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## Stage all set for wtm LONDON

More than 3,000 exhibitors, including 70 new exhibitors, from 100 countries are expected to participate in the World Travel Market (WTM), to be held in London from 7 to 9 November 2022. **TRAVTALK** talks to industry champions.

“Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) is pleased to return to WTM this year - an invaluable platform for raising Sharjah's profile globally. We look forward to showcasing several mega projects and brand new developments before WTM's global audience comprising more than 51,000 senior travel professionals, government ministers, and thought leaders and tourists. Through these path breaking developments, Sharjah is making forays into the future of sustainable travel and tourism, while also renewing its commitment to strategies to promote the travel sector through the consistent adoption of industry's best practices. WTM, with its large audience of industry professionals, is an ideal platform for us to remind the world that Sharjah is a favourite family destination and is the go-to emirate for an authentic glimpse into the traditions and lifestyle of the UAE. Through this participation, SCTDA and all participating entities will continue on its mission to place the emirate in the spotlight within the most prominent tourism and travel events and forums locally and internationally.”



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

Contd. on page 35 ▶

## Recognition for industry leaders

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Arabian Travel Awards (ATA), to be held on 16 November 2022, will once again felicitate the industry leaders working tirelessly to promote tourism in the region.

Shehara Rizly

The most coveted awards in the region, Arabian Travel Awards (ATA) will once again host the industry winners at the Le Meridien Hotel and Conference Center in Garhoud on 16 November 2022. This year's edition is special as the focus is on sustain-



ability. ATA is a platform for the Middle East market to appreciate the efforts of the travel specialists who have contributed to the booming

travel and hospitality industry. The aim is to encourage them to continue promoting tourism in the region. The Arabian Travel Awards are fair and unbiased, following a systematic method of internet-based voting. These awards are supported by Tourismbreakingnews.ae, TravelTVMiddleEast.news

Contd. on page 33 ▶

## GCC gets ready for FIFA WC

After Expo 2020, Gulf region prepares for another big event in the region - the FIFA World Cup in Qatar - says **Mamoun Hmedan**, Chief Commercial Officer and MD MENA and India, Wego.

TT Bureau

The FIFA World Cup is boosting tourism in the region, especially in the GCC. It's a once in a lifetime experience. We see an increased demand on flights and hotels as a result. The biggest beneficiary after Qatar will be the surrounding countries in the region. Travellers attending



Mamoun Hmedan  
Chief Commercial Officer and Managing Director  
MENA and India, Wego

the FIFA World Cup will get the chance to get a glimpse of other countries. Many are searching for hotel stays in nearby GCC countries with the UAE being the top of the list, followed by Saudi and Oman. The hotel occupancy rates in Dubai began to approach 100 per cent a month ahead of the event date. Dubai will be one of the top getaways

Contd. on page 22 ▶

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# Satguru Group takes over Orient Tours DMC

Satguru Group, established in 1989 in Kigali (East Africa) with an aim to offer unique services to global travellers, announces the acquisition of Orient Tours, an esteemed Destination Management Company in Dubai. The acquisition of the Arabian Gulf's oldest premier DMC will accelerate Satguru's plan to strengthen its presence in the United Arab Emirates.

 TT Bureau

Satguru Group was established in 1989 in Kigali (East Africa) with an aim to offer unique services to global travellers and transform the travel world. Their customers have access to the best-in-class booking technology, smart analytics, worldwide partnerships and impeccable client service.

ing. They pride themselves in providing end-to-end services to allow stress-free travel to all of their customers. Their services range from organized planning, hotels and accommodation, corporate travel, car rentals, visa and insurance among others. Headquartered in Dubai, Satguru Travel under Satguru Group is one of the largest TMCs (Travel Manage-

ment Companies) covering over 80 locations in every continent over the past decade.

**Anil Chandirani**, Chairman, Satguru Group, said, "Leveraging Orient Tour's international footprint, the Satguru Group aims to expand its DMC operations in the UAE. We are confident that in the years to come, we will all reap the benefits of this cooperation."

The acquisition of Orient Tours fits seamlessly into Satguru's business strategy to augment its growth and establish its presence both nationally and internationally. Orient Tours brings 40 years of experience to the table, offering an unconventional DMC perspective. The brand is synonymous with ex-



ceptional customer service and unique product offerings. With this acquisition, Satguru Group intends to leverage Orient Tours' decades of expertise to further strengthen inbound tourism to the UAE and expand its footprint across 70+ countries. According to Orient Tours, the decision

to hand over the reins was made keeping in mind the best interests of the company's future, its employees, and its legion of loyal partners.

"Since Orient Tours' inception, our goal has been to provide the highest value to our custom-

ers. It's an exciting time for the Orient Tours family as we hand over the reins of this wonderful DMC to the Satguru Group, who, we are confident will take this organization to the next level", said **Asim Arshad**, Group CEO of Orient Tours, Orient Travels & Orient Cargo. 





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## TourismNews

NEOM names first partner hotel brand with Ennismore

Japan starts visa waivers for the UAE nationals

IHG Group to unveils its sustainable hotel in Q4 2022

Qatar Airways and Qatar Tourism reveal World Cup fan events

Emirates to resume operations to Taipei

Jumeirah to open new luxury hotel in Bahrain

Travelport adds more options for travel agents

GNT0 medical tourism webinar on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

# Are we ready for Sustainable Travel?

Sustainability has many layers to be addressed, it is no longer a word to be utilized and passed on as a mere CSR activity. It is a commitment to ensure that everyone has a part to play on Mother Earth, says **Dr Sean Lochrie**, Assistant Professor at School of Social Sciences, Heriot-Watt University, Dubai.

Sustainability is one of the most important core values for organisations across industries worldwide. The travel and tourism industry is no different, with the increasing number of tourists opting for more sustainable and environmentally friendly travel experiences.

For example, a 2021 Google survey revealed a 70 per cent rise in the number of people searching for sustainable travel options. Additionally, a recent Booking.com study showed that 61 per cent travellers state that the COVID-19 pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future. The sustainable tourism market is also expected to grow considerably over the next decade. Recent research by Future

Market Insights indicated that the sustainable tourism market is expected to reach a global value of USD 8.4 trillion by 2032.

Sustainable travel embraces a sense of responsibility towards local communities' environ-

people globally. Furthermore, the travel industry is also known to be one of the most significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions as well as an extensive energy user. The industry's negative impact has been a concern for years and

and the environmental destruction caused by the development of tourist infrastructure, including airports, hotels, and shopping destinations - especially in ecologically sensitive areas.

With heightened concern for the challenges associated with tourism, the question 'Are we ready for Sustainable Travel?' is often asked. There is no question that sustainable travel, or the motivation for sustainable travel, is at the forefront of many travellers' minds. Much of this originates from the actions by the industry stakeholders and wider influences impacting tourists' perceptions.

While the onus of travelling sustainably does fall on the shoulders of vacationers, the industry plays an important role

in supporting these choices. For example, destinations and travel providers can play a key role in making sustainable travel more accessible. The travel industry is uniquely positioned to make a huge difference and support the global sustainability and net-zero agenda.



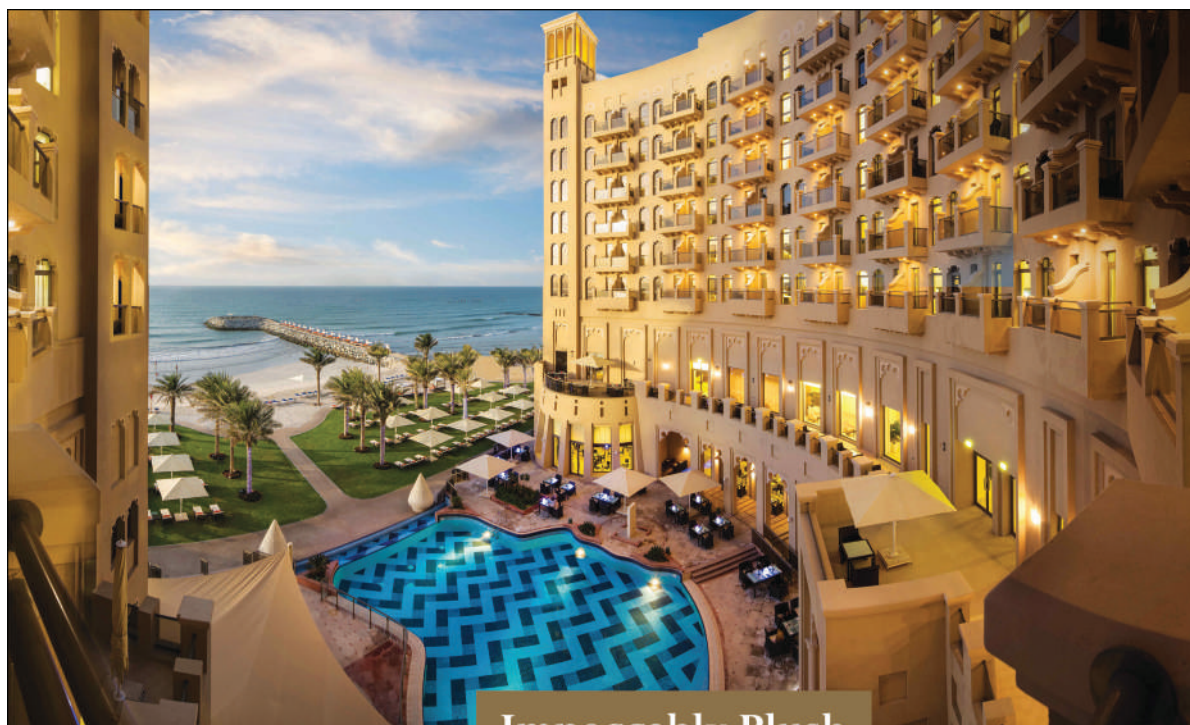
**Dr Sean Lochrie**  
Assistant Professor at the School of Social Sciences at Heriot-Watt University Dubai

(The views expressed are solely of the author.)

**A recent report states that human-induced climate change is causing disruptions in Nature and affecting the lives of billions of people globally**

mental and socioeconomic well-being. A recent report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that human-induced climate change is causing disruptions in Nature and affecting the lives of billions of

consumers are now becoming more aware of how their travel choices affect the sustainability of the places they visit and the wider world. Understanding has grown around the enormous emissions from air travel, the social harm from over-tourism,



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# Germany to host workshop on medical tourism

German National Tourist Office GCC will be hosting a webinar focusing on medical tourism in Berlin on 7 December 2022 at 12 noon, UAE time. Berlin, the capital of Germany, has been at the forefront of medical tourism with state of the art hospitals. The webinar will bring to light the many new offerings for the visitors who need expert medical care and attention.

 TT Bureau

**Yamina Sofo**, Director, German National Tourist Office GCC, shared that she will start off the webinar with focus on the GCC market and its impact, especially the last summer, then move on to share insights on the current

campaigns that focus on sustainable tourism. "The webinar is two-fold, first our focus is on the 'Feel Good' campaign, which is to demonstrate our commitment to promote sustainable tourism ensuring that all players and stakeholders are involved and benefitted long term. Sustainable tourism is not mere a PR



**Yamina Sofo**  
Director, German National Tourist Office GCC



**Michaela Kehrler**  
Medical Tourism Manager, visitBerlin

per cent since 2012 and before the pandemic between 17,000 to 21,000 patients were coming to Berlin to do check-ups, receive medical treatment or rehabilitation. Many hospitals and surgeries in Berlin have adapted themselves to the needs of the patients from abroad. They offer multilingual service with the help of their

eral hospitals feature comfort wards where the international patient is being offered greater privacy in single and double rooms with exclusive furnishing. The comfort wards are providing additional service, such as Wi-Fi, international TV programs/ daily papers and halal food. The medical platform [berlin-health-excel-](#)



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exercise, but a campaign that will add value to the traveller whilst granting them an opportunity to explore a truly authentic experience. Travellers can explore wide open spaces, natural forests, springs, lakes and rivers across Germany. Secondly, we will be promoting medical tourism with our capital Berlin. **Michaela Kehrler**, Medical Tourism Manager, visitBerlin, will be sharing

her expertise on what can be expected when on medical travel."

National and international experts work in Berlin, their expertise encompassing virtually the entire spectrum of medical treatment. Patients from all over the world put their trust in Berlin's hospitals and physicians. The number of international patients has risen by 15

**Sustainable tourism is not mere a PR exercise, but a campaign that will grant travellers an opportunity to explore a truly authentic experience**

international staff and run an international office in order to provide the patient with a most pleasant medical stay. Sev-

lence.com is available in six languages, including Arabic, giving information about the medical specializations. 



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# Shurooq to showcase luxury projects at WTM

Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) will be participating at World Travel Market (WTM) for its 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and this time they will be showcasing their luxury mega projects 2022-2023; H.E Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer, Acting CEO, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq) shares more with **TRAVELTALK**.

**TT Bureau**

**Could you share the importance of participating at WTM this year?**

This will be Shurooq's 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive participation in WTM. We consider this market leading international event as a key annual opportunity to showcase our latest and upcoming projects, particularly in luxury hospitality, eco escapes, leisure and entertainment. The event, which is expecting around 51,000 attendees this year from 140 countries, is also a key networking platform for us and an opportunity to showcase Sharjah's burgeoning potential and appeal as a business-friendly destination and a leading global hub of investments in the sector.

**What will you showcase this year?**

Shurooq is gearing up to turn the spotlight on its latest developments and upcoming mega projects, particularly in luxury hospitality and authentic eco-inspired travel, scheduled for completion in 2022 and in early 2023. We will also be showcasing our diverse world-class portfolio of existing eco-destinations. Several Shurooq projects will be making their WTM debut. These include the Lux\* Al Jabal Resort – a luxurious beach resort in Khorfakkan overlooking the pristine waters of the Soueifa Beach; the Lux\* Al Bridi Resort in Al Dhaid set adjacent to the Sharjah

Safari - the largest wildlife safari in the world outside of Africa; and Nomad which explores the emirate's nature through beach trailer experience in Al Hamriya.



H.E Ahmed Obaid Al Qaseer  
Acting CEO, Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq)

Heritage-inspired projects by Shurooq that will be making their WTM debut are the Serai Wing, Bait Khalid bin Ibrahim – a pearl merchant's 19<sup>th</sup> century family

New entertainment destinations, Al Hira Beach and Khorfakkan Beach, and the popular Al Montazah parks will be showcased alongside Mleiha Archeological and Eco-Tourism Project and Al Noor Island, the two projects with which the entity has set a regional example of environment conservation and giving people access to nature in the heart of a bustling city.

**Will you be able to list out the projects scheduled for next year and a brief about them?**

❖ LUX\* Al Jabal Resort - nestled in the picturesque landscape of Khorfakkan on the east coast of the UAE, the LUX\* Al Jabal Resort is an idyllic mountain hideout that will serve as the perfect escape for nature

**World Travel Market is also a key networking platform for us and an opportunity to showcase Sharjah's burgeoning potential**

home in the Heart of Sharjah district, which Shurooq is converting into a modern 12-key boutique wing of The Chedi Al Bait, Sharjah; and the Mysk Najd Al Meqsar Village, which will feature 13 luxurious heritage-style hotel units that Shurooq is building on the foundations of 100-year-old houses in the mountainous terrains of the picturesque coastal city of Khorfakkan.

lovers. Scheduled for completion in 2023, the five-star resort will comprise 45 eco-friendly 1 and 2-bedroom units, including simple and luxury options, of which several are equipped with a private swimming pool, in addition to a royal suite with a private garden and pool. A kids play area, cliff-top restaurant with mesmerising sunrise/sunset views, a reception hall on the



sloping hills, gym and LUX\* ME Spa are other amenities.

❖ Shurooq's LUX\* Al Bridi Resort, an upcoming five-star hospitality offering in Al Dhaid, Sharjah occupies 784 hectares of the Al Bridi Nature Reserve where Sharjah Safari project, the largest wildlife safari in the world

The Chedi Al Bait. Launched by Shurooq in 2017 and managed by GHM Hotels, The Chedi Al Bait, Sharjah, is a 53-key hotel offering luxurious Emirati hospitality and bespoke experiences.

❖ Mysk Najd Al Meqsar Village is nestled in the mountainous terrains of the picturesque

300-year-old Meqsar Fortress which offers a vantage view of the historic settlement from a height of 220m, a barbecue and outdoor areas and a mosque, are complete. As part of the project, Shurooq will also be developing 9 villas with private pools, private farm villas, hiking trails, horseback riding routes,



outside Africa is located. Also scheduled for completion next year, the LUX\* Al Bridi Resort marks a new era of luxury living in the wild. A partnership with Sharjah's Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA) ensures the care and conservation of the wild species inhabiting the reserve.

❖ The Serai Wing, Bait Khalid bin Ibrahim is a pearl merchant's 19<sup>th</sup> century family home in the Heart of Sharjah district, which Shurooq is converting into a modern 12-key boutique wing of

coastal city of Khorfakkan. The destination is being developed to bring travellers and residents a brand-new opportunity to experience the emirate's diverse natural landscapes. With this ambitious project, 13 houses in the 100-year-old Najd Al Meqsar village, which were restored as part of a larger revitalisation project in the Wadi Shie archaeological site by the Sharjah Infrastructure Development Authority 'Mubadara', are being transformed into luxurious heritage-style hotel units by Shurooq. Seven hotel units, the

tracks for electric club cars, and other attractions.

❖ NOMAD by Mysk - With a collection of 20 fully-equipped trailers designed to complement their natural surroundings, Shurooq is introducing the airstream experience to the UAE. The trailers will dot the sandy beaches of Al Hamriyah. Nomad will start welcoming guests later this year or early next, who will be treated to an offbeat escape, an exciting array of water sports and other beach activities. 📍





# Don't confuse Central Asia with 'Asia'

Over the past few years, the Eastern European and Central European destinations became popular as they offered locals and expats living in the GCC easier options to visit and explore their destinations. **Marsel Arystanbekov**, Kyrgyzstan's Country Manager for metasearch platform Aviasales shares his views with TravTalk over the new outbound markets.

When our industry speaks about the importance of Asian travellers returning to international and long-haul travel, inevitably that means two Asian source markets only: Japan and China. Of course their significance is major in terms of both pax and spend. But what about Central Asia?

Whilst China outbound tourism is barred and Japan only just opened its borders fully a few weeks ago, travel from Central

Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was never as strict as China or other countries. So, as tourism in Europe and the Middle East has opened up over the last year, so too have the numbers gone up for people from Central Asian countries travelling internationally. In fact, according to our research, this summer demand for visiting GCC countries has grown by 75 per cent among Central Asian countries compared to the same period last year.



So, when visiting the GCC where do they go? The most popular countries to visit in this region are the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, with Dubai the most popular city. Interestingly, 38 per cent of travelers take their children with them on vacation. And which specific Central Asian countries travel most to the GCC? The biggest share by

PAX is from Kazakhstan (80 per cent), followed by Uzbekistan (17 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (less than 3 per cent), and Tajikistan (less than 1 per cent). It's not just search demand or even flight bookings that have recovered in the Central Asian states, spending has too. Just a few weeks ago we published a study revealing a significant increase

in travel spends among travellers from Central Asian republics. Central Asians like visiting Europe too, of course. In fact, Europe is the number one dream destination for 40 per cent of them. This is really quite interesting. Basically it's just airBaltic, Lufthansa, LOT and Wizz Air flying to Kazakhstan.

Is there a good time to market to the region you might ask? Probably the most extended holiday period for many would be during 'Naryz', a kind of spring festival in March time that sees several days of national holiday in several countries across the region. In our experience demand for international travel is very high during those dates. Next time someone speaks to you about

the Asian outbound market ask them to clarify which markets they mean by that and remind them that Central Asia is still Asia, and more importantly, much more closely located to Europe and the Middle East, thus making it a valuable market to not be overlooked.



**Marsel Arystanbekov**  
Kyrgyzstan's Country Manager for  
metasearch platform Aviasales

(The views expressed  
are solely of the author.)

**This summer demand for visiting GCC countries has grown by 75 per cent among Central Asian countries compared to the same period last year**

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# Assadi honoured with UAE Golden Visa

**Faiz Assadi**, Managing Director of Al Marina Holding, was honoured with the UAE Golden Visa. This distinction coincides with his completion of a decade with the conglomerate. Starting after the pandemic, the UAE Golden Visa has become one of the key tools of recognition of talent and dedication.

TT Bureau

It is a great privilege that **Faiz Assadi**, Managing Director of Al Marina Holding, was recently honoured with UAE's coveted 10-year Golden Visa. This coincided with Assadi completing 10 years in the company, driving it from strength to strength, ensuring that the growth not just continues but diversifying them to complement and go one step further and find the perfect blend to mix in all the different resources to derive better results.

During this period of time, he has been instrumental in leading the company into key growth sectors such as Real



Estate, Leisure & Retail, Hospitality, Transportation, Travel and Healthcare sectors. Assadi expressed his gratitude towards the support of **Mohammed Khalfan Al Hameli** – Chairman of Al Marina Holding, which made it a smooth operation.

Assadi is known to have a fresh and futuristic perspective where he has strategically capitalized and managed Hospitality & Retail key projects in Al Dhafra Region, aiming to boost tourism development and established 'Western Hotels', Al Dhafra

Walk and Western Souk. Understanding the market and its many segments is important in order to ensure a smooth transition and continued operation. The wealth of knowledge about the surroundings and the necessary changes that will make

it a different experience is very important when you are looking at market development. Assadi has completed his research and the result was that he delivered

ing adventure getaways and a Shopping Plaza in Saadiyat Island among many others lined up in the pipeline. Assadi reiterates, "The reliability of the

**Assadi is known to have a fresh and futuristic perspective and has managed Hospitality & Retail key projects in Al Dhafra Region**

a new type of experiences for travellers across the UAE.

Redefining the experiences of shoppers and travelers, the upcoming leisure development projects include a boutique resort in Liwa Desert promot-

service we provide and the service quality we offer defines us. We rose to the challenge. Our networks and platforms passed the test, and we have proven as an organization to be both robust and extremely flexible in the face of change."

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## 'Amsaan' for accessible travel

In a move to promote accessible tourism, Gulf People of Determination Information Technologies has developed an app designed for those who are deaf and short of hearing to travel without a hassle, shares **Nida Inamdar**, Marketing Manager, GPDIT.

 TT Bureau

**C**ould you share about the app developed for people with determined hearing?

Amsaan is a customised software designed for Deaf and People with Hearing loss. In one click the user can connect with a sign language interpreter and choose which sign language you want to use. It will connect the user with an online Sign Language Interpreter, who will translate the conversation between the participant and the deaf person. Amsaan eliminates the necessity for an onsite sign language interpreter, allowing Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to communicate without assistance using their smartphone or through a pre-installed tablet.

**Accessible tourism is a key focus in Dubai, how will this help as a tourist?**

The majority of deaf people cannot read or comprehend the text - they prefer to use sign language interpreters to understand documents and texts.

**AMSAAN gives an opportunity for guests to connect with online interpreters, which are available on the application 24x7**

AMSAAN gives an opportunity for guests to connect with online interpreters which are available on application 24x7. We are striving to develop an ecosystem that is deaf friendly for the deaf that allows them to travel to the UAE with ease making it the first deaf friendly country. Consequently, the first group of deaf travellers from Uzbekistan were recently hosted in the UAE with significant support by Coral Beach Resort Sharjah. They used AMSAAN to communicate with the vendors at in Sharjah and Dubai to purchase gifts, souvenirs.

**Where and how does the app work? Do travel, tourism and**



**hospitality related services have access?**

We have currently deployed AMSAAN in the hospitality sector. We are committed to making most facilities deaf-friendly so that deaf tourists and residents may travel without any barriers and have a pleasant stay at the hotel. We are also endeavouring to implement AMSAAN in other essential sectors such as trans-

AMSAAN is an easy-to-use application. Communication between deaf individuals and the environment becomes nearly unobstructed with the assistance of this application.

- ❖ AMSAAN provides city tours for the deaf in sign language.
- ❖ Our platform has various sign language options
- ❖ Interactive Map on the application which shows where AMSAAN service is available.
- ❖ QR codes to be scanned by AMSAAN mobile application for watching a pre recorded video in sign language about the history of the site, location, directions.

- ❖ AMSAAN Web Widget feature that can be embedded on any business website that connects with sign language interpreters. Interpreter translates webpage content into sign language (as Deaf People avoid to reading text information) These are a few of the many ways we demarcate from the rest.

**Technology needs training, how do you conduct them?**  
For this application, there is no

additional training required since it is a video relay service that resembles a video call between the participant, sign language interpreter and the deaf person.


**Am I right to say assisted help for the app? How do they connect with people using this app?**

For individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, AMSAAN is an easy to use application as it allows them to immediately connect to a sign language interpreter anytime they need to interact with someone. To use the app, they simply have to download it from the Play Store or the App Store. Businesses which strive to be deaf-friendly can install our tablet AMSAAN PRO, which includes engineered software that is accessible by deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

**Would you be looking at upgrading it with more features?**

Yes, we are introducing new features to AMSAAN to make it more accessible and available to millions of deaf individuals throughout the world.

**What is the investment and how do they procure it?**

For individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, they can install this application and use it instantly. Businesses can install our tablets with pre-installed software, we provide commercial packages for them. 



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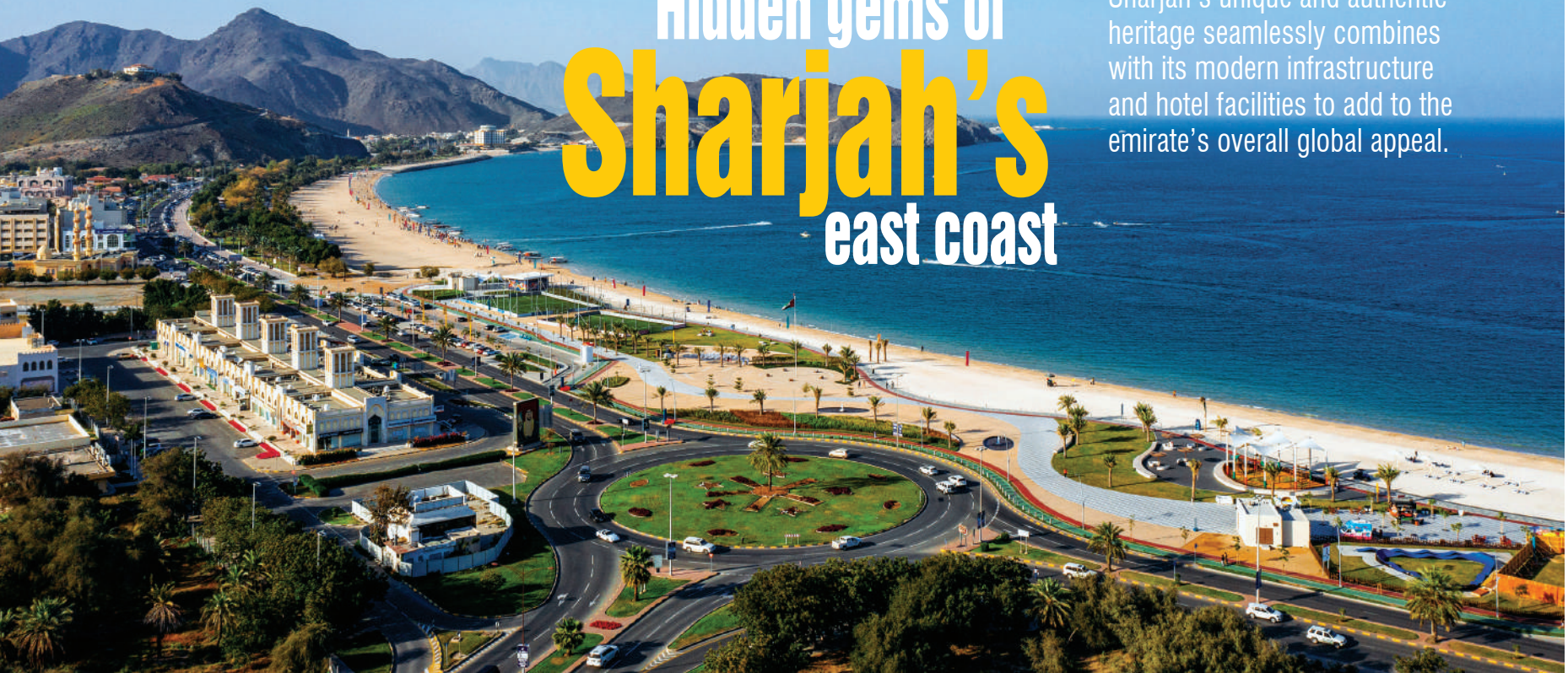
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# Hidden gems of Sharjah's east coast

Sharjah's unique and authentic heritage seamlessly combines with its modern infrastructure and hotel facilities to add to the emirate's overall global appeal.



Sharjah, a popular tourist destination, exudes a certain charm that draws visitors from all over the world to its shores. Its unique and authentic heritage and beautiful nature seamlessly combined with modern infrastructure and hotel facilities add to the emirate's overall global appeal.

Renowned for providing an unparalleled experience, the emir-

tiful museums, and bustling cultural centers, among others.

Part of Sharjah's unique characteristics is its terrain. This is especially evident as one drives along the east coast, where charming beaches, towering mountains, and lush oasis meet. On this side of the emirate, which is less than two hours' drive from the city, tourists flock to famous attractions such as Dibba Al-

**Renowned for providing an unparalleled experience, Sharjah is a cultural metropolis and incubator of thought, art, and literature**

ate is a cultural metropolis and incubator of thought, art, and literature, boasting picturesque heritage neighborhoods, beau-

Hisn, Khorfakkan, Kalba, and other areas. The east coast is known for its breathtaking mountain and coastal views, bringing



relaxation and peace to visitors who are looking to escape the

hustle and bustle of the big cities. Its quaint islands and environmental reserves carry secrets of nature well-worth exploring, being the center of biodiversity and habitat for many species of birds, wild animals, and marine fauna.

## Shark Island: Habitat for birds and marine life

Located off the eastern coast of Sharjah, Shark Island can be accessed via boats. This island, which is renowned for its unique rocky nature and diverse ecosystem, is considered one of the emirate's most important tourist attractions. On the island, which is scat-

tered with anemones, different types of fish and marine fauna cohabit, including sea turtles, moray eels, stingrays, and Arabian angelfish.

**Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre: Haven for mountain and desert animals**  
Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre, located on the

**Shark Island, renowned for its unique rocky nature and diverse ecosystem, is considered one of the emirate's most important tourist attractions**

Huts are available for rent on the island, where tourists can explore a range of enjoyable recreational activities, including swimming, diving, and fishing.

Hajar Mountain, is adjacent to the city of Kalba, and extends over an area of 12 square kilometers. The Centre has a diverse ecosystem and is home to 30





species of mountain and desert animals that have made the area their natural haven. The animals in this vast reserve include the Arabian leopard, wolves, Tahr, the caracal (desert lynx), snakes, lizards, hedgehogs, and scorpions, among others.

Providing visitors with an integrated and comfortable experience, the Centre offers golf carts to facilitate movement around the reserve. Tourists are guided and accompanied by teams who have expert knowledge about the history of the reserve and wildlife in general.

Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre also features a night

the protection and conservation of endangered animals, biodiversity, and nature.

**Al Qurm Nature Reserve: A unique combination of tall trees and beautiful waterfowl**  
Located within the coastal area of Kalba, the Al Qurm Nature Reserve covers an area of 4.9 square kilometers. The reserve is considered one of the UAE's most unique ecological sites thanks to its diverse plant, bird, and animal species. At the heart of this reserve are the mangrove trees.

The reserve is home to several rare waterfowl, most notably the Arabian collared kingfisher,



exhibition, allowing visitors to closely observe the life of desert animals and their close interrelationship with the surrounding environment. Furthermore, it organizes activities to promote

which is classified as an endangered bird. The beach next to the Al Qurm Nature Reserve, is a refuge for marine reptiles, including loggerhead sea turtles and green turtles.

The ecosystem here is divided into two main environments: the mangrove tree forest and the marine environment. The mangrove trees in the area, some of which reach a height

of eight meters, are characterized by their beauty and hardiness. Growing naturally in the region, these trees can withstand seawater salinity and low

Mangrove Reserve is an excellent destination for tourists looking to embark on fun outdoor activities such as kayaking, hiking, and birdwatching.

**Al Qurm Nature Reserve is considered one of the UAE's most unique ecological sites thanks to its diverse plant, bird, and animal species**

oxygen levels. The trees also provide a valuable layer of protection that reduces the impact of storms, currents, tidal factors, and soil erosion.

The marine environment consists of an artificial lake, a haven for algae that play an important role in the photosynthesis process that provides food for marine life. The

**'Al Suhub Rest House:' Integration of beauty of nature and engineering creativity**  
Al Suhub Rest House, which is located in the city of Khorfakkan at an altitude of 600 metres above sea level, represents the true combination of natural richness and engineering creativity. One of the UAE's pioneering projects, it features a two-story, 2,788-square-meter rest house with a

It also includes indoor and outdoor balconies to enable all visitors to fully enjoy the wonder of nature.

Furthermore, is the rest house is connected to the Al Rafisah Dam by a mountain path. This trail is a favorite destination for lovers of mountain sports and adventures, allowing them to enjoy hiking and exploring while enjoying a panoramic view of the city of Khorfakkan.

As part of its ongoing efforts to improve the experience of visitors and advance the local tourism sector, the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA) continues to highlight the unique beauty of the east coast while showing off Sharjah's natural, environmental, cultural, and urban heritage. The SCTDA is committed to

**Al Suhub Rest House, located in Khorfakkan, represents the true combination of natural richness and engineering creativity**

restaurant, a café, separate prayer rooms for men and women, a children's play area, and other exceptional facilities.

Al Suhub Rest House is surrounded by green spaces, which reflect the latest innovations in forest architecture and landscape design. These green spaces include 8,700 trees that give an extra touch of beauty inspired by nature.

strengthening Sharjah's position as a leading regional and global tourist destination. It is also working towards enhancing the emirate's presence in the global tourism markets, attracting more international tourists, and enticing more foreign investments to the local tourism and hospitality sectors, which play an important role in the economy of Sharjah and the UAE. 





# Golden Sands showcasing new hotels at WTM

One of the pioneering local Emirati brands born in Dubai, Golden Sands Hotels and Apartments is part of Al Moosa Enterprises, which holds 5,000 keys across the MENA region managed by worldwide chains such as Hilton, Marriott, IHG and Taj. **Mohammad Khoori**, General Manager of Golden Sands Hotels and Apartments share their plans with **TRAVTALK**.

**Shehara Rizly**

**How important is WTM and what will you be showcasing this year?**

WTM is one of the most important trade shows that we participate in every year, as it provides us an opportunity to meet with partners from across the globe. Europe is one of the most important source markets for us, hence we showcase all our new offerings at the event. WTM provides us a good platform to display and personally meet people to showcase our ventures.

**What makes Golden Sands stand out against the rest?**

It is a well-established local Emirati brand, which has received prominence over the past few years with many recognitions and accolades as a unique brand that caters to different market segments. Our brand is authentic, caters to family travellers, solo or group travellers considering everyone's requirement. Our

hotel apartments are bigger in size to accommodate families, and this is important to those who travel from Europe with their families or friends. Our service excellence is another unique



**Mohammad Khoori**  
General Manager  
Golden Sands Hotels and Apartments

point that brings back repeat clientele. Since we have many properties in different parts of Dubai and Sharjah, guests have many options to select a convenient accommodation suiting their needs.

**As a well-established Emirati brand, what are the latest successful stories?**

Recently, we have been expanding the brand to operate four and five-star hotels. We successfully opened our first 5-star boutique hotel last September (2021) and it has been performing remarkably well. As we rebranded to our local brand, within a short period of time, Golden Sands Hotel Creek has broken record after record in terms of performance and in terms of quality of service. Located at a prime location facing the Dubai Creek, the hotel rapidly proved a new favourite among European travellers and International visitors to Dubai, who are looking for an ideal base to take in a unique perspective of Dubai.

**Could you share the emerging markets and current tourism position in Dubai?**

There is no doubt that Dubai has been able to overcome the most complex global challenges, including the repercussions of the recent worldwide health crisis, to create a destination that offers rich value for travellers whether they are visiting for leisure or business. Modern Dubai is well positioned on the international tourism map as one of the world's top destinations, and new emerging markets to this destination continue to make an



impact on international visitation, further underscoring the success of Dubai government's diversified multi-geographic strategy.

Future. New strategic, legislative and regulatory enablers, including the recent announcement of more options for various Visa

ment in Dubai has been the intense and ongoing increase in the supply of high-quality tourism infrastructure, supported by Dubai Economy and Tourism Department's constant drive for superior facilities and services in the tourism sector. In order to remain highly competitive and fulfill the government's expectations of quality offering, we at Golden Sands are constantly improving our offerings to the guest, in terms of quality of the product or services, supported by commitment to sustainable activities, where we can experience reduced costs paired

**Golden Sands is a local Emirati brand, which has received prominence over the past few years with many recognitions and accolades**

Building upon the city's drive to further diversify its offerings to ensure a broad choice to travellers of all ages and interests, 2022 saw the opening of new attractions and leisure landmarks, including the Museum of the

categories, as well as the increase in the duration of the tourist visa, are set to further boost visitor arrivals and encourage visitors to stay longer and ex-

**Dubai has overcome challenges to create a destination that offers rich value for travellers whether they are visiting for leisure or business**

plore the city's diverse offerings, while also supporting those who are considering a permanent move to Dubai.

**How is Golden Sands keeping up with Dubai's constant demand for high quality standards?**

Massive investments in newly built high-quality tourism attractions have made Dubai one of the world's leading international tourist destinations and the fastest growing in the world. The most obvious and publicised outcome of tourism develop-

with maximum efficiency, all while elevating the guest experience and creating a feeling of connection between property and visitor. Improved technology and automated processes such as mobile room access and digital room guest directories are sustainable practices that we have incorporated in our recent property. While face-to-face interactions will never be completely replaced, implementing new technology can increase cost savings and help utilize resources more effectively. 





# Dubai cruise season expects 166 ship calls

Underscoring Dubai's status as the region's leading cruise hub, the emirate is set to welcome 900,000 cruise tourists during the 2022-2023 season, which kicked off with the arrival of the cruise liner TUI Cruises (Mein Schiff 6) at the Hamdan bin Mohammed Cruise Terminal, Mina Rashid, on 29 October 2022.

**TT Bureau**

The 2022-2023 season is scheduled to see 166 ship calls between Mina Rashid and Dubai Harbour, bringing in an estimated 900,000 cruise passengers and crew. His Highness Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Border Security Council, said: "The strong outlook for Dubai's 2022-2023 cruise season will help accelerate its drive to realise the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to make Dubai the world's most visited destination and the best city to live and work in."

His Highness Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed added: "The cruise industry is an integral part of Dubai's tourism sector and plays an important role in reinforcing the emirate's status as a global tourism hub. Dubai's robust port infrastructure and state-of-the-art

for regional and international cruise itineraries."

Some major cruise liners scheduled to visit Dubai this season include MSC Cruises & TUI Cruises and Ponant (MSC World Europa, Opera, Mein Schiff 6 & Le Bougainville),

**Cruise industry is an integral part of Dubai's tourism and plays key role in reinforcing the emirate's status as a global tourism hub**

terminal facilities can handle some of the world's largest cruise ships, underpinning the city's reputation as one of the world's most advanced cruise destinations and a key gateway

which will make the award-winning Mina Rashid Cruise Terminal their home port for the season. In addition, C.S. Aida Cosma (arriving on 17 November) and C.S. Costa Toscana,



the two new LNG-powered cruise ships, will arrive at the Dubai Harbour Cruise Terminal.

Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO, DP World, said: "Cruise Tourism has become a key contributor to Dubai's economy. The emirate's central location, midway

between Europe and Asia, is vital to its success as a primary homeport for cruise ships in the Arabian Gulf and the wider Middle East and its popularity as one of the top destinations. Owing to Dubai's strengths, including decades of investments in the tourism industry, we are predicting another robust winter

for the 2022-2023 season. At our cruise terminals, we expect 123 calls from some of the largest cruise operators, which is a 100 per cent increase over the last season. Additionally, passenger and crew inflows are forecast to rise to around 600,000, more than double the previous season."



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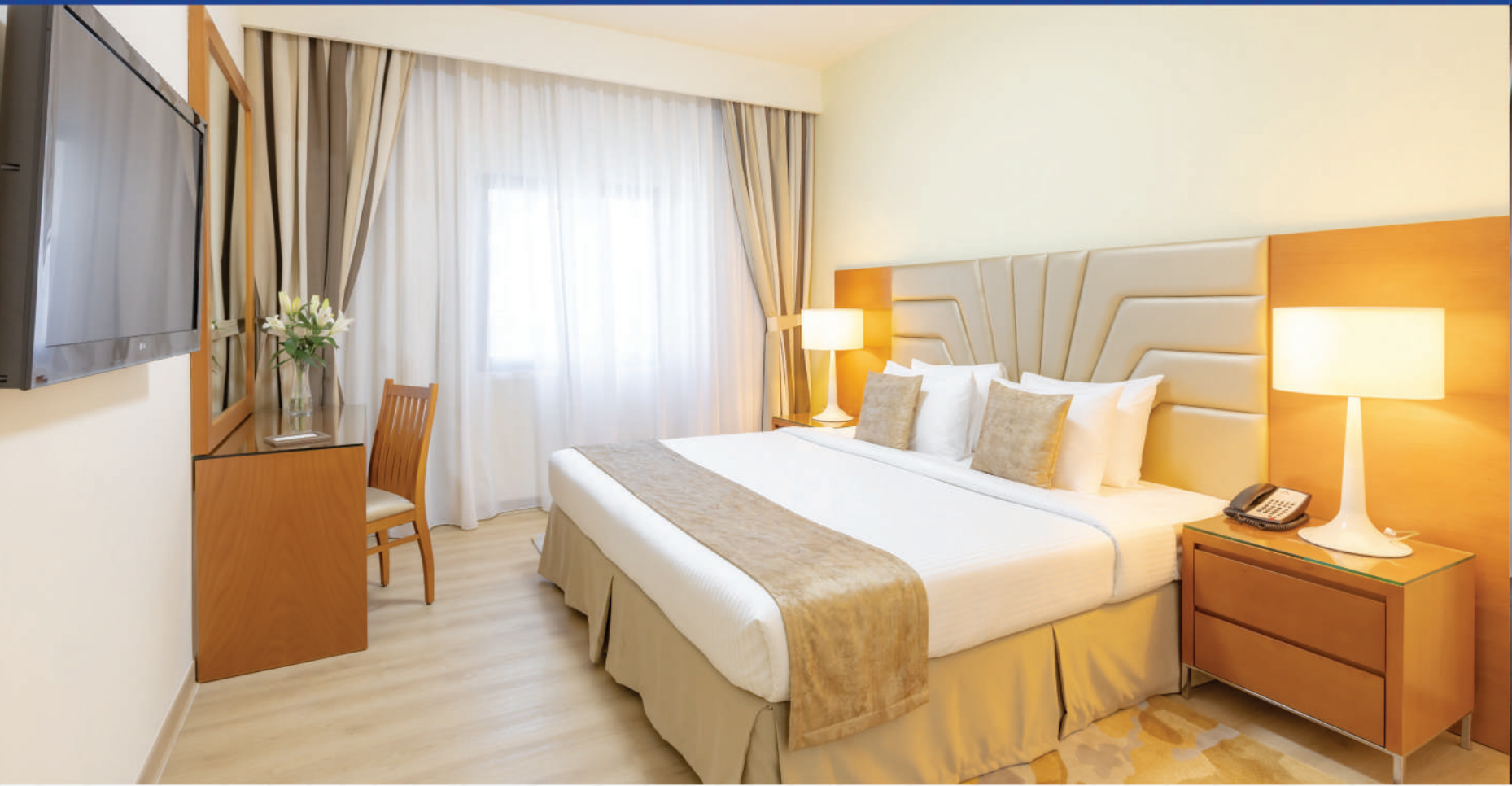
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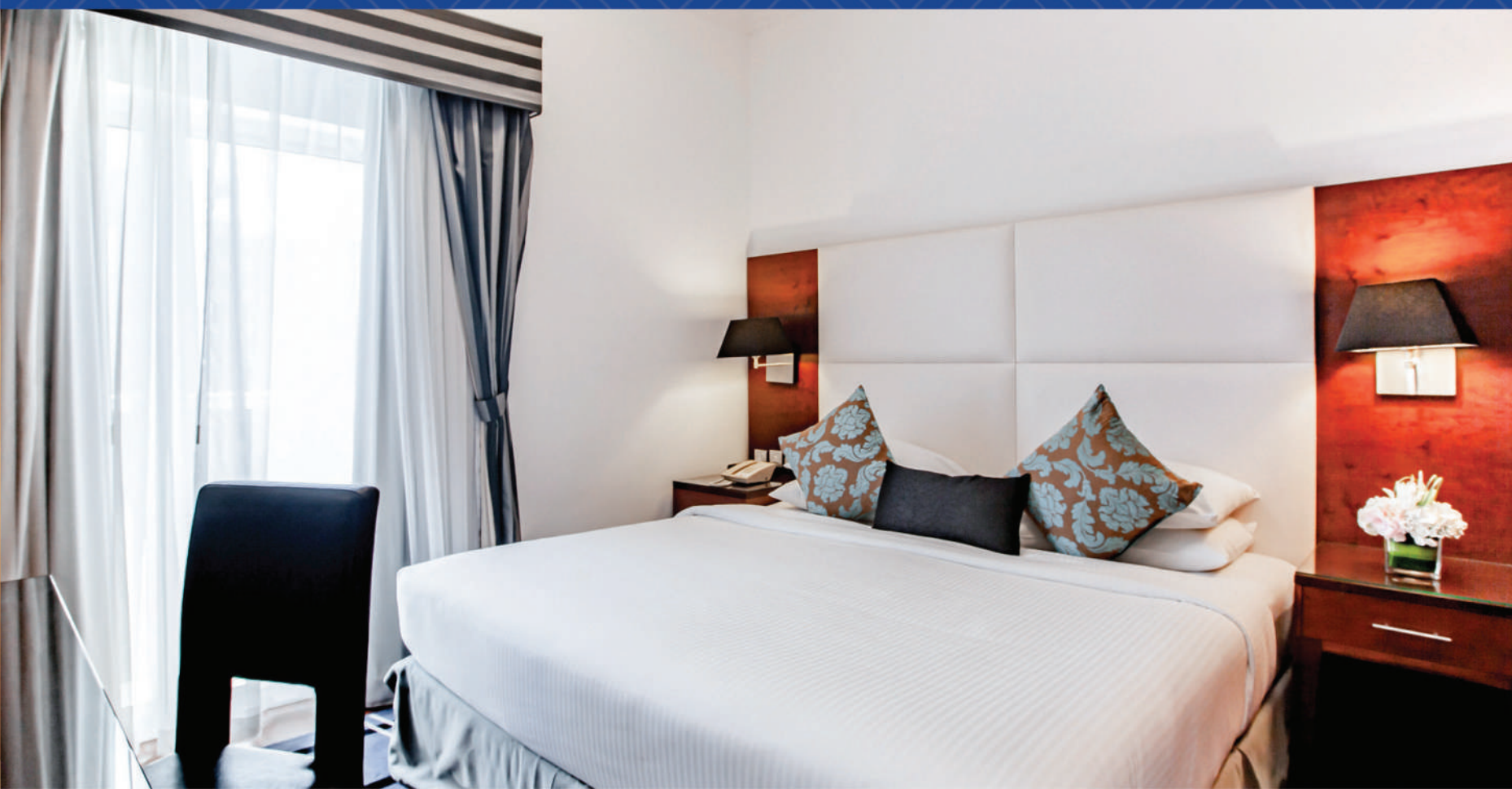
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# Ireland showcases luxury at Tfest Dubai

It was quite an eventful week at Tfest Dubai when Tourism Ireland and delegates from the island of Ireland showcased their luxury offerings to the influential buyers from across the globe. The organisers did a great job in ensuring that every partner is able to spend quality time with the buyers.





# Ireland's luxury portrayed at Tfest

Tourism Ireland showcased their luxury offerings with 14 key partners from the island at the recently concluded third edition of Tfest in Dubai. Most influential buyers from across the globe attended the four-day event, which is one of the most exclusive meeting points for those who cater to luxury high end travellers.

 **Shehara Rizly**

The first part of the day included one on one meetings with the affluent buyers who flew across the globe to meet the luxury exhibitors who displayed all their offerings. Tourism Ireland's 14 iconic luxury island of Ireland industry partners who joined in the event, were Adare Manor, Ashford Castle, Cashel Palace Hotel, Galgorm, Culloden Estate, Hayfield Manor, K Club, The Merrion Hotel, The Shelbourne Hotel, MHL Collection, Trump Hotel & Golf Resort Doonbeg, Irelands Blue Book, By Appointment DMC and Luxurious Ireland.

As part of their afternoon experiences on the Tourism Ireland stand in the Global Village they brought in their concept to life showcasing Ireland through unique experiences under the title - 'Awakening your senses in Ireland' and they brought in friends from Ireland who brought this to life. It was a really unforgettable experience with Keith Barry (Irish born) world's leading TV hypnotist, mentalist and brain hacker, who took everyone by surprise.

**It was a really unforgettable experience with Keith Barry (Irish born) world's leading TV hypnotist, mentalist and brain hacker**

Speaking to TravTalk, **Olivia Frawley** – Executive Pan Market Luxury, Tourism Ireland shared, "We are very excited to be here at Tfest this year as we elevated our partnership with the event, as we felt that it provided us a great opportunity to highlight the 14 wonderful partners we brought with us to Tfest with our luxury messaging and warm hospitality. We have a mixture of beautiful five star luxury hotels, DMCs, experiences and the most amazing

is the fact that we have 14 of them and all situated in the same area, the global village and everyone is busy with their B2B meetings."

Ireland's programme "Sensorium in Ireland" a way one can taste, tour and discover the Emerald isle aligning your senses. **Phil Ervine**, Co-Founder, The Spirit Circle Bel-

Bluebook hotels offer accommodation that really suits large families and also our hotels are really rich in history and that can offer something different, its wonderful to stay in an Irish castle and to learn about its history and wander around the beautiful green gardens, I really think Ireland and our hotels resonate with this market."

one for Ireland, so it has provided an excellent opportunity to meet so many buyers from this region in particular."

**Liz Godfrey** – Assistant Director of Sales – Adare Manor, said, "It is the first time that we are exhibiting here at Tfest, we see the UAE as an emerging market for us with over five flights a day, seven days a week coming

**Tania Dawson** – Executive Director - Luxurious Ireland, said, "This is our second time attending Tfest its fantastic now as the Irish delegation has expanded, last year it was a handful of us and this year we have 14 delegation and we have our own exclusive stand here with Tourism Ireland making this market aware of what is available in Ireland and what is

this is the second time for us to come to the Middle East, it's a growing and relatively new market, we are predominantly domestic and we are trying to grow a different market and we feel that what we have to offer is perfect for this market and to have joined Tourism Ireland in their quest to grow their market here. We have a stunning five star property in the south



fast Ireland, reiterated, "We are here with Tourism Ireland with an interactive drinks experience called Sensorium we are asking guests to tap into their sensorial experiences awakening their senses and relating them to different areas in the island of Ireland."

**Eoin McGrath** – Assistant Sales Director – Hastings Hotel Group represented The Culloden Estate and Spa. "It's great to be back here at Tfest, this is my second year and its great to have a bigger delegation of Irish hotels. Tfest brings together some of the world's best travel advisors and this market is something that is growing for the island of Ireland and we love whenever that we can welcome the clients from the GCC market to the hotel because we really have great options for them at the Culloden Estate and Spa," McGrath said.

**Melissa Steele** – Sales and Marketing Executive – Cashel Palace hotel, said, "It is an amazing opportunity to be at Tfest, especially among such a fantastic group of other hotels and travel designers represented by Tourism Ireland. Tfest has been a brilliant way to expose our brand to a far-reaching selection of buyers, many of whom we have never met before. The UAE market is also an increasingly important

from the UAE directly into Dublin which is fantastic lift and also with the Ryder Cup coming into Adare in 2027, we certainly see it as a growth market for us, a market that we are going to concen-

there to see. We are a DMC in Ireland, so for any guests who are looking at visiting Ireland from when they arrive into Ireland to departure we can create a full customised itinerary for

of Ireland, it is family owned and family run boutique style property and the family is very much involved so you experience authentic Irish hospitality and because we are in the city you can walk in the city center as it is a great luxury property with rich art and culture and shopping from the south of Ireland. Tourism Ireland is doing a really great job in the ultra-luxury experience."

**Tfest has been a brilliant way to expose our brand to a far-reaching selection of buyers, many of whom we have never met before**

trate in the next number of years is going to be the UAE market."

**Gillian Costelloe** – Business Development Manager & Creative Partner, – By appointment DMC, said, "By appointment DMC is a luxury leisure DMC, we promote the island of Ireland as an ultra-luxe destination and curate itineraries and bespoke experiences for high net worth individuals. Being here with Tourism Ireland is very important as key sponsor for Tfest this year and as Ireland was announced among the top 10 winter destination for UAE travellers this year."

them including private security on arrival, private land access, accommodation, transport, guides, and also experiences, experiencing the best of Ireland and unique experiences as well going off the beaten track in Ireland. It's a growing market and for this market its important to have very high standard accommodation. high level of service and accommodation which Ireland is renowned for worldwide. People love to come to Ireland for scenery, nature, culture."

**Danielle Murrphy** – representing Hayfield Manor, said, "It is extremely important to us as

**Keith Barry** – world-renowned Irish magician, hypnotist, and mentalist, said, "It is fantastic to be here with Tourism Ireland this year at Tfest, really my talk is about how travel can magically awaken your senses and, of course, Ireland is packed with all different experiences and can highlight your senses, get your senses enhanced and the talk I'm giving today is about the fact that when we go on holidays we don't just have just one holiday but three holidays. It is important that people understand that neurologically our minds don't know the difference between an imagined experience and an experience actually happening." ➔



# Malaysia eyes 50,000 visitors from ME

As soon as borders opened in Malaysia on 1<sup>st</sup> April this year, first three months saw almost 21,000 people visiting the country for family leisure vacation or business. The destination expects to close the year with 50,000 visitors from the ME region, says **Syaliza Abd Aziz** - Deputy Director - West Asia, Africa & Pakistan Unit - International Promotion Division (Asia/ Africa) - Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board.

 TT Bureau

**What are the latest offerings Malaysia has to attract Middle Eastern travellers?**

Genting Skyworlds Theme Park, the world's second tallest skyscraper Merdeka 118, Sunway Resort in Kuala Lumpur that just reopened after a once-in-a-generation transformation and Desaru Coast. There are no new rules for the Middle East countries as they get visa upon arrival to Malaysia.

**How is connectivity from Middle East? Has it become it was during pre-COVID times?**

Currently there are 21 direct flights per week from the UAE, 21 flights from Doha, seven (7) flights from Muscat

and two (2) flights from Kuwait City, and the number of flights are lesser than during pre-COVID times.

**Any new restrictions within Malaysia for travellers? Any protocols to adhere to?**

Malaysia is one of the most hassle-free countries to visit in the post-pandemic. Travellers are no longer required to oblige for the traveller's card, pre-departure test and on-arrival test as well as home surveillance order. Travel insurance is also no longer a prerequisite for foreigners entering the country.

**Since opening how has the visitor numbers from Middle East been? Have they been family travellers, solo, business or what type of travellers?**

The number of visitors from the Middle East since the opening of our borders from April to June 2022 is 21,521.

Most of them were travelling with families and business purposes to Malaysia.

**The travellers who visited post pandemic, what were they interested in?**

The post pandemic travellers tend to choose off the beaten track destinations, less crowded places and to endure into more personalized tours instead of the normal massive tour. Most of the Middle East travellers are still more interested in city tourism, shopping tour as well as cultural and heritage tourism. Besides that, Malaysia has also a lot of Instagram able or scenic view to



strategic partnerships with industry players in efforts to reach out to a larger market. We look forward to working with airlines,

promotional materials, as well as working together on tactical campaigns. Besides participating in major events such as

initiation of its reach to the modern traveler. For Middle Eastern market, we have positioned Malaysia as year-round destination for families and value for money destination. Among others, one of the main programs that we have embarked is the joint tactical campaigns with Qatar Airways and Emirates to lure more connections into Malaysia. Reasonably priced holiday packages and attractive airfare to Malaysia are being promoted as part of our joint promotions in support of our mainstream advertising campaign. Our advertising campaigns are done using all the medium of electronic including television commercials, printed ads in newspaper and magazines, outdoor billboards and the online social media. The television commercials and printed ads portray the various attractions activities for the families and honeymooners as our target segment.



be captured into a social media feed by the Gen Z and millennial travellers while travelling.

**Do you have any expectations in terms of numbers for the rest of the year or the last quarter or three months of the year?**

Our target for this year arrival from Middle East is 50,000 tourists.

**Malaysia is famous for its natural rain forest, how would you promote this to attract Middle East travellers?**

We strongly believe that our success is a collective effort of all our industry and trade partners. As such, we will continue to form

**Travellers are no longer required to oblige for the traveller's card, pre-departure test and on-arrival test as well as home surveillance order**

tour operators, and other industry sectors to push Malaysia as an exciting yet affordable tourist destination. Tourism Malaysia is working closely with Malaysia Association of Hotel (MAH) and Malaysia Inbound Tourism Association (MITA) to create more packages for inbound tourists to Malaysia, and with MATTA to promote inbound tourism; We also provide support to partners in the areas of providing resources, training and

World Travel Mart (WTM), International Tourism Bourse (ITB), Arabian Travel Mart (ATM), ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) and China International Travel Mart (CITM), we also support our partners in their local and niche trade shows.

We are also aware of new opportunities and platforms that can leverage our tourism presence. For example, we are utilizing digital media more in recog-

**Will Tourism Malaysia promote new destinations for the ME market? If so, could you please explain them.**

We will continue to promote our latest destination such as Genting Skyworlds Theme Park, the world's second tallest skyscraper Merdeka 118, Sunway Resort in Kuala Lumpur that just reopened after a once-in-a-generation transformation and Desaru Coast with interesting packages. 

**Syaliza Abd Aziz**

Deputy Director - West Asia, Africa & Pakistan Unit - International Promotion Division (Asia/ Africa) - Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board



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# wraps up in resounding success

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Gulf Travel Show (GTS), organised with Tourism Malaysia and German National Tourists Office GCC as the platinum and silver partners respectively, concluded successfully after two productive days of networking with an overwhelming response spearheading the recovery of tourism in the region.

TT Bureau

The theme in focus was sustainability, hence buyers from across the Middle East were able to connect with exhibitors and conduct more than 2000 one-on-one meetings attended by travel agents, tour operators, tourism boards, airlines, hotels, travel management companies, international agencies and media.

**Syaliza Abd Aziz** - Deputy Director - West Asia, Africa & Pakistan Unit - International Promotion Division (Asia/ Africa) Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, said, "Tourism Malaysia is proud and honoured to participate in GTS 5.0 as a platinum partner, which is a testament to the country's commitment in attracting more



**Syaliza Abd Aziz**  
Deputy Director - West Asia, Africa & Pakistan  
Unit - International Promotion Division (Asia/ Africa)  
Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board

travellers from the Middle East region. This prestigious event has provided an opportunity for Malaysian delegation to promote and share our extensive tourism offerings. We were truly excited to meet, network and establish business opportunities with more than 200 buyers, the elite members of the global travel and trade industry participated during

the whole programme. See you in Malaysia soon!"

**Yamina Soto**, Director, German National Tourist Office (GNTD), the regional office of GNTB, said, "It's been a pleasure being back at this year's GTS, and connecting with both our legacy partners, and brand new potential who we are looking forward to fostering relationships with. The



**Yamina Soto**  
Director, German National Tourist Office GCC



**Shibu C**  
Managing Director - Lets Go Tourism LLC

GCC is one of our most important source markets, so it is great to be hear and further develop our understanding of the market, as well as present what we have on offer."

**Zayeem Mohtisham**, General Manager, Tour Planner, said, "We had a great experience at GTS 5.0. Not only were the meetings and collaborations su-

per helpful, expansive, and successful, but we can definitely see how incredible the future of travel looks like."

**Khaled Abdo Aldhabab**, Tours Director, Hesen Almusafer Travel



**Zayeem Mohtisham**  
General Manager, Tour Planner

and Tourism, Riyadh Saudi Arabia, said, "This travel exhibition is considered successful by all accounts, as it comes after the



**Khaled Abdo Aldhabab**  
Tours Director, Hesen Almusafer Travel and  
Tourism, Riyadh Saudi Arabia

end of the Corona pandemic. This extraordinary event.

**Shibu C**, Managing Director, Lets Go Tourism LLC, said, "It was a fantastic event. Providing an amazing platform for all travel agents to expand their business and meet with the top most companies and suppliers. I never felt it was a virtual event. I'm grateful to the organisers."



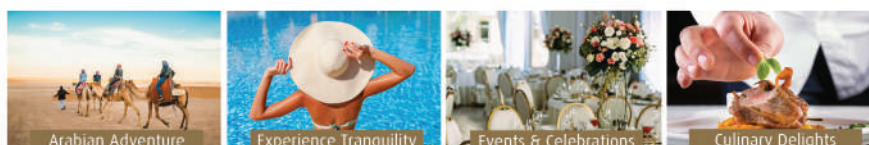
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# GCC nationals prefer European holidays

The travel relationship between Europe and the GCC have been strengthening year on year, this was also seen when travel escalated as soon as the European borders opened for travel. **JVR Fernando**, Chief Commercial Officer, Satguru Travel, shares his insights with TravTalk about this relationship further.

TT Bureau

**A**s a travel curator, how do you see the European market adjusting and adhering to make GCC travellers more welcome in their destinations?

Many European countries are permitting visa on arrival for GCC nationals and residents, and some others are having quick procedures is one of the key factors. Ease of travel restriction from the European

countries attracting more travellers from the GCC region.

**What are the key areas the European destinations focus on to accommodate GCC travellers? Language, food, rooms or any other aspect?**

Europe countries have been quite popular among the GCC travellers who have been travelling to experience different culture, culinary and the township the country has to offer, which is different to what they have in the GCC.

**Europe has been quite popular among GCC travellers who have been travelling to experience different culture, culinary and township**



JVR Fernando  
Chief Commercial Officer  
Satguru Travel

**How do they see GCC travellers against other travellers in terms of importance? Is it their spending power, loyalty or any other trait?**

GCC travellers of course have been an important segment of customers for them, as their spending at the destination is higher than any other tourist, from the choice of hotels to dining, shopping to traveling

across the cities, has always been upscale. Also, travellers from this region travel mostly with the large families on a holiday and love spending highly on ground, this is also due to the currency and regular daily spend they do in GCC is higher than any European countries.

**In terms of travellers from UAE or the rest of GCC, what do they expect when they select European destinations?**

They do love the sceneries with different landscape and a peaceful environment to relax, trying to cover more cities which could offer that is key for them when selecting a destination.

**Why do travellers from UAE or the rest of GCC decide on European holidays? Do they go with**

**The main reason (for European holidays) of course is the climate and change of scenery can happen easily from one place to another**

**family? How do they travel and what are the main attractions they like to visit? How much time do they spend?**

The main reason of course is the climate and change of scenery can happen easily from one place to another. We have a lot of groups & family travellers, the major spots are the main attractions in the cities which can be mostly covered by just walking around the cities. On an average, we see a trend of 6-10 days of holiday duration for our travellers.

**Once again, as a travel curator how do you prepare them for the destination? What would you say will be your key role? How do you advise them?**

We have dedicated holiday experts working under the DMC department who take care of our Corporate, B2B and B2C customers. Moreover, our presence in more than 72 countries is the biggest dominance to handle our customers as we can provide 100 per cent ground support to the travellers. 🇮🇳



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# ‘Hotel, flight searches for FIFA WC go up’

► Contd. from page 1

to the World Cup travellers. The shuttle flights between Dubai and Doha, with around 60 to 79 flights per day, make it easier for travellers to commute. In addition, the multi entry visa scheme, which was rolled out recently, will drive more footfall to the country. “The hotel and flight searches to the UAE, around the period of the event (November 20 to December 18) recorded over 268,000 searches on our platform, and

searches to the UAE around the World Cup period from Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Morocco, Germany, USA,” he adds.

## Winter travel

“As with the summer travel, we see a lot of travellers searching for flights and hotels in the winter season, despite the spike in airfares to some destinations. Travellers still want to make up for the lost

winter as they look for more economically stable destinations,” he further adds.

A lot of countries and tourism boards are working on special winter packages and preparing unforgettable winter experiences. “We also observe that a lot of GCC travellers tend to book in advance for the winter holidays,” Hmedan says.

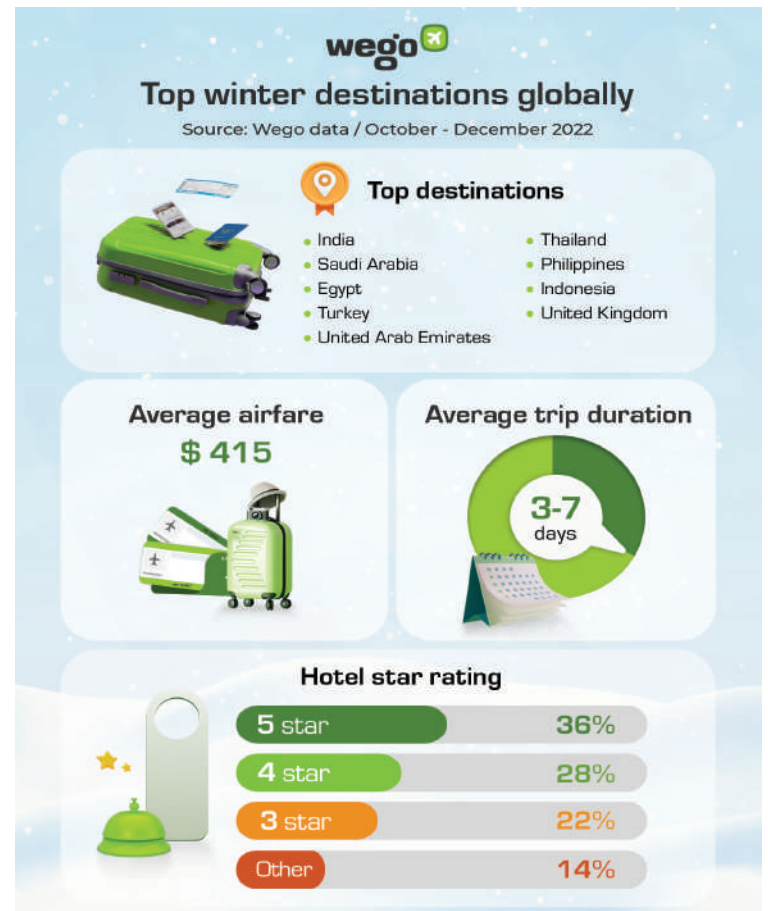
The top winter destinations globally, between October and December 2022 are: India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia. “Through our data, we see that the average airfare globally will cost approximate \$415 between October until December 2022. The average trip duration ranges between 3 to 7 days. And the top hotels in demand are 5-star hotels with 36 per cent, followed by 4-star hotels 28 per cent, 3- star hotels 22 per cent. ➔

**The hotel and flight searches to the UAE, around the period of the event (November 20 to December 18) recorded over 268,000 searches on our platform**

we expect to see an increase in searches and bookings as we get closer to the event date,” he says.

“Internationally, we have seen the highest demand in terms of flight

time and spend the holidays with their families and enjoy the magic of the winter season. Through our data, we are observing a new travel pattern. The Gulf countries will see an influx of European travellers this





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# Europe, the much-loved getaway

With all its natural beauty, habitats that intersperse the past, present and future with lush landscapes, rivers and mountains, Europe is and always will be a luxury escape for GCC travellers. Luxury can be defined in many ways depending on the clientele, some will need more private escapes whilst others prefer to have a full on service.

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Travel curators will be the main contact when it comes to planning a holiday. In the GCC, there are times when travellers book on their own, but if they are travelling with family, or sometimes families, they require assistance to coordinate and ensure that every single requirement is taken care of, after all you will be in a country which is different, sometimes it gets easier if they have someone who speaks the same language, so this does become a key factor too when it comes to selecting a destination for vacation.

The relationship between Europe and the GCC has been developing over the years,

**Rehan Ali**, CEO, Tawfeeq Travel, explains how European market adjusts or adhere to make GCC travellers more welcome in their destination. "Be it the new development of e-visas or introduction of longer shopping hours, European markets have always been proactively adjusting to make GCC travellers more welcome," he says.

In terms of selecting the final destination for vacation, GCC travellers will pick out Europe as the number one destination. Ali explains the key areas accommodated by European destinations to accommodate GCC travellers, saying, "European destinations have got a better understanding of GCC travellers. Hence, they ensure that not only the basic needs



**Rehan Ali**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Tawfeeq Travel

like accessibility, Arabic language, Halal food, luxury accommodation, luxury shopping are met, but also focus on enhancing the experience."

Brand loyalty has been a number one priority to many travellers across the globe, most travellers prefer to stay at certain brands than others, however, with the pandemic, some of these

trends did change but not to a great extent. Why does Europe prefer travellers from the GCC, is a question many ask, and according to Ali, there are three key factors behind, "It's a mix of good spending power, loyalty and good appreciation of luxury."

Travellers from Qatar are seen looking out for luxury destinations, so we inquired from Ali, what exactly are the travellers from Qatar look at when it comes to selecting a destination. Ali reiterated, "Europe is well perceived for its natural beauty, diverse landscape, history, culture and good weather. It is well regarded as a destination that offers great diversity in holiday types & holiday experiences, and shopping for luxury fashion & designer brands.

Well-developed infrastructure, luxury accommodation, gastronomy, luxury shopping experiences, good weather, safety, Wellness is another area that's growing at a fast pace."

Speaking on the type of travellers to Europe from the GCC, Ali shared, "Families are still the

around 3-6 weeks during summer holiday months." A travel curator needs to arm travellers with enough information. "Our well experienced Holiday experts prepare our clients by giving them up-to-date information about latest travel policies, general weather conditions, latest products and experiences that

**Be it the new development of e-visas or introduction of longer shopping hours, European markets have been adjusting to welcome GCC travellers**

dominant travel group among GCC travellers. Key attractions are city life, nature activities, shopping, theme parks for children. Typically, they spend

the destination is offering. Our key role is to make our clients' holiday experience, a memorable one by adding personal touch," he says. 🇸🇦




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# Versatile experiences in Azerbaijan

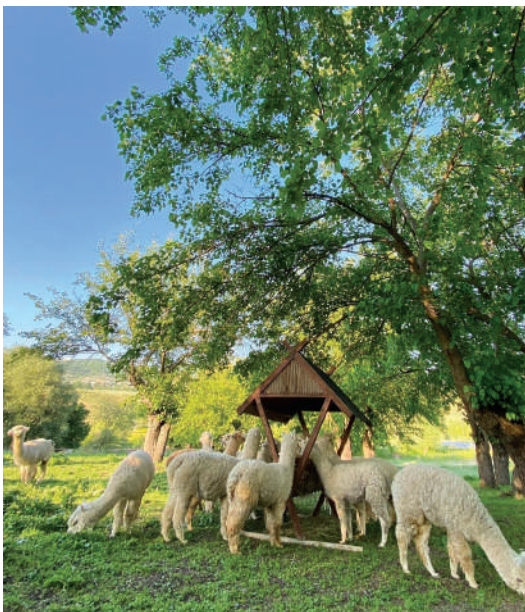
 TT Bureau

All the opportunities are available in Azerbaijan. With multiple direct flights and a convenient process to obtain a visa, Azerbaijan is easily accessible for the GCC travellers. And it is quite possible that after you read this article, you will be on your way booking

the trip to Azerbaijan. Your first stop should be the capital city - Baku, which is an incredible and unique place full of cultural and historical heritage, as well as emerging modern experiences. In Baku, one can't go without visiting UNESCO world heritage sites of Icheri Sheher together with the Maiden Tower and Shirvanshahs' Palace Complex.

The exquisite landscape of Baku is decorated with landmarks built in architectural styles such as baroque, rococo, neoclassical and contemporary. The combination of the diverse architecture, view to the Caspian Sea and number of parks make it hard to take your eyes away from this majestic scenery. This view can be perfectly watched from the ride on Baku Eye or top of Highland Park. While the first one is located on Seaside Boulevard, it takes just a 20-minute walk from the latter one to get to the noted seaside park. Baku Boulevard in particular, has a very special place in the hearts of locals as it combines a variety of activities for people of all ages. Here you can go for a walk, rent a bike or electric scooter. Adults and children can enjoy an active day at the amusement park followed by a relaxing boat ride across canals of Little Venice. The biggest mall in the region - Deniz Mall - is located here and attracts

Azerbaijan is a unique place full of harmony and myriads of different travel experiences. The availability of 8 out of 11 climate zones in the country makes it a perfect destination during any season. Whether you are here on a family or business trip, want to have an amazing time in the cosmopolitan Baku, celebrate your wedding or run away to wild nature...



with its exceptional design. This venue that combines entertainment, leisure and dining all at once, has a flame shaped tower in the centre of the eight-shaped wings. What appears to be an astonishing building with a unique exterior also has surprises within it. While parents can enjoy shopping or sports activities at SkyPark, children will have some quality time at the Kinderland entertainment and educational centre.

Alpaca Farm. Every farm visitor leaves it with the widest smile on their face and feeling content as these kind animals facilitate the creation of a positive and bright atmosphere filled with love and joy.

With the approach of winter, Shahdag and Tufandag Winter Resorts are welcoming everyone to their venues and fascinating view to the mountains.

non-skiers can also have fun choosing among a number of activities such as off-road tours, paragliding, cycling and cable car rides overlooking the majestic mountains.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan is a great place for the organisation of the big events. Whether you plan a wedding of your dreams or want to hold a business conference, it is all possible

Your children will be fascinated with the opportunity to get acquainted with animals from all across the world at Baku Zoo located right in the centre of the city. If you would like to have even more authentic wildlife experience, then we suggest you travel to Shamakhi to visit a vast Safari Park. It is surrounded with dramatic nature that merges you into a whole new world. Shamakhi surprises with another unique experience at

**Your first stop should be the capital city - Baku, which is an incredible and unique place full of cultural and historical heritage**

Both resorts offer high-class hotels, spas, restaurants, as well as different thrilling sports and leisure activities. Here everyone from the beginner to professional skier can relish greatly groomed slopes, while

sible with equipped venues and specialists in the event planning. Number of luxury hotels are ready to decorate and add all your needs to the planning of the event, customising it based on your desires. 







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# AVIAREPS successfully relaunches its

After a two-year hiatus, AVIAREPS successfully relaunched its in-person Middle East Travel Caravan attended by more than 110 key travel industry professionals, media and travel influencers in Dubai and KSA, who met 27 exhibitors from Qatar Tourism Board and a host of other global hospitality brands, airlines and destination management companies.





# in-person Middle East Travel Caravan





# Travel industry leaders discuss business at

AVIAREPS successfully relaunches its in-person AVIAREPS Middle East Travel Caravan after a two-year hiatus following the pandemic. More than 110 important travel industry professionals, media and travel influencers attended the event in Dubai and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia last month.

TT Bureau

The travel roadshow saw key international travel brands and destinations gather under the one roof to meet with the UAE's and Saudi Arabia's key outbound travel agencies and professionals to develop new travel packages, itineraries and events tailored for UAE and Saudi Arabia-based travellers.

A total of 27 key international partners joined the 2022 edition of the AVIAREPS Caravan, including Qatar Tourism Board, The Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, Malta Tourism Authority, The Royal Commission for AlUla, Visit California, Mauritius Tourism Pro-



Glenn Johnston  
Vice President, Middle East  
& Global Public Affairs, AVIAREPS



motion Authority and a host of international hospitality brands, airlines and destination management companies. In addition to meeting leading travel agencies, partners also had the opportunity to meet with popular travel influencers from the region, as well as join an intimate panel discussion industry thought leaders, that included representatives from Emirates Holidays, ITL World and Al Rostamani Travel, where they were updated on the latest travel trends and consumer travel requirements from the region.



Arthur Grima  
Senior Manager Marketing  
Malta Tourism Authority

demographic world outbound international travel from the Gulf countries continues to demonstrate a remarkably strong and quick return compared to all other major travel regions around the globe. Within this context it is extremely important and timely to hold such an event. By bringing the UAE and Saudi Arabia's travel professionals directly in contact with such an exciting and ec-

ings to follow, that will no doubt create new travel trends for the coming months and 2023."

Not only do travellers from the Gulf countries tend to travel more

Johnston added; "This year's edition of the AVIAREPS Middle East Travel Caravan comes on the heels of Dubai EXPO 2020, which successfully concluded earlier this year. Many of this year's caravan participants have decided to use this platform to continue the positive and productive momentum created during EXPO, and use it further strengthen their presence in the Middle East market. Personal



His Excellency Showkutally Soodhun  
Ambassador for the Republic of Mauritius in the GCC

**Outbound travel from Gulf countries continues to show a remarkably strong and quick return compared to all other major travel regions**

**Type of tourists we receive from the ME are luxury travellers, interested mainly in more exclusive and boutique, private luxury type of hotels**

Glenn Johnston, Vice President Middle East & Global Public Affairs, AVIAREPS commented: "As we head towards a post pan-

lectic mix of travel providers and destinations, I'm confident we will all see jointly crafted, attractive travel experiences and offer-

often than others, but they also tend to stay longer and have one of the world's highest average-daily-spends while travelling. The luxury travel segment is par-

networks and ongoing connections remain an essential ingredient for business success within our region. A key focus for us is to ensure that through our well-



ticularly strong, as too is MICE travel, providing a multitude of opportunities for entities seeking to diversify their client mix.

established industry networks both co-participants and our carefully selected Middle Eastern outbound partners see a return



# AVIAREPS Middle East Travel Caravan

on their investment and a growth in their business. That is our commitment to these events."

Among the distinguished guests were the Ambassador for the Republic of Mauritius in the GCC, **His Excellency Showkutally Soodhun G.C.S.K.** Speaking with TravTalk His Excellency mentioned the many efforts taken to attract GCC locals as well as residents to the destination. HE said, "First of all, we have now opened an embassy in Riyadh after 50 years and we have also opened a secondary general consulate in the world in Dubai, first in Mumbai and second in



**Chirs Micallef**  
GM, Avon Brockdorff Services Limited

now to travel to Mauritius if you are vaccinated. There are many private jet passengers that travel from GCC to Mauritius."

Malta's delegation consisted DMCs and hotels which were more suited for the Middle Eastern travellers. **Arthur Grima** – Senior Manager Marketing at Malta Tourism Authority, shared,

**This is relatively a new market for us, we represent an agency Malta DMC where we specialise in MICE, events, groups and conferences**



**Brian Bartolo**  
Director of Sales and Marketing  
Radisson Resort and Spa Malta Golden Sands

**We are showcasing one of Malta's five-star properties located on the north side of the island; it is blessed with its location**

Dubai. Also now, we are working very closely with UAE and GCC to attract more visitors from these countries. In the past there were not many visitors coming to Mauritius from GCC countries, now all locals of GCC don't need

guests to our destination whilst improving the many attractions in Mauritius for guests. Our hotels are located on the white sandy beaches and there are more shopping malls added to attract the GCC clientele. It is hassle free

"We are in the interesting period of seeing the recovery of tourism from the pandemic. In fact, this year we are expecting to have around 2 million passengers from all our markets. Middle East is an emerging market for us and the type of tourists we receive are luxury travellers, interested mainly in more exclusive and boutique, private luxury type of hotels. We shared our diverse culture as various civilisations left their mark on their island, which is a significant attraction for visitors, also ours is the only language which is sematic but written in the Latin alphabet and this is very particular, its not just the language but also the gastronomy which is very varied and one can experience over 7,000 years of history. Connectivity to Malta from this region is easy with the daily flight on Emirates to Malta. We are trying to make ourselves known in the region."



**Grace El Khoury**  
Senior Business Development Manager,  
Middle East, Intercontinental Malta

**We are trying to extend our market in the GCC, as you know intercontinental is part of IHG and we want to explore the GCC market in Malta**

**Brian Bartolo**, Director of Sales and Marketing Radisson Resort and Spa Malta Golden Sands, said, "We are showcasing one of Malta's five-star properties located on the north side of the island; it is blessed with its location, primarily it sits besides Malta's Golden Bay beach enjoying Malta's wonderful sunsets and it is a place that one has to visit. We have five different types of luxury suites, our best selling suites are what called the sense tower suites which sits by the water's edge and they have just being refurbished two years ago."

**Chirs Micallef**, General Manager Avon Brockdorff Services Limited, said, "This is a relatively a new market for us, we represent an agency Malta DMC where we specialise in MICE, events, groups and con-

ferences, meetings as well as luxury travel so it was nice to meet people and showcase what Malta offers in this sector and it does offer quite a lot in this sector and value for money. A lot of people are not aware of the many offerings available in Malta so basically the agents asked questions about what you can do for incentives, is

sine which is another attraction of the destination."

**Damon Camilleri Allan**, Exclusively Malta, a luxury DMC in the Maltese islands, shared, "It's a privilege to be here, it's a unique situation as we represent luxury travel as well as small group travel, what that means is when we say luxury it doesn't always mean the price tag rather the exclusivity, uniqueness and private nature of the experiences for guests. The uniqueness of our storyline in Malta is the ultimate Mediterranean experience because of our relationship with partners, artisans and farmers we can offer exclusivity which no one else can have which we believe our clients from this region would really appreciate."

**Grace El Khoury**, Senior Business Development Manager Middle East, Intercontinental Malta, said, "We are trying to extend our market in the GCC, as you know Intercontinental is part of IHG and we want to ex-



**Damon Camilleri Allan**  
Exclusively Malta, a luxury DMC in the island

**Uniqueness of our storyline in Malta is the ultimate Mediterranean experience because of our relationship with partners, artisans and farmers**

there enough conference space, facilities, hotels, also what I explained was that Malta is a small country its only 27km long and you don't spend more time there. We also spoke about cui-

plore the GCC market in Malta. The agents mainly inquired about our room inventory, as well as the surrounding areas as well as the meeting facilities for MICE business." 📌



# Luxury glamps at its finest in Janda Baik

Catering to the luxury seekers from the Middle East, Malaysia introduces its new glamping area located just 45 minutes away in Genting Highlands. The guests can select from a range of luxury styled tented villas or even an airy treetop villa with extended verandas immersed in nature itself.

With just 45-minute journey from town, once you get at R&R Genting Sempah, which is nestled in the cool foothills of Genting Highlands, there are signs that directs you to the accommodation (roads with the old fashioned manner!). Upon arriving, you feel like you are in in another universe, secluded and tranquil.

This luxury glamping provides guests the choice of 20 elegantly crafted luxury safari-styled tented villas, five airy treetop

villas with huge encircling verandas or three bespoke villas namely The Maui Treehouse, The Lion Sands Tent and The Marrakech Tent, set across 7 acres of stunning environment in the mountains and lush rainforests. Various activities such as arts and crafts, jungle trekking, badminton, paintball and archery can be done. For corporate retreats, the programme called PLAY! was crafted for Communication, Leadership and Team Building. The property do caters to weddings and events.

## Nature constantly bears the colors of the soul

Nothing beats getting out from the city for some fresh air and lush countryside. Furthermore, you will be coming with ease since everything is prepared for your arrival. Get ready to be enchanted by these glamping sites for a fantastic experience. This luxury glamping provides guests the choice of elegantly crafted luxury safari-styled tented villas or airy treetop villas with huge encircling verandas, set across 7 acres of stunning environment that's the ideal synergy of a natural rainforest and intelligent design. As a result, Puan Sri Tiara Jacqueline, the owner, draws inspiration from her stay in Berber tent at Sir Richard Branson's Kasbah Tamadot in Morocco which resembles the 'Boho-Chic' idea.



## Moroccan interior inside peek at Tiarasa Escapes



With babbling brooks and mountain vistas, you may have an unforgettable glamping experience in Janda Baik's rainforest. There is no barrier in setting up your own tent or lighting a fire for cooking with all the comforts of luxury. But who says glamping has to be boring? Not at Tiarasa Escapes, where each encounter is guaranteed to leave you with nothing but amazing memories! The accommodations here are everything – big, plush and specially furnished by Puan Sri Tiara Jacqueline with Sarawakian flourishes visible, and consist of 20 magnificent safari style lodgings and 5 treetop villas hidden in a beautifully planted valley in Janda Baik.

## Time for campfire and S'mores at night by the fire

Tiarasa Escapes is the pinnacle of luxury glamping! Of course, with such things on at Tiarasa Escapes – one overnight is insufficient! It's absolute delight to be able to connect with nature while still being comfortable. Spend a little of your hard-earned money to treat yourself and enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Life is brief!



## Swim your worries away, think less, and swim more!



Tiarasa Escape never runs out of activities! Various of activities can be done such as, arts and crafts, jungle trekking, ATV rides, bicycle kampong fun ride, badminton, paintball and even archery are some of the activities you may cram in during your stay, and don't forget the wonderful swimming pool with a slide will surely make you feel like a kid, again! Suprisingly, the little stream here originates from the Enderong River which passes alongside the resort. Yes! You may also play within this stream too.

Not only that, but breakfast baskets will be supplied for free, which you can have brought to your villa or any picnic site of your choosing on the resort grounds! Every sunset, a communal bonfire is lighted on the amphitheatre lawn, along with a plethora of additional activities ranging from nature hikes and ATV rides to archery and a moonlight cinema.



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# LEGOLAND® Malaysia shares growth plans

To support the government's tourism revitalizing efforts, LEGOLAND® Malaysia Resort announced its upcoming expansion plans and a line-up of exciting activities. The announcement is in line with the resort's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, including a month-long celebration.

"We will continue to build on our fundamentals and focus on our strategic priorities by investing in enhancing, expanding, and establishing new activities to provide our guests with a truly unique experience that is only available in LEGOLAND. We are grateful for the unwavering support shown by our guests, partners, and the

government. LEGOLAND Malaysia Resort is committed to providing our guests with new offerings of great value," says **CS Lim**, Divisional Director at LEGOLAND Malaysia Resort.

## Major Enhancements

LEGOLAND Malaysia Resort has brought guests new and unique experiences over the last 10 years. In the coming years,

guests can look forward to a series of enhancements such as:

- ❖ Shaded MINILAND - from January 2023 onwards.
- ❖ Refurbished LEGOLAND Hotel Rooms with New Themes in Q1 of 2023.
- ❖ Splash Carnival LEGOLAND Water Park in Mid 2023.

- ❖ New Thrilling 4D Movie at LEGO Studio.

"The investments and enhancements align with our strategic priorities to draw new and repeat visitations from domestic and international tourists. We are optimistic about the industry's recovery and look forward to the government's tourism revitalizing plans," Lim said. 🇸🇲



# Sunway unveils reimagined rooms and suites

In a bold drive to seal its position as Asia's leading fully-integrated premier hospitality and entertainment destination, Sunway Resort, located in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur, unveils phase one of its once-in-a-generation transformation, which includes eight brand new rooms and suite categories.



Sunway City Kuala Lumpur's transformation of its flagship property, Sunway Resort, began early 2020 – the most extensive renovation in its 25-year history. Phase one of our US\$60 million project is now complete, and guests are welcome to experience eight (8) brand new rooms and suites. The next phases of Sunway Resort's dramatic

transformation will be progressively revealed in 2022, where guests can expect more themed suites, dedicated family spaces, exciting new dining destinations, reimagined leisure facilities including the swimming pool, health club and more, securing Sunway City Kuala Lumpur's position as Asia's leading fully-integrated premier hospitality and entertainment destination.

Introducing our entry-level Deluxe Rooms (30-40sqm) with brand new interior fittings for guests to unwind in comfort includes a luxurious marble bathroom, premium bath amenities, sleep-inducing beds, a choice of pillows from our pillow menu and the latest gadgetry, including a 50-inch television with IPTV. "For 25 years, Sunway Resort has been raising the bar

of hospitality in Malaysia. Today, we are excited to reveal these pioneering rooms and suites that will continue our legacy. With dedicated options specifically tailored to the latest travel and lifestyle trends, all supported by state-of-the-art solutions, Sunway Resort is setting new standards," said **Alex Castaldi**, Senior General Manager of Sunway City Kuala Lumpur Hotels. 🇸🇲

# Gordon Ramsay Bar opens in Kuala Lumpur

Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur opened its doors at Sunway Resort on 18 June 2022, becoming the iconic British chef's inaugural restaurant in Malaysia and the first Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill outside the United Kingdom. This landmark launch also represents the culmination of a once-in-a-generation transformation of Sunway Resort.

The restaurant blends Gordon Ramsay's British heritage with the grace and grandeur of Sunway Resort. A series of luxurious and intimate spaces include a trio of private dining rooms – 8 Mayfair, 10 Soho and 12 Chelsea, a grand dining room with semi-private seating booths and a glittering cocktail bar, seating up to a total of 150 guests at a time.

The interior design features robust furnishings with a rich red and forest green colour scheme accentuated by polished walnut hardwood flooring, brass finishes, 24 karat gold leaf hand-placed ceiling and more. Monochrome portraits of British style icons by celebrated photographers Terry O'Neill and Arthur Steel feature The Rolling Stones frontman Sir Mick Jagger, the

original 007 Sir Sean Connery, supermodels Jean Shrimpton and Twiggy, line the walls of the main dining room. Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill will be the city's most sought-after dining destination and is only a short flight away from other great Asian cities. "This is an exciting occasion for us. The opening of Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill at Sunway Resort marks the start of a new

era of international epicurean excellence in Malaysia. It also represents the culmination of our once-in-a-generation transformation to enhance every aspect of Sunway Resort as we embark on a drive to seal our position as Asia's leading premier hospitality and entertainment destination," said **Alex Castaldi**, Senior General Manager, Sunway City Kuala Lumpur Hotels. 🇸🇲





# ATA acknowledges industry leaders' efforts

► Contd. from page 1

and TravTalk Middle East, who are premier media partners for the coverage of the event. The awards will be divided into four categories: Personal Awards, Business Awards, Trending Awards and Partner Awards. They will include awards for Best Business Hotel, Best Family Friendly Hotel, Best City Hotel, Best Green Hotel, Best Leisure Hotel, Best Destination Management Company, Best Hotel Apartments, Best B2B Travel Portal, and Best Luxury Hotel to name a few.

**SanJeet**, Director, Arabian Travel Awards, shares, "Our awards this year is very special as it recognizes the untiring efforts of the industry experts. This year as the borders open, the travel, tourism and hospitality experts were able to restore to levels



**San Jeet**  
Director, Arabian Travel Awards

enjoyed pre-pandemic time. Most had to redefine the way forward in the post COVID era, as we can confidently

in the forefront promoting and working to go over and beyond the general norms of the industry. Middle East has always been the most resilient region, especially the UAE and Dubai in particular set an example to all the destinations of the world on how to move forward and achieve in every possible way. The public and private partnership in the GCC region provided the industry a much faster comeback ensuring their commitment to move

**If you are yet to vote for your team, this is the right time to do so. Check the website [www.arabiantravelawards.ae](http://www.arabiantravelawards.ae) and vote for your hero of the year**

call it. Applications are still open to vote for those in the industry and who has been

forward. Now, it is time to reward the industry experts and their establishments to



advance ahead through all obstacles and challenges to a brand new era in the making in the region."

If you are yet to vote for your team, this is the right time to do so. Check the website [www.arabiantravelawards.ae](http://www.arabiantravelawards.ae).

ae and vote for your hero of the year. Make a difference in the industry and carry forward all the positive trends that has been witnessed. Travel is back on track, new trends emerge everyday and looking forward to a more sustainable future is the key

in this new era that has all the focus. Once again tourism, travel and hospitality begins its major contribution towards not just the economy of the nation but securing employment and uplifting the standard of life especially in the region. 📌

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Lets Go Tourism, UAE

#### Zayeem Mohtisham

General Manager  
Tour Planner, UAE

#### Al Rostamani Travel and Holidays

Senior Sales Exec  
Al Rostamani Travel and Holidays, UAE

#### George Joseph

General Manager  
Trinity Travel, UAE

#### Alan Orong

Senior Travel Manager  
South Travel DMCC, UAE

#### Al Rostamani Travel and Holidays

Senior Executive - Product Development  
Al Rostamani Travel and Holidays, UAE

#### Amila Wickramasekara

Supervisor - Leisure  
Al Naboodah Travel & Tourism  
Agencies LLC, UAE

Media Partner



Platinum Partner



Silver Partner





# 1.5 mn fans visit Qatar to watch FIFA WC

Countdown to the biggest sporting event in the world this year ends on 20th November, as 32 best football teams in the world fight for the FIFA World Cup title in Qatar until 18th December. Qatar Tourism has a much bigger role to play considering that they are getting the best ever support from across the globe as the host country.

 Shehara Rizly

The next four weeks will be the most eventful for not just Qatar but the rest of the GCC, as the biggest sporting event in the world - FIFA World Cup - takes place in the Arab country. More than 1.5 million football fans are expected to visit Qatar to watch the sports event, while over 5 billion people will watch the matches on various screens. Qatar Tourism has been given the opportunity to take the event to the next level.

## Role at the World Cup

**Bertold Trenkel**, Chief Operating Officer, Qatar Tourism, shares, "We have two tasks that are related to the World Cup, we



**Bertold Trenkel**  
Chief Operating Officer Qatar Tourism

are supporting the supreme committee in many initiatives, one of them is training, which

is a big programme, where so far over the last four weeks we have trained alone 25,000 people across hospitality and other government functions. We are also supporting with basic information, the Hayya card, the entry ticket to the country, which replaces any visa process, but the Hayya card mobile app is powered largely by Visit Qatar content. So, when you use the Hayya app you will find all the content that you will find in the Visit Qatar mobile app. We

**This will be the most watched FIFA World Cup ever in the history of mankind, so that is a big opportunity and we are capitalising on that one**



are doing many other things like we are publishing a new guide book that will not be on shelves but in the hotel rooms by November, we are also publishing a new tourist map to optimise the visitor experience. We are also promoting all the events indestination before and during

the World Cup. Outside of Qatar, Qatar tourism will run a destination campaign to make people aware of all the things they are missing out. "This will be the most watched FIFA World Cup ever in the history of mankind, so that is a big opportunity and we are capitalising on that

one. With that springboard of 5 billion eyeballs that are watching the games, we are hoping to convert many of them and get their interest levels up to their consideration list and hopefully visit Qatar in 2023 or the year after," Trenkel said. 



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## Northern Emirates big attraction

Nestled in the northern Emirates, Coral Beach Resort Sharjah and Bahi Ajman Palace is home to some of the best kept secrets when it comes to sandy beaches in the UAE.

Europeans have been a key source market to the northern Emirates over the past many years. Winter in the UAE is enjoyed by European travellers over the years and they have become the most loyal market for the destination. **Ittikhar Hamdani**, Area General Manager – Northern Emirates - Coral Beach Resort Sharjah and Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel,



**Ittikhar Hamdani**  
Area General Manager – Northern Emirates - Coral Beach Resort Sharjah and Bahi Ajman Palace Hotel

stay. Hamdani shares, “A good air connectivity, state of the art infrastructure, security and innovation are the main reason that European love to visit UAE and numbers are increasing every year. Scandinavians, UK, German speaking countries are frequent visitors of our hotels, but our main European market is Germany, which stands No. 2 in our overall nationality mix. High speed internet, and almost every Scandinavian love to have balconies in the resorts. Our major tourists are visiting for the leisure as we have beach resort with many leisure facilities, at the same time, there are solo European travellers visit us for business. We have many family tourists in our resort and for overall Ajman and Sharjah destination. Northern Emirates is hub for the European tourists since years and years and hotels are enjoying consistent loyalty from this market.”

**European Market is very important for us. UAE hotels enjoy good occupancy by the European tourists round the year, particularly in winter season**

says, “European Market is very important for us. UAE hotels enjoy good occupancy by the European tourists round the year, particularly in winter season.”

UAE’s position in air connectivity play an integral part to

receive the repeat visitors from the European and Scandinavian destinations. Germany has been a strong source market to the UAE and their attraction to seek a leisure resort even during their business stay has made it a pleasurable bleisure

## Stunning views speak volumes

Providing a panoramic view of the world’s iconic tower Burj Khalifa and the famous manmade Dubai canal, Park Regis Business Bay is a bleisure precinct that resonates the cosmopolitan city.

**Muhammad Mujtaba Haider** - General Manager - Park Regis Business Bay, shared, “As our slogan says it all “The most beautiful view is the one we share with you”. While staying in spacious deluxe room, guests can enjoy breathtaking panoramic view of Burj Khalifa and Dubai Canal by booking Panoramic room. Also rooms are available for determined guests. Families step into a stress-free vacation and unwind in the comfort and amenities of our spacious Junior suite. Guests can indulge their taste buds while dining in Food Souq at lobby level, offers wide range of Mediterranean, Continental and Asian cuisines. Guests can also order from Manas Café authentic Uzbek and Kyrgyzstan cuisines at lobby level. An outdoor, temperature-controlled swimming pool with safety precautions and manned with lifeguard to assure safety



**Muhammad Mujtaba Haider**  
General Manager  
Park Regis Business Bay

designed to help our guests achieve the perfect mind-body harmony after their travels. Meeting rooms are available to cater working groups, corporate trainings, small seminars and trainings with all required audio/ visual support. Can be booked on competitive DDR packages. Hotel is positioned well in market and capturing fair share from all segments, be it

**While staying in deluxe room, guests can enjoy breathtaking panoramic view of Burj Khalifa and Dubai Canal by booking Panoramic room**

of our guests and their loved ones. Fully equipped fitness centre to rejuvenate and keep healthy, young, and fit. The hotel SPA provides the guests with the perfect treatment from Deep tissue massage to Lava bamboo massage, specially

leisure, corporate, solo travelers or families. Close to iconic Burj Khalifa, one of the biggest mall The Dubai Mall, spectacular dancing fountains and so much more to offer when all vacation activities are at walking distance.

## Private beaches bring higher yield

For a hotel to have its own private beach means that it will be able to provide more leisure activities around the sea and the shore such as jet skiing, paddle boating and family activities.

**Ravi Santiago** – Cluster General Manager - Ramada Hotel & Suites by Wyndham, Ajman Ramada By Wyndham Beach Hotel, Ajman Wyndham Garden Ajman Corniche, explains, “Europe inbound travellers are perceived to have higher purchasing power depending on the target market and our location, which could result



**Ravi Santiago**  
Cluster General Manager, Ramada Hotel & Suites by Wyndham, Ajman Ramada By Wyndham Beach Hotel, Ajman Wyndham Garden Ajman Corniche

perience are from Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and France.”

He adds, “Certainly, it depends on the marketing strategies and focus of specific hotels. An all-time popular request we receive is for an all-inclusive stay on the beach or at least in proximity to the beach. Most of our guests are leisure travellers with families as our hotels provide a relaxing ambiance and a homely feeling with a natural virgin beach at attractive rates. If you are looking for a relaxing getaway with a wide variety of flavoursome cuisine and a quiet, clean beach, Wyndham Hotels Ajman is the place for you.”

**Europe inbound travellers are perceived to have higher purchasing power, which could result in higher yielding opportunities**

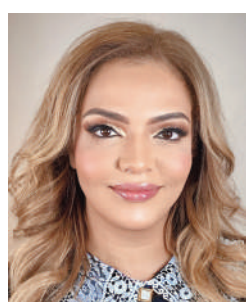
in higher yielding opportunities. Further, it gives a balanced diversity to our busi-

ness mix without depending on few markets. Some of the European guests we ex-

## Stay near the view of the future

Walking into the Museum of Future in Dubai across The Tower Plaza hotel and then dipping into the infinity pool or chill at view@61 is the way European bleisure travellers enjoy the city.

**Nuran Kilani** – Director of Sales and Marketing – The Tower Plaza Hotel, says, “Our source markets are German, UK, Benelux, India, Australia, US, Israel, Latin America, Iran, Middle East, CIS & GCC and China is coming back soon, as agents here have started working on the preparations for them. We have a good



**Nuran Kilani**  
Director, Sales and Marketing  
The Tower Plaza Hotel

in mind, for them to walk out of the airport then walk into a metro and walk out straight into the hotel is a different experience. The Tower Plaza hotel has its advantage due to this, as it is the most accessible hotel in the area. Kilani shares that their welcome and the exceptional service is key to receive repeat clients to the hotel. “We provide a great arrival and welcome experience, comfortable and luxurious accommodation, a variety of cuisine to choose from as well as exceptional service. Guests can chill by the infinity pool or at the view@61, where our guests can have mixed drinks tasting and looking just as the ‘original’, enjoying that it is alcohol-free,” she says.

**We provide a great arrival and welcome experience, comfortable and luxurious accommodation and a variety of cuisine to choose from**

mix of Nationality showing that Dubai is really a cosmopolitan city.” One of the key

unique points are the accessibility to the hotel. Europeans travel with sustainability



# WTM is back with new exciting features



**Juliette Losardo**  
Exhibition Director  
WTM London

“Middle East halls at WTM, which are located in the middle of the South Hall, have some of the big ME players (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Oman, Jordan, Bahrain...). We are back to a fully live format. We have four stages and many new exciting features, over 75 conference sessions and quite a few celebrity speakers. Ministers Summit of course. WTM brings together the global (leisure) travel community; providing National

Tourism Organisations and international travel service providers a place to promote their products and services and do business with world-class travel buyers, as well as a stage to showcase their services to the international media. We have many dedicated sessions and speakers geared specifically for our new generation of travel trade and tourism industry leaders like ITT Future You. There are 3000+ exhibitors confirmed, over 70 new-to-show exhibitors and exhibitors from over 100 countries represented.”



**Matthias Albrecht**  
Director  
Switzerland Tourism

“The Middle East are extremely important for us. In our internal framework they are considered as a priority market, which is the highest tier. We aim for sustainable growth from the region; reaching 1Mio overnights within the next two years. Arabs absolutely love Switzerland. In a Survey of YouGov in January 2022, Switzerland was rated the first foreign destination. And travelling to Switzerland is very convenient,

next to SWISS International Airlines all Middle Eastern flagship carriers travel to Switzerland. Switzerland offers everything what is demanded by Arab travellers: luxurious delights, convenience but also personal service surrounded by beautiful nature. Clearly, travel reason number 1 why Arabs travel to Switzerland is nature; and Switzerland has a lot to offer in this regard: green meadows, deep blue lakes, sugarcoated mountains, cosy villages and lively cities. Switzerland has it all.”



**Daniel Rosado Bayón**  
Director  
Spain Tourism Office - Tourism Counsellor GCC

“The GCC is a very important market for Spain. Taking into consideration that Spain had 83 million visitors in 2019, it's not a big market in terms of numbers, but it is important in terms of quality. Visitors from the GCC are high spenders, who travel throughout the year and to different parts of our country, which helps to implement our sustainable strategy aimed at attracting a more sustainable and quality visitor.

In 2022 the trend in the GCC is great, and we are receiving far more guests than in 2019, our record year of tourist arrivals. As an outbound destination, Spain offers security being a safe destination, and with a great health system. Anyone who comes to our country will feel like at home. Our gastronomy is well known, with a wide range of Halal options available and with our awarded Mediterranean diet. Moreover, tourists will be thrilled to discover our huge heritage, history and culture.”

“The Middle East is an important tourism market for the island of Ireland. With numerous direct flight options to Ireland from the UAE, Qatar and Egypt with Emirates Airlines, Etihad Airways and Egypt Air, the island of Ireland is an easy to access destination for Middle East travellers considering a holiday in Europe. Ireland has a superb range of luxury tourism offerings that fit perfectly with the needs of Middle East travellers, from

boutique hotels, castles, luxury resorts and spas, to our rich culture and heritage, and not forgetting our world-class golf. Ireland was recently named 'Friendliest Country in Europe' by Condé Nast Reader's Choice Awards. This is an ongoing accolade that Ireland is proud to hold. The island of Ireland also has a wide range of Halal friendly dining experiences right across the island, plus food walking tours and unique family friendly experiences in all our cities. UAE nationals do not need a visa to travel to Ireland. This has seen a significant boost in tourism from the UAE to the island of Ireland.”



**Aisling McDermott**  
Manager  
Middle East & Asia, Tourism Ireland

“The GCC market is one of our key overseas source markets. From the GCC alone we have witnessed a staggering increase in travellers to Germany in the first half of 2022 compared to 2021. The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) recorded a 318 per cent increase in overnight stays from Gulf nationals in the first six months of 2022 when compared to the same period last year. To further attract GCC travellers, we have

launched three different campaigns this year aligning with market wants and interests. Our 'Feel Good' campaign encompasses a range of guiding tips, highlighting the country's eco-friendly initiatives that provide conscious tourists with adequate tools and information to reduce their carbon footprint during their travels. Our 'German.Local.Culture' campaign drives awareness on the diversity of traditional experiences that Germany has to offer. Our 'Embrace German Nature' campaign highlights outdoor, nature-focused activities amid awe-inspiring landscapes.”



**Yamina Soto**  
Director  
German National Tourist Office (GNTB) GCC

“The Gulf region is an important long-distance market for Austria and travellers from the GCC form a significant portion of visitors to our country and are classified as 'high-spending visitors'. Austria is one of the leading tourist destinations for the GCC residents, as it is well known for its myriad offerings when it comes to nature, culture, history and unique shopping opportunities. In the Gulf region, Austria is well known as

a popular summer destination. However, the winter season has a lot to offer too. No matter if the travellers prefer an active holiday with skiing, discovering winter wonderland while enjoying dog or horse sledding, visiting the festive winter markets or indulging into the culinary and culture of the country, they will definitely find what they are looking for during Austria's winter. Moreover, there are various flights connecting the Gulf region and Austria (Emirates Airline, Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, flydubai, and Saudia), hence travelling to Austria from any state in the Gulf is convenient.”



**Michael Tauschmann**  
Head of Market, Middle East and India  
Austrian National Tourist Office



**Ayman Al Qudwa**  
Manager  
Falcon Travel Qatar

“I believe that travellers from GCC are set to become a key market to support post-COVID recovery for European countries. With many flight options and varied tourism products, Europe has many attractive features for GCC travellers. Today, European Tourism Boards generally want GCC travellers to experience the authentic local culture and heritage. It has been observed that GCC travellers have a vital role in tourism

recovery. As the UNWTO indicated, GCC travellers spend 6.5 times more than the global average, with 40 per cent of GCC travellers spending more than \$9,770 on their last trip to European countries. Yes, it is their spending power! In terms of holiday favourite for Qatari Tourists, the harmony is on escaping and breaking free and learning new practices and new cultures, which many have been unable to do in the last two years during the COVID-19 lockdown.”



**Sushant Pilankar**  
Manager Leisure Travel  
Uranus Travel and Tours

“2020 & 21 were truly shake-up years for our industry. Every destination had to step out of the box and innovate. One common area many worked was Luxury travel and we cannot avoid GCC when it comes to Luxury travellers. Many countries in Europe offer Visa Free or Visa on Arrival to GCC nationals. Also, many European destinations, including small regions' luxury properties are showcasing their offerings. While travel is gradually opening

we could see that almost whole of Europe was mainly aligning to welcome GCC travellers, as they were the ones ready to travel immediately. We could see activity on Social Media and Marketing Communications adapting to Arabic language. Also, the number of travel roadshows conducted in KSA & GCC within last one year by European destinations explains all. Design of economic system in GCC countries will always give clients higher spending power.”



**Fabian Gonzalez**  
Founder of Forward MAD,  
a luxury tourism conference

“Thanks to technologies such as Big Data, which makes it possible to have more and better information on the behavior of travellers, both destinations and suppliers are making great efforts to meet the expectations of their customers by adapting their offer to their needs and preferences. Language is one of them, of course, to facilitate communication and be able to deliver the brand message and experience correctly, but also the

design of the spaces, services, food and drink to adapt to their specific preferences. The GCC market is very attractive for all European destinations, as they have a longer stay and higher spending at the destination than other source markets. They are one of the main markets in shopping tourism, and tend to spend large amounts of money on complementary offers. In the case of Spain, most of them come to see the Arabic influence and legacy they left in the peninsula.”



# European nations keen to greet GCC visitors

“Many European destinations and hotels offer Arab oriented experiences, food, Arab amenities like bidet in toilets and visa free facility for selected GCC nationals to name a few. The need to have Arabic speaking staff to assist guests and employing them has also been a growing trend. Quality living, Comfort and privacy are the main criteria for an average Arab traveller in addition to Halal food. Traditionally, European countries have been eager to welcome guests from GCC countries - both expat and nationals. This is mainly because of their spending power. Brand loyalty and the potential to become repeat customers are the key elements for them to be solicited. Nature, quality shopping, educated social behaviour, tourist-friendly cities, respect and safety. Easy connectivity of flights, Nature, comfort and quality. Relaxation in Visa is another major factor. Mostly family travel by Arab community, travel by flight or cruise, main attractions, quality hotels, close to tourist attractions, nightlife for solo travellers.”



**Saleem Shariff**  
Deputy MD  
ATS Travel

“Europe is a highly important market for the UAE and overall GCC travel market. The proximity to EU countries, with an average of 6-hour flights, which is an attractive flight time for those looking to have a quick sunny escape, especially in the colder months of the year. For leisure travel, Dubai is the primary destination due to its global reputation for beach, attractions, retail, dining offerings and nightlife, followed by Abu Dhabi, Doha and Bahrain. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a primary destination for business and religious travel. However, we do see the trends slowly changing with an increase in leisure tourism showing due to the development of destinations within the country such as AIUla, the Red Sea and NEOM. The main European source markets we see an increased demand for travel are UK and Germany, which are followed closely by Italy and France. This year, we see an increase in demand for family holidays.”



**Matthew Roberts**  
Vice President of Sales - India, Middle East  
Africa and Turkey, Accor

“Europe is a key source for Premier Inn MENA, accounting for more than 30 per cent of visitors at our Dubai hotels so far this year. With the World Cup approaching, this figure will rise. UK visitors account for the highest amount of European guests, closely followed by guests from France, Germany, Spain and Italy. Our guests are a mixture of business and leisure travellers, and include many long stay guests taking advantage of our monthly rates. With the continued easing of travel restrictions, there is an uptick in overall visitor numbers, especially in people coming from long-haul destinations. Premier Inn, owned by leading UK hospitality company, Whitbread, has 11 properties in the MENA region. The brand established itself in the Middle East with the opening of Premier Inn Dubai Investment Park in 2008, and now operates seven hotels in Dubai, two in Abu Dhabi and two in Qatar, with more in the pipeline.”



**Simon Leigh**  
Managing Director  
Premier Inn MENA

“The European market is a key source for international travellers flying to Jordan and that is evident by the number of flights landing at Queen Alia International Airport in Amman and King Hussein International Airport in Aqaba. Travellers, short and long-term stay, come to explore the history of the country along with the culture - not to forget one of the Wonders of the World Petra and the lowest point on earth at the Dead Sea, in addition to the iconic Wadi Rum and the amazing Gulf of Aqaba. United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Italy and Spain prefer GCC/ ME countries. The European market has the diversity of all kind of travellers depending on the seasonality. Those who travel during Christmas, New Year's holidays and Easter usually come in a groups and with families. Those who come for a short trip do come for business and may have a bleisure stay, specially if they are flying for the first time to explore the city and the cultural heritage.”



**Waddah Al Dabbas**  
Sales and Marketing Director  
Cloud7 Residence Ayia Aqaba

“The European population make up the largest number of travellers to Georgia. Travellers from UK, Germany, France and Spain are mostly visiting Tbilisi and the mountainous parts of the country. Georgia gets a lot of visitors from Dubai, Kuwait, Israel and Saudi and that is at all levels. Georgia became a romantic gateway for couples and for families, who are visiting eco-resorts in the mountains and at the seaside. Authentic Georgian food, wine and mountains are attracting the attention of visitors. Georgia is appealing to tourists who are more into “slow tourism”. They expect us to connect and provide information on the local community and neighbourhood, and to get information on historical aspects, which you can meet in every corner of the city. Georgia is hosting mostly leisure travellers and it is mostly groups and families. However, there is a big demand for solo business travellers as well. Our ‘House Hotels’ offer full comfort for all types of travellers, offering superb hotel facilities.”



**Nikoloz Kurdadze**  
General Manager  
The House Hotel Old Tbilisi

“Important inbound markets UK, Germany and CIS are among the Top 10 source markets in the Middle East. Above three markets are key to the UAE, UK and Italy is also key to the rest of the GCC in terms of Defence and Oil & Gas sectors. For leisure customers, their requirements resonate around F&B offerings, accessibility to points of attraction and safety. For Business clients, the key requirements are around efficiency in check-in and check-out processes, proximity to their offices and Club Lounge access. Now, international organisations are also focused on ESG deliverables by all partners they are affiliated with, whether that are hotels, airlines, TMCs or suppliers. It is a mix of all segments really with leisure dominance in resort destinations, business in city hotels and blended travel in urban locations. When it comes to outbound Europe, the ME plus GCC market is an important source market to Europe, including France, Turkey, Switzerland, UK and the Nederland.”



**James Britchford**  
VP Commercial  
India Middle East and Africa, IHG

“As a Spanish brand Melia is well known in the European market, and as such we receive a lot of interest from our guests, as well as Melia Rewards members. Additionally, with our polo credentials, the UK is a big market for us, both from players and those in the polo fraternity. For Melia Desert Palm specifically we have a lot of guests from Spain, Germany, Italy, France and the UK. We find they are looking for friendly genuine service blended with our Spanish hospitality, as well as somewhere to relax and be at peace, while enjoying what the city has to offer. We get guests from all categories, some for business, some for leisure, and as we are an ideal place to enjoy an extended trip over a weekend, we also get guests here for a little ‘bleisure’.”



**Nathalie Cockayne**  
GM, Melia Desert Palm  
A member of Melia Collection

“The Middle East/ GCC market (15 per cent in 2021) counts among the most important markets for the Dolder Grand in Switzerland, Germany, UK and the USA with personalised service, Oriental cuisine, Arabic speaking staff, ultimate luxury, safety, comfort, discretion. Most of the families have their PAs, who are in direct contact with our reservations, sales or butler team. They choose the hotel over the package. An exclusive shopping experience e.g. can be organised via our concierge team if wanted. Couples, families, or groups travel. They would send their special requests upfront to our reservations team or mention it during the booking process. In addition, our butler team, when booking a suite, takes care of the special requests and get in touch with the guest upfront.”



**Joachim Schweiher**  
Senior Marketing & Communications Manager  
The Dolder Grand, Zurich

“EVINTRA's CEO Andreas Thölken, who created an independent platform for global MICE industry shares about attending WTM this year. “WTM is a true “must attend” event in the MICE & Tourism sector. We had been attending it for more than 10 years already and would not miss it in the future. The amazing diversity of global exhibitors, networking opportunities and wide selection of education offerings are one of a kind. It is the place to be for doing business, getting new leads, meeting up with existing connections and acquiring valuable industry knowledge make WTM one of world leading get together for professionals.” The name EVINTRA consists out of the three words EVent, INcentive and TRavel, which was established as a brand by Andreas Thölken in 2011. The vision of EVINTRA is to become the most valuable tool of the connected industries.”



**Andreas Thölken**  
Chief Executive Officer  
EVINTRA



## TERRA SOLIS Dubai

Terra Solis Dubai has appointed hotelier **ALEXANDER SUSKI** to lead the team at the five-star holistic desert destination. Suski's remit will include the expansion of Terra Solis Dubai in the region and securing its position as a must-visit year-round destination while developing Terra Sol Hospitality as a trailblazing hospitality management company. Before his appointment as Terra Sol Hospitality CEO, Suski, a Belgian national, has garnered valuable experience in the hospitality sector with a career spanning almost two decades, including senior management positions across the UAE, the Middle East & Africa, and Europe for brands, including Ishraq Hospitality and Millennium Hotels and Resorts MEA.



## JUMEIRAH GROUP Dubai

Dubai Holding announced the appointment of **KATERINA GIANNOUKA** as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Jumeirah Group as of December 2022. A recognised professional in the international hospitality industry, Giannouka joins Jumeirah Group with 20 years of experience in business leadership, operations, hotel development, asset management and strategic advisory. Giannouka joins Jumeirah Group from Radisson Hotel Group, where, as President Asia-Pacific since 2017, she led the execution of a comprehensive five-year plan, delivering unprecedented growth of nearly doubling the size of the hotel portfolio. Prior to this, Katerina led the Asia-Pacific and China Development team of Rosewood Hotels & Resorts.



## PREMIER INN DOHA EDUCATION CITY Qatar

Premier Inn has announced **VIVEK CHOWDHRY** to the role of General Manager at Premier Inn Doha Education City. Chowdhry brings in 21 years work experience in the field of Finance and Administration in various industries such as Audit, Business process planning, Television, Real Estate Contracting and Hotel. Has been part of Premier Inn since pre-opening from 2015. Managed Finance and Administrative portfolio. Long-time resident in Qatar. Schooled in Qatar and a Commerce Graduate from India. Sales networking, Cost optimisation, Business process improvements, managing Human capital have been his strengths. He will manage the daily hotel operations ensuring that guests enjoy an outstanding experience.



## PREMIER INN DOHA EDUCATION CITY Qatar

Premier Inn appointed **KONJIT AYELE** to the position of Operations Manager at Premier Inn Doha Education City. Ayele has worked with multiple brands over the past 19 years in the hospitality industry. Throughout her career, she has progressed from team leader to general manager. With an Advanced Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Diploma in Hospitality Management, Information Technology Diploma, Revenue Management, and Employee Relations Certificate. Managing the high levels of guest satisfaction through the team, aligned with the company's KPIs, ensure health and safety regulations are always followed and manage the team to meet company targets.



## PREMIER INN DOHA AIRPORT HOTEL Qatar

**ABID SHAIKH** has been appointed as the new General Manager at Premier Inn Doha Airport Hotel. Passionate hotelier with 18 years' experience across India, UK and Middle East including some of the best brands and properties. I have carved my niche in management & technical skills amalgamated with my experience across various hospitality industries. Shaikh holds a Postgraduation Diploma in International Business, (London Institute of technology & research UK) Bachelor of commerce (Mumbai university, Mumbai, India). Prior to this Shaikh was Operations Manager Premier Inn Doha Education City (preopening). He is passionate about leading teams, nurturing talent, overcoming difficult challenges, and maximizing sales opportunities.



## PHILIPPINE AIRLINES Dubai

Philippine Airlines has appointed **JOSH VASQUEZ** as Area Manager for United Arab Emirates to oversee sales operations of the airline in the country to identify and implement growth plans in the region. He will also ensure that revenues continue to grow, and the airline adapts with new travel trends. Fresh from his recent assignment in New York, USA, Josh brings with him 21 years of airline sales and revenue management experience. His previous posts include Bangkok (Thailand), Vancouver (Canada) and New York. Before his overseas assignment, Josh has held various roles in Philippine Airlines' from Reservations, International Passenger Sales and Revenue Management International divisions at its headquarters in Manila.



# Hues Boutique Hotel ready to greet visitors

Revamped as Hues Boutique Hotel in the newly developed area known as the Deira enrichment project, which features the instagrammably famous Infinity Bridge, it is now ready to welcome visitors, especially during this season, which is FIFA World Cup and winter ready. **Tarek Lotfy**, General Manager of the hotel, shares their new offerings with **TRAUTALK**.

**TT Bureau**

**C**ould you share information about the hotel and its facilities, as it is located in the Deira enrichment project area?

Hues Boutique Hotel is located on Al Khaleej road, Corniche Deira overlooking the newly developed Dubai Islands and on a view to the new infinity bridge, one of the most recently developed areas in Dubai. 15 minutes from Dubai Airport DXB and 20 minutes from Dubai World Trade Centre, 10 minutes from La Mer beach, and 5 minutes to Al Mamzar beach. The hotel is the winner of The Best Design Hotel in the region and has facilities



**Tarek Lotfy**  
General Manager  
Hues Boutique Hotel

of rooms, suites, Metro all-day dining, King's Bar and Grill; an African-Ethiopian concept, and the famous Club Lounge and Terrace (Aurora) one of the most elegant nightlife places in Dubai. The rooftop swimming pool, gym, and Taki Spa are for

treatment, relaxation, and therapy. Hues Boutique Hotel has new management that restructured the new Sales and Marketing team and the new Food and Beverage team for a better commitment to excellence to both our clients and guests.

**World Cup is happening for the first time in the region, how will this support in attracting more tourists to the region?**

The FIFA World Cup is a continental event that will drive fans from all over the world to Qatar and Gulf region, this competition will continue for over one month and definitely, there are visitors will attend from all over the world that



never been to the area. Therefore, we expect them to make tours in the GCC countries for the first time as well as most of those fans have purchasing power that will energize not only the hotel businesses but also tourism, airlines, transportation, retails, and all shopping businesses.

**With WTM opening this year, how important is it for the trade to keep a tab on the show?**

This year, a large number of participants will come back to the major travel business partners, who were away from the site. This will create a new opportunity for businesses.

**Having been in the hospitality trade over a period of time, how do you see the industry change especially after the pandemic?**

A lot of countries, companies, and hotels are looking forward to meeting with new customers during this event and opening new business channels, finding new programs, and with the change in travellers' behaviour, and all the political challenges that face the world currently, that will create new opportunities and change of direction to both travel and hospitality business. Here is the importance of WTM as a meeting point for these directions. ➔



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# GOLDEN SANDS

## HOTEL DUBAI CREEK



### *Welcome to Luxury*

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