

TRAVTALK

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

- RAK targets 1 mn tourists by 2018 06
- ME buoyant about experiential travel 16
- Travel industry gearing up for Expo 2020 20



Book on GRNconnect.com
& get higher value.
API/ XML
(New Version Available)

GRNconnect.com
Global Reservation Network
marketing@grnconnect.com

Emerging travel trends in ME

Attendees at Arabian Travel Market put forth the trends that are affecting the dynamics of the tourism and hospitality industry in the Middle East region. Digitalisation is here to stay as accommodation inventories and attractions are steadily increasing showing impressive numbers.

SHEHARA RIZLY

“Tourism is a constantly changing industry and we can see tourism to the Middle East is defined by mass and niche markets. Warm climate and beautiful beach resorts are always popular with visitors from colder climates while other tourists are looking for ‘remarkable experiences’ in a location or culture that they can talk about and share with their family and

friends. Sharjah is confident that it will achieve 10 million visitors by 2021 and some of these will be positively affected by Expo 2020. Sharjah will add 7000 new rooms to its inventory over the next three years with a significant increase to help accommodate growth across the region.

Moving past this tourism will continue to evolve, with new developments in air transportation,



His Excellency Khalid Jasim Al Midfa
Chairman, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism
Development Authority (SCTDA)

even more of the world will open up. Communication will allow better messaging as social media becomes further developed to an increasingly cynical millennial market.

There are no guarantees for the future but what is sure is that the expected standards of accommodation and attractions will be expected to rise and potential markets will continue to search for destinations that are genuine and



authentic and not already saturated with mass tourism. In Sharjah we are confident that we will continue to evolve our standards and our steady growth developing our assets sensitively will mean we can continue to ensure that we meet future trends effectively.”



Matthew Powell
Director-Middle East and
South Asia, Travelport

“The Middle East continues to be a leading player in the global travel industry and despite a slowdown in arrivals from traditional source countries, the region effectively counters this trend through its diversification strategy. This new direction, combined with a relatively young demographic implies several trends that will re-shape consumer habits and drive the sector in the future. Prominent trends include: further digitalisation of the industry, the desire for more personalised travel experience, and the boom of travel apps and remote payments. Travelport's technology is cutting edge in enabling travel players to meet and exceed expectations around new travel trends. Travelport puts the value of wide content and personalisation as key themes in upcoming years. By connecting all the people in travel with the people who travel we're leading the digital transformation of the travel

industry and we are continually transforming our unique platform to drive high travel performance and empower travel experience experiences for the global travel industry. Our digital strategy and value propositions focus on creating superior travel experiences across multiple devices and channels. Our work enables airlines, TMCs and travel agencies to leverage ‘every moment in travel’ with mobile and digital services that transform how they interact with their travellers.”



Mohammed Khoori
General Manager,
Golden Sands Hotel
Apartments

“Inbound market to Dubai is key to its tourism success. Key markets for Dubai and Golden Sands are India, KSA and UK. Inbound traffic accounts for the biggest percentage of tourism business to Dubai. Trend in travel for this region is still relatively unchanged with GCC countries still booking with short lead time, whilst European markets tend to book early. There are also more B2B and B2C companies, increasing the volume of business coming via online channels. Hospitality industry is seeing more companies creating software/ apps to not only help increase volume of business but also to improve visibility of one's products.

Millennials are those tourists who need to be connected and able to post/share information online as and when they are experiencing it. Travellers to this region will continue to increase as more attractions, such as Dubai Parks & Resorts, open up. Families from within ME will also visit the attractions, thereby increasing tourist numbers. Additionally, we are seeing increased tourists from areas such as China, and the numbers will only continue to grow due to the size of its population.”

Contd. on page 3 ►



FLY WITH US
TO THE **Philippines**

Enjoy non-stop flights from Abu Dhabi, Dammam, Doha, Dubai, Jeddah, Kuwait and Riyadh to Manila.

PHILIPPINEAIRLINES.COM | flyPAL | VISIT A PAL TICKET OFFICE OR YOUR NEAREST TRAVEL AGENT



Simply. Comfortable

Centrally located in Bur Dubai. Close to major shopping malls, tourist attractions and restaurants. Easy access to metro stations, 10 km drive from Dubai International Airport and 18 km from Kite Beach.



www.goldensandsdubai.com



#SimplyGoldenSands

For Booking:

+971 4 355 5553

  /goldensandsdubai

Industry in ME fast adopting digitalisation

► Contd. from page 1



Robin Parry
Vice President
Emirates Holidays

“ATM is very important, it enables key people within the industry across the globe to meet in an efficient and productive manner, share knowledge and trade, and showcase Dubai. The travel industry, as most sectors currently, is facing challenges that further highlight the importance of ATM. It is still an innovative and growing sector with demand remaining relatively robust; however, customers are increasingly seeking more value and lower price points. Demand for more ‘authentic’ travel experiences is also growing. Digitalisation is disrupting the sector. Customers are now more in control of how they source inspiration, search, book and share their travel arrangements and it’s important that companies understand these changing customer needs and adapt the technology to support. However, great service and product delivery and customisation remains imperative.”



Melwin D'Silva
Regional Manager
Air India

“The Arabian Travel Market is the largest travel exhibition in the region and an excellent platform to meet our existing clients and network with the potential ones. We take this opportunity to showcase the excellent and exclusive products and services of the national carrier to India to our valued partners. As India’s national flag carrier to the Gulf region since the late 60s we have been connecting over 13 cities in six countries in GCC/MEA region to 69 domestic destinations in India and to the US, Europe, Australia, Far East and South East Asia.

The positive impact of digitalisation can be observed by 10 per cent Y-o-Y growth in web bookings on Air India’s website and on Air India Express (IX), our LCC subsidiary, all bookings are net based. IX had a 45 per cent growth in operations in GCC region. We are responding to the strong demand on travel needs for employment, corporates, tour operators or governments and will be introducing attractive packages with special focus on the Gulf, the Middle East and Asian region and connectivity to India in 2017.”



Samir Mehta
General Manager, Arabian
Adventures

“ATM is certainly one of the key shows for inbound operators and certainly for Arabian Adventures to attend. It provides an opportunity to not only meet with tour operator partners but also to showcase the destination, our products and services.

At Arabian Adventures we operate in 60 markets worldwide and it is therefore vital that we research and survey to find out what our clients need – be it for FIT or MIE. We have a product development team that works on refining our product portfolio and assessing the potential of new experiences. The infrastructural development of the UAE has been the significant factor toward offering world class experiences to international tourists. At Arabian Adventures, we work across multiple markets and continually collaborate with partners, consortia and associations across all the markets we operate in. We have a proud history of pioneering new products and investing in unique experiences be it around culinary endeavours the desert, conservation and local heritage.”



Samir Hamadeh
General Manager, Alpha
Destination Management

“ATM is a very important platform for travel, tourism and hospitality. Over the years it has created the ideal platform for trade partners to negotiate key business deals over a period of four days. Today, we witness a very educated and knowledgeable traveller who would seek the assistance of a travel agent after careful research on his own about the type of destination to travel, reasons to travel, how, where and what needs to be done. Both traditional and online travel agencies are used as a medium of consultation which places the agents and their partners on a higher level.

As we see an upward trend in the usage of smart phones as DMCs we should be prepared to cater to the new age of traveller whether it is business or leisure. The online world will have to work better on the social media arena, not only through targeted marketing, but through sharing experiences better. Online giants cannot continue being bookers. They have to move into being travel consultants. Hotels are trying to reduce the dependency on these giants and this where they can mark their difference.”

لتلبية جميع احتياجات سفركم
For all your travel needs

www.satatravels.com



Flights



UAE Visa



Holidays



Cruise



Hotels



Insurance



sata
ساتا

وكالة مطار الشارقة للسفرات
Sharjah Airport Travel Agency

For Booking and inquiries Call :

Tel: 06 561 8888 | Email: info@satatravels.com

Sharjah • Abu Dhabi • Dubai • RAK • Ajman

ATM: The backbone of inbound tourism

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) has witnessed steady growth in recent years, with more exhibitors joining in the event every year. It has become one of the largest travel and tourism trade exhibitions, connecting the whole world on one single platform.

Participation at ATM is important not just for the travel agents and tourism companies in the GCC and Middle East, but to exhibitors from around the world too. For example, destinations such as Georgia, Azerbaijan and Bosnia have been enjoying increased traffic from the region mainly due to participation at ATM. Today, they are amongst the top destinations for outbound travel from the GCC/ME market. Countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Peru are also seeking increased traffic from the Middle East as they recognise the potential for tourism growth, with direct connections from the Emirates enabling hassle-free travel for visitors.

ATM brings a host of benefits to all stakeholders, partners and agents in the

Four days of networking to connect with the whole world brings a wealth of opportunity. Most countries have been successful in increasing market share by participating at ATM, hence the reason that we see a growth of new markets, buyers and exhibitors from around the world

region and globally. Four days of networking to connect with the whole world brings a wealth of opportunity. Most countries have been successful in increasing market share by participating at ATM, hence the reason that we see a growth of new markets, buyers and exhibitors from around the world each year.

Dubai's connectivity plays a very important role in its attraction as a travel hub, a fact which many travel businesses are aware of and

capitalise on to the maximum extent at ATM. Each year new destinations take part to attract more visitors from the region in a reciprocal process that also raises the profile of the GCC at those destinations. ATM also brings foreign travel agencies to Dubai to network directly with local operators, who enjoy the benefits of exposure to many different markets in one platform.

ATM gives ample opportunities to the inbound tourism market as it facilitates

the inbound tour operator. Tourism in Dubai increases Year-on-Year as the UAE's visionary leadership works with the department of tourism and other stakeholders and partners to consistently bring something new to the market. As a result, ATM will keep getting stronger every year, enabling not just the UAE but the whole GCC region to ensure sustainable tourism growth in the region.

From the general list of markets, both inbound and outbound travel from Saudi

Arabia, India and China has increased over the past year. Since Air Canada launched direct operations with three weekly flights to Dubai a year ago there has been an increase in the traffic from Canada. Outbound to Turkey and inbound from Russia is yet to pick up, although inbound from Turkey is still steady, as direct connectivity by both Emirates and Turkish Airlines ensures an increase in traffic to the region and beyond. Although there was an initial drop of visitors from the

UK, we are now witnessing strong traffic.

Overall, the outlook is extremely positive for yet another hugely successful Arabian Travel Market exhibition.

(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



Nasir Jamal Khan
CEO
Al Naboodah Travel and Tourism

ATM gives ample opportunities to the inbound market as it facilitates the inbound tour operator. Tourism in Dubai increases YoY as the UAE's visionary leadership works with the department of tourism and other stakeholders and partners to consistently bring something new to the market

Decline in Travel Intent from UAE to US

UAE travellers, at this early planning stage, are showing less interest in travel to the US and the UK with both countries dropping two places from 2nd and 3rd place to 4th and 5th place. With an uncertain political landscape in the US at the moment, this could be a factor in the decrease in travel intent. However, India tops the chart as in the previous year, while the Philippines rose two places up.

Top 10 Destinations

Origin = UAE

Rank	2016	2017	YoY Rank Change	Rank	2016	2017	YoY Rank Change
1	India	India	0	6	Australia	Australia	0
2	United States	Philippines	2	7	Canada	Jordan	2
3	United Kingdom	Egypt	2	8	Thailand	Thailand	0
4	Philippines	United States	-2	9	Jordan	Indonesia	2
5	Egypt	United Kingdom	-2	10	Germany	Canada	-3

2016 = Searching or Booking October '15 - January '16, to depart in June - August '16.

2017 = Searching or Booking October '16 - January '17, to depart in June - August '17.

The Rise of the 'Staycation'

Qatar sees a whopping 56.2 per cent increase in travellers planning to travel within the country this summer, followed by Saudi Arabia (34.5%), Oman (34%) and Bahrain (33.2%). More than half of all travellers planning staycations this summer in this region are intending on a trip lasting more than 12 days. 92.2% of travellers planning staycations this summer in Bahrain intend to stay for more than 12 days.

Country	% Change YoY
UK	23.80%
UAE	4.90%
Saudi Arabia	34.50%
Qatar	56.20%
Oman	34.00%
Kuwait	9.60%
Bahrain	33.20%

Staycation Insights - Search and Booking Volume Difference Year on Year (Origin = Destination)

2016 = Searching or Booking October '15 - January '16, to depart in June - August '16

2017 = Searching or Booking October '16 - January '17, to depart in June - August '17.

Source: Sojern's Summer Travel Trends for 2017



Publisher : Sanjeet
Director : Sumeera Bahl
Managing Editor : Peden Doma Bhutia
Assistant Editor : Shehara Rizvi
Desk Editor : Ruchi J Singh
Assistant Desk Editor : Shivani Kaul
Design : Nityanand Misra
Business Development Manager : Crisna De Guzman
Sales & Admin Assistant : Angelito Villeza
Asst. Manager - Advertising : Gaganpreet Kaur
Manager Production : Anil Kharbanda
Circulation Manager : Ashok Rana

is published
by Sanjeet on behalf of
**Durga Das Publications
Private Limited**

Printed at
Citrus Graphics Private Limited
B-61, Sector-67
Noida, (U.P.) 201 301

Offices:

DELHI: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
Ph: +91-11-23344179
E-mail: travtalk@ddppl.com

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

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

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

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

material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action. The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material solicited or unsolicited nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged. This publication is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific product or services offered. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the Indian and International Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by delayed publication, error or failure of an advertisement to appear.

93% occupancy at Ramada Ajman

Ramada Hotels and Suites and Ramada Beach Ajman under the leadership of Cluster General Manager **Iftikhar Hamdani** have recorded an increase in occupancy levels during the last quarter of 2016, leading up to a very good first quarter in 2017 as well.

TT BUREAU

Beach properties in the UAE have recorded a steady growth trajectory from the latter part of 2016 under the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum who announced ease of entry visa to Russia and China ensuring a stronger 2017.

According to Hamdani there has been an increase in arrivals by nearly 20-25 per cent after the visa on arrival was announced last year for the Russian market. He further stressed that 2017 summer looks very promising as already the bookings have been pouring in good numbers.

Hamdani explains that ensuring a 93 per cent occupancy with a strong ADR that enhances the profit share is

similar to the years they enjoyed in 2014 when the tourism trade was booming with visitors especially from the CIS market. Good relationships with partners and team work within the property are some of the key elements which ensure their profitability at all times.

Another important factor to be stressed upon is an increase in visitors booking through online channels. The CIS market is a traditional market that would always depend on the travel agents to make their arrangements but they have seen a new emerging trend as about 2 to 3 per cent of Russian travellers have booked through online travel agents or GDS. This is a sign that there is a new millennial traveller emerging from the CIS market.

Closely working with the Ajman tourism develop-

ment department and other partners and stake holders Ramada Beach and Ramada Hotels and Suites Ajman are on a very strong path towards achieving the largest hotel chain in Ajman as well. The recent addition of the first Wyndham Garden in the emirate towards the latter part of the year ensures the numbers increase to above 600 rooms for Ramada Hotels in Ajman.

As this year marks the year of giving, under the leadership of Hamdani, the hotels have once again stepped in to a new programme to provide food for the labour camps in Ajman. The untouched food from the hotel banquet and buffet will not be wasted; instead, it will be shared among the many deprived individuals in labour camps. The charity committee of the properties will provide meals for labour-

“We encourage our colleagues within the hospitality sector to follow suit so we can create a bigger impact for the community. Passion and philanthropy are all it takes to make a positive difference.”

Iftikhar Hamdani

Cluster General Manager
Ramada Hotels and Suites and Ramada Beach Ajman



ers in makeshift buffet tents especially for the occasion.

Pioneering in CSR programmes Hamdani and his team has been successful at various events during the year. Latest among the achievements is Iftikhar Hamdani's accolade – Wyndham Hotel Group EMEA President's Award for CSR 2016. Hamdani was again recognised by the group for its in-

novative and substantial Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives over the past year. The award was presented to Hamdani by Wyndham Hotel Group's top officials including Geoff Balloti, President and CEO; Dan Ruff, President and Managing Director of WHG – EMEA, and Ignace Bauwens, Regional Vice-President of WHG Middle East and Africa, during the group's annual EMEA

Summit held in Brussels, Belgium. On receiving the award, Hamdani said: “I would like to thank Wyndham Hotel Group for lauding our continuous contribution to charitable and sustainable causes. We encourage our colleagues within the hospitality sector to follow suit so we can create a bigger impact for the community. Passion and philanthropy are all it takes to make a positive difference.”



CREATE MEMORIES... ENJOY DUBAI

At Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach, we will make sure your stay is memorable. You can explore the city & famous sites, go shopping or unwind at the relaxing Jumeirah beach... All just minutes away!

ramadaplazajbr.com | +971 4 439 8888

YOU DO YOUR THING. LEAVE THE REST TO US.®

© 2017 Wyndham Worldwide, Inc. This property is independently owned by Golden Sands Hotels LLC and operated under a management agreement by Wyndham Hotel Group (WHG) Limited or one of its Affiliates.

RAMADA
PLAZA
Jumeirah Beach



CREATE MEMORIES... ENJOY SHARJAH

At the new Ramada Sharjah discover the additional & enhanced facilities. 343 rooms and suites including: Deluxe Rooms - Twin & King bed, Executive Rooms & Suites, Executive Lounge, Business Center, 6 Meeting Rooms, 2 Restaurants, Spa, Pool & Pool Terrace.

ramadasharjah.com | +971 6 530 0003

YOU DO YOUR THING. LEAVE THE REST TO US.®

© 2017 Wyndham Worldwide, Inc. This property is independently owned by Golden Sands Hotels LLC and operated under a management agreement by Wyndham Hotel Group (WHG) Limited or one of its Affiliates.

RAMADA
Sharjah

RAK targets 1 mn tourists by 2018

Ras Al Khaimah is targeting 1 million tourists by the end of 2018, revealed **Haitham Mattar**, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) on his recent visit to India.

NISHA VERMA

Ras Al Khaimah recently organised roadshows in Delhi and Mumbai, India to meet and interact with travel trade in the country. **Haitham Mattar**, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) while speaking at a press conference in New Delhi, revealed that India is a prominent market for them and they are expecting huge growth from the country.

"We have seen about 35 per cent growth in the first quarter of the year from the Indian market, and interestingly we have seen a 10 per cent growth in the length of the stay

from Indians, which means that Indian travellers are finding more things to do in Ras Al Khaimah. Our target is to keep the travellers for more days and enjoy the destination. We are aiming to get 1 million visitors to Ras Al Khaimah by the end of 2018," Mattar said.

In order to achieve that, they are developing new tourism products. "Ras Al Khaimah is a hidden gem and is very different from Dubai and its neighbouring emirates. We are more about natural assets and adventure. One can hike and zipline in the mountains, dive in the sea and can also do a desert safari, all in the same day.

We are a growing market for India, in terms of weddings as well. Another area we are focussing on is MICE. We also have beach concerts for young millennials

Haitham Mattar
CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA)



We also have five shopping malls and we are located only 45 minutes from Dubai. The biggest advantage is that RAK offers value for money, especially for families. 72 per cent of our business comes from families. We have beach front resorts, which are 5-star products under 4-star brands and pricing. We are a growing market for India, in terms of weddings as well. We have seen a growth of this segment

from India into the destination with high profile weddings, where 300-450 people fly in from India to RAK. Another area we are focusing on is MICE. We also have beach concerts for young millennials," he informed

India is the fourth largest source market for RAK right now, while Germany is the first. Mattar realises the difference and says that their

strategy is to put RAK in the itineraries of Indians travelling to Dubai. "The number of Indian travellers coming to Dubai is 1.6 million, and those coming to RAK is 37,000. We have seen a great appetite from Indian travellers for combination trips like Dubai-RAK or Abu Dhabi-RAK. For us, it's a huge growth potential, because if we get even a small segment of those coming to Dubai, India would al-

ready be our biggest source market," he revealed.

Mattar also signed an MOU with **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), for hosting OTOAI convention in Ras Al Khaimah, tentatively from September 12-14 in the emirate. More details about the convention will be revealed soon.

Subscription-based travel

Middle East airlines need to start catering to the expectations of the 'Netflix' generation in order to engender loyalty and remain competitive.

Subscription-based concepts are trending in all walks of life, however this is an area in which the majority of airlines are currently lagging. Subscription-based travel gives huge benefits to both parties. Passengers avoid the repetitive tasks involved in each booking, saving time and remaining loyal to the airline, which in turn enjoys increased self-service, direct sales and customer satisfaction.

Mobile commerce is growing exponentially and yet few airlines have gained plaudits for the functional ease of their apps. Studies into loyalty by companies such as Facebook have shown there is a huge opportunity to deepen and strengthen customer relationships by ensuring the service an airline offers provides a memorable experience. By offering a product that simplifies the travel booking process to a few clicks, TravelPass makes repeat travel easy and airlines

who offer this service will see these passengers return time and again.

TravelPass, a similar concept to a smartcard used on other forms of transport, gives travellers the opportunity to buy a pass that carries a certain amount of trips, or even unlimited travel for a given period. This technology enables airlines to offer subscription products to their passengers, making it much easier and quicker to bulk-purchase flights. The admin tool within TravelPass, controlled by the airline, allows it to set its own business rules and product attributes to they can build a unique offering. TravelPass then integrates with the airlines' PSS and GDS, such as Sabre or Amadeus. This means the airline can handle subscription customers in the same way as any other booking when it comes to changes, rebooking, cancellations and revenue management.

TravelPass allows airlines to differentiate themselves and compete on more than just price. The opportunity for airlines is now to change the behaviour of frequent passengers from being buyers to bookers and to make the repeat booking process so streamlined it gives customers no reason to ever consider an alternative.

(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



David Taylor
Senior Vice President Business Development, TravelPass

**SIMPLE APPROACH
PRIME LOCATIONS
TIME HOTELS**

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

TIME HOTELS **TIME HOTELS & RESORTS** **TIME EXPRESS HOTELS** **TIME Hotel Apartments** **TIME Residence**

Winner of ATTA 2017 in the Best Standard Hotel Category

You really matter! www.timehotels.ae



Regione Toscana



TOSCANA
PROMOZIONE TURISTICA



DISCOVER TUSCANY

Come to ATM 2017

Italy- PAD Europe 7330

Personality of the month

Making Thailand a lucrative destination

Chalerm Sak Suranant, Director for Tourism Authority of Thailand for Dubai and Middle East, has become one of the most prominent tourism board professionals driving Thailand and its tourism products to incredible heights in its vision to make it a top tourist destination.



Early years

Born in Chiang Mai, the largest city in north Thailand and home to Loy Krathong Festival or The Festival of Lights, **Chalerm Sak Suranant** has been in the forefront in terms of tourism promotions for his country in the Middle East.

Suranant started his primary education at Montfort College and attended high school at Yupparaj Wittayalai School. In 1975, he entered college and obtained Bachelor of Arts at Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University. In 1991, he began his career in Tourism Authority of Thailand as Assistant

Cathay Pacific Chinese New Year Night Parade and 2008 the Most Vibrant Travel Destination in Sport Tourism by X Life Magazine in X Life Sport Awards 2008 Event.

Determined for success

Suranant has been instrumental along with his team to ensure that there are more visitors to Thailand from the Middle East right throughout the year. From January 1-December 31, 2016, Thailand welcomed 585,633 tourists from the Middle East including Iran, generating an income of more than 40 million Thai baht, a 15 per cent increase compares to same time last year.

2016 compared to 2015. In 2017, we aim at increasing this number and plan to attract more tourists during the green season which will fall from May-August."

Suranant and his efficient team from the Thailand tourism board in Dubai carry out a very good campaign to entice visitors from Dubai and other emirates with various interesting events. Recently they introduced the destination as the most affluent for golfers in Abu Dhabi, followed by a summer promotion campaign in one of the significant shopping malls in Dubai in order to encourage more visitors to try out new destinations within Thailand like Chiang Mai. Thailand's "Rose of the North" is a cultural and natural wonderland with ethnic diversity, a multitude of attractions and welcoming hospitality.

Chiang Mai literally means "new city" and has retained the name despite celebrating its 700th anniversary in 1996. King Meng Rai the Great founded the city as the capital of the Lanna Kingdom on Thursday, April 12 1296 around the same time as the establishment of the Sukhothai Kingdom. King Meng Rai even conferred with his friends, King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai and King Ngam Muang of Phayao before choosing the site where the capital of the Lanna Kingdom was to be founded. Henceforth, Chiang Mai not only became the capital and cultural core of the Lanna



Kingdom, it was also to be the centre of Buddhism in northern Thailand. King Meng Rai himself was a very religious leader who even founded many of the city's temples that remain important to this day. Chiang Mai is one of the few places in Thailand where it is possible to experience both historical and modern Thai culture coexisting side by side: the city features centuries-old pagodas and temples next to modern convenience stores and boutique hotels.

This year TAT aims to offer "Value for Experiences" to travellers coming to the Kingdom by focusing on "Unique Thai Local Experiences" to the world. In line with the Thailand 4.0 model, TAT will highlighting a value-based economy driven by innovation and looking to be a creative economy deliver-

ing creative tourism. TAT has also initiated the LINK project in which 'L' represents Local Experiences; 'I' for Innovation; 'N' for Networking and 'K' for Keeping character. This

is aimed to promote the local tourism in various communities in Thailand; such as, Ban Na Ton Chan Community in Sukhothai province, Kram Sakon in Sakon Nakhon province, Ban Nam Chiao Ecotourism Community, Trat province, and Ko Klang Community, Krabi province. 🇹🇭



Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand, Chiang Mai Office for two years. Afterwards, he was assigned as TAT Assistant Director for New York office from 1993 to 1997. In 2004, he became the Director of TAT Hong Kong office until 2008. During the same year, he went back to Chiang Mai to head TAT Chiang Mai office until 2012 before heading to Dubai in 2012 to lead TAT Dubai and Middle East market until present time.

Accomplishments

Suranant has received numerous awards such as the Excellent Brand of Tourism Paradise Award in 2007, Excellent Tourism Organisation Award (Excellent Tourism Department) from Hong Kong Leaders Choice Brand Award 2008 Event, Bangkok - Best City for Leisure in Asia Pacific between 2006-2008: Winner in Chinese New Year in

The top five tourism spending countries in the Middle East region are the UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar.

Designed to fit in with the "Year of Sustainable Tourism Development" proclaimed by the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) for 2017, the "Unique Thai Local Experiences" campaign is being extensively publicised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) at the Arabian Travel Market 2017, the largest travel trade show in the Middle East region being held from April 24 to 27, 2017, at Dubai World Trade Center, Dubai, UAE.

TAT Director for Dubai and Middle East market commented, "We are extremely happy to announce that TAT Middle East office received a 13 per cent increase in tourist arrival in

From January 1-December 31, 2016, Thailand welcomed 585,633 tourists from the Middle East including Iran, generating an income of more than 40 million Thai Baht, a 15 per cent increase compares to same time last year

Chalerm Sak Suranant
Director for Tourism Authority of Thailand for
Dubai and Middle East market



One View sets sights on new markets

The year 2017 marked a spectacular beginning for One View IT Solutions — as the company achieved a milestone 100th Live Online Travel Booking portal for its clientele who are from nine countries including UAE, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sudan and Egypt.

TT BUREAU

Despite being relatively new to the business, One View IT Solutions has witnessed tremendous growth in the past years. They have extended their presence in different markets to cater to their customers' requirements. They have R&D centres in two major cities of India — Cochin and Ahmedabad, each centre dedicated to serve specific functions, thereby maintaining their exceptional service levels.

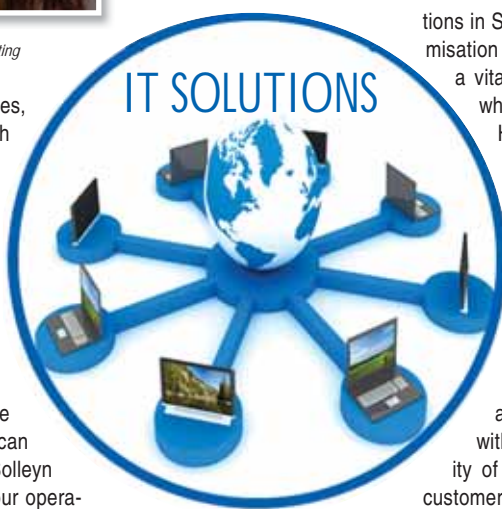
Azima Chhuvara, Head of Sales & Marketing, One View IT Solutions, commented, "One View already has the reputation of being client-centric. Keeping that as the cornerstone of our business we aim to revolutionise travel businesses associated with us. To achieve this we have two



Azima Chhuvara
Head of Sales & Marketing
One View IT Solutions

separate entities, one dealing with efficient product development and the other specialised in digital marketing. As part of our expansion plans we have extended our presence to the South American market with Solleyn Arago heading our opera-

One View already has the reputation of being client-centric. Keeping that as the cornerstone of our business we aim to revolutionise travel businesses associated with us. To achieve this we have two separate entities, one dealing with efficient product development and the other specialised in digital marketing



tions in South America. Optimisation of resources plays a vital role in delivering what we promise.

Hina Nassim, Head of Customer Relations and Account Management, brings years of experience in project management and is committed to a disciplined approach coupled with exceptional quality of service to exceed customer expectations."

One View IT Solutions is concentrating on helping their customers on essential business requirements today and provides support with Back Office Support, Data Entry, Credit Card Fraud Management solutions, Business Process Outsourcing, Search Engine Optimisation, Social Media Optimisation and other technologies that travel companies are in dire need of to succeed in this competitive market.

There are many traditional travel agencies and newbies in the travel industry whom they have assisted to go online. They are successfully progressing in their vision of being the leading technology solutions and services provider for the travel industry in the Middle East and North Africa.

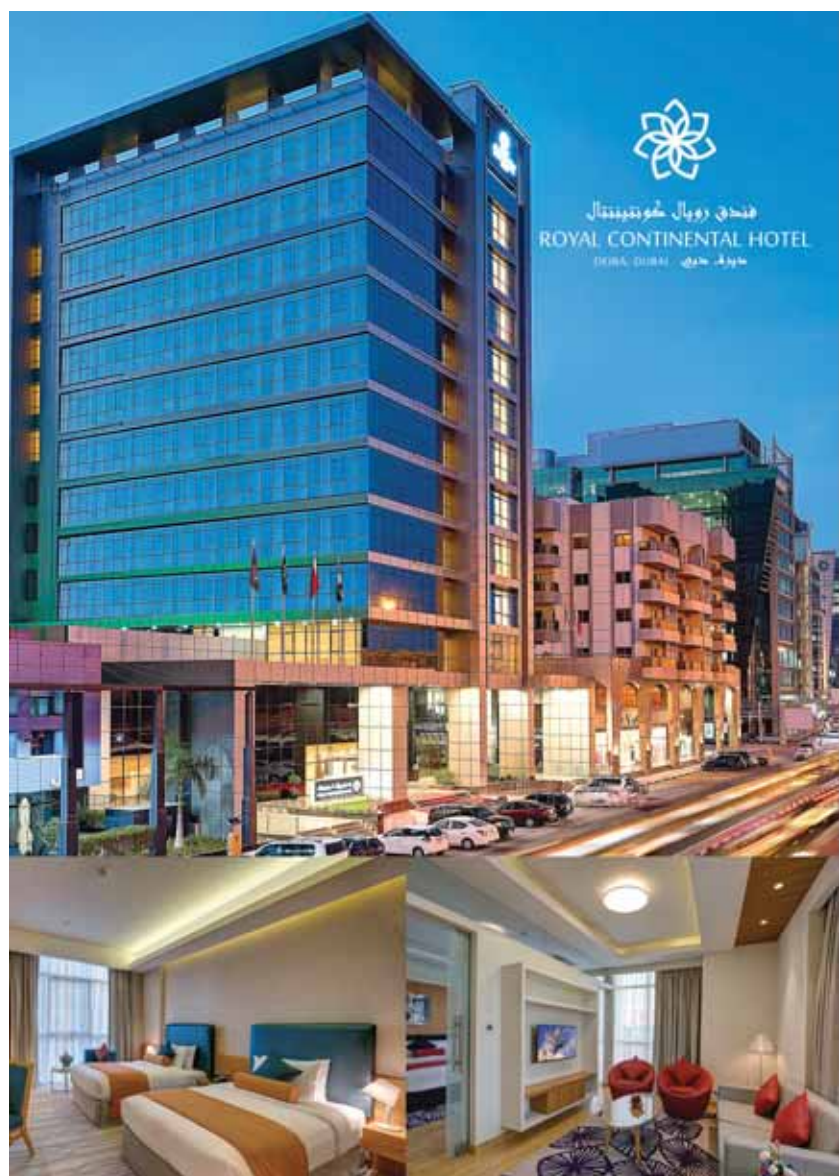
Currently in its sixth year of operation, the company has 35 professionals who are

dedicated to offer quality and precision. They believe that quality is what matter the most hence in order to enhance the service levels and to be more accessible to their customers, they will soon be having their our presence in Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia as well.

New trends are emerging and there is a shift in technology, Industry Experience is fundamental and creativity, efficiency is vital in this evolution. One View, with its winning combination of right minds and cutting edge technology provides exactly the same.

Services on Offer

- One View IT Solutions provides support with Back Office Support, Data Entry, Credit Card Fraud Management solutions



Welcome to Royal Continental Hotel

Located in the thriving heart of Dubai, Royal Continental Hotel offers business travelers and holiday makers a stylish and welcoming haven just minutes from Dubai International Airport.

We pride ourselves on offering a unique and technologically-advanced experience through our innovative in-room hospitality facilities, which are unrivaled among 4 star hotels in the city. All rooms feature our state-of-the-art Royal Continental Digital Connect, an innovative LED Screen controlled room introduced to accommodate our guests' every need at a single touch.

- > 168 tastefully-appointed rooms and suites
- > All Day Dining, Café & 24-Hour Room Service
- > Business, Meeting & Conference Facility
- > Spa, Gym, Pool, Game Zone
- > WiFi, Business Services



P.O. Box 182166, Deira, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Tel: +971 4 203 5000
Fax: +971 4 203 5199

Email: sales@royalcontinentalhotels.com
Web: www.royalcontinentalhotels.com

MEET US HERE



Rose Park to enter Dubai by Q2, 2017

Rose Hotels and Hotel Apartments is set to add a four-star property – Rose Park Hotel Al Barsha – to its portfolio by Q2, 2017. The hotel is ideal for leisure and business travellers alike thanks to its proximity to metro stations which connect it to shopping malls and business centres.

TT BUREAU

Since 2006, Rose Garden has been at the forefront of development and management of luxurious commercial properties in key locations in Dubai. Rose Hotels & Hotel Apartments is consistently creating a benchmark in both operational and aesthetic standards. Positioned as one of the top hotel group in the UAE, Rose Garden strives to become the Middle East's leading preferred family hotel in the region. Their philosophy combines authentic sense of hospitality, sustainability and an outstanding vision for tomorrow's trends and an innovative approach to hospitality industry. Their mission is to be established as a premier and preferred Hospitality Management Company for guests, associates and owners alike.

The 56-unit Rose Garden Hotel Apartments in Bur Dubai and 144-units in Al Barsha are the existing properties for Rose Hotels and Apartments and this year, they will be introducing the upscale four-star brand Rose Park Hotel Al Barsha; 60-meters away from the Sharaf DG metro station adjacent to Sheikh Zayed Road. The property promises to offer a new dimension of luxury with 168 rooms including 24 suites exquisitely designed in a comfortable ambience. The property easily reaches out to the best of Dubai; the largest Ski-Zone, shopping malls, the Jumeirah Beach or Dubai Internet City are strategically located a few minutes away. Rose Park Hotel is well positioned to connect both the leisure and business guests.



At Rose Park Hotel, discerning travellers are exposed to the best of everything including restaurants serving multi cuisine, coupled with its lavish, fine dining ambience, extensive spectrum of delicacies to suite the most earnest palate. The latest addition was the brand 'Bombay urban café' – a fusion Indian restaurant serving authentic north Indian cuisine and a Turkish restaurant.

Branding is important for Rose Hotels and Apartments. It is designed to enhance every aspect of a guest's experience by reflecting the location's culture, history and geography. Rose Garden brands are built on a reputation for unparalleled attention to detail and impeccable personal service. They represent dining experiences that are memorable, inven-

tive and considered among the world's finest facilities that are renowned for providing the ultimate in relaxation; and the sense that each of their distinctive properties are the only destination of choice for discerning guests. Through advertising, collateral, direct mail, public relations, trade show events and regional sales office efforts, Rose Garden Brands keep reinforcing their standards and quality. The new branding as Rose Hotel Apartments and Hotels, they seek to leverage the allure of Rose Hospitality brands while building on the location or identity of an individual property.

"Dubai is a destination which continues to attract leisure and business travellers with their continuous events and exhibitions. It has always been a top pri-



ority for Business travellers. The main attractions included in Dubai during last year have definitely increased the number of visitors to the emirates, compared to the rest of the world. Air connectivity with increased number of flights per day with competitive price attracts not only first time



Abdulla Sharafi
CEO
Rose Hotels and Hotel Apartments.

Corporates is an essential segment for us, in terms of leisure we receive guests from GCC, Europe and India. We are on the look out to tap new markets this year such as China and America



visitors, but also encourages frequent visits to Dubai. Corporates is an essential market segment for us, in terms of leisure we receive guests from GCC, Europe and India. We are on the look out to tap new markets this year such as China and America which we will carry out with the strong relationships with our travel trade partners and by participating in various trade exhibitions. ATM gives us a very good opportunity to meet and network with

clients from all over the world. We value our relationship with travel agents and tour operators as they provide us the right sources in terms of revenue. They have now started to go a step ahead from traditional to online as they incorporate with current technology and this works extremely well for us as it is more convenient and faster to have our confirmed bookings," stated **Abdulla Sharafi**, CEO Rose Hotels and Hotel Apartments. 📞



Fly the National Carrier with Pride and in Comfort.

Choose Air India for

- ✓ More Leg Space and Pitch
- ✓ Hot Meals
- ✓ Higher Baggage Allowance
- ✓ Improved Punctuality
- ✓ Frequent Flyer Program
- ✓ Maximum Destinations

CAN ANYONE MATCH WHAT WE OFFER?

A strong connectivity with 69 domestic
and 42 international destinations



Call Toll Free: 1800 180 1407 or visit www.airindia.in

Stay connected [f](#) airindia [t](#) @airindia

Air India... Truly Indian



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Luxury speaks at La Verda

La Verda Suites and Villas have developed their own 'Be Home' brand with a touch of luxury and personalisation for discerning guests. Strategically located within close proximity to leisure destinations, the property boasts of terrific views of the Dubai skyline and is a 45-minute drive to the downtown.

TT BUREAU

La Verda Suites and Villas Dubai Marina is an addition to Dubai's luxury hospitality landscape with 150 rooms. Their distinct 'Be Home' concept coupled with their unforgettable service experience elevates luxury to new heights. They provide the finest facilities to the guests with uncompromising experiences, signature butler service, exceptional culinary venues, swimming pool, state-of-the-art gymnasium and a fun outdoor play area for children. Enhancing the guest experiences they offer a personalised butler service for villas and penthouses 24 hours a day customising the guests specific tastes, needs and preferences.

Guests have a choice of 150 individually designed opulent living spaces. This includes 91 one-bed room suites with three different categories, 35 two-bedroomed suites with two different categories, 14 three-bedroomed suites, two Penthouse-Duplex with three bedrooms, 8 villas into 5 units of three bedrooms and 3 villas into four bedrooms. Each accommodation is fitted with highest standards with ultra-modern furnishings, deluxe bathrooms and fully-equipped kitchens with top-of-the-line appliances. Every possible need, from an on-site washer, up-to-date technology including high speed Internet and complete entertainment with IPTV



to daily necessities such as a hair dryer, safe box and IP telephone and video intercom system are provided in all residences.

Each of the villas and penthouses are equipped with a private balcony or large deck with a Jacuzzi that set the mood for a revitalising stay. The villas offer an unforgettable retreat with stunning views, a unique modern layout and exotic design accents. A large sun deck in each of these homes allows a scenic and impressive venue for a gathering of up to 25 guests. Equally unique are the expansive penthouses that evoke an ambiance of luxury with sensational Marina views from the soaring La Verda heights. It is more an opulent home than a temporary getaway.

Siddharth Mehra, General Manager, La Verda Suites and Villas Dubai Marina & Managing Director, La Verda Global Hotels Management, says, "We live by our core value that we are different and we make the difference. We offer a home away from home to our guests and to each other. We are a multi-cultural workforce and proud to offer our individual cultural influences to our guests. For our guest this means unparalleled hospitality experience. For investors and owners, it translates to maximum business yield and value."

The all-day dining outlet 'Promenade' serves multi-cuisine breakfast, lunch, dinner and light snacks beyond the usual hours for the guests who might need to indulge at different times. Ho Ya Mal is a

typical heritage café; an Emirati coffee shop which serves local refreshments along with a fine selection of coffee and tea. It includes blended beverages, signature salads, delicious sandwiches etc. and operates from 12 noon to 12 midnight. Bahar is the Persian specialty restaurant which is open for lunch and dinner.

The main clientele for this niche property hail from the GCC region with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia leading the way followed by UK and Russia. The property is on a regular plan to tap into some of the new markets by participating at various international travel and tourism trade exhibitions. They will be visitors at ATM this year but by June they will participate at ILTM Asia and by

November at WTM London in order to strengthen their portfolio of clientele.

MICE is another important segment that would create interest in the property but at a very niche level catering to their discerning clientele. The Ballroom will be ready in La Verda Suites and Villas Dubai Marina in Q3 with capacity for 200 guests with state of the art features for various different styled meeting facilities.

Having good relationships with their trade partners is very important to them. Travel agents, corporates and media play a very important role and they keep strengthening the relationship by introducing various different programmes that reciprocally benefit both



Siddharth Mehra
General Manager, La Verda Suites and Villas Dubai Marina & Managing Director, La Verda Global Hotels Management LLC

The Ballroom will be ready in La Verda Suites and Villas Dubai Marina in Q3 with capacity for 200 guests with state of the art features for various different styled meeting facilities

parties. Apart from these programmes in the pipeline is a loyalty card to be introduced which will be ready for all by end of Q2. Similarly they will be ending the year with special appreciation and trophies for high performers. This will be an additional token of appreciation for all their partners. Also, in the pipeline in terms of expanding their global footprint would be the development of two new territories including Doha and Tbilisi.

La Verda Global Hotels Management, a joint venture between ARJ Holding, Dubai UAE and Aryan International, Doha, Qatar.





Holiday Inn
DUBAI - AL BARSHA

A HOST OF AMENITIES
IN AN UPSCALE 4 STAR HOTEL

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

India Business Awards, India Travel Awards 2016 (The Best Business Hotel – Dubai), Arabia CSR Award 2016
Best 4Star Business/Corporate, Silver Award:
MENA Travel Awards 2012, 2013 and 2014
Quality Excellence Award: IHG EMEA 2010

The Royal Budha: What's On Award 2016 (Shortlisted)
Time Out Dubai Restaurant Awards 2017 (Shortlisted)
What's On Award 2014 Winner
Gharana: Honourable Mention at Leaders in F&B
Awards 2017 - Leading Asian Restaurant

MEET US AT THE



24-27 April 2017, Dubai

AT STAND NUMBER
ME3110
BOOTH NO. 26B, HALL NO. 3

Holiday Inn Dubai - Al Barsha

Sheikh Zayed Road | PO Box 115443, Dubai
T: +971 4 323 4333 | F: +971 4 323 4334
Email: reservations@hialbarsha.com



www.holidayinn.com | 800-4642 | IHG Rewards Club



Revisit Arabic traditions with Tilal Liwa

Located on the edge of Rub Al Khali desert in Abu Dhabi, Tilal Liwa Hotel is the perfect destination to explore and experience the ancient Arabic traditions and culture clubbed with modern activities for the young and the old alike.

TT BUREAU

The Rub Al Khali desert is a unique destination, also known as the 'Empty Quarter', the largest uninterrupted sand desert in the world. Danat Hotels and Resort's Tilal Liwa Hotel is nestled amidst the rolling sand dunes providing a pristine view of the remarkable desert landscape. The property is built in traditional design offering a look and feel of the rich Arabic heritage and culture embodied in ornate craftsmanship.

Apart from its inherent cultural character, the wide expanse of land at the property is a hub for adventure enthusiasts offering activities such as sand boarding, cycling through the desert, horseback riding and quad bike safaris and thrilling adventure drive into the dunes of the majestic Rub Al Khali desert. The hotel also offers ample activities for families such as visiting traditional

camel farms and an ideal romantic hideaway for couples to unwind in the desert.

The property consists of different types of luxurious rooms and suites even special 96 sqm Royal Suite to accommodate niche clientele. While the superior Tilal room overlooks the rolling sand dunes of the Rub Al Khali desert offering accommodation for two adults and two children, the Al Sahab room with Arabian style décor, extends to a private balcony with sit-out area overlooking the pool and the lush green lawns. Deluxe room like the Courtyard room extends to a private terrace with sit-out area while Oasis room overlooks the swimming pool extending to a private terrace with sit-out area and sun lounge beds.

The Executive Suite with the separate dining, living areas with the kitchenette provides views of the dunes. Among the signa-

ture suites is the 175 sq.m. Majaheem Suite; the hotel's Presidential Suite offer the most breathtaking views of the desert dunes and pool from a large balcony and features an elegant lounge, private dining room, and a kitchenette. The Presidential Suite reflects local tradition and Art Deco influences, exuding the richness of Arabian culture, art and history. The intricate work of the handcrafted wall coverings and the unique materials help bring the vast space to life. The suite is furnished with a master bedroom, including luxury bathtub and another bedroom. It consists of modern amenities such as wireless Internet, 32-inch LCD TVs, DVD player, work desk, in-room safe, minibar and complimentary tea and coffee making facilities.

In terms of dining, Al Badiya is an all-day dining restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, offering a wide selection of contem-



porary and regional cuisine from a vibrant open kitchen. Layali is the intimate bar; it is an ideal stop-off before dining or to cap off the night after your evening meal. A rich array of eclectic snacks from around the world can be enjoyed in a lively bar atmosphere featuring a live singer. In addition, Al Liwan is an informal setting for drinks and dinner in a more casual and laid back atmosphere at the poolside with live entertainment which includes a belly dancer, sheesha and barbecue.



Tours and excursions are arranged from the hotel including desert safaris in a 4x4, where you can explore the towering dunes and follow in the steps of famous explorers. You can also enjoy a bar-

becue under the stars or take a trip to Liwa Oasis and discover a number of restored forts dating back to 200 to 300 years, built to defend earlier settlers and to protect scarce water resources.



Bringing the 'best' of hospitality to Dubai

The 202-room Best Western Plus Pearl Creek, managed by Pearl Hotels, offers eight different categories of rooms and suites catering to leisure and business travellers in Dubai.

TT BUREAU

The Pearl Hotels Group (PH Group), established in 2005, has become one of the fastest-growing hospitality companies in the Middle East with the opening of its first budget hotel – Rahab Hotel. Within a short span, the number of hotels in the group expanded to 15 new properties across Dubai and Saudi Arabia varying from budget hotels to 4-star premium properties.

PH Group is renowned as a chain of family hotels catering to the wider markets under the leadership of the Group's Managing Director

Haji Abdul Rauf. "Striving for excellence in hospitality, where our journey began with one star in 2005, today we have reached four stars and the journey will continue till we become the best," says Rauf.

The hotel group has 400 professionally trained employees from different cultures and nationalities serving customers around the clock and ensuring that the best services are delivered in keeping with the high standards of hospitality.

Best Western Plus Pearl Creek offers spacious rooms in a welcoming environment

Striving for excellence in hospitality, where our journey began with one star in 2005, today we have reached four stars and the journey will continue till we become the best

Haji Abdul Rauf



Haji Abdul Rauf
Group Managing Director
Pearl Hotels Group

with high speed Internet. All modern amenities are available in the eight different types of rooms and suites with a variety of dining options for the guests. The 24 hour coffee shop Café Latte allows busy business travellers to sit back and relax with a cup of coffee. Cloud 9 Shisha lounge and restaurant is a favourite among some of the valued guests. Women guests can also indulge in beauty services at the hotel's Identity Salon.



Ravi K Nair
General Manager
Best Western Plus Pearl Creek

Focusing on the group's business is essential in terms of occupancy and the online marketing trends have become very active within the past few years. There are many newly identified groups emerging from India and China but the feeder market is still the GCC region. As a hotel catering to both business and leisure clientele their focus will be to ensure different markets are aware of the properties. For MICE, the hotel offers state-of-the-art

The market trend this year seems to be on a rapid pick up and it is important to participate in various travel, tourism and hospitality trade related shows in order to gain more exposure

Ravi K. Nair

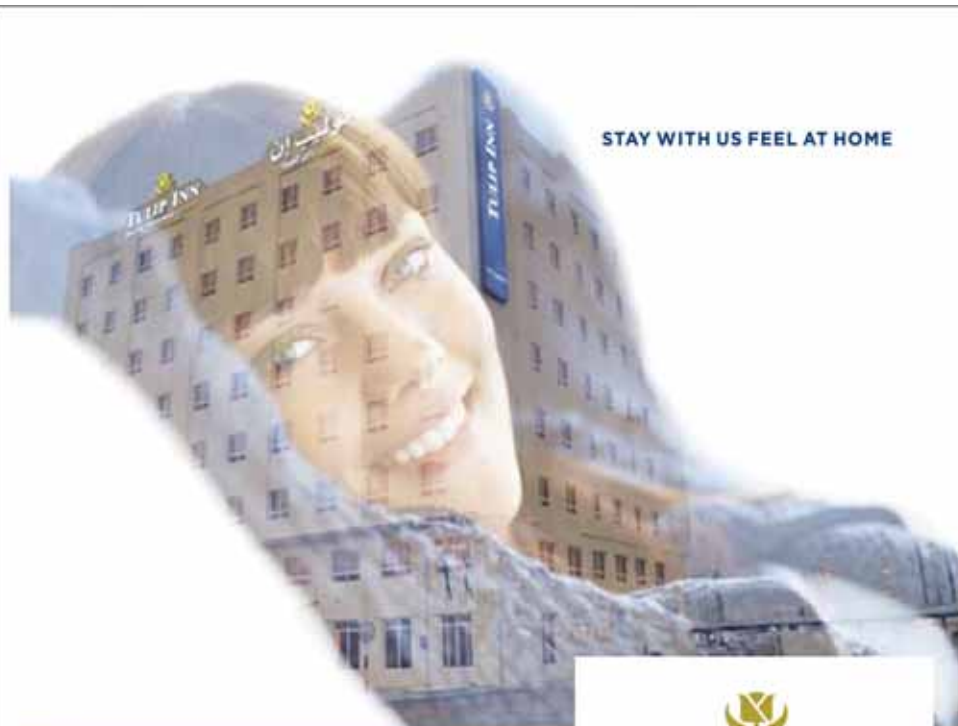
meeting room facilities which could accommodate from six to 300 people in one venue. Pearl Dining can host over 120 guests at one sitting to enjoy a multi cuisine with their culinary experts from around the world.

Ravi K. Nair, General Manager, Best Western Plus Pearl Creek, shares, "The market trend this year seems to be on a rapid pick-up and it is important to participate in various travel, tourism and hospitality trade related shows in order to gain more exposure."

Branding is important in every aspect as the clien-

tele Best Western Plus Pearl Creek caters to is the most discerning among the rest. Therefore, placing branded toiletries in their cloak rooms and guest contact areas as well as rooms is quite an advantage.

There are many additional privileges for the guests on long stay at the property. Going that extra mile to make the guest feel at home away from home is a concept adopted by the brand which has many benefits to its staff members. Its strategic positioning both locally and globally for Best Western Plus Pearl Creek ensures they reach greater heights. 🌟



STAY WITH US FEEL AT HOME

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
TULIP INN
RAS AL KHAIMAH

TULIP INN
RAS AL KHAIMAH - HOTEL
International standards, local flavours



In the Cosmopolitan Base of the Rising Emirate this stylish hotel offers 102 rooms, Champs Sprots Bar and Ristretto Café and 03 Meetings Rooms, Tulip Inn is located in the heart of the city, walking distance from the Shopping Centre, Exhibition Centre and RAK Free Trade Zone.

P.O. Box 13098, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE Tel: +971 7 2211222
info@tulipinnrasalkhaimah.com, www.tulipinnrasalkhaimah.com

ME buoyant about experiential travel

Experiential travel is growing significantly and is fast becoming a global trend. The official show theme for ATM 2017 is experiential travel and seminars held at the event will be with a focus on this theme, and on selling local experiences. **TRAVTALK** speaks to industry experts about their take on the importance of this latest tourism trend.

 SHEHARA RIZLY

“Defined as a form of tourism in which travellers focus on experiencing a country, city or a particular place by connecting to its history, people and culture, experiential travel is growing significantly. The real task for tour operators, travel agents and hospitality stakeholders is to understand how a travel experience can truly change a traveller's viewpoint and provide them with a new, unique, and authentic way to understand the world. Developing new communication strategies is very important to be able to engage in these types of customers who are tech savvy and mobile. Millennials or the smartphone generation (76 per cent of them own smartphones globally) are often associated with experiential travel. Yet, according to TripBarometer, 2015, 69 per cent of global travellers – of all age groups – planned to try something new in 2016. Slowly and steadily the older generation is seeking experiences beyond the relaxing ‘bed and beach’ holiday.”



Freddy Farid
Area General Manager
Gloria Hotels and Resorts

“When travellers visit new and adventurous destinations – or even more familiar ones – they are looking for a total experience, not just a bedroom for the night. At Wyndham, we are proud to offer our guests a taste of local culture and custom around the world through a combination of our trusted brand name with local flair and expertise. Our revolutionary guest loyalty programme now also allows our guests to experience a taste of the local destination through Member Levels. Wyndham Rewards members can book onto special experiences when redeeming free nights, taking advantage of various experiences ranging from an authentic cooking class in Shanghai to a desert safari in Dubai, without using any additional points.”



Ignace Bauwens
Regional Vice President
Middle East and Africa at
Wyndham Hotel Group

“Experiential tourism is trending globally as more travellers are looking to experience more of the city during their stay. We have even seen a strong increase in group travel, specifically multi-generational family groups; as such it is crucial for the hospitality industry to enrich their offerings for visitors of all ages. Travelling is now more about an immersive style of tourism, where different aspects of local life such as culture, history, nature, wellness and spas, shopping, entertainment, etc., are presented for each individual. Our exclusive mountain retreat, JA Hatta Fort Hotel has recently been revamped to offer a more modern Arabesque welcome; JA Manafaru was recently entered top 10 hotels in the world by TripAdvisor – Travellers' Choice. The property brings traditional cultural experiences complimented with recreational activities such as PADI dive centre, water sports school, and wellness pavilion.”



David Thomson
Chief Operating Officer
JA Resorts & Hotels



Mark Sawkins
General Manager
Fairmont-The Palm

“Industry leaders are saying that ‘transformational travel’ is the next evolution. It has similar elements of experiential travel, but taken a step further—it’s travel motivated and defined by a shift in self-reflection and development. With that said, Fairmont The Palm’s motto ‘Be. Your. Best’, is a promise made by Fairmont to inspire their guests to transform themselves through a programme of healthy living and wellbeing activities.

The resort has significantly boosted initiatives around this ethos, from dining and nutrition to health, fitness and relaxation to add value to the guest experience and local community. Fairmont The Palm fully supports health and wellbeing for our guests and colleagues alike, and we are proud to be bringing breakthrough experiences, specialised experts and the latest in international trends to the Middle East market – placing us firmly as innovators in the region.”



Bruce Simpson
Managing Director
North Island Hotel Seychelles

“North Island, Seychelles will be participating at ILTM Arabia which is co-locating with ATM this year. Our aim is to push North Island as a unique luxury destination and raise our profile in the GCC market, especially the UAE. We have increased our sole-hire business from this market and this clientele is both discerning and demanding particularly when it comes to wellness and experiential offerings, which we are finding to be global trends. Our all-inclusive sole-hire rate includes all activities and dining experiences from scuba diving courses, snorkelling, sea kayaking, surfing, bodyboarding, stand-up paddle boarding, and sunset cruises to our unique and completely customizable dining menus and experiences all over the island. This has set us apart for the GCC traveller and allowed us to stand out in a market that is at the forefront of trendsetting when it comes to luxury travel.”



Shanoon Khalid
Sales and Marketing Manager
Baros Maldives

“The GCC has become one of our top growing markets and we’ve seen an increase in travellers from that region, especially coming through the UAE to Baros Maldives. The GCC traveller is very discerning and we have noticed an increase in demand for unique tailor-made experiences. Privacy, fine dining, and diving are amongst our biggest strengths and we have added to those over the years to satisfy this need.

Our ‘Fluo Night Dives’ and ‘Diving by Design’ have been received very well and are gaining more popularity and we also introduced a collection of new ‘Nooma’ cruises and excursions. Our ‘Private Sandbank Cinema’ where guests can enjoy an exclusive private cinema screening on a sandbank in the middle of the Indian Ocean has also been a hit with our GCC guests.”

“These days, tourism has become commoditised. Today’s tourist wants more from a city than just visiting local attractions and landmarks. They’re looking for ways to engage with the local culture and people. They simply want to feel like locals when they’re travelling.

A big part of this is keeping the guest connected at all times, and providing them with curated travel recommendations at their fingertips. This is the core of our company’s vision. Experiential travel is the fastest growing trend in tourism across the globe and the industry as a whole is embracing technology like never before. Accessibility and speed are critical to the demands of today’s tech-savvy travellers who are generally associated with this type of experiential travel.”



Jean-Pierre Aramouni
Managing Director
Tink Labs Limited

“When experiential travel reached its peak, Sun Siyam Resorts in the Maldives was offering way more than just excursions. We hosted cooking classes where we invited Maldivian ladies from local islands to share and show their secret recipes. We had our ‘Pack to make a difference’ programme, where tourist preparing for their visit to the Maldives could take some extra things to give away to local kids. And the most popular: Giving a lesson about your country to local kids at schools, while visiting local islands. We knew that such experiences bond cultures and changes our inner world for the better. We didn’t call it transformative, but with the new term in 2017, we believe to be the experts on it. Our travelling groups learn to dance Bodu Beru, some of our individual guests ask us to drop them on a deserted island and only provide food and water supply daily. We guide our guests to feel that they are part of something better than themselves. And this is our, Sun Siyam rhythm of transformation – giving back while enjoying your time travelling.”



Evgenia Boyankova
Group Director of Business
Development, Sun Siyam Resorts

YACHT CHARTERS & FISHING

Turn Wonderful Moments into Priceless Memories

Charter with Family and Friends

AED 500/- Per Hour Onwards



Pickup and drop off facility from hotels in Dubai

LUXURY PRIVATE CHARTER
DEEP SEA FISHING
SUNSET CRUISE



ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED COMPANY
www.alwaslyachts.ae

24/7 RESERVATION
04 295 3485 / 04 295 3486

NOMINATE NOW

To Nominate and Vote, please log on to:
www.arabiantravelawards.ae

For further details, please contact:

**gunjan@arabiantravelawards.ae,
amit.bhasin@arabiantravelawards.ae,
sonia.butalia@arabiantravelawards.ae**

ARABIAN TRAVEL AWARDS



4th July, 2017

JW MARRIOTT HOTEL DUBAI

HOSPITALITY PARTNER



MEDIA PARTNERS



Travel industry gearing up for Expo 2020

ATM Global Stage Dubai opens with the most-awaited Expo 2020 legacy debate with some key personalities. Expo 2020, between October 2020 and April 2021, will bring together more than 180 nations and is expected to host an international audience of 25 million visitors. Experts from the trade share their views with **TRAVTALK**.

SHEHARA RIZLY



Marjan Faraidooni
Senior Vice President of
Legacy Impact and Development,
Expo 2020 Dubai

“Each day, hundreds of thousands of people will be entertained by spectacular architecture, experience global cultures and thought provoking exhibitions and taste foods from every corner of the globe. Above all, visitors to Expo 2020 Dubai will witness the very latest in thinking and technology all in one place and at one time, leaving them with an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

“Dubai is all geared up to welcome the delegates of Expo 2020, which will further strengthen the emirate's status as a major player in global tourism. Developers are adding around 10,000 hotel rooms and serviced apartments per year to accommodate the visitor traffic during the event. Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham JBR is now looking into various opportunities to capitalise on our location's proximity to the venue. The property is intensifying its efforts to enhance its services and facilities over the next two years to be more competitive and increase our market share, leading to the event.”



Samer Rafie
Hotel Manager, Hawthorn Suites
by Wyndham JBR



Shahzad Butt
General Manager
Ramada Downtown Dubai

“Dubai has been actively preparing to host Expo 2020, which will strengthen its position as a top global business and tourism hub. The emirate has been offering new attractions, enhancing its infrastructure and boosting job and business opportunities to lure both visitors and investors leading to the event. The hospitality industry expects to benefit significantly from these developments, as affirmed by the emirate's growing room inventory. Strategically located at the heart of the city, Ramada Downtown Dubai is enthused to host the delegates of Expo 2020 and showcase the best of what Dubai has to offer to the international diaspora.”

“With 2020 expected to attract 25 million visitors, our renovation comes at a very prolific time. We're in the process of renovating our lobby area which will be complete by end of this year and we're then rolling out phase two which will see a number of rooms renovated within the property. Over the next three years we will be investing heavily in our team to ensure they're providing our guests with the best services possible.”



Shaun Parsons
Complex General Manager, Le
Meridien Dubai Hotel + Conference
Centre and Le Meridien Fairway



Muhammad Haider
Hotel Manager
Ibis Styles Jumeira

“Dubai is one of the world's key points of connection and is consistently ranked as one of the world's most globalised cities. It is home to many nationalities, the world's busiest airport by international passengers served, and the world's largest man-made harbor. The city has developed numerous hotels significantly over the last 40 years. The city is a thriving center for business with 70 per cent of Fortune 500 companies having their regional base in Dubai and it regularly tops the World Bank's annual report for Ease of Doing Business in the Arab world. The city is a magnet for international visitors, aiming to attract more than 20 million travellers during Expo 2020.”

“Our current portfolio in the region includes 50 operational hotels, representing approximately 8,700 rooms. We have another 24 hotels under development, representing a further 5,234 rooms – and our bold target for the MEA region by 2020 is 70 operational hotels.”



Ignace Bauwens
Regional Vice President for
Middle East and Africa
Wyndham Hotel Group



Alper Can Bulcum
Cluster General Manager
Ramada Hotel and Suites Sharjah
and Ramada JBR

“As the number of travellers visiting the Emirate from across the globe is expected to increase during 2020, we are looking forward to welcoming guests with different travel needs to both Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach and Ramada Hotel & Suites Sharjah. Ramada Hotel & Suites Sharjah's recent renovation which has seen the addition of diverse meeting space that feature convenient access to the new Executive Lounge as well as the enhanced dining options, make it a great choice for business travellers, while the broad accommodation offering and prime location of Ramada Plaza Jumeirah Beach will make it a popular choice for both leisure and business guests.”



Slim Zaiane
General Manager
Kempinski Hotel Mall of
the Emirates

“As the first-ever World Expo to be held in the MENASA (Middle East, North Africa and South Asia) region, Dubai Expo 2020 will undoubtedly have an impact that ranges beyond Dubai and even the UAE. It only takes a quick exploration of the impact of an expected additional 20-25 million international visitors over a six-month period to see that substantial investment in hospitality and retail infrastructure will be required, expected to be particularly in the vicinities of Dubai World Central, to cater for an estimated additional 70 million room-nights and a boost of over \$10 billion in consumer spending. We definitely should expect a significant boost in the 4 percent predicted growth rates in the economy (Shanghai achieved 13 percent GDP).”

Dubai Tourism highlights career opportunities in tourism

■ Dubai Tourism's two major initiatives, being carried out by its Dubai College of Tourism (DCT) – 'Medyaf' (Generous Host) and the 'UAE Tour Guide Programme' under its Emiratisation Programme, are aimed at training UAE nationals for a future career in the tourism industry. Dubai Tourism was at this year's Careers UAE at the Dubai World Trade Centre. At this event, DCT is also promoting the programme of

Dubai Summer Surprises, the summer extravaganza run by the Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment, an agency of Dubai Tourism, to recruit young UAE nationals as volunteers during DSS 2017.

The participating partners of Dubai Tourism representing various sectors including retail, hospitality and entertainment are: Emaar, Jumeirah Group, Dubai Parks and Resorts,



Chalhoub Group, Shangri-La Hotel, Millennium Hotels and Resorts, AccorHotels, Rotana Management Cooperation, Habtoor Grand Resort, Marriott International, JA Resorts and Hotels, IMG Worlds of Adventure, Plazzo Versace, Hilton and InterContinental

Hotels Group. **Essa Bin Hadher**, General Manager, Dubai College of Tourism, said: “Young Emirati men and women are being encouraged by the leadership of the country to participate in all aspects of development of this nation and contribute towards economic growth. As a result, Dubai's rapid development has seen the emergence of highly qualified young UAE nationals in the local workforce, both

in government and private sectors, and more and more of our nationals are getting actively involved in imparting their knowledge and skills in diverse sectors. Against this backdrop, and based on our commitment to support the on-going programme of Emiratisation, we have joined hands with our partners in the private sector at this year's Careers UAE to provide promising young UAE nationals

the opportunity to learn about suitable careers with tourist-facing roles in all sectors, whether it is corporate, retail, hospitality or events. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the private sector entities that are supporting us in the true spirit of collaboration to attract young visitors to our stand and offer them the opportunity to explore a range of exciting career options.”

Cruising off Dubai shores with Al Wasl

In its endeavour to offer new experiences to clients every season, Al Wasl Dhow goes all out to create new packages that include sunset cruise, spectacular views of Dubai's canals, desert sports and adventure activities, reveals its Managing Director **Ishrat Ali Khan**.

TT BUREAU

Al Wasl Dhow Cruise promises breathtaking views of skyscrapers and spectacular canals of Dubai with delectable cuisine on-board the open deck and many entertainment activities. The Dhow, a traditional cruise vessel entirely made up of wood, offers several location options to tourists out of which the creek or the marina are the most popular ones in Dubai.

Among their many other tourism offerings, Al Wasl yachts are a favourite among many visitors. There are different sizes from 33 to 85 feet with various passenger capacities used for parties, functions, fishing trips, etc. The best time to indulge in both the dhow cruise and yacht is definitely evening where one can enjoy the

beautiful sunset onboard the vessel. They provide special sunset cruise Dubai packages which includes food, drinks, and entertainment.

For enthusiasts seeking land activities, Oasis Palm Tourism under the Al Wasl



group offers guests wide range of activities such as desert sports and adventure activities like dune bashing, sand surfing, quad biking, camel riding, jeep riding on



different terrains, etc. These activities are coupled with delectable cuisine and beverages of choice, lighter activities such as henna art, entertainment, sheesha and even a bonfire. These are

just a few of the many activities planned for an ultimate vacation in the UAE.

"The Arabian Travel Market gives business owners, investors and visitors a common podium to engage, learn, collaborate and grow. With opportunities like customer relationship building and business development, we look forward to Arabian Travel Market 2017," says **Ishrat Ali Khan**, Managing Director, Al Wasl Dhow.

Dubai is the fourth most popular tourist destination in world with 14.9 million overnight visitors in 2016, recording a 5 per cent increase from 2015.

This is a positive indication that Dubai is going to achieve its target of 22 million visitors by 2020, critically delivering the highest value to the domestic economy with number one ranking in terms of spend per tourist compared to any other destination.



Ishrat Ali Khan
Managing Director
Al Wasl Dhow

The Arabian Travel Market gives business owners, investors and visitors a common podium to engage, learn, collaborate and grow. We look forward to Arabian Travel Market 2017

Kwality

38 Years in Dubai

Al Barsha Mall
04-3974726

Arabian Centre
04-2845164

Mobile: 050 4575243
E-mail: kwalityrst@gmail.com

DINE IN, DELIVERY AND CATERING

Oberoi Beach Resort opens in Al Zorah

The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah, is fast becoming a preferred choice for discerning travellers looking for unique beach experiences in the United Arab Emirates. The hotel boasts of 113 keys with unparalleled luxury, exquisite design and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts' legendary service.

TT BUREAU

Al Zorah is a refined coastal destination in the UAE, master planned by Solidere International and a joint venture with the Government of Ajman. Nestled within 247 acres (one million square metres) of rich ecological wetland, Al Zorah boasts exceptional biodiversity and is home to almost 60 species of birds and marine life. The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah boasts a sophisticated design set within mangrove forests, caressed by the gentle sea breeze and in harmony with nature, spread along white sandy beaches, azure lagoons and set in close proximity to the two million square meters of lush, green mangroves.

The Oberoi Beach Resort has been designed by



the famous Italian architect Piero Lissoni and the resort's luxury accommodation includes rooms, suites and villas with private terraces and swimming pools. Guests can choose secluded accommodation offering privacy and tranquility or two and three bedroom villas for family holidays. The resort's timeless aesthetic design and abundance of natural light and ocean views are unique to the resort.

P.R.S. Oberoi, Executive Chairman, The Oberoi Group, said, "We are pleased to present The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah, which offers the highest standards of luxury and hospitality. A number of Oberoi Hotels have been recognised as amongst the best in the world. I am confident that The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah with its unique location, aesthetic design and a committed young team

will offer distinctive Oberoi service to travellers from around the world."

Imad Dana, Chief Executive Officer, The Oberoi Beach Resort Al Zorah, said, "We celebrate the launch of The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah, which unveils the destination and the diversity of experiences we offer. We are confident that visitors to Al Zorah will appreciate our flagship 5-star beach resort property which will become a focal point for tourists and UAE residents to explore and enjoy."

Further commenting on the occasion Imad Dana added, "The Oberoi Group is a hospitality partner that is synonymous with luxury and great service. With this opening, guests will be able to enjoy the extensive beau-

ty of Al Zorah, play a round of golf at the nearby Nicklaus Design 18-hole golf course, rent sail boats from the nearby fully-equipped marina set

bly locally sourced seafood cooked using traditional, nutrient-conserving methods at Aquario, the sea grill by the beach. At the



to open soon and enjoy a variety of water sports. The guest experience will be undoubtedly unforgettable."

Culinary highlights at The Oberoi Beach Resort, Al Zorah include an international menu and responsi-

Poolside Lounge, guests can enjoy light and healthy food. Sensio Spa by Oberoi is a tranquil oasis with private therapy suites. It offers Eastern, Western and signature massage therapies, Turkish hammams and ayurvedic treatments. 🌿

Why three seconds is better than 12

Wego.ae, the largest travel marketplace in the Middle East and Asia Pacific reveals astonishing results after implementing Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) combined with Progressive Web App (PWA), becoming the fastest loading mobile travel site in the world.

TT BUREAU

According to Google, 40 per cent of consumers will leave a site if a page takes longer than three seconds to load on mobile, with 79 percent unlikely to return. "By rebuilding the static pages using AMP, and the core search experience with PWA, Wego has decreased page load time from around 12 seconds to between .50 and three seconds," said **Honey Mittal**, Senior Vice President, Product, Wego.

The astonishing speed easily outranks all other global travel sites with a score of 90, while others hover at a median score of 51. "Over 70 per cent of Wego's searches take place on mobile and increasing site speed was key to upgrading the user experience, and ultimately increasing engagement and conversions," continued Mittal. "We saw AMP and PWA

as a development priority in our objective to achieve this outcome and committed our resources to producing the fastest loading mobile travel site in the world, and we succeeded."

Wego implemented AMP on the site's landing pages which reduced page load time to less than one second when served from the AMP Cache. AMP is a Google project designed as an open standard for publishers to support fast page loads on mobile devices, serving from the AMP cache – a proxy-based content delivery network which delivers all valid AMP documents. AMP uses a stripped down version of HTML and an off-the-shelf JavaScript library (blocking third party scripts) that allow lazy loading. For the search and shop experience, Wego built a PWA using service workers, reducing page load time to less than

We saw AMP and PWA as a development priority in our objective to achieve this outcome and committed our resources to producing the fastest loading mobile travel site in the world, and we succeeded

three seconds for new users, and less than a second for returning users.

Progressive Web Apps (PWA) are mobile websites that deliver app-like experiences with full web reach. PWA's use service workers that are client side proxies produced in JavaScript to allow you control over the cache. By pre-caching key resources using service workers, Wego's PWA is able to deliver content fast and reliably over a variety of problematic network conditions with all testing conducted on a slow, 3G network.

The AMP install service worker provided a seamless

transition from AMP to PWA, Wego paired PWA with Polymer, a lightweight library that takes full advantage of reusable and interoperable web components. Wego's PWA now supports silky smooth animations with no janky scrolling and testing was conducted on a slow 3G network.

"Slow mobile page loads are intensely frustrating, especially during the travel shopping journey," he said. "Wego's website now opens seamlessly, loading in the same time it takes to open Wego's popular travel app - in fact, it's difficult to tell the UX apart." "While upgrading performance we also redesigned the en-



Honey Mittal
Senior Vice President, Product
Wego

tire mobile site to mimic the native apps, rebuilding the APIs from scratch to be fully optimised for mobile to deliver a consistent experience across both web and app," Mittal added. The solution has had an impressive impact on Wego's business.

"Mobile web has wide reach, especially in Wego's core markets in the Middle East, Asia and India where slow, unstable networks and

less than 512MB storage space on mobile devices is common," Mittal explained. "For the majority, travel planning and booking is not a daily necessity, which often results in the removal of less frequently used apps to free up space for photos and video. By delivering a lightning fast mobile website experience, Wego has solved an enormous problem for our users who aren't able to download or retain our app, as well as our travel partners."

"The loss of potential customers during site loading time has been reduced significantly and we've increased value for our partner's marketing investments," Mittal concluded. "The revamp has not only improved user experience, we've improved each step within the funnel, from visits to searches to conversion - ultimately increasing conversions by 95 per cent." 🌿

We'll fly you to more fun and adventure!

Fly from Dubai to Bacolod, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Cotabato, Davao,
Dumaguete, General Santos, Iloilo, Manila, Pagadian, Tacloban, Zamboanga and more!

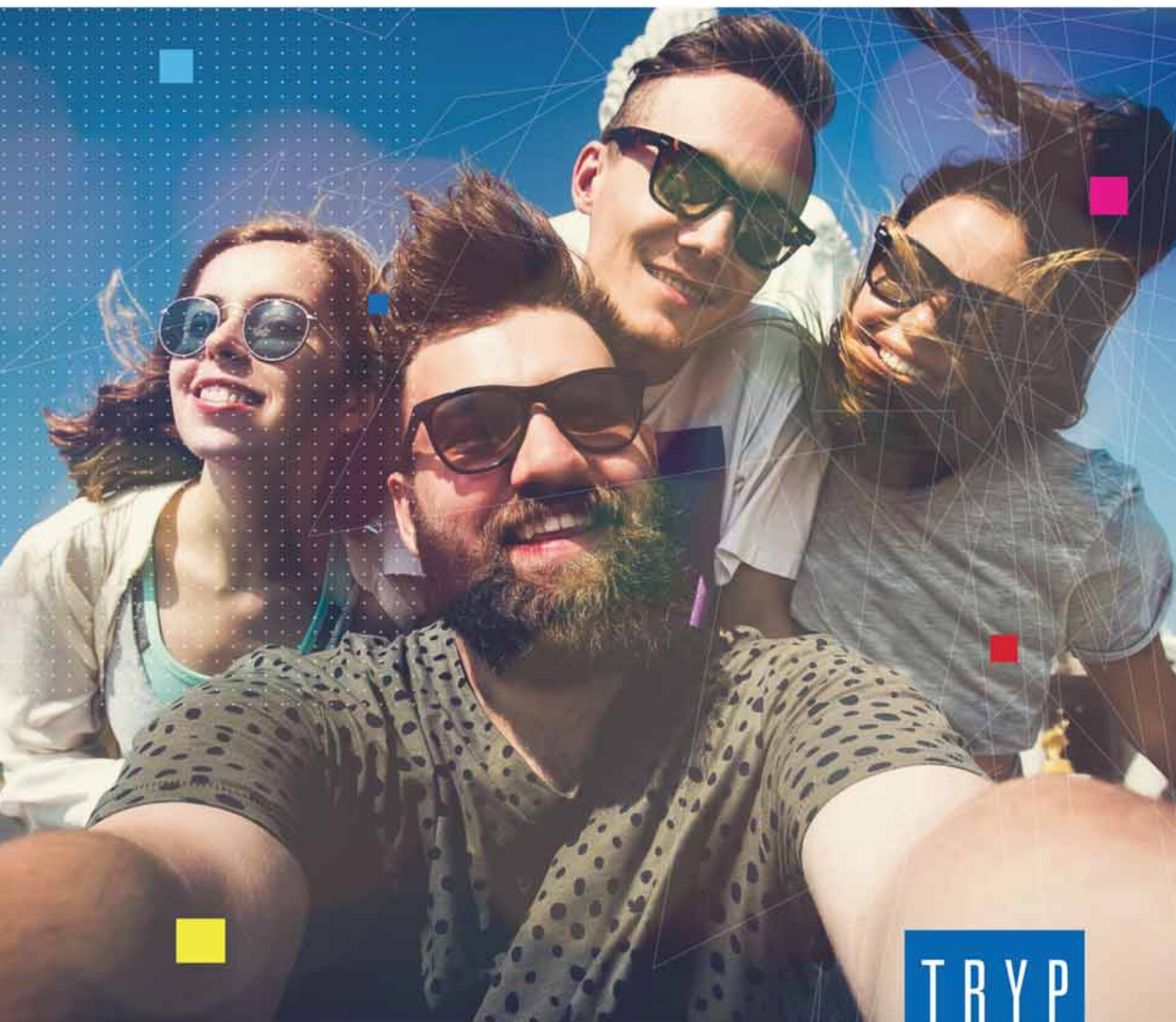


Sign-up now for our seat sale
alerts & updates and visit

 Cebu Pacific Air
cebupacificair.com

For bookings and inquiries, visit your preferred travel agency
or contact (971) 4354 5777 | (971) 2 6338238


cebu pacific



DUBAI

THE CENTRE OF YOUR TRYP

COMING SOON

Soak up the vibe and energy with the first TRYP by Wyndham Hotel opening in Barsha Heights, Dubai. Sleep in and make yourself comfy in any of our 650 rooms stylishly designed with sleek décor and supersfast Wi-Fi. Tantalize your taste buds, grab a snack or hang out with friends in any of the 3 restaurants and bars. Create, connect and collaborate at THE NEST, our co-workspace where great ideas are transformed into reality.

trypwyndhamdubai.com

info@trypdubai.com | +971 4 407 8831 / 32



[trypwyndhamdxb](#)
[trypwyndhamdubai](#)

MEMBER OF

WYNDHAM
REWARDS