



World Travel Awards

**Encouraging Excellence in Every Sector
of Global Travel and Tourism Since 1994**

The History

World Travel Awards is the most prestigious, comprehensive and sought after awards for the global travel and tourism industry.

Established in 1993 by the Founder and President Graham E Cooke to acknowledge and celebrate excellence in all sectors of the industry, World Travel Awards is recognised and respected worldwide as the definitive hallmark of excellence. Winners of World Travel Awards set the benchmark to which all others aspire.

The Wall Street Journal has heralded World Travel Awards as the 'travel industry's equivalent to the Oscars'.

Evidence is growing that consumers are increasingly using the portfolio of World Travel Awards winners to help them make their personal choices for travel and leisure.

The first ever ceremony was held in Hollywood in 1994. Since then there have been

Gala Ceremonies every year to celebrate the 'best of the best' in the international travel industry.

Finals of World Travel Awards have been held in major international industry destinations including New York, Las Vegas, The Bahamas, London, Jamaica, Kuala Lumpur, St Lucia and Turks and Caicos.

In 2007, The World Travel Awards expanded from one event annually to regional ceremonies for each continent, culminating in a grand final.

Regional events are now staged to cover Africa, Middle East, North and Central America, Europe, South America, Caribbean, Asia, Australasia and the Indian Ocean.

In 2009, regional ceremonies took place in Dubai (Middle East region), Durban, South Africa (Africa region), Mexico (North and Central America region), Portugal (European region) and London (South America, Caribbean, Asia, Australasia and Indian Ocean regions).

The 2009 global final of World Travel Awards was also held in London at Grosvenor House, a JW Marriott Hotel. Here a selection of the very best global companies and organizations were recognized and awarded with the status and accolade of becoming a World award winner.

World Travel Awards global media partners include: BBC World News, eTurboNews, Breaking Travel News, CNBC Arabiya, Khaleej Times, L'Agenzia di Viaggi, Trav Talk, Trade Arabia, TTN, Travel Daily News International, Focus on Travel News, New Focus Travel Magazine, Tourism Review, JAX FAX, Travel & Leisure, Travel & Leisure Golf, Xenios & Xenios World.

The prestigious awards scheme is at the forefront of the online media evolution. WTA Twitters from events and has also recently launched a mobile website, www.worldtravelawards.mobi to keep people updated whilst on the go with events information and award results.

Video clips and interviews from the past ceremonies are also now available on a YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/worldtravelawards, reaching tens of thousands of industry professionals and consumers worldwide.

Details of the 2010 World Travel Awards Gala Ceremonies are available online at www.worldtravelawards.com

21 Facts You May Not Know About World Travel Awards

- Over 5,000 travel companies, destinations and organisations are nominated every year
- More than 6,000 awards have been presented since the awards were launched in 1994
- New York has hosted the finals more often than any other destination
- In 2009 there was a 10% increase in the number of registered voters, bringing this year's total to 183,000.
- There is over a staggering 1,000 categories within the awards
- A total of 33 presentation ceremonies have taken place so far
- 31 categories are dedicated to sustainable tourism
- 47 countries compete in the European Ceremony
- 7 countries from Central America partake in the awards.
- A total of 13 countries compete in South America
- And 11 countries take part in Australasia
- Asian countries competing number 24
- 19 African countries take part every year
- Middle Eastern destinations who participate number 16
- A plethora of 31 Caribbean islands are involved every year
- Companies can self nominate for consideration after completing a detailed questionnaire
- Companies can also be nominated by other industry professionals
- World Travel Awards nominations are decided by an independent panel of industry experts
- Judging criteria takes into account every aspect of the business including overall performance, product development, innovation, creativity and customer satisfaction
- When the awards were first launched, travel awards had a poor reputation; World Travel Awards changed all that, encouraging the pursuit of business excellence and value for money. It is this insistence on fundamental quality that has attracted consumers to check who the winners are before making a reservation
- Evidence of creative thinking and supreme external and internal communications are factors that World Travel Awards Founder Graham E Cooke sees as critical to success

World Travel Awards Voting

World Travel Awards is totally impartial and independent.

A number of key partnerships with major media and leading global brands worldwide have been established, but this does not in any way influence the ultimate results.

Launched to encourage the international travel and tourism industry to embrace the pursuit of excellence in everything it does – from customer relations to creativity, product innovation and business acumen – the awards and judging are strictly controlled to ensure total fairness.

World Travel Awards primary objective is to drive up standards within the industry and to ensure that brands exceed expectations.

The success of travel businesses, where ever they may be in the world, is a critical factor not only for individual organisations, their staff, suppliers, partners, local communities and other stakeholders on vital issues such as jobs, but also impacts economic growth and the long-term prosperity of a region.

There are key factors that transform a well-run company into an excellent one and these are recognised, encouraged and underlined in every World Travel Awards event, both regionally and globally.

The inherent principles under which all nominations are judged are:

- Consistent overall business performance and success
- Understanding visitor needs and expectations for a supreme customer experience
- High levels of customer satisfaction
- Valuing personnel
- Excellent internal and external communications
- Enterprising product expansion and development
- Fostering innovation, creativity and enterprise
- Expansion and development, and
- Team work that helps a company to deliver longer-term corporate vision

Since its inception, World Travel Awards had done more than most other global organisations to help, inspire and motivate companies to transform into excellent ones.

By providing many high-level examples that showcase business excellence within the industry, the awards help provide pointers and a framework that assists a business to sense changes, trends, threats and opportunities. It also assists in analysing competitive market conditions to develop strategic business options.

World Travel Awards believes that crucial to the success of any long-term business strategy for travel and tourism is the development of sustainable competitive advantages and making them the focus of successful methods of branding, marketing and promotion.

The voting process is online and a year-long communications campaign encourages global participation. Votes are made by executives working within travel and tourism, but the majority are made by travel agents, call centres and home workers.

In 2009 the voting was open to the travelling public. Travel agent voters can upgrade to "industry" status by providing their travel agent association membership number during registration. Votes cast by travel agent voters count as two votes while the votes cast by non-industry voters count as one vote. All votes are internally audited to ensure the validity of each individual vote.

THE ENIGMA OF EXCELLENCE

Graham Cooke, Founder and President of the World Travel Awards, Explains his Goal for Outstanding Industry Excellence

Graham Cooke has been searching for supreme excellence throughout his 37-year career.

Cooke, President of the World Travel Awards, will never give up that search. He says: "It's what drives me on. There are many well-run travel companies in the world but what fine dividing line separates them from the exceptional?"

"What qualities mean their names leap automatically to people's lips when the word 'excellence' is mentioned, regardless of whether they are customers or fellow professionals?"

"It's about selecting the exceptional from the also-rans, the superstars from the plodders; whose track records are poured over by their peers worldwide, who wish that even a sprinkle of this quantifiable magic would rub off on them, their products and employees."

The enigma of 'excellence', how you come by it and maintain it in the 'bear pit' of the international travel and tourism industry is the reason why Cooke founded the rapidly expanding World Travel Awards 17 years ago.

In a few short years they have become described by the Wall Street Journal as the global Oscars of the travel industry. For winners, the awards are a symbol of excellence in everything they do and say. It is also a reassurance for customers and an acceptance by the industry of outstanding achievements.

But when he launched the awards it was a different story!

"Travel awards, as now, were commonplace", he said. "None of them really meant anything, apart from, of course to the winners. There was no real substance behind them and everyone frankly took them with an element of 'So What?'."

"I wanted to establish some kind of serious and constructive template for excellence by which the travel industry could measure its performance. I wanted to improve standards, stimulate competitiveness and create an acknowledgment that not only delivers glitz and glamour but also a great deal more besides."

"This is the cornerstone of the World Travel Awards."

But as Cooke admits, there is still a lot further to go in the journey. "We need to foster trust in senior leadership that will, in turn, lay down a strong foundation for other key factors in this pursuit of excellence.

"A great deal, for example, rides on employees, the opportunities to use their on-the-job skills and a sense of enjoyment and passion.

"It goes far deeper than that. Competitiveness and the quality of a company, its philosophy, culture and products need to be integrated with honesty and integrity.

This means that those nominated for the World Travel Awards are judged on quantifiable principles such as customer satisfaction and evidence of innovation and creativity."

But as the industry increasingly recognises the importance of securing the future, Cooke is also anxious that businesses adopt sustainable tourism strategies with a clear focus on environmental practices.

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

World Travel Awards Press and PR provide a full service department including:

- Answering enquiries
- Provision of the latest information
- Downloadable pictures of events
- Bespoke editorial

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