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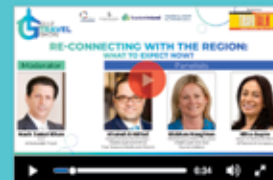
Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

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Arabian Travel Awards 2021

Stars dazzle at the award ceremony

It was a glitzy and glamorous evening as the fourth edition of the Arabian Travel Awards recognized some of the key leaders in the region. The three categories of awards were presented by the Chief Guests to honour the dedicated professionals of the industry.

Shehara Rizly

This year's awards were extremely special as it was a salutation and for all those overcoming the unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. His Excellency, Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian, Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE, Her Excellency Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, The Republic of the Philippines, UAE and



(L-R): Sumeera Bahl, Director, DDP Group; Jamal Abdulnazar, Winner Gallery of Legends 2018, HE; Dr. Aman Puri, Consulate General of India in UAE; H.E. Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, The Republic of the Philippines, UAE; H.E. Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian, Ambassador of Malaysia; Saskia Evraert, Complex Director, Le Meridien Hotel & Conference Centre; and SanJeet, Director, DDP Group

Dr. Aman Puri, Consul General of India in Dubai graced the occasion with their presence. The chief guests

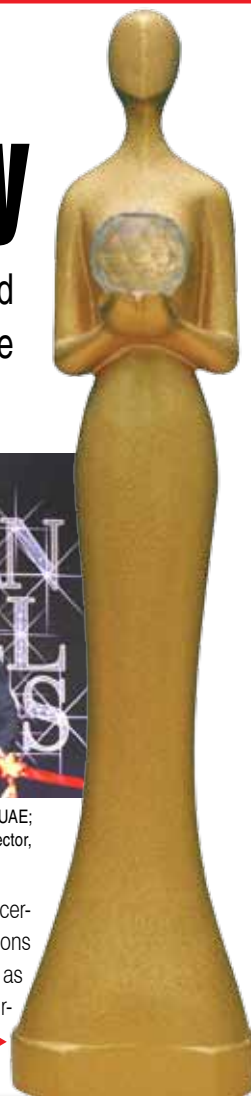
shared a few words about the industry. His Excellency, Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian, Ambassador of Malay-

sia to the UAE, says in his address, "It was indeed an energetic and lively opening of the Arabian Travel Awards.

It is indeed an incredible honour to be with all of you this evening. After a short break due to the pandemic, we are

here for this awards ceremony. Congratulations as this event serve as a recognition honour-

Contd. on page 11 ▶



Gallery of Legends



Nasir Jamal Khan
CEO
Al Naboodah Travel

"Firstly, I would like to say that we are the luckiest people to be in this land of opportunity, peace, tolerance and success, UAE. I like to thank the authorities for making arrangements to be one of the first countries in the world that pushed back COVID-19 and brought us back together. Tonight I would like to thank the organisers SanJeet and DDP Group for bringing us together at a live event to recognize the efforts of our industry and throughout the pandemic, for keeping us updated over all channels possible about the industry."

Travel Ambassador



Gerald Lawless
Ambassador
WTTC

"People and governments worldwide must understand the value of travel and tourism to the global economy. It provides 10 per cent of the global GDP, and 330 million jobs worldwide. I would like to dedicate this award to all the people that look after us in this business. I always ask the management who are the most important people; those who meet you at the doors, all these people this evening serving so well, those who clean the washrooms, they are the ones who speak with customers, they are true heroes of travel and tourism."

DDP Gamechanger



Kathryn Wallington
Head of Middle East & Africa
Travelport

"Thank you so much. Accepting this award is a great honour for me. Making real change in business, I believe, can only be done on a large scale when you have customers, a team, and a family. I have got all three of them in abundance."

FACTFILE

- This year's awards were remarkable since they were a salutation to one and all of those who triumphed over the pandemic's unprecedented challenges.

Face of the Future



Mohamed Khater
Regional Manager and
Managing Partner
Flash Horizon

"I am honored and very pleased to accept this award. Very delighted to be with everyone in the room. I would like to dedicate this award to my team who have left no stone unturned in supporting us. I would always say, "Conducting business during the hard time is always challenging, but what we do as a team is far more easier for everyone. I would like to congratulate all the winners today: It is a milestone for us. I believe the future will be moving forward in all industries in the markets."

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- Mezzanine kids pool
- Misk spa with hammam

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- Fitness centre



New tourism projects in Sharjah

Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) announced a series of new and future tourism projects to look forward to in the emirate at on the Day two of the World Trade Market (WTM) 2021 in London.



Shehara Rizly

The Authority announced that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) includes the management of two new tourist resorts in Al Dhaid and

Rest House in Khorfakkan, Kalba Waterfront, family parks, and plans to develop the emirate's beaches, including Al Heerah and Al Luluyah.

Tourism is a key pillar of Sharjah's economy and



H.E. Khalid Jassim Al Midfa
Chairman
Sharjah Commerce and Tourism
Development Authority

“WTM provided Sharjah the opportunity to connect to experts and decision-makers in the European and global tourism markets”

Khorfakkan cities in Sharjah. Additional new and notable tourism projects were also highlighted, such as Sharjah Safari in Al Dhaid, the Moon Retreat in Mleiha, Al Suhub

the national economy in general,” says H.E. Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman, SCTDA. “It is a necessary requirement to drive sustainable development at

every level. As the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic recedes, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) sought to strengthen its relations with the European market by actively taking part in the

World Travel Market exhibition in London.

WTM is an opportunity for us to highlight the great potential tourism sector of Sharjah has, showcasing the emirate's various tourist attractions, which are, once again, drawing tourists from around the world as travel restrictions are gradually rolled back and air traffic rebounds,” he adds.

“We are committed to the vision of our wise leadership, which calls for working towards advancing the emirate's standing on the world tourism map,” H.E. Al Midfa added. “To that

end, we have introduced a host of development projects in the tourism sector and continue to promote our attractions, and diverse terrains that characterise the Emirate of Sharjah.”

“Our participation in this year's edition of the WTM exhibition offers an ideal platform for us and our partners from the government and private sectors to showcase the progress they have made in hospitality, tourism, and infrastructure projects, among other developments currently underway in the emirate,” H.E. Al Midfa continued.

H.E. went on to assert that WTM has provided Sharjah with the opportunity to communicate with experts and decision makers in the European and global tourism markets.

“We have a chance to restore confidence in the sector by highlighting the preventive steps and norms put in place to ensure visitors' health and safety,” “We are optimistic about the period ahead as we witness the cultural and developmental advancements the emirate has made under the leadership of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah,” H.E. Al Midfa concluded.

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Focus on Middle East

MCARTHURGLEN[™] DESIGNER OUTLETS

Destination shopping is a concept introduced by McArthurGlen Group in 1993. Before the pandemic, visitor numbers from the Middle East soared to the point that they began to explore the possibility of tailoring experiences for GCC guests. **Gulio Leporatti**, Head of Tourism-Marketing and Sales, McArthurGlen Group, shares more details with **TRAVTALK**.

 Shehara Rizly

Please explain your partnership with Buzz marketing.

The partnership with Buzz Travel Marketing is helping us in establishing relationships with the best tour operators and travel agent networks in the Middle Eastern markets, and we are confident that we will be able to grow this network as well as our ability to follow up with them and create tailored packages for them. We are optimistic that Buzz Travel Marketing's local presence will help us increase our visibility among Middle Eastern customers and better meet their needs.

How do you plan to work with agents, especially given their key role in this market?

I believe we can work in two ways. One is to raise agents' awareness of what we have to offer, allowing them to present our unique service proposition and understand how our shopping centres can

Which areas are more popular amongst GCC travellers?

We measured the impact of the Middle Eastern market and identified five centres that are particularly interesting for our international and ME markets, which are the three Italian centres of Serravalle near Milan, Noventa di Piave near Venice, Castel Romano near Rome, Parn-

“ We welcomed 90 million visitors in 2019, generating over € 5 billion turnover, making 2019 our record year owing to strong tourist growth ”

fit into their itineraries, both practically and as an attraction. By better understanding their needs and customer types, we can also develop tailored packages for them that will include additional premium services only available to their customers.

dorf in Vienna, and Roermond in the south of the Netherlands. I must also mention Malaga, which just opened in 2020 and is proving to be popular and there is a high demand from ME travellers. Some centres are stronger than others. The Italian centres are stronger for Saudi nationals. Roermond is especially strong with Kuwait, and Qatar visitors have a strong relationship with Malaga, so we are ready to welcome them again.

Is there a difference in shoppers from before to after the pandemic?

We have more mission-



oriented shoppers; people want to come shopping, they spend more time than in the past, and they are more focussed on shopping than they were previously. As soon as restrictions were progressively lifted, we experienced a tremendous resurgence.

Can you share pre-pandemic data and your future expectations?

We welcomed 90 million visitors in 2019, generating over €5 billion turnover, making 2019 our record year owing to strong tourist growth proportionally. Tourism is a huge driver, and there is a gap to close before we can

return to 2019 levels, possibly in 2022 or 2023, as all markets reopen progressively. I see strong demand for travel and people want to travel.

Please elaborate on McArthurGlen as a shopping destination.

McArthurGlen is a European pioneer in designer outlet retailing. The company presently operates 26 designer stores in 10 countries, including Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK. It caters to approximately 90 million fashion-loving customers with 695,000 sq. m.,

of retail space, generating total portfolio revenues of over € 4.5 billion per year.

What are your expansion plans?

We continue to expand our existing centres. Just a few weeks ago we opened a new phase of Lareja near Naples, new facilities in Serravalle, and we completed the expansion of Cheshire Oaks.

What is the best time to visit the centres?

Because we are open all year, it is always a good time to visit. In many countries, we are open seven days a week, 364 days a year, depending on the country's regulations. There is a calendar featuring promotions, such as a winter sale in January or a summer sale in July/August, both of which are quite popular with European customers.

FACTFILE

■ We run a special post-Ramadan campaign for the Middle East, encouraging visitors to travel after Ramadan while also taking advantage of special deals tailored to their needs.



Gulio Leporatti, Head of Tourism-Marketing and Sales, McArthurGlen Group



McArthurGlen meets with trade czars

McArthurGlen, Europe's one of the largest shopping destinations, recently organised a special meeting with the main travel trade CEOs in the Middle East, which was represented by Buzz Travel Marketing. Gulio Leporatti, Head of Tourism-Marketing and Sales, and Matthias Sinner, Senior International Markets Manager of McArthurGlen were in attendance.



Marking triumph over COVID-19

The fourth edition of the Arabian Travel Awards honoured all industry heroes. This year's awards were a culmination of their struggles and obstacles, which they triumphed over to the best of their abilities. It was a night of celebration for everyone who worked tirelessly during the pandemic while still making a difference in the New Normal.





Contd. on next page ▶

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Flash Horizon's diversified growth plan

Flash Horizon is a destination management company that is the newest addition to the Flash Group's Dubai project. The expansion of Flash Tours in the Arab world is transferring its legacy and heritage to the UAE. **Mohamed Khater**, the newly appointed Regional GM & Managing Partner, speaks with **TRAVTALK** about their current regional ambitions.

 Shehara Rizly

Which areas of tourism do you specialise in?

The Flash Group, established in 1985, is an Egyptian international company that owns various brands and sister companies in the tourism and hospitality industries. Flash Group oper-

Are there any specific source markets with which you are working? How important are they and why?

The company has a strong base in West European source markets, including the Netherlands and France, but we intend to diversify our business and segments as the company expands.



Mohamed Khater
Regional GM & Managing Partner
Flash Horizon

measures and regulations that were implemented and validated by the governments and authorities, there is a tremendous demand in the region. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact in the future.

What are the strategies for attracting visitors, both inbound and outbound?

We need to be different and offer a diverse range of products and services to our partners and clients. For both segments, I plan to present out of the box ideas. One of my main objectives is to engage with National Tourism Boards and international associations to promote destinations using new and innovative strategies. The market is quite volatile, and we must be prepared. We cannot keep doing the same activities we were doing before the pandemic.

What will this year's winter look like? Do you have anything special planned?

This winter season is promising. The demand for travel to the UAE and the Middle East is tremendous, and we must capture this in the right manner. My plans are to strengthen our existing partnerships while also bringing new business



1920's Boutique Hotel - Cairo



Le Vela Luxury Sailing Boat Red Sea

opportunities to the destinations. As a result, we began to hire more team members and bring in new partners as part of our expansion plan to Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Africa.

What are your plans to bring in more visitors to help with incoming visitor numbers, and what destinations and numbers do you expect to attract before March?

Expo 2020 is a national

pride event, and I must say, we have witnessed positive growth from our primary source markets visiting Dubai and the UAE in preparation for Expo 2020. We have included Expo 2020 tickets in some of our partner packages. The response has been great, and as I said before, the numbers are on their way up. Until March 2020, we expect this to continue in a positive direction. 🌅



Kiwengwa Beach Resort Zanzibar

“One of my main objectives is to engage with National Tourism Boards and international associations to promote destinations using new and innovative strategies”

ates across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, offering comprehensive tourist services. These range from hotel stays, Nile cruises, transportation, desert camping, and restaurants.

I plan to cover West Europe to the Far East with a proper strategy to tackle each source market and business. My primary philosophy is 'do not put all your eggs in one basket'. For the past few years, we

have been the pioneers in organising Formula F1 Groups to Abu Dhabi.

What is your outlook for tourism in the region?

The future looks bright and promising. The travel industry is resilient, and we can overcome many challenges. Vaccination rates are improving every day, which gives travellers more confidence in their safety and security. Due to the proper and effective



Sunset Bungalows Kendwa, Zanzibar

High-speed testing facility opens in Sharjah

At its test facility in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, Unitsky String Technologies Inc. (UST), a Belarusian company specialising in environmentally friendly, safe, and comfortable transport solutions, has completed the first stage of the uSky freight and passenger elevated string rail transport system for use in global logistics.

TT Bureau

Marking the company's first commercial project launch, uSky has set ambitions to expand its portfolio to 10 projects by the end of 2022. The first commercial uSky project will be in

will continue to test the sustainable transportation solution before deploying it widely next year.

"By leveraging our cutting-edge, proprietary technology, we are demonstrating the agility, versatility, and capabilities that our



Anatoli Unitsky
Founder, Unitsky String Technologies
and uSky Transport

uSky is designed to handle cargo and passenger logistics, and it provides high transit speeds and performance at a fraction of the cost of other solutions with minimum environmental impact

the 'investment business' stage, having passed through the 'innovation' and 'venture capital' stages. Meanwhile, Unitsky

cost-effective, elevated string rail technology can offer to destinations. uSky is designed to handle both cargo and passen-

ger logistics, and it provides high transit speeds and performance (up to 150 km/h and 50,000 people per hour) at a fraction of the cost of other solutions with minimum environmental impact," says **Anatoli Unitsky**, Founder, Unitsky String Technolo-

gies and uSky Transport. More than US\$ 14 million has already been invested in the design, construction, and certification of uSky's urban transport and freight facilities in the UAE.

Parameters for the deployment of the high-speed uSky technology platform are: the required investment for the research, demonstration, and certification of a high-speed transport complex (up to 500 km/h) is US\$ 230 million. The test string-rail overpass will be 20 km long, with a required land area of 100 hectares; the total investment needed to fully deploy the tech-

nological platform is US\$ 580 million. The additional land piece is over 50 hectares in size; the term for the construction and certification of the complex is two years; the technol-

ogy platform will be fully established in three years; the speed of intercity high-speed rail electric vehicles



100 research and development activities and related technologies would be developed.

A celebratory night

► Contd. from page 1

ing those who worked tirelessly and given their time and soul and life to the industry. This evening is your time and your moment. It is more than a trophy, known as Maya. It is recognised at a professional level. We can

to be here tonight. Just by seeing all of you here, I can say that travel and tourism are back and it gives so much confidence in the industry seeing all of you getting back to normal. The past 21 months have been unprecedented; as

achieve anything. Expo is a great example of hope, and I believe you in the industry have shown your commitment. I believe it is important that the industry voice be heard, since policymakers need you to balance the policies they have, and your inputs are important."



now see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

Her Excellency Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, The Republic of the Philippines, UAE, notes, "It is my pleasure and honour

the Ambassador of the UAE's third-largest group, I became instant friends with travel agencies, airline companies, and learnt a great deal in that time. It was difficult, but with excellent company, I was able to

This will be the first time the single largest group will visit the Expo. We have a good untapped potential in tourism sector. This year, we started the flight between Sri Nagar and Sharjah. Congratulations to all the winners!"



We are pleased to announce the reopening of BLESS Hotel Madrid on 27th of November, the flagship of our hedonistic luxury brand in Madrid's privileged Golden Mile. A long-awaited return that will once again offer the most cosmopolitan and demanding travellers the opportunity to enjoy fashion, art, music, gastronomy and the most exclusive experiences in the city of Madrid, in an extroverted and sophisticated atmosphere.

Time to fully celebrate the authentic pleasure of living, through a renewed proposal of personalized experiences, from private visits to art galleries, workshops and fashion boutiques, to the exclusive system with multiple health benefits that only BLESS Hotel Madrid offers by HOGO or our acclaimed sensory experience named "bathology" and many more.

Undoubtedly, we will continue to surprise with our luxury gastronomic proposal, but this time, we announce a new opening of a Japanese fusion cuisine restaurant, in which every aspect will contribute to create a memorable 360° experience.

BLESS Hotel Madrid, recently acquired by RLH Properties, will continue to be operated under the exclusive BLESS Collection Hotels brand. The hotel also holds the prestigious The Leading Hotels of the World seal of approval.

Furthermore, in order to protect employees and guests and offer a worry-free experience, BLESS Hotel has been accredited with the GBAC STAR™ seal, issued by the Global Biorisk Advisory Council®, a division of ISSA, the global association of the cleaning industry. This accreditation ensures the implementation of the strictest cleaning and disinfection protocols against infectious diseases.

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Unravelling tourism opportunities

Spain Tourism recently organised post-pandemic travel and trade roadshows in the UAE and KSA as part of its initiative to target regional travellers while adhering to COVID-19 rules. Over 60 attendees met with representatives from Spain's various tourism regions as well as DMCs, hotels, and retail outlets. Attendees included key players from several travel and tourism sectors, allowing them to meet with all of the Spanish partners one on one.





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Roadshow targets tourism market

Spain Tourism hosted its first post-pandemic travel and trade roadshow in Dubai as part of its initiative to target travellers of the region. There were 70 agents who participated from Dubai and met with the different tourism boards of regions in Spain such as Barcelona, Madrid, Costa del sol, Valencia, Andalucia.

Shehara Rizly

Key stakeholders in the Dubai travel and tourism industry attended the roadshow, giving them the opportunity to meet one on one with representatives from Spanish destinations, DMCs, and hotels.

Speaking about the Spain Tourism Roadshow in Dubai, **Daniel Rosado**, Director, Spain Tourism-GCC, says, "As part of our commitment to

further engage and strengthen our connections with the Dubai market, Spain Tourism

develop new joint prospects, create new holiday packages for locals and expatriates in

ties, and Golden Islamic era buildings displaying traces of many cultures and civilisations. Spain also is home to 49 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites and offers a wide range of lifestyle experiences, such as exclusive luxury and gourmet experiences, entertainment, and shopping, making it an ideal destination for families and groups seeking meaningful travel that will last a lifetime.

"We have been actively marketing and promoting Spain as a tourist destination from these regions, as the country has everything that GCC travellers look for. We are pleased to welcome all of our Spanish partners



Daniel Rosado
Director
Spain Tourism-GCC



Namratha Rose
Marketing Manager
Spain Tourism-GCC

Spain is home to 49 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and offers a range of lifestyle experiences, making it ideal for groups seeking meaningful travel to last a lifetime

is excited to organise its first post-pandemic roadshow in Dubai. The event was a great opportunity to further

the United Arab Emirates, and increase visitation from the region as part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen connections between outbound travel professionals of Dubai, MICE specialists, and travel industry partners of Spain Tourism."

Spain is a one of a kind destination, with ancient Roman architecture, mediaeval cas-

back to the region after a hiatus, and on behalf of the Tourism Office, I would like to express my gratitude to all of our United Arab Emirates trade partners for their constant encouragement and support in making this a successful roadshow," concludes **Namratha Rose**, Marketing Manager, Spain Tourism.

FACTFILE

■ There were 70 participants from Dubai who met with the different tourism boards of regions in Spain, such as Barcelona, Madrid, Costa del sol, Valencia, and Andalucia.



One-of-a-kind star hotel renamed

At WTM, it was announced that the Hilton Dubai Creek, a five-star hotel previously managed by Hilton Worldwide, will be renamed Golden Sands. The Dubai-based AA Al MOOSA Enterprises LLC, a dynamic and service-oriented conglomerate with a diverse range of commercial interests, has announced the rebranding of one of its five-star hotel properties at a key location in Dubai.

TT Bureau

Previously managed by Hilton Worldwide under the name of Hilton Dubai Creek, the property's rebranding to Golden Sands Hotel Creek comes in line with AA Al MOOSA En-

in the market for more than 30 years.

Officially opened on October 25, 2021, by His Excellency Dawoud Al Hajri, Director General, Dubai Municipality; Khalid Al Naboodah; Faisal Al Moosa, Director of Al Moosa En-



There is no doubt that the UAE hospitality industry is constantly evolving, therefore, we must be flexible and adapt our strategies to meet the ever-growing market needs

terprises new strategy to strengthen its local brand Golden Sands, which has been successfully present

terprises; and Mohammad Khoori, General Manager, Golden Sands Hotels and Hotel Apartments.

H.E. Dawoud Al Hajri expressed his admiration for the property and wished Golden Sands the best in its new venture as a local operator. "There is no doubt that the UAE hospitality industry is evolving, therefore, we must

be flexible and adapt our strategies to meet the ever-growing market needs," says Moosa. "We maintain a productive and friendly ties with Hilton Worldwide, and are confident that Golden Sands management will

achieve our aspirations for this property."

For his part, Mohammad Khoori noted, "We believe in this area as an essential tourism and business destination for Dubai, and we are delighted to

be here to support the government's vision that is aiming to highlight the historic part of Dubai, by introducing a one-of-a-kind boutique five-star hotel managed by a true local Emirati brand." He says, "We are pleased to be selected to manage this fine property."

The portfolio of AA Al Moosa Enterprises includes hotels in the UAE and Oman that are managed in partnership with global chains, such as Hilton Worldwide, Marriott International, IHG, and Taj Hotels, as well as its local brand Golden Sands, which manages many hotel apartments and hotels in the UAE. 🇦🇪

Spain eyes KSA as potential market

Following the lifting of international travel bans, Spain Tourism has successfully organised its first post-pandemic travel and trade roadshows in the GCC. The first roadshow was held in Jeddah on October 25, 2021, and another was organised in Riyadh on October 26, 2021. The crowd at both the events was seen to be believed.

Shehara Rizly

The two roadshows saw impressive turnouts as significant travel agencies and industry experts were eager to learn more about Spain's new promotions and offer-

Ameen Saduk, General Manager, Al Maha United Travel, comments following his participation in the Jeddah roadshow, "This is my first physical roadshow post-pandemic, and I thank Spain Tourism for the tremendous effort. The roadshow allowed



Daniel Rosado, Director of Spain Tourism-GCC, following the events in Saudi Arabia and Dubai, says, "We are pleased to see the turnouts at all three events. It is great to hear that many agencies are eager to promote Spain now that travel curbs have been lifted. We hope that the number of Saudi and GCC tourists to Spain will increase as a result of our efforts to strengthen links between the region's outbound travel professionals and Spain Tourism's travel partners."

We are optimistic that the number of Saudi and GCC tourists to Spain will increase in the coming months

ings after the easing of the international travel restrictions. Partners from Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Andalusia, and the Costa del Sol, and the notable hotel and DMC partners from Spain, were in attendance at the events.

us to build new ties and strengthen existing ones with our partners in Spain, which will help us in creating new holiday packages for Saudi travellers in the coming months. Now that the agents in Jeddah are more familiar with Spain, we anticipate

a surge in demand for the destination in the KSA market, and an increase in the number of Saudi travellers to Spain in the near future."

Mohamad Korjeh, Sales Manager, Time Travel, asserts about the Riyadh roadshow, "We were really

thrilled to receive an invitation for a physical roadshow after a long time of attending the events virtually. We were impressed of the level of organisation that Spain Tourism had displayed. Spain has always been an attractive destination for Saudi families and

sports enthusiasts, however, we now understand that Spain has a lot more to offer as a destination. Accordingly, we will work with our new Spanish partners to develop and promote exciting new holiday packages that target other traveller segments."

"It is a great feeling to be back with live events and the roadshow in Riyadh and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia as they are potential markets for Spain," says Namratha Rose, Marketing Manager, Spain Tourism. 🇪🇸

Emirates, DXB at 'full' capacity

The Dubai Airshow attracted industry experts and leaders from all over the world from the aviation, aerospace, space, and defence sectors. The airshow featured nearly 150 countries, including 20 country pavilions, and new additions from the Czech Republic, Belgium, Brazil, Israel, and Slovakia.

TT Bureau

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and Chairman and Chief Executive, Emirates Airline and Group has said that the Dubai Airshow has made strides to become one of the world's major aviation and aerospace events since its inception in 1989. The fact that the airshow was able to attract 1,200 exhibitors this year, including 370 new ones from 148 countries, demonstrates its significance. According to him, the firms of the sector are looking up to the Dubai Airshow to help chart a new course for the industry fol-

lowing the pandemic. His Highness said the airshow is the largest aviation and aerospace event held since the pandemic began. The 17th edition of the Dubai Airshow, which runs till November 18, is aiming for a record number of visitors, he said.

The event, according to HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed, offers a chance for the industry to explore new partnerships and alliances. Many firms announced multibillion-dollar deals for aircraft, services, infrastructure, and defence during the airshow. His Highness expressed optimism that the event will spur new developments that will enhance global firms efficiency thus



His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum
Chairman of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and Chairman and Chief Executive Emirates Airline and Group

enabling firms to regain their growth momentum.

During the Dubai Airshow, Emirates Airlines announced deals related to aircraft and a revamping customer service as part of the company's effort to maintain high-quality

standards. The company's performance is linked to the reopening of key destinations and the easing of travel curbs around the world. His Highness noted that global cooperation is vital for the international aviation sector to return to pre-pandemic levels and that discussions with

reopening of Concourse A, Dubai International Airport (DXB) will return to full operational capacity next week, providing the country's aviation sector a boost.

His Highness also expressed confidence that, during the next 12 months,

stated that Dubai authorities are working to restore the high passenger numbers before the pandemic, when DXB handled 90 million global passengers annually, making it one of the busiest airports in the world.

His Highness praised Emirates SkyCargo for leveraging its cargo transportation capabilities from DXB and Al Maktoum Airport to aid supplies to nations in combat against the pandemic in last two years. During the crisis, His Highness said, Emirates took the lead in using its logistics infrastructure to transport vaccines, medical supplies, and equipment around the world. 🇦🇪

At the show, there were civil and military delegations from over 140 countries and over 370 new exhibitors

authorities in various cities to resume normal flight schedules are ongoing.

Sheikh Ahmed, speaking about the UAE aviation industry and the outlook for Dubai airports, said with the

both Emirates and DXB will return to pre-COVID levels. He said efforts are being made to coordinate with other countries and aviation authorities across the world, which will make this possible. His Highness

World reunites at WTM 2021

For the first time since the pandemic, the world was able to reconnect and reunite at the World Travel Market 2021. The physical event witnessed familiar faces returning to pavilions and reuniting with business partners.





Shurooq appoints 'The Lux Collective'

Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) has appointed 'The Lux Collective', a luxury hospitality management company based in Singapore, to manage two new hospitality projects in Sharjah's scenic central and east coast regions. At World Travel Market 2021, **TRAVELTALK** captured the announcement.



IHG partners with TRSDC

IHG and TRSDC have signed a Management Agreement to open the InterContinental Resort Red Sea in KSA. The new InterContinental Resort will open during phase-I of The Red Sea Project's development, and will be nestled within the premium Red Sea Development location. Phase-I is well underway, and will be completed by the end of 2023.

TT Bureau

Speaking on the announcement, **Haitham Mattar**, MD, India, Middle East & Africa, IHG Hotels & Resorts, says, "We are committed to leveraging the growth opportunities that are aligned with

pany (TRSDC), the world's ambitious regenerative projects, to strengthen our offering in Saudi Arabia and collaborate on sustainability initiatives that make this destination unique. These initiatives are in line with IHG's 10-year 'Journey to Tomorrow' action plan with a focus

guests expected to visit in the coming years."

The announcement comes as InterContinental Hotels & Resorts celebrates its 75th anniversary of luxury travel with a celebration of rich heritage, iconic hotels among others. The InterContinental Resort Red Sea will exemplify the brand's values, travel, and cultural discovery. The hotel will offer guests sweeping views of the desert and dramatic mountain vistas, with diversity for discerning global travellers, as part of one of the world's ambitious luxury tourism developments set within an archipelago of over 90 pristine islands.

Each of the resort's 210 sea-facing rooms will have di-



rect beach access, allowing guests to walk right out into the Red Sea's sands from the terrace. The resort will include seven different gastronomic experiences, sprawling pools and recreational facilities, a spa, a health club, and meeting and event spaces for leisure and business travellers, and groups.

John Pagano, CEO, The Red Sea Development Company and AMAALA, says,

"Given IHG's global expertise and our legacy in the Kingdom, we are happy to partner with them to bring world-class hospitality to our guests at The Red Sea Project. IHG is the ideal partner to build on our hospitality offerings and taking them to the next level. With their understanding of the local landscape, high standards of quality, focus on sustainability and responsible travel, we are confident this partner-

ship will see best results. We also look forward to welcoming guests to this luxury leisure destination."

Many giga projects are being developed across Saudi Arabia, such as Qiddiya, AMAALA, Riyadh Central, Diriyah Gate, Jeddah Downtown, Rua Al Haram, Rua Al Madinah, Al Ula, NEOM, and King Abdullah Financial District. When completed, the Red Sea Development is set to be amongst the most premium leisure destinations in the Kingdom. IHG currently operates 37 hotels in Saudi Arabia across five brands, including InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Staybridge Suites and VOCO. 🇸🇦

The announcement comes as InterContinental Hotels & Resorts celebrates its 75th anniversary of heritage and iconic experiences

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the priority destinations highlighted in the Saudi Tourism Strategy. We are excited to be partnering with The Red Sea Development Com-

pany on our commitment to drive change among people. We anticipate building scale in the Kingdom to deliver a landmark development to meet the needs of a diverse

'No destination stands alone'

The physical return of global leaders to WTM was an overt expression of the international travel community's confidence in the world of travel safely, steadily re-opening, some places more confidently than others, after almost two years of global grounding due to COVID-19, including the forced transfer of WTM 2020 into a virtual format.

WTM is an annual pilgrimage for both government and business tourism leaders from across the world in many respects. Every year as November nears, world leaders turn their attention and travel towards London for the event. A critical event in the Travel and Tourism year, it has been a bookmark, enabling direct discussion about the year just gone by and the year(s) ahead for the sector.

WTM provides a forum for government tourism ministers and heads of national tourism authorities to showcase bold elements of destination invitation to the travellers, reflecting both the spirit of hospitality and the competitive spirit.

WTM 2021 was different, very different. How could it not be? The physical return of global leaders to WTM was an overt expression of the global travel community's confidence in the world of travel safely, steadily re-opening, some places more confidently than others.

A source of immense confidence at WTM was the presence of destinations from the Middle East, a region keen to convey a clear welcome to the world

ers, after almost two years of global grounding due to COVID-19, including the forced transfer of WTM 2020 into a virtual format.

Central to the willingness of leaders to show up was the

understanding of the fundamental need for industry recovery. Never has the sector seen such devastation – never has it needed such united support. To both the travel industry and travellers alike, the recent challenges have revealed vividly how critical travel

and tourism is as a lever for the protection of people and places worldwide, past, present and future. As expressed by **Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary General, UNWTO, "Around the world, in countries at all

development levels, many millions of jobs and businesses are dependent on a thriving tourism sector. Tourism has also been a driving force in protecting natural and cultural heritage, preserving them for future generations to enjoy."

Without question, a source of immense confidence at WTM was the presence of destinations from the Middle East, a region keen to convey a clear welcome to the world. This was true for the KSA, premier partner of WTM 2021. The Kingdom proudly shared its Saudi Vision 2030-inspired global ambitions with magnetic strength of presence, creativity, and inclusivity. This was done recognising overtly that, as reinforced by **Fahd Hamidaddin**, CEO,

Saudi Tourism Authority, no destination stands alone. "The pandemic has shown us the global tourism sector is not interlinked but interdependent."

This spirit of collective strength is central to STA's tourism development strategy, which was shared through the CEO, "As the sector rebuilds globally, we are forging partnerships at all levels to support the recovery and growth of the sector."

In any other year (barring 2020), this expression of invitation would risk being muted by similar invitations from across the world. Again, 2021 was different - a difference that could not only be seen, but also felt, and it was a feeling

that leaders in the travel community have so dearly needed. One of the touching aspects of WTM 2021 was the way the leaders looked at every destination pavilions, but at each other, looking for signs that there were reasons to remain confident and reasons to exhale.



Anita Mendiratta
Special Advisor to the
Secretary General
UNWTO

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

Promoting leisure tourism

Oman Air Holidays has entered into a strategic partnership with the Saudi International Travel Company (SITC) to promote domestic tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman. The partnership will focus on providing turnkey travel and tourism services for guests arriving in Oman, as well as bolstering the partnership.

TT Bureau

The partnership reflects both organisations' commitment to providing an extensive range of bespoke

way for Saudi International Travel Company (SITC) to offer travel and tourism services to Oman Air passengers flying to Saudi Arabia for business, leisure, or investment purposes.

The partnership between Oman Air Holidays and SITC will strengthen the relationship between Oman and KSA in the delivery of innovative holiday products and services

tours and packages that combine the best hospitality, leisure, and tourism experiences in the Middle East. The agreement paves the

The strategic partnership will focus on providing a wide range of recreational options as well as turnkey travel and tourism services



for visitors arriving in the Kingdom from Oman, as well as strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Mundher Al Shaikhani, Senior Manager, Oman Air Holidays, says, "The partnership between Oman Air

Holidays and Saudi International Travel Company (SITC) will strengthen the relationship between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the delivery of innovative holiday products and services and will contribute to the

tremendous growth potential of both countries' tourism ecosystems. This aligns closely with the objectives of Oman's Vision 2040 and the Kingdom's Vision 2030."

Sultan Suleiman, Chief Executive Officer, Saudi In-

ternational Travel Company, says, "The partnership enhances strategic cooperation based on the innovative approach followed by private companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to expand investment opportunities across markets with the aim of developing and providing a series of distinctive, high-efficiency tourism services in both the Saudi and Omani markets." Since June 2021, Saudi International Travel Company has been providing institutional quarantine accommodation for Oman Air Holidays' guests who arrive in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Oman Air flights.

Austria tourism travel meet held

Austria Tourism in Dubai hosted a workshop for travel trade partners recently in collaboration with Emirates Airline and 13 Austrian partners representing tourist boards, companies, and hotels. Austrian National Tourist Office CEO Lisa Weddig highlighted the diverse experiences that country offers and the factors that make it a popular travel destination in the world.



GCC travellers' play role in revival

The Austrian National Tourist Office held a travel workshop in Dubai to discuss the most recent travel updates to Austria and the factors that put the European country at the top of travellers' lists. Many local media and travel trade professionals attended the event, which was organised in partnership with Emirates Airline and 13 Austrian partners representing tourist boards, companies, and hotels.

 TT Bureau

During the event, **Lisa Weddig**, CEO, Austrian National Tourist Office, highlights the diverse experiences Austria has to offer, as well as the factors that make it a popular travel destination around the world. "Austria welcomes visitors with a myriad of offerings that fulfill all aspirations. Whether travellers come to enjoy its cultural heritage, picturesque

nature, family adventures, or to savour its flavours, they will undoubtedly find what they are looking for and more. COVID-19 has affected the tourism industry worldwide, but thanks to the successful management of this crisis by the Austrian government, we have witnessed a rapid recovery with the return of travel. The health and safety regulations in place have greatly contributed to rebuilding the travellers' trust and making

the summer holiday season a remarkable success," Weddig says.

The summer holiday season in Austria was marked by a clear recovery, and travel-

of June, we have witnessed an increasing number of visitors from this region to Austria. This observation is supported by figures, as 263,000 overnight stays by GCC travellers were regis-

In 2021, the GCC ranks first among the largest source markets for travellers to Austria outside the European Union

lers from the GCC region played a major role in this. **Robert Groeblacher**, Director, Austrian National Tourist Office in the Middle East, asserts, "Since the return of touristic travel between Austria and the GCC at the end

tered over the course of the following three months. In September 2021, the number of overnight stays from this region reached 80 per cent of the number recorded in September 2019 before COVID-19. This indicates a



Lisa Weddig
CEO
Austrian National Tourist Office



Robert Groeblacher
Director
Austrian National Tourist Office, Middle East

clear recovery of the travel industry, and we stay positive about it."

Groeblacher also highlights the importance of the Gulf region for Austria's tourism industry, saying, "In 2021, the GCC ranks first among the largest source markets

for travellers to Austria outside the European Union. This makes the GCC market of great importance to us, and we are working to establish more initiatives within the region aimed at introducing Austria's rich experiences to the largest possible audience." 





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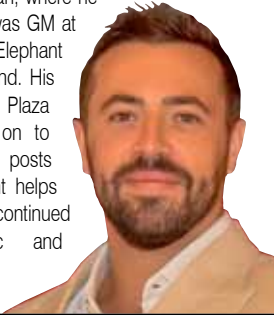
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ANANTARA HOTELS, RESORTS & SPAS Sir Bani Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

Gauderic Harang re-joins Anantara as General Manager of the three award-winning Anantara Sir Bani Yas Resorts, UAE. He comes from Six Senses Zighy Bay Oman, where he was GM, and prior to that, he was GM at Anantara Golden Triangle & Elephant Camp Resort in northern Thailand. His career began in France at the Plaza Athénée Paris, and he went on to hold a number of additional posts in the country. His appointment helps to ensure the three properties' continued positioning, drive authentic and indigenous luxury experiences.



BANANA ISLAND RESORT DOHA BY ANANTARA Doha, Qatar

Mohammed Wazir has been named General Manager of Banana Island Resort Doha. He comes to Qatar with 17 years of hospitality expertise, most recently as General Manager at Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara in Oman. His hospitality career began with Millennium Hotels in the UK, followed by Corinthia Hotels in Malta. Mohammed spent time with this hotel group in properties in Russia, North Africa, the UK, and Eastern Europe, undertaking various roles and displaying his skills in all areas of hotel operations.



MILLENNIUM PLACE BARSHA HEIGHTS Dubai

Prasanth Janarthanan has been appointed Director of Sales and Marketing at Millennium Place Barsha Heights. His career began with Taj Hotels in India and spent the following two decades in the UAE, where he worked with a number of well-known hospitality brands, including Starwood, Habtoor Hospitality, and Time Hotels. He is well-versed in all areas of hospitality, with strong skills in working with different markets and business verticals and achieving successful records in cluster sales and individual property sales setup.



New hotels in the region

New hotel signings have been made throughout the Middle East in recent weeks, with the Saudi Red Sea project being one of them, with new hotels set to debut in the next few years. Some new brands have recently opened in Dubai, and we are sharing an update this month.

W Mina Seyahi

Location – Dubai | Number of Rooms – 318



W Dubai - Mina Seyahi is positioned to offer guests a colourful escape, since it is close to Dubai's popular leisure areas, including Dubai Marina and JBR Walk. The 318 guestrooms in the 31-storey hotel include 26 suites and an Extreme WOW Suite (W's take on a Presidential Suite). The W Lounge (the brand's signature take on the hotel lobby) is expected to be a dynamic and active environment.

Fairmont

Location – Red Sea Project Saudi Arabia | Number of Rooms/Apartments – 200



The Fairmont Red Sea, a luxurious family, wellness, and nature focussed resort part of the upcoming landmark The Red Sea Project (TRSP), strengthens Accor's luxury footprint in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Within a pristine 28,000 sq. km., territory, TRSP is being developed as a ultra-luxury destination. It will set new standards in sustainable development and position Saudi Arabia on the global tourism map.

SLS Hotels & Residences

Location – Red Sea Saudi Arabia | Number of Rooms – 150



SLS Red Sea, a brand of Ennismore Hotels & Residences, will open in Q1 2023, in conjunction with The Red Sea Development Company (TRSDC). The project includes 150 hotel rooms, 12 suites, and 15 villas spread across 800,000 sq. ft., of single-storey space. The property will feature one, two, three, and four bedroom Pool Villas, each with its own private swimming pool and plenty of space.

EDITION

Location – Downtown Dubai | Number of Rooms – 275



The Dubai EDITION recently opened, marking its foray in Middle East's tourism destination. The hotel is located in the heart of Downtown Dubai, and displays EDITION's blend of modern elegance and local influence. The hotel, designed by LW Design Group LLC, has 275 luxurious guestrooms, including 45 suites. A spa with three treatment rooms, a pool, and a gym will also be available at the hotel.

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Stars dazzle amidst challenges

The ATA concluded successfully recognizing the heroes of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry post-pandemic. Personal awards kicked-started the glittering night followed by the company recognition awards.

 Shehara Rizly

The opening speech, Convener for The fourth edition of the Arabian Travel Awards recognized experts of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry at a dazzling event. This year's awards ceremony was graced by three special Chief Guests — His Excellency Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian, Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE, Her Excellency Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, The Republic of the Philippines, UAE and Dr. Aman Puri, Consul General of India in Dubai.

The evening celebrations started with the cutting of the ribbon, depicting that the event is now in session. It was attended by dignitaries who graced the occasion. His Excellency Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian, Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE said, "It is an honour to be with all of you this evening. After a short break due to the pandemic, we are here this evening

to recognize all the contributors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry at the travel awards ceremony. Congratulations to the winners as this event serves as a recognition felicitating those who worked tirelessly, and gave their time and soul and life to the industry. This evening is your

“After a short break due to the pandemic, we are here this evening to recognize all the contributors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry at the travel awards ceremony”

— His Excellency Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian

time and your moment. It is more than a trophy known as Maya, which recognizes at a professional level. We can now see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.”

Her Excellency Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, The Republic of the Philippines, UAE said, "It is my pleasure and honour to be here

became friends with travel agencies, with airline companies and learned so much over the past months, it was tough but with the good company able to achieve anything. With Expo it is a good example that there is hope and I think you in the industry has shown the commitment and I think it is very important that industry voice be heard as policy

makers need you to balance the policies they have and your inputs are important.”

Dr. Aman Puri, Consul General of India in Dubai expressed, "Travel and tourism sectors are important to both India and the UAE, who are both natural partners. We have 3.3 million Indians living here, the single largest community living outside India. This will be the first time that the single largest group will visit the Expo. We have a good untapped potential in tourism. Today is about recognizing the hard work you have been carrying on. Congratulations to all the winners.”

In the personal awards category for the first time a Special Tourism Ambassador Award was introduced which was bagged by the foremost tourism professional in the Middle East Gerald Lawless, Ambassador WTTTC. Followed by the Gallery of Legends to CEO AL Naboodah Travel Nasir Jamal Khan. Technology in its forefront changing and adapting in time was recognized as the coveted DDP Gamechanger in the industry awarded to Kathryn Wallington Head, Middle East and Africa, Travelport. vRecognizing the face of the future was none other than Mohamed Khater Regional GM and Managing Partner of Flash Horizon.

Apart from the personal awards recognition as combined industry professionals went out to some of the most prestigious travel, tourism and hospitality brands which were recognized for their efforts during the era of the pandemic hence presentation of over 30 recognition awards ended the evening. 🎉





Gallery of Legends

NASIR JAMAL KHAN

It is a great honour to be included in the 'Gallery of Legends' at the Arabian Travel Awards 2021. Recognition at such a high-profile event in the presence of government dignitaries and trade experts is humbling. This achievement serves as motivation for me and my team to enhance our collaboration with our trade partners and accelerate our goals towards growth during this challenging time across the globe. On another note, I would like to compliment the DDP organisers and the TravTalk team for their hard work keeping the industry connected and for organising such a glamorous event.

*The award was given to **Nasir Jamal Khan**, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel*

Tourism Ambassador

GERALD LAWLESS

I am deeply honoured to have been recognised at the recent Travel Awards as the Tourism Ambassador for 2021. I sincerely believe in the value of travel and tourism not only to the global economy but also for the industry's contribution to society generally. Travel and tourism connects people of all nationalities, creates understanding and generates respect and tolerance between communities. I very much appreciate the role of Travtalk and its efforts to communicate these benefits to potential travellers everywhere.

*The award was given to **Gerald Lawless**, Ambassador, WTTTC*



DDP Gamechanger

KATHRYN WALLINGTON

It goes without saying- being named DDP Gamechanger of the Year is a huge honour. The last two years have been a rollercoaster for our industry. We've all had to dig deep, support one another, and truly reinvent what it means to travel both safely and conveniently. I think we can all be proud of our resilient the travel industry- and all of us- are. In business, you can only achieve real change at scale if you have your team, your customers and your family behind you. I am fortunate enough to have all three in abundance.

*The award was given to **Kathryn Wallington**, Head Middle East and Africa, Travelport*



Face of the Future

MOHAMED KHATER

I'm pleased, honoured and humbled to accept this award. This is a great milestone in my career and I'm pleased to receive such a prestigious award. Special thanks to Arabian Travel Awards team for the significant event. Big salute to all this year nominees who made great contributions to the industry. And of course, thanks to God, family, friends, colleagues and team who always supported me. I always believe that the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

*The award was given to **Mohamed Khater**, Regional Manager and Managing Partner, Flash Horizon*





Travel Trendsetter

SALIH GOZCU

It is a great honour and privilege to be recognized as the travel trendsetter at this year's Arabian travel awards. At a time when we faced unprecedented challenges, to have emerged as a travel trendsetter is truly thanks to the team behind me who helped right throughout to ensure that we stayed relevant and made the right choices during the pandemic and now when we see the light at the end of the tunnel.

*The award was received by **Salih Gozcu**, CEO, BTB Tours*



Most Promising General Manager

ISSAM SLAIMI

We are extremely gratified about this award. Firstly, I want to appreciate the members of the jury for choosing our Hotel as the Best City Hotel of the year and showing great respect for us with this prize. I am greatly delighted to be chosen for the most promising GM of the Year award, it is a big privilege and respect. The biggest appreciation goes to the Staff and hotel owners who has helped me to have the overwhelming achievement for the past few years. We wish to express our gratitude to Travtalk and Arabian Travel award for giving us the opportunity to be part of the prestigious awards ceremony. We all had enjoyed the event.

*The award was received by **Issam Slaimi**, General Manager, Golden Tulip Media Hotel*



Best Travel Management Company – ME

KANOO TRAVEL

I am delighted about the recognitions received by Kanoo Travel as it reflects the immense efforts exemplified by our team. The continued strength demonstrated by Kanoo Travel, of course, would not be possible without the continued trust of our clients. Thank you for believing in our devotion to bring the best travel services in the region.

— Zaeem Gama, CEO

*The award was received by **Aubrey Heldt**, GM Operations, Kanoo Travel; **Amit Gupta**, Head - MICE & Holidays and **Nayem Syed**, Head Client - Management*

Most Dynamic International Tourism Board in UAE

SPAIN TOURISM

The ATA has brought the industry together after a long and difficult time. Tourism has been hardly affected but at this ceremony we are celebrating the resilience, and commitment of some of the best actors of the UAE panorama. After opening an office in the region seven years ago, we are increasing our exposure and this awards certifies that we are on the right track.

*The award was received by **Daniel Rosado Bayón**, Director, Spain Tourism Office, Tourism Counsellor GCC*



Most Dedicated Team at Covid Quarantine Hotel

BAB AL QASR, ABU DHABI

Thank you to the Arabian Travel Awards 2021. We were humbled to receive the Most Dedicated Team at Covid Quarantine Hotel Award, for on behalf of Bab Al Qasr Hotel, Abu Dhabi. Our team was recognised for their contribution towards UAE's recovery. For the past 21 months they helped over 10,000 UAE Nationals recover with their courage and their care for humanity. They are our heroes and I am proud to be part of this team.

— Nemo Acimovic, General Manager

*The award was received by **Nemo Acimovic**, General Manager and **Elias Saad**, Director of Food and Beverage*



Best Visa Outsourcing Company

VFS GLOBAL

This recognition reinstates that we maintained our service excellence amidst the pandemic. This is a part of the unwavering commitment demonstrated by VFS Global over the past 20 years. We are honoured and inspired to continue serving our client governments and customers.

— Atul Marwah, Head-Middle East & North Africa, VFS Global

*The award was received by **Monaz Billimoria**, Deputy Regional Head, UAE & Qatar and **Atul Marwah**, Head-Middle East & North Africa*



Industrious efforts of experts lauded

The fourth edition of the Arabian Travel Awards honoured all industry heroes. This year's awards were a culmination of their struggles and obstacles, which they triumphed over to the best of their abilities. It was a night of celebration for everyone who worked tirelessly during the pandemic while still making a difference in the New Normal.





Most Trusted Travel Partner in the ME

COZMO TRAVEL

Arabian Travel awards serves to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellent sectors of travel and tourism industry in the region. We are proud winning this prestigious award once again as the most trusted travel partner. During the year of the pandemic and the most difficult times, trust is an important factor and it proved to be very critical for business during the pandemic years from the point of view in terms of the airline or agency as they struggled to keep their business going. I dedicate this prestigious award to every staff member of Cozmo and I thank the ATA for organizing this event continuously for the past three years.

— Jamal Abdulnazar, CEO, Cozmo Travel

The award was received by **Malik Naseer**, Head of Operations; **Vijay GB**, CTO; **Jamal Abdulnazar**, CEO and **Deepa Rajesh**, Director of Sales & Business Development



Best City Hotel Apartments

CITY PREMIERE HOTEL APARTMENTS

After 20 months of challenges in hospitality we are thrilled to be recognized as "Best City Hotel Apartments" of the year. Our pride and award goes to the dedication of City Premiere Hotel Apartments team who work hard to constantly exceed guests' expectations. In the presence of H.E. Mohd Tarid Sufian Ambassador for Malaysia in UAE, H.E. Hjayceelyn Quintana Ambassador for Philippines in UAE and Mr. Sanjeet from DDP Publications. Thank you to the entire team of Arabian Travel Awards for recognition and for this significant event!

The award was received by **Nabeel Bayoun**, General Manager, City Premiere Hotel Apartments



Best Luxury Hotel

MAKKAH HOTELS AND TOWERS

We are proud to receive the prestigious Best Luxury Hotel in KSA award for Makkah Hotel and Towers. This accolade demonstrates the hotel and Towers' strength in the market and its position as the regional and global leading hotel brand for pilgrims and visitors from around the Islamic world. The testament goes to the dedication of Makkah Hotel and Towers team who work hard to constantly exceed guests' expectations.

The award was received by **Saad Khayat**, Cluster General Manager, Makkah Hotel & Towers

Most Exemplary Tourism Authority

TOURISM MALAYSIA - DUBAI OFFICE

Tourism Malaysia is delighted to receive such a recognition from ATA. This is a great achievement for our office during a very challenging year. Even when Malaysia was close for tourists due to the pandemic, we still continued to engage with the travel & tourism industry and update them about new tourism products in Malaysia. Since 15 Nov 2021, Malaysia has already opened the beautiful island of Langkawi for tourists.

— Mirza Ghalib, Deputy Director - Tourism Malaysia, Dubai

The award was received by **Mirza Ghalib**, Deputy Director - Tourism Malaysia, Dubai; **Felisa Faisal**, Marketing Executive - Tourism Malaysia, Dubai and **Amir Muhammad Hanif**, Marketing Manager - Tourism Malaysia, Dubai



Best African Airline

RWANDAIR

This year's awards have been diverse and we were able to witness different categories of service providers within the travel and tourism industry. The occasion itself was such a great opportunity to bring together industry players to share the spirit of what can be termed as "revival" from a tough period characterized by the pandemic. There was a true sense of inspiration from the event especially considering that not so long ago, the industry had cast in very uncertain times. The event served as a true reflection of the resilience from industry players.

— Reuben Mbonye, Country Manager U.A.E, RwandaAir

The award was received by **Reuben Mbonye**, Country Manager U.A.E and **Arnold Anthony**, Sales Manager





Best GSA

AL NABOODAH TRAVEL

We are absolutely thrilled to win 'The Best GSA Award' at the Arabian Travel Awards 2021 for the third year in a row. Al Naboodah Travel began its journey in 1973 as a travel agency along with GSA, representing some of the world's most renowned international airlines. Since inception, we have worked bilaterally with our partner airlines towards common goals of growth and success, continuously expanding our portfolio throughout the journey. This award ensures that we continue striving towards success in the future.

The award was received by **Nasir Jamal Khan**, CEO, Al Naboodah Travel



Best Travel Technology Provider

TRAVELPORT

Well before the pandemic began, we started to work on our next generation platform, Travelport. We have been laser-focused on simplifying how brands connect, upgrading how travel is sold, and enabling modern digital retailing, and to win Best Technology Provider is such an achievement to everyone at the company who has worked tirelessly on this mission.

The award was received by **Kathryn Wallington**, Head Middle East and Africa, Travelport



Best 5 Star Family Hotel, Makkah

MILLENNIUM MAKKAH AL NASEEM HOTEL

The award was received by **Sathis M Aravinda**, Regional Director of Revenue, Sales, Distribution & Digital, Middle East & Africa and **Haitham Assem**, Regional Director of Marketing & Communications, Middle East & Africa

Best Family Friendly Hotel

SWISSOTEL AL GHURAIR

It is an honor to be recognized with a regional award of a family-friendly hotel in the Middle East, Africa and India, and we are truly humbled by it. Swissotel Al Ghurair will continue its efforts to make this premium luxury hotel a family-friendly destination in the city with thoughtful amenities, features, and offers. Right from the stunning ceremony to the beautifully sculpted award, it was absolute pleasure to be a part of the event and we look forward to participating next year.

— Dominic Arel, General Manager

The award was received by **Dominic Arel**, General Manager and **Tunde Nagy**, Director of Sales & Marketing



Best DMC, UAE

BTB TOURS

Winning a second recognition award as the best DMC is truly a great honour for myself and my team for their tireless efforts to take us to the next level weathering the storm during the dark days. Our dreams are slowly but steadily coming into reality and to be recognized for our efforts by the Arabian travel awards is truly an amazing experience. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers behind the awards for hosting an impressive night.

The award was received by **Anastasiya Gozcu**, General Manager, BTB Tours



A gathering of industry professionals





Fastest Growing Holiday Homes Company

EVERLUXE HOLIDAY HOMES

We are grateful to our families, our team and most of all to this great country for the exemplary vision. We are so honored to have our work recognized in this way by the ATA this year. We will continue our efforts to create an even better experience for our guests and we look forward to creating innovative solutions for many years to come.

— Sandeep K Sahni, Founder

The award was received by **Sandeep K Sahni**, Founder and **Asfand Yar Khan**, General Manager, Everluxe Holiday Homes

Best Desert Resort

TILAL LIWA HOTEL

The award highlights the positive atmosphere for the entire team to continue providing the best experience to every guest. We continue to level up our products, services, offers and strengthen our commitment towards delivering the mix of Arabian hospitality, culture, and unique desert stay to all our valued guests and travellers visiting the region.

— Andre Struckmeier, General Manager

The award was received by **Andre Struckmeier**, General Manager and **Imane Aadjou**, Cluster Assistant Director of Sales, Tilal Liwa Hotel



Best MICE Hotel

LE MERIDIEN DUBAI HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTRE

We are very thankful to ATA for recognizing Le Meridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre as the Best Mice Hotel. We are proud of this achievement, and it is indeed a reflection of the efforts put in by our team to ensure that our guests are taken care of and are provided with Le Meridien Dubai's finest services consistently. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our guests who have supported us throughout the years. Moving forward we strive to consistently enhance the services we offer and to exceed all expectations of our valued guests and partners.

The award was received by **Saskia Evraert**, Complex Hotel Manager, Le Meridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre



Best 4 Star Business Hotel

COPTHORNE HOTEL DUBAI

I would like to share this recognition of being the best 4-star Business Hotel to the whole team of Copthorne Hotel Dubai whose dedication significantly contributed to delivering bespoke service to our guests. We are grateful to receive this award and it inspires us to uplift our practices to deliver better guest experience.

— Shady Dawad, GM

The award was received by **Shady Dawad**, General Manager and **Noushad Abdulrahim**, Director of Sales & Marketing



Most Virtually Active Tourism Board

SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD, MIDDLE EAST

It is a proud moment for Singapore Tourism Board to be recognized by Arabian Travel Awards as the Most Virtually Active Tourism Board for the virtual initiatives, webinars and events done during the pandemic to keep our valued travel trade partners engaged and updated about the destination. Singapore Tourism Board is grateful to its partners for their resilience and support, through these challenging times. We will continue to explore initiatives that will help strengthen our trade relationships while we chart our pathways to tourism recovery.

The award was received by **Beverly Au Yong**, Area Director, Singapore Tourism Board, Middle East



A swanky affair on glitzy night





Best DMC, Oman

BAHWAN TOURISM

Bahwan Tourism LLC, a flagship company of Suhail Bahwan Group has recently won the ATA as “Best Destination Management Company-Oman”. The award was conferred in recognition of Bahwan Tourism’s outstanding performance as a Destination Management Company. Bahwan Tourism is a pioneer in Oman with over 45 years of experience in every aspect of travel industry. The General Manager of Bahwan Tourism, S.A. Gururaj appreciates this award as it carries a lot of value especially during post-pandemic scenario to promote Tourism in Oman.

— S A Gururaj, GM, Bahwan Tourism

The award was received by **Abdullah Mansoor Al Jabri**, Manager, Holidays, Bahwan Tourism



Most Active in Information Dissemination Campaign

GERMAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE, GULF COUNTRIES

With the Arabian Travel Awards viewed as a longstanding linchpin for the regional travel sector, GNTTO being recognised as the ‘Most Active Tourism Board in Information Dissemination Campaign’ is a tremendous honour for the organization. Throughout the pandemic, we have endeavored to keep travellers across the GCC informed of both relevant developments in Germany and the recovery of the domestic tourism sector. This award acknowledges our efforts thus far, and simultaneously fuels our desire to continue keeping the region informed of all ongoing developments and advancements in the sector.

— Yamina Sofo, Director, Sales and Marketing

The award was received by **Nicole Zaspel**, Senior Manager, Sales and Marketing, German National Tourist Office, Gulf Countries



Best Contemporary Hotel Apartments

CITY PREMIERE MARINA HOTEL APARTMENTS

We are humbled to be recognized as the “Best Contemporary Hotel Apartments” of the year. Thank you to the ATA team for making us the part of this event. After almost 20 months of challenges, the event acknowledged and awarded the stalwarts of the industry along with other hard working tourism and hospitality partners in the region. I am earnestly grateful to the entire team of City Premiere Marina Hotel Apartments for their hard work and dedication.

The award was received by **Mohamed Dessouky**, Resident Manager, City Premiere Marina Hotel Apartments

Outstanding Showcase of Resilience

EXPO 2020

Expo 2020 Dubai’s premise has always been to provide a platform for global collaboration and optimism. Our resilience reflects a collective global optimism, from the vision and leadership of Dubai and the UAE, to a steadfast commitment from over 200 participants, including 192 nations and our partners, and millions of visitors from around the world who have come together with a shared purpose to help build a better future for all. We are grateful for the support of the UAE tourism industry – airlines, hotels, tourism boards and destination management companies – in making Expo 2020 a reality. We celebrate and share this award with them.

The award was received by **Sumathi Ramanathan**, Vice President, Market Strategy, Sales and Sales & Analytics, Expo 2020



Best Luxury & MICE Hotel

GRAND MILLENNIUM TABUK

We Applauding this achievement, **Jalal Nasser**, Cluster General Manager, Grand Millennium Tabuk, Giza and Millennium Hail, commented, “We are proud of this recognition as it reflects the dedication of our team to provide our guests with an exceptional luxury experience. We are honoured to dedicate this award to the city of Tabuk and our owner, The Higher Education Fund. From the very beginning of Grand Millennium Tabuk, two years ago, we have been the hotel of choice for our partners to host all key events in Tabuk city. Although Grand Millennium Tabuk has become a landmark, we will continue to elevate our services setting a brand new level of hospitality.”

The award was received by **Jalal Nasser**, Cluster General Manager, Grand Millennium Tabuk, Giza and Millennium Hail





Leading Travel Agency for restarting Covid recovery

KANOO TRAVEL

The division has contributed to lifting the travel and leisure industry in the region and strengthening the Kanoo name. This is testimony to our commitment to garner success despite the challenges posed by coronavirus. I am happy to be part of the team. — Zaeem Gama, CEO

The award was received by **Aubrey Heldt**, GM Operations, Kanoo Travel



Most Engaging Tourism Board

TOURISM IRELAND, MIDDLE EAST & ASIA

Tourism Ireland is thrilled and honoured to win The Most Engaging Tourism Board 2021 at the Arabian Travel Awards. We've worked really hard to keep the island of Ireland front of mind and to keep inspiring visitors as to why the island of Ireland is an exceptional holiday destination for families, friends, couples and solo travellers. We have unique experiences to suit all visitors. Thanks to everyone at TravTalk and the travel trade for your ongoing support for Tourism Ireland.

The award was received by **Siobhan McManamy**, Director of Markets – Tourism Ireland; **Aisling McDermott**, Manager Middle East & Asia - Tourism Ireland and **Siobhán Naughton**, Marketing & Trade Executive Middle East & Asia - Tourism Ireland



Best City Hotel

GOLDEN TULIP MEDIA HOTEL

We are pleased to be selected for the award. My respect to all the members of the jury for choosing our Hotel as the Best City Hotel of the year. We are humbled to receive the ATA award. The recognition goes to the team and hotel owners for the support to the company during its success for the past years. I want to give my appreciation to Travtalk and Arabian Travel award for giving us the opportunity to be part of the prestigious awards ceremony. Words cannot express my sincere appreciation to the organizers of this event. — Issam Salimi, GM

The award was received by **Victoria Naydenova**, Front Office Manager and **Issam Slaimi**, General Manager and **Ajith De Alwis**, Financial Controller

Best 5 Star Luxury Hotel, Ajman

BAHI AJMAN PALACE HOTEL

On behalf of the entire staff of Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel, I would like to thank Arabian Travel Awards 2021 for this recognition, especially my team for their continuous hard work and extraordinary dedication to always go beyond the guest's expectations. The award crowns our distinctive hospitality, top-notch service standards and impeccable service offerings. The property beams with pride as we accept the awards.

The award was received by **Iftikhar Hamdani**, Area General Manager - Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel/Coral Beach Resort Sharjah



Best Business Hotel

MEDIA ROTANA DUBAI

Despite the unprecedented challenging year, we are proud to have continued to innovate, surprise and impress our guests with exceptional experiences. Our loyal guests recognized and applauded our efforts to introduce fresh new concepts and deliver safe and memorable experiences. It is our commitment to our guests that has culminated in this prestigious award. We are proud of our team whose world-class service standard led to winning this award. I am confident this award will be a great motivation for all of us to continue to deliver the highest standards to all our guests. — Sherif Madkour, GM

The award was received on behalf of Media Rotana Dubai





Chief Guest

HIS EXCELLENCY, MOHAMMAD TARID BIN SUFIAN

It is a great honour to be with all of you this evening. After a short break due to the pandemic we are here this evening to recognize all the contributors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry at the Arabian travel awards ceremony. Congratulations as this event serve as a recognition honouring those who worked tirelessly and given their time and soul and life to the industry. This evening is your time and your moment. It is more than a trophy known as Maya, which recognizes at a professional level. We can now see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

The award was given to His Excellency, Mohammad Tarid bin Sufian, Ambassador of Malaysia to the UAE

Chief Guest

HER EXCELLENCY HJAYCEELYN M. QUINTANA

It is my pleasure and honour to be here tonight, just by seeing all of you here I can say that travel and tourism are back and it gives so much confidence in the industry seeing all of you getting back to normal. The past 21 months have been unprecedented, as the Ambassador of the third largest group here in the United Arab Emirates, I became instant friends with travel agencies, with airline companies and learned so much over the past months, it was tough but with the good company able to achieve anything. With Expo it is a very good example that there is hope and I think you in the industry has shown the commitment and I think it is very important that industry voice be heard as policy makers need you to balance the policies they have and your inputs are very important."

The award was given to Her Excellency Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, Ambassador, The Republic of the Philippines, UAE



Chief Guest

DR. AMAN PURI

Travel and tourism sectors are very important to both India and the UAE, they are both natural partners. We have 3.3 million Indians living here, the single largest community living outside of India. This will be the first time that the single largest group will visit Expo. We have a very good untapped potential in tourism. Today is about recognizing the hard work you have been carrying on. Congratulations to all the winners."

The award was given to Dr. Aman Puri, Consul General of India in Dubai



Hospitality Partner

LE MERIDIEN DUBAI HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTRE

We are delighted to be the Hospitality Partner of the ATA 2021. Having been established in the industry for over 50 years, we understand the importance of those who are engaged in the hospitality, travel and tourism sectors but also to the many others who support every aspect of the industry. Having this opportunity to support these major players in the market is an absolute pleasure.

The award was given to Saskia Evraert, Complex Hotel Manager, Le Meridien Dubai Hotel & Conference Centre



We are Back!
2022

Middle East's Only
Virtual Travel Show

More than
400 buyers
attended GTS 3.0

Resume, Restart,
Reconnect,
Reimagine,
Rethink, Reengage
and **Reignite**
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Nominations

Open

ARABIAN
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AWARDS

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MEDIA PARTNERS

