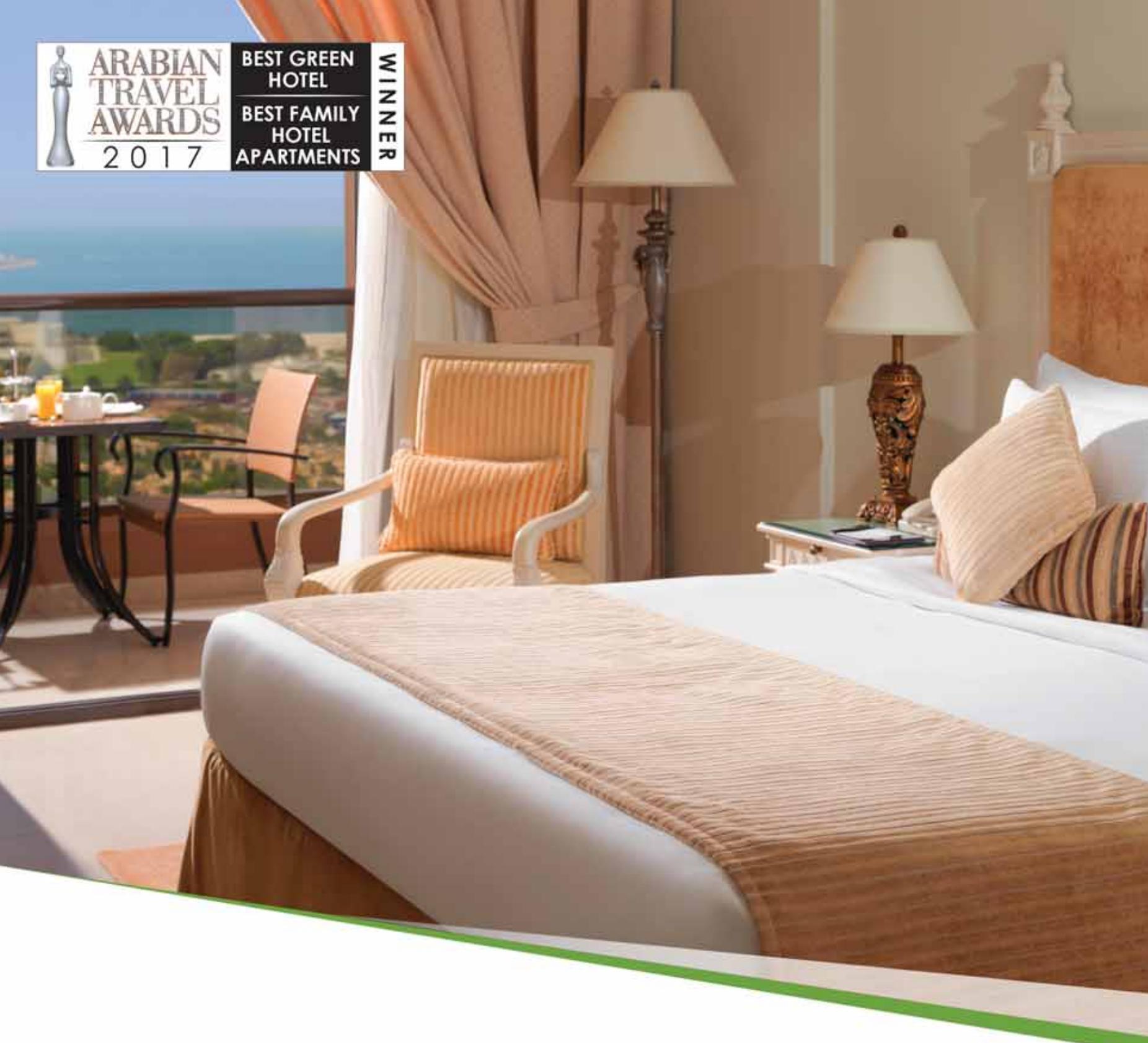
Starting from 16th Sep 2017

Flight	Route	Departure	Arrival	Days of Operation
AI 167	Delhi (DEL) - Stockholm (ARN)	1450	1840	Wed, Fri & Sun
AI 168	Stockholm (ARN) - Delhi (DEL)	2040	0740+1	Wed, Fri & Sun

Flight	Route	Departure	Arrival	Days of Operation
AI 158	Delhi (DEL) - Copenhagen (CPH)	1430	1845	Tue, Thu & Sat
AI 157	Copenhagen (CPH) - Delhi (DEL)	2045	0735+1	Tue, Thu & Sat



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Middle East region is undoubtedly a perfect blend of traditional and modern, it continuously strives to preserve its rich culture and heritage while encouraging contemporary infrastructure development. The region is also developing its tourism products and is fast moving towards becoming a hub for travellers, and this effort is what we acknowledge and render our full support to!

As a tribute, Durga Das Publications Middle East has introduced Arabian Travel Awards to recognise the achievers of the travel and tourism industry, who have worked steadfastly towards enhancing the environment that allows the growth of this business. These stalwarts need to be acknowledged, appreciated and encouraged in every region, and we have started the journey this year from Dubai, UAE.

Our top-most honour, the Gold Maya, is awarded to those stalwarts who have shaped the industry the way it is today and created innovative ways and products to take the industry a notch higher.

The award ceremony is brought to life by a charismatic anchor and singer who makes sure that there is not a single dull moment for the audience. At the black-tie, silver service event, various performers enthrall and amuse the audience.

The guests this year were audience to a mesmerising dance performance, which they not only enjoyed watching but also participated wholeheartedly. Overall, the debut Arabian Travel Awards was a successful beginning in the journey of long-term associations.

Arabian Travel Awards will be travelling to various other countries in its subsequent editions. Thus, we take it upon ourselves, in our own small way, to revive and enhance tourism in the region.

Sanjeet

Arabian Travel Awards

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Maiden Arabian Travel Awards

The first edition of Arabian Travel Awards captivated over 150 travel, tourism and hospitality partners from the Middle East at the first American hotel chain in Dubai—JW Marriott Hotel. Arabian Travel Awards is Durga Das Publications' first-ever international initiative to celebrate the best talent from the tourism and hospitality industries in the Middle East.



(L-R): Sumeera Bahl, Shaji Thomas, Sanjeet, Matthew Powell, Ankush Nijhawan, Dr. Tanushree Pandey, Dominic Sherry, Gunjan Sabikhi and Melwin D'Silva

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enchants the Middle East



SHEHARA RIZLY

It was an extravagant 4th of July celebrations and an evening of glitter, glamour, honour and an unforgettable night to over 46 award winners who were recognised for the hard work and applauded for their many efforts undertaken over the years. The awards consisted of a unique system of jury judgement and internet voting to give out absolutely fair and unbiased results. The formal black-tie event was attended by over 150 notable personalities of the Middle East travel and tourism sector.

In his opening remarks, welcoming the guests for the awards, **SanJeet**, Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards, said, "Arabian Travel Awards aim at identifying and encouraging talent of every aspect of the tourism sector. We are pleased to share with you that we were surprised when we received nominations for awards from over 25 countries for this maiden international awards ceremony. The hospitality and tourism industry in the Middle East has reached remarkable heights and it is our pleasure and privilege to honour the people behind the hard work to attract millions of tourists from around the world to the Middle East region. Winning this award brings with it a great source of responsibility to encourage and further develop the industry, ensuring the best practices for the future enabling it to much greater heights."

From the very beginning of the event, the crowd was engaged through fun activities and the awards were given away very swiftly with no interruptions, which was very well received by

the Middle East audience. The award categories were very different and unique compared to other awards in the region. The awards were divided into four main categories: Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards and Partner Awards. These included awards for Best Business Hotel, Best Family Friendly Hotel, Best City Hotel, Best Green Hotel, Best Leisure Hotel, Best Destination Management Company, Best Hotel Apartments, Best B2B Travel Portal, and Best Luxury Hotel to name a few.

The awards were given away by the Guest of Honour **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, Gladrag Mrs. India, who specially flew in for the event; **Sumeera Bahl**, Director, Durga Das Publications

Middle East and the **SanJeet**, Mentor, Arabian Travel Awards.

Kulwant Singh, Founder and Managing Director, Lama Tours, was declared the 'Face of the Future' whilst **Lakshmi Durai**, CEO, Travel Matrix, won the Best Cruise Professional award. Each of these awards spoke beyond words about the recognition and appreciation shown to the stalwarts of the industry who have tirelessly worked hard over the past many years to ensure the correct lanes, best practices are maintained in the industry and have contributed to the development of the trade relations between the Middle East and the rest of the world in order to better improve the economy of the region.





Face of the Future | KULWANT SINGH

Top award winner Kulwant Singh, Founder and Managing Director, Lama Tours, says, one of the most rewarding aspects of his career is to be recognised with accolades for his efforts and commitments to the tourism industry. "These recognitions have opened up invitations to be a part of global tourism forums to discuss innovative ideas for the region. The trade is turning towards globalisation and technology has been able to accelerate tourism marketing into a fast-moving, easily-accessible global experience for all. Social media has made a huge impact on the tourism industry, thus, I am encouraging the younger tourism professionals to contribute their skills, ideas and knowledge towards the growth of the travel and tourism industry."

►Kulwant Singh, Founder and Managing Director, Lama Tours, received the award for Face of the Future. He was felicitated by Sanjeet, Director, DDP Group; Dr. Tanushree Pandey, Gladrag Mrs. India and Sumeera Bahl, Director, Durga Das Publications Middle East





Chief Guest

DR. TANUSHREE PANDEY

Adding the glamour quotient to the awards ceremony, Gladrags Mrs. India **Dr. Tanushree Pandey**, says, "It was a pleasure to be a part of the first Arabian Travel Awards in Dubai. The night was full of glitz and glamour. The awards went to the well-deserved and I really look forward to many such glamorous nights to follow. Congratulations to all the winners and kudos to the DDP team for a great awards night."

► Dr. Tanushree Pandey, Gladrags Mrs. India 2015, received the award for Chief Guest. She was felicitated by Sanjeet, Director, DDP Group and Award Team

Best Cruise Professional

LAKSHMI DURAI

Lakshmi Durai, Chief Executive Officer, Travel Matrix–Middle East Representative for Celebrity Cruises, says, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thank TravTalk Middle East for recognising me as the Best Cruise Professional. I am truly humbled to have been chosen for this award. It encourages me to further develop the cruise industry in the region. Thank you once again for your efforts in recognising the well-deserved winners in every field of travel and for arranging this wonderful evening." She also appreciated the winner selection criteria and the unique style of hosting the event.

► Lakshmi Durai, Chief Executive Officer, Travel Matrix, Middle East Representative of Celebrity Cruises was given the Best Cruise Professional award



Best General Manager

DOMINIC SHERRY

Dominic Sherry, General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Dubai, says he is honoured and delighted to receive the 'Best General Manager Award' at the inaugural Arabian Travel Awards. "Congratulations to all the winners and a special thanks to San Jeet and his team for taking their award programme outside India for the first time. The Arabian Travel Awards is here to stay and we are very excited about next year. It's so important for our industry to recognise individuals and travel companies who work so hard and tirelessly for our global customers. I'm truly humbled by this honour."

► Dominic Sherry, General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Dubai was given the Best General Manager award



Best Travel Professional

PRAVEEN GANDHI

Being recognised or rewarded for your hard work is the best possible motivation for any working professional, says **Praveen Gandhi**, Executive General Manager, Kanoo Travel. "Having been awarded the 'Best Travel Professional' inspires me to work for the growth of the travel trade in the region, develop promising tourism professionals by sharing my learnings and best practices with them. I would take this opportunity to thank DDP for creating such a magical event, and express my gratitude to trade professionals, my mentors, seniors, colleagues, team members and my family who have contributed over the years in shaping me as what I am as a person and as a travel professional," adds Gandhi.

► **Praveen Gandhi**, Executive General Manager - Travel Division, Kanoo Travel was given the Best Travel Professional award



Best Travel and Tourism Consultant | ASHWIN SINGH

It's an honour to be recognised as the 'Best Travel and Tourism Consultant' at the maiden Arabian Travel Awards, says **Ashvin Singh**, Managing Director, Plus Point Hospitality Marketing. "When one has spent over 27 years in the industry and is felicitated by industry colleagues, one is encouraged to do better for the future of the travel industry. I take this opportunity to thank everyone for this special recognition and also everyone at DDP Publication for making this possible and for a wonderfully-organised award ceremony," Singh says.

► **Ashwin Singh**, Managing Director, Plus Point Hospitality Marketing DMCC, Dubai was given the Best Travel and Tourism Consultant award



Most Enterprising Sales and Marketing Hospitality Professional | SONA RAWAL

It is an incredible feeling to have won the award as it represents so many brilliant minds in our field of work, says **Sona Rawal**, Director of Sales Task Force, Courtyard Marriott and Marriott Executive Apartments. "As an individual in the hospitality industry, I have won awards from various hotel chains in India, Dubai and Canada. However, it's truly an honour to be recognised at such a great platform as Arabian Travel Awards, the highest accolade in the travel and hospitality industry in the region. I truly appreciate it and thanks a lot for the great job you are doing for our industry."

► **Sona Rawal**, Director of Sales, JW Marriott Hotel Dubai was given the Most Enterprising Sales and Marketing Hospitality Professional award

Best Global Distribution system | TRAVEPORT

Matt Powell, Managing Director, Middle East and South Asia, Travelport, says that this win endorses Travelport's position as the technology partner of choice. "We are honoured that agents acknowledged our efforts in helping them to drive their performance through customer-driven solutions. We're dedicated to driving growth for the MENA region by providing travel players with superior tools and technology that exceed expectations of travellers. We will continue to focus on the areas of data and analytics, mobile solutions, payments, and technology services," Powell adds.

► The award was given to **Travelport** and received by **Kathryn Wallington**, Country Manager, United Arab Emirates and **Matthew Powell**, Managing Director, Middle East & South Asia





Best B2B Travel Portal TBO HOLIDAYS

Gaurav Bhatnagar, Co-founder, TBO Group, says they are honoured to win this prestigious award. "TBO Group has been at the forefront of supporting travel agents world over by providing them superior content and technology. We have a network of over 25,000 travel partners in 68 countries who work with us. Arabian Travel Award is a great recognition and motivation for the entire trade fraternity to strive for excellence," Bhatnagar adds.

► The award was given to **TBO Holidays** and received by **Gaurav Bhatnagar**, Co-founder, TBO Group; **V.K. Balaji**, COO, TBO Holidays and **Ankush Nijhawan**, Co-founder, TBO Group

Best Visa facilitation Company VFS GLOBAL

On receiving the award, **Vinay Malhotra**, Chief Operating Officer-Middle East & South Asia, VFS Global, says, "Being recognised by industry experts is a testament of our commitment to offer world-class services to our clients and redefine the visa facilitation process for our 56 client governments worldwide as well as millions of applicants every year. The award also celebrates the outstanding contribution and dedication of all VFS Global employees. I would like to sincerely thank DDP Group for this recognition and I'm sure it will inspire us all to work even harder and transform visa facilitation services, in the region and globally."

► The award was given to **VFS Global** and received by **Vinay Malhotra**, Chief Operating Officer, Middle East & South Asia



Best Arabian Tourism Board RAS AL KHAIMAH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Expressing delight over being recognised as the 'Best Arabian Tourism Board,' **Haitham Mattar**, CEO, Ras al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, observes, "To receive this accolade is a great achievement for both RAKTDA and our stakeholders who support our various initiatives and activities globally. The second half of this year is already building up to be an exciting year for the emirate with a number of new products and activities launching in the latter months and I look forward to welcoming more travellers to Ras Al Khaimah."

► The award was given to **Ras al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority** and received by **Shaji Thomas**, Tourism Development Director and **Matteo Prato**, Marketing Director



Best Green Hotel GLORIA HOTEL

Throwing light on the hotel's sustainable activities, **Freddy Farid**, Area General Manager, Gloria Hotels & Resorts, says, Gloria Hotels has for a second time continuously saved AED 2.16 million on its electricity and water bills. "The property witnessed major improvements in a number of other key indicators including carbon footprint per occupied room, and food and waste reduction through the modification of their recycling programmes. These results were achieved through passion, dedication and teamwork, applying the Green Globe principles in improving economic, social and environmental stability contributing to Green Initiatives which in turn helped us win the 'Best Green Hotel' at the first Arabian Travel Awards," Farid adds.

► The award was given to **Gloria Hotel** and received by **Bashar Turk**, Director of Sales & Marketing and **Aklilu Admekom** (CIPD, CHT) Director of Talent & Career Development - Cluster





Fastest Growing Hotel Brand

NIHAL HOSPITALITY

“Dreams and dedication are a powerful combination.” The Nihal Hospitality team believes in these wise words by William Longgood. To dream is the first step one must take to achieve the main goals of their lives. “The title of the Fastest Growing Hotel Brand is an honour given by Arabian Travels. This has not only encouraged us to progress further, but has pushed our hotel chain to work more efficiently,” says **Amarpreet Singh Chadha**, Chairman, Nihal Hospitality. Nihal Hospitality manages two four-star hotels—Nihal Palace Hotel and Golden Tulip Hotel—and three three-star hotels—Nihal Hotel, Palm Beach Hotel and Orchid Hotel.

► The award was given to **Nihal Hospitality** and received by **Amarpreet Singh Chadha**, Chairman

Best City Hotel

TIME GRAND PLAZA HOTEL

Guzman Muela, General Manager, TIME Oak Hotel & Suites, says, “We are glad to be honoured at the first Arabian Travel Awards with the ‘Best City Hotel’ award. This will insure higher integrity to the brand and to the hotel. We are glad to receive an award of such calibre recognising the efforts that the team put in place to achieve unprecedented guest stay experiences. This award is a true gratification to the daily duties that each member of the team strives to deliver.”

► The award was given to **Time Grand Plaza Hotel** and received by **Guzman Muela**, Cluster General Manager



Best Travel Technology Provider

TI INFOTECH

Expressing gratitude for this recognition, **Meenu Sachdeva**, Co-founder and Managing Director, TI Infotech, says “Our highly proficient and experienced team has been working hard to provide top-quality and cost-effective solutions to the clients. Our services have been recognised by experts for being one of the most dependable in the industry.” Two signature products of TI Infotech, which have been recognised as the most dependable and proficient in the industry, are ‘Travel Assist’ and ‘Travel Cloud’. “Our ongoing endeavour is always to embrace latest technologies which can bring in value proposition to our existing and prospective clients,” Sachdeva adds.

► The award was given to **TI Infotech** and received by **Meenu Sachdeva**, Managing Director and **Vipin Mahasayan**, Manager - Business Development



Best Luxury Hotel Brand

THE ADDRESS HOTELS AND RESORTS

The team at Address Hotels & Resorts is delighted to be recognised at the inaugural Arabian Travel Awards as the ‘Best Luxury Hotel Brand,’ says **Satish Jaidev**, Group Director Sales, Emaar Group. “We pride ourselves on creating spaces and experiences for our guests that deliver a superior standard of excellence with every interaction and at every touch point. Hospitality is a people’s business and while we use technology to streamline the transactional element of what we do, it is our people who really create memorable stays for our guests, whether they are visiting for the first time or hundredth time,” Jaidev adds.

► The award was given to **The Address Hotels and Resorts** and received by **Satish Jaidev**, Group Director of Sales





Best OTA | MUSAFIR.COM

At a time when there are rapid developments in the e-commerce sector, Rajesh Pareek, Group CEO, Musafir.com, is extremely proud to have been recognised as the 'Best Online Travel Agency' in the region at the first Arabian Travel Awards. "We have had a rewarding year in terms of growth and development at Musafir.com with further expansions in the pipeline. An award such as this validates our position in the region as the go-to travel experts and as a result, our teams are committed to delivering high-quality professional services to our customers," Pareek adds.

► The award was given to **Musafir.com** and received by **Albert Dias**, CTO; **Rajesh Pareek**, Group CEO and **Atish Thapa**, Head B2C

Best Airline South Asia AIR INDIA

Air India team is ecstatic about being recognised as the Best Airline South Asia. Melwin D'Silva, Regional Manager-GMEA, Air India, says, "I am honoured to receive this award on behalf of Air India. Truly appreciate Durga Das Publications for conferring the award and rightfully recognising Air India. I accept this honour on behalf of our CMD Ashwani Lohani and our Commercial Director Pankaj Srivastava and of course on behalf of my team Air India Gulf Middle East and Africa."

► The award was given to **Air India** and received by **Melvin D'Silva**, Regional Manager Gulf, Middle East & Africa and **Harish Pai**, Regional Finance Manager, Gulf, Middle East & Africa



Best Travel Management Company | ROYAL ARABIAN TOURS LLC

Naveen Saldanha, Managing Director, Royal Arabian Tours LLC, Dubai, says, "We are delighted to receive the maiden Arabian Travel Award for 'Best Travel Management Company'. We congratulate the Awards team for recognising the best in the trade. This accolade is a testament of the hard work of our team and premium service standards. My team and I are very clear in putting the interests of the destination before ours and we are totally focused in making UAE the most attractive Leisure and MICE destination in the world today."

► The award was given to **Royal Arabian Tours LLC** and received by **Richard Devadasan**, General Manager - Business Development and **Nitya C Acharya**, Senior Manager - Contracting and Products



Best Desert Resort TILAL LIWA HOTEL

Exremely pleased to receive the award for the 'Best Desert Resort', Khaled Sharabassy, General Manager, Tilal Liwa Hotel, says, "I am so proud of this achievement because it truly describes Tilal Liwa Hotel. Our location makes us a unique destination, a secluded hideaway where families as well as individual travellers can experience pure relaxation and rejuvenation. I would like to share this award with my team members who continuously strive to give our guests ultimate satisfaction during their stay. Our goal is to ensure superior tourism experience to travellers and this award recognises our effort."

► The award was given to **Tilal Liwa Hotel** and received by **Khaled Sharabassy**, General Manager



Best Destination Management Co. STHI GROUP

STHI Group is a professional travel company which provides a one stop shop for travel and tourism needs for the traveller. Their branch network consists of Malaysia, Dubai and India; three key points that drive in major business. Whether it is domestic or international travel, they tailor make packages for leisure and business as well. They are professional MICE agents and cater to the various corporate needs for conducting residential seminars, exhibitions and conventions. This includes arranging hotels or space and other allied equipment required for conducting the seminars/exhibitions and conventions, etc.

► The award was given to **STHI Group** and received by **Gagan Kumar**, Director and Founder

Best Business Hotel JW MARRIOTT HOTEL DUBAI

Grateful to have received the award for the 'Best Business Hotel', **Bhavesh Rawal**, EAM Food & Beverage, JW Marriott Hotel Dubai, says, "It is an enormous accomplishment to be recognised amongst leaders in the tourism, airline, hotel and hospitality sectors. Also, it was an honour and privilege to host the maiden gala ceremony. I am very pleased to have received this award on behalf of the JW Marriott team and we will strive even harder to keep our guests delighted and to deliver the highest level of hospitality at all times."

► The award was given to **JW Marriott Hotel, Dubai** and received by **Dominic Sherry**, General Manager, **Sona Rawal**, Director of Sales; **Rabih Nicolas**, Director of Sales & Marketing and **Bhavesh Rawal**, EAM Food and Beverage



Best Tourist Attraction DUBAI PARKS AND RESORTS

Opened in 2016, Dubai Parks and Resorts is the largest multi-themed leisure and entertainment destination in the Middle East. The AED 13.2 billion development is spread across 30.6 million square feet on Sheikh Zayed Road. It comprises three theme parks-Motiongate, Legoland and Bollywood Parks and the entire destination is connected by Riverland. The fourth theme park Six Flags is expected to open by late 2019. A Polynesian-themed Lapita Hotels (part of the Marriott autograph collection) is also located there.

► The award was given to **Dubai Parks and Resorts** and received by **Ankush Nijhawan**, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group, Representation Office of Dubai Parks & Resorts in India



Best Family Friendly Hotel JOOD PALACE HOTEL DUBAI

It is an honour for the Jood Palace Hotel team to win such a prestigious, well-deserved award, says **Ahmed Badawy**, General Manager, Jood Palace Hotel. "It's a token of appreciation for the tremendous effort and hard work gone behind creating a family friendly environment, especially after separating from the management of Taj Hotels and creating our own identity. It was a challenge to create a new hospitality brand in a very competitive and dynamic market of Dubai, but our commitment to excellence and focus on exceeding all guest expectations we were able to position the brand on its well-deserved place."

► The award was given to **Jood Palace Hotel Dubai** and received by **Ahmed Badawy**, General Manager





Excellence in customer service NORTH TOURS

Part of the Rikks Group of Companies Dubai since 2001, North Tours is the main tour operator arm for the organisation. They have been working with local officials, destination management companies, corporates and hotels to strengthen ties, build a wealth of experience and increase guest services. They would strive to exceed the expectations of the guests by providing guests a unique experience in Dubai. They are well informed and will ensure that all the visitors receive credible information.

► The award was given to North Tours and received by Bharti Kanani, CFC, Radica Kanani, Vice President and Sureshkumar Laljee, Chairman

Best Airport Hotel MILLENIUM AIRPORT HOTEL DUBAI

Simon Moore, General Manager, Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai, says, "We are truly grateful to Arabian Travel Awards for this amazing recognition. Award like this is an indication of our hard work and perseverance in the pursuit of delivering a memorable experience to our guests. We take this opportunity to thank all our team members as well as guests who are the real force behind this remarkable achievement. We will continue delivering the award-winning services to gain more loyal and repeat guests."

► The award was given to Millennium Airport Hotel Dubai and received by Binu Varghese, Director of Sales & Marketing; Chady Kanaan, Hotel Manager and Sheryl Aqviyan, Assistant Marketing Manager



Best Travel Insurance Facilitator TUNE PROTECT

Arijit Munshi, General Manager, Tune Protect, appreciates Durga Das Publication team for encouraging Tune Protect by recognising their hard work through this award. "I must take this opportunity to compliment the awards team for setting up and managing the first Arabian Travel Awards 2017 with such precision. I am well aware of the logistics and planning that goes into setting up and managing such an event. The event was managed spot on and a special mention for the emcee for doing a fantastic job in keeping the attendees engaged throughout the evening. I am already looking forward to the next event," Munshi says.

► The award was given to Tune Protect and received by Arijit Munshi (ORI), General Manager and Angelina D'Costa, Regional Business Development Manager



Best Budget Hotel Brand CITYMAX HOTELS

An elated Rohit Challapalli, Head of Marketing, City Max Hotels, says, "We at Citymax Hotels are delighted to receive this awards as it is an assurance of the good work we're doing in the mid-market hospitality sector in the UAE. We're glad to know that our customers feel delighted by our service and have had memorable experiences with us. This win is a testament to that support and only adds to our commitment towards award-winning hospitality at an affordable price."

► The award was given to Citymax Hotels and received by Joanne Williams, GM, Citymax Hotel Business Bay; Giridhar Hublisai, Chief Financial Controller, Citymax Hotels; Rohit K Challapalli, Head of Marketing, Citymax hotels; Satish Nambiar, GM, Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai; Roopal Aher, Sr. Marketing Executive, Citymax Hotel Al Barsha and Avinash Reddy, Marketing Manager, Citymax Hotel Bur Dubai



Arabian Travel Awards lays



out the red carpet for ME's best





Best Dhow Cruise Company AL WASL DHOW

Ishrat Ali Khan Managing Director, Al Wasl Dhow, says it's an honor to receive the 'Best Dhow Cruise Company' award. "I appreciate the Arabian Travel Awards team and voters for considering us capable to win this award. This award is special because Al Wasl Dhow completes its first year in operation. Thanks to the many brilliant minds in my team who have led us to this victory. Their dedication and excellence earned this honour for the company. We want to do a lot more to extend our reach. I hope we will continue to do our best for our company and experience a huge success," Khan adds.

► The award was given to Al Wasl Dhow and received by **Ali Bin Masood**, Sales Executive; **Umar Khan**, Sales Manager; **Shaeena Patel**, Corporate Sales Manager and **Aamir Basheer**, Sales Manager

Best Leisure Resort MERCURE GRAND JEBEL HAFEET

Sushanth Nambiar, General Manager, Mercure Grand Hotels Jebel Hafeet, feels proud to win in this highly competitive category of 'Best Leisure Resort' at the first ever Arabian Travel Awards. "Awards are not only recognitions for the hard work and sincere efforts of the team, but also fuel for doing even more in the coming days. The fact that it comes from an organisation that has its roots in the travel business makes it even more inspiring and gives the hotel and the brand global recognition and business presence, along with a quality promise for the travellers and guests. We hope to return next year with another win," says Nambiar.

► The award was given to Mercure Grand Jebel Hafeet and received by **Sushanth Nambiar**, General Manager



Best Golf Destination TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

Chalermak Suranant, Director-Dubai and Middle East office, Tourism Authority of Thailand, says, "We would like to thank the jury of Arabian Travel Awards for this recognition and all the people who voted for Thailand as the 'Best Golf Destination'. This is truly a manifestation of our hard work and dedication to give our Middle East-based golf enthusiasts the highest quality of golf products and services." Moreover, Thailand boasts of the best courses in the world, with state-of-the-art facilities. "Women travellers can partake in several leisure activities after a round of play, such as spa treatments, facials, Thai cooking classes, or shopping in local markets and luxury malls," Suranant adds.

► The award was given to Tourism Authority of Thailand and received by **Chalermak Suranant**, Director and **Chawarot Chankiatthitkul**, Marketing Executive



Best Family Hotel Apartments GLORIA HOTEL

Freddy Farid, Area General Manager, Gloria Hotels & Resorts, says "We believe that Gloria Hotels, Dubai was presented with the award for Best Family Hotel Apartments for understanding our clients' needs and culture and helping to provide them with the best service amongst families. We sincerely thank our clients, guests and each and everyone who supported and voted for us. We hope to continue our success. A special thank you to the organisers."

► The award was given to Gloria Hotel and received by **Bashan Turk**, Director of Sales Marketing and **Aklilu Admekom** (CIPD, CHT) Director of Talent & Career Development - Cluster





Best Debut Mid-Market Hotel | ROYAL CONTINENTAL HOTEL DUBAI

Lauding the Arabian Travel Awards team for successfully organising the event, **Wajeed Bagwan**, General Manager, Royal Continental Hotel Dubai, says, "It is an incredible honor to be recognised with this award, as it is a true testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire team. A special shout out to the entire team of Royal Continental Hotel because without them this would not have been possible. Having this appreciation will help the whole organisation in continue and improving utmost quality customer service. The ceremony was also a good platform for professional networking."

► The award was given to Royal Continental Hotel Dubai and received by Wajeed Bagwan, General Manager and Hany Shaker, Director of Sales Marketing

Fastest Growing OTA | SKYSOUQ.COM

Skysouq.com is the first online travel market based in Muscat, Oman. Part of Suhail Bahwan Group Holdings, at Skysouq they offer a wide range of travel products bookable at traveller's fingertips. Their objective is to ensure seamless travel for the passengers or customers who book through their agency over the internet. They understand the value of each visitor and they take the extra interest in providing unmatched service.

► The award was given to SkySouq.com and received by Gururaj S.A., General Manager, Bahwan Travel Agencies LLC



Best 5 Star Family Hotel | ATLANTIS THE PALM

On winning the 'Best 5 Star Family Hotel' award at the 1st Arabian Travel Awards, **Linda Abdul Hay**, PR Director at Atlantis, The Palm (ATP) says, "We, at Atlantis, The Palm, are honoured to win a prestigious award such as the Arabian Travel Award 2017. Reputable awards as such pay off for us at ATP as we put customers at the heart of everything we do. Furthermore, winning in this category reaffirms our position as a leading destination for families not only in the GCC but also globally. It is a matter of pride to win this award as we always strive to exceed our valuable guests' expectations by offering them amazing experiences and everlasting memories."

► The award was given to Atlantis The Palm and received by Linda Abdul Hay, Director, Public Relations



Best 4 Star Hotel | RAMADA PLAZA JUMEIRAH BEACH

Stefan Thumiger, Cluster General Manager, Ramada JBR and Sharjah, "We are thrilled to have been recognised as the 'Best Four Star Hotel' as it appreciates the fantastic job Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach is doing in terms of delivering guest satisfaction. This award will motivate the team to focus even more on delivering guest satisfaction and will enable us to maintain a competitive edge in this dynamic market."

► The award was given to Ramada Plaza, Jumeirah Beach and received by Mircea Canduletiu, Executive Assistant Manager and Stefan Thumiger, Cluster General Manager





Most Promising Airline

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

Ali Mohammed, Regional Manager Gulf, Ethiopian Airlines, says recognising and applauding the hard work of key advocates is crucial to develop the travel and tourism industry. "Africa's largest airline group, Ethiopian Airlines is a multi-award winning airline. Receiving the 'Most Promising Airline' award on the first-ever Arabian Travel Awards is encouraging and we shall continue to work hard. Ethiopian currently flies to/from 10 cities in the Middle East and thrice daily from Dubai with the ultramodern aircraft; connecting travellers from the region to over 54 and over 95 destinations in Africa and worldwide respectively," adds Mohammed.

► The award was given to Ethiopian Airlines and received by Ali Mohammed, Area Manager, Gulf Ethiopian Airlines

Best 4 Star Business Hotel

HOLIDAY INN DUBAI - AL BARSHA

Roxana Jaffer, CEO, Sovereign Hotels Dubai and Resident Director, Holiday Inn Dubai-Al Barsha, elucidates the vision of the hotel has been to be the best four star hotel in Dubai. "Winning the 'Best Four Star Business Hotel' award at the prestigious Arabian Travel Awards substantiates the actualisation of our vision. We thank you for your confidence and pledge to continue in our endeavour to give our guests a superior product laced with unquestionable service that surpasses their expectations," she adds.

► The award was given to Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha and received by Vincent D'Souza, Director of Finance and Kezia Da Rocha, Director of Marketing, Quality Assurance



Best Debut Hotel

BEST WESTERN PLUS PEARL CREEK HOTEL

Ravi K Nair, General Manager, Best Western Pearl Creek Dubai, says "We are proud to have been recognised as the Best Debut Hotel at the maiden Arabian Travel Awards conducted by Durga Das Publications. By winning this award, we have not only been recognised for all our hard work and effort during the past years but has also boosted our morale and motivated us to perform even better to serve our clients and contribute towards the 2020 vision of Dubai to have 20 million tourists to the emirate. We are very grateful to Durga Das Publications for the award and commend the wonderful evening which brought in a lot of glamour and honour to the Arabian travel and hospitality industry."

► The award was given to Best Western Plus Pearl Creek Hotel and received by Abdul Rauf Charakla, Group Managing Director and Ravi K Nair, General Manager



Best MICE Tour Operator

RED APPLE TRAVEL

Suneet Goenka, Group Managing Director, Red Apple Travel, feels truly honoured to have received the Arabian Travel Award 2017. "What makes this special for us is that we have been chosen for the maiden award. As a rapidly growing DMC, our focus is to be the best by integrating new technology and providing quality service to our industry partners. With 13 destination offices and eight sales offices, we aim to set our footprint in other destinations, thus adding to the burgeoning travel segment. It will also be our constant endeavour to bring smiles to all those connected with us in this travel chain."

► The award was given to Red Apple Travel and received by Elizabeth Kuruvilla, General Manager, UAE and Tamer Magdy, General Manager, Sales of GCC & MENA



Best Wedding & MICE Hotel

PULLMAN DUBAI CREEK CITY CENTRE HOTEL

Valerie Michelet, Director of Sales & Marketing, Pullman Dubai Creek City Centre Hotel, says it's a great honour for us to receive the 'Best MICE & Wedding Hotel' award at the inaugural Arabian Travel Awards. "Over the years, through flawless service and creative personalisation, Pullman Dubai Creek City Centre has developed a reputation as the best-in-class hotel for MICE and weddings which has kept us one step ahead of the game. We are proud that our efforts have been recognised by the organisers of this prestigious award and will continue to aim higher."

► The award was given to Pullman Dubai Creek City Centre Hotel and received by Valerie Michelet, Director of Sales & Marketing

Best Mid-Market Hotel Brand

TIME HOTELS

Mohamad Awadalla, CEO, TIME Hotels, says, "Being awarded the leading chain among the mid-market range is a definite recognition of our efforts. The mid-market is our bread and butter, with two hotels operating and three to come within the same category across UAE and KSA. It's a definite translation of the effort that each member of the TIME Hotels family exercises and our leading team paves the road for. Receiving the title will strengthen our efforts and being awarded the best chain in the mid-market segment is a bigger responsibility to maintain the level of execution and delivery and meet guest expectation and exceed them."

► The award was given to TIME Hotels and received by Kamal Abou Fares, Director of Marketing & Communications



Best Roof Top Lounge

LEVEL 43, FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON

The best place to chill out with friends, Level 43 at Four Points by Sheraton allows you to take in the magnificent 360-degree views of the Dubai skyline up close. Atop this unique chic modern restaurant and lounge on Sheikh Zayed Road, one can view the city's most iconic monuments like Burj Khalifa, Burj Al Arab, Atlantis, Dubai Mall, and the Jumeirah coastline, guests can quickly take in the beauty of Dubai within a moment's time.

► The award was given to Level 43, Four Points by Sheraton and received by Olga Galiuk, Venue Manager and Adrien Ehksam, F&B Manager





Best Contemporary Hotel MELIA HOTEL

The first Spanish five-star hotel in the Middle East, designed by a Milan-based architect, Melia Hotel offers 164 well-decorated rooms with a fresh and modern feel geared to make your stay exceptional. The award-winning signature restaurant by Sanjeev Kapoor is a welcome change for the discerning clientele. Their state-of-the-art meeting room facilities will provide spaces for different meetings and events on request by their guests for various occasions.

► The award was given to Melia Hotel and received by Irfan Ul Islam, Rooms Division Manager, Melia Dubai Hotel



Best Hotel Apartment Brand GOLDEN SANDS HOTEL APARTMENTS

Mohammed Khoory, General Manager, Golden Sands Hotel Apartments, says winning the Arabian Travel Awards is a major achievement for Golden Sands Hotel Apartments because it recognises and rewards excellent performance in the hospitality industry. "We are truly grateful for being selected as the Best Brand Hotel Apartment in the UAE and this award will encourage us to continue delivering outstanding standards to ensure our guests are happy and satisfied. For the past years, we have been upgrading our facilities and renovating our properties to cater to the ever-changing demands of our guests. The renovation is also needed to attract other markets that are looking for an accommodation which offers a 'home away from home' experience," Khoory adds.

► The award was given to Golden Sands Hotel Apartments and received by Mohammad Khoori, General Manager



Best 4 Star Leisure Hotel NIHAL PALACE HOTEL

Sandeep Singh Sahni, Managing Director, Nihal Palace Hotel, says, "Constant encouragement can make you achieve the toughest goals in life. Thus, the Arabian Travels Awards gave a boost to our team by recognizing their efforts. We are honoured that we have been awarded 'Best Four Star Leisure Hotel'. Our main motive is to provide the best services to our customers. The team takes an initiative at every step to keep their customers happy. At every point, we strive to provide the best to our customers. We, at Nihal Palace Hotel, have one dream: to promise our customers the best service in Dubai and to live up to the same."

► The award was given to Nihal Palace Hotel and received by its Managing Directors, Sandeep Singh Sahni and Harshdeep Singh Sahni



Most Innovative Travel Management Company

ARABIAN EXPLORERS

“We’re delighted that Arabian Explorers has been honoured with the award for ‘Most Innovative Travel Management Company,’ demonstrating our continued innovative approach in the market,” says **Yasser Noman**, CEO, Arabian Explorers. “We put great emphasis on providing the best service to our customers and this award is a testimony to our constant efforts and dedication to innovation across our products, technologies, and services. Our customers always come first and we are thrilled to continue the track record and develop new solutions, products and outstanding on-ground support,” Noman adds.

► The award was given to Arabian Explorers and received by **Srinivas Pannasa**, Executive Director Asia & Africa, **Afroz Nawaf**, Creative Director and **Susan Joehti**, Head of Sales

Hospitality Partner

JW MARRIOTT HOTEL DUBAI

Situated in Dubai’s thriving Deira business district and within minutes of the Dubai International Airport, JW Marriott Dubai is in close proximity to many of the city’s most prominent attractions, including top shopping at the Dubai Spice and Gold Souks. Besides necessary key amenities such as a business centre, fitness centre, high-speed Internet, etc. the hotel also provides Certified Meeting Planner, Marriott-certified wedding planner, meeting event space, meeting services App and ‘Meetings Imagined’. JW Marriott luxury hotels and resorts provide business and leisure travelers with simple elegance, an inviting atmosphere, and a deluxe level of comfort and personal service on their terms.

► The award was given to JW Marriott Hotel, Dubai and received by **Dominic Sherry**, General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Dubai



Technology Partner

TRAVEPORT

Travelport is a Travel Commerce Platform providing distribution, technology, payment, mobile and other solutions for the global travel and tourism industry. With a presence in approximately 180 countries, approximately 4,000 employees, and an additional approximately 1,000 employees at IGT Solutions Private Ltd, Travelport’s 2016 net revenue was over \$2.3 billion. Travelport has a leadership position in airline merchandising, hotel content and rate distribution, mobile travel commerce and a pioneering B2B payment solution that addresses the needs of travel intermediaries to efficiently and securely settle travel transactions.

► The award was given to Travelport and received by **Matthew Powell**, Managing Director, Middle East & South Asia







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of

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innovation and development in tourism industry

Thank You
for the overwhelming response

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MEDIA PARTNERS



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