



WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS MAKE THEIR NAME IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The World Travel Awards (WTA) has announced the winners for the Middle East and Africa at its inaugural regional event. Over 1,000 industry leaders convened at the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday to celebrate their achievements at the star-studded event.

This year has seen the addition of satellite World Travel Awards ceremonies in a bid to recognize winners in their own region. A total of 65 awards were presented to winners throughout the evening's gala. **Abu Dhabi** won Middle East's Leading New Destination and Middle East's Leading Tourist Board—fitting accolades since the emirate has seen such impressive growth in travel and tourism over the last year. The **Emirates Palace** won the title of Middle East's Leading Resort, Middle East's Leading Conference Hotel and UAE's Leading Resort.

"Abu Dhabi is spearheading the globe when it comes to business and luxury travel, world class service and innovative tourism products. Their offerings are setting the benchmark for the industry worldwide, with a number of ambitious projects planned to boost the emirates tourism offering, so it is fitting for us to host our inaugural regional ceremony here," says Graham Cooke, President of the World Travel Awards.

Fairmont Dubai, Burj Al Arab, Grand Hyatt Cairo, Ritz-Carlton Bahrain Hotel and Spa and Saxon Boutique Hotel and Spa all received awards during the evening. Rotana Hotels and Resorts won Middle East's Leading Hotel Brand, while Etihad Airways scored Middle East's Leading Airline and Middle East's Leading First Class Airline. Also Europcar took home Middle East's Leading Car Hire Company and Africa's Leading Car Hire Company.



MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA AWARDS CEREMONY RECEPTION, ABU DHABI 2007

These companies have automatically been put forward as nominees in their global categories. The World category winners will be announced at the global World Travel Awards ceremony in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos in the Caribbean towards the end of 2007.

Media coverage of the regional awards was at an all time high, with over 25 international publications attending the event. As the official WTA media partner, BBC World broadcast the big event to over 254 million homes in over 200 countries.

The star-studded event saw travel industry professionals enjoy music, comedy and entertainment throughout the evening. The event was hosted by **Akhtar Khan** and the original "pop princess," **Deborah Gibson**, and **Haifa Wehbe** captivated the audience with her headline performance. **Chris Noth**, best known for his role as Mr. Big in "Sex and the City", and **Lauren Holly**, who appeared in the movie classics "Dumb and Dumber" and "What Women Want" also took centre stage, giving lively performances. Global heads of industry rubbed shoulders with VIPs spanning the Middle East and Africa, including Sheikh Faisal Bin Khalid Al Qasimi, H.E. Ahmad Al Hmairi and H.E. Mubarak Al Muhairi of UAE, Governor of South Sinai Egypt H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hany Metwally Iman and Hon. Wayne Garland Minister of Tourism Turks & Caicos Islands.

A total of 167,000 travel agencies and professionals in over 163 countries worldwide have been asked to vote for their leading travel



2007 WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS



ACTRESS LAUREN HOLLY



CHRIS NOTH FROM LAW & ORDER AND SEX IN THE CITY



HAIFA WEHBE, RENOWNED LEBANESE ARTIST



CHRIS NOTH AND DEBORAH GIBSON

ORIGINAL
"POP PRINCESS"
DEBORAH GIBSON



WINNERS FOR AFRICA

AFRICA'S LEADING AIRLINE:

South African Airways

AFRICA'S LEADING AIRPORT:

Johannesburg International

AFRICA'S LEADING CONFERENCE CENTRE:

Cape Town International Convention Centre, South Africa

AFRICA'S LEADING HOTEL:

Mount Nelson Hotel, South Africa

AFRICA'S LEADING DESTINATIONS:

Sharm El Sheikh

AFRICA'S LEADING LUXURY LODGE:

Thanda Private Game Reserve, South Africa

AFRICA'S LEADING FAMILY RESORT:

Hilton Sharm Dreams Resort, Egypt

AFRICA'S LEADING GOLF RESORT:

The Palmeraie Golf Palace, Morocco

AFRICA'S LEADING SPA RESORT:

The Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa, South Africa

AFRICA'S LEADING SAFARI:

Shamwari Game Reserve, South Africa

AFRICA'S LEADING WATERSPORTS RESORT:

Breezes Beach Club, Tanzania

AFRICA'S LEADING CASINO RESORT:

D'oreale Grande at Emperors Palace, South Africa

AFRICA'S LEADING VILLA:

Queen Cleopatra Villa, Savoy Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

destinations, airlines, hotels and companies around the world. Voting for the Middle East and Africa categories started in January of this year and ended in May. During this period ballots were completed, returned and processed using the online voting form. The World Travel Awards accounts for all sectors of the global travel industry.

"Since founding the World Travel Awards in 1993, we have seen a growing sophistication in the travel and tourism trade and increased competition. Yet our winners have always been at the forefront of this process with their initiatives and products," says Cooke. "Voted for independently by travel professionals worldwide, our Middle East and Africa award winners are having a major impact and influence on regional and global tourism. They are the true innovators and benchmarks for our trade, especially in the areas of customer service, technology, operational efficiency, product offering and style."

"Due to the phenomenal success of the World Travel Awards and increasing competition in every sector of the travel industry, it was a natural progression for us to expand the honours scheme and to recognise companies for their achievements in their own



RALPH HIGGS, ONEIKA AND KINGSLEY



MR. RALPH HIGGS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, TURKS & CAICOS TOURIST BOARD

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WED. JAMAICAN DANCEHALL	SAT. MORE FUN OPEN 'TIL 3 A.M



ENTERTAINMENT BAND AT THE 2007 MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA TRAVEL AWARDS CEREMONY



TATANA KUCHAROVA MS. WORLD 2006, CLAUDIA HARDT

regions,” says Manon Han, Vice President, World Travel Awards. “We are delighted with the success of the first regional awards ceremony, which also marks the first time that we have held the awards in the Middle East, and Abu Dhabi was an ideal host destination. The glamorous ball gown and tuxedo-clad event provided an unparalleled networking forum for those who attended and a chance to share the limelight with other award winners.”

The other chosen locations for the 2007 world tour include Bangkok in Thailand, New York in the US and Newcastle Gateshead in England.

Please be sure to check the next issue of Helm Magazine to learn more about the winners of the regional awards ceremony taking place in the month of September and October.

The “Americas” ceremony will be held at the luxurious Jumeirah Essex House located in one of the world’s most exciting city: New York. The ceremony will include awards from Argentina to Anguilla, including the U.S. and Canada. The “Europe & Green Awards” ceremony in October will be held at the most admired “Sage Gateshead” performing arts center and international award winning architectural building in the UK. The “Asia and Indian Ocean” awards will be held in Bangkok, capital of Thailand encompassing awards from New Zealand to the Maldives. ☒



AFZAL PARAMBIL, FATIMA MASCARENHAS, MARCO HEINRICH, MATHEW D’COSTA BRIGITTE JENS, JYRIKI NILSON AND JOHN FELIX MIDDLE EAST’S LEADING TOUR OPERATOR



WAYNE GARLAND, TURKS & CAICOS TOURIST BOARD



CREW MEMBERS OF ETIHAD AIRWAY FLIGHT, NATIONAL AIRLINE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



TONY AWARD WINNER MR. BEN VEREEN



MR GRAHAM COOKE, PRESIDENT, WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS, MR ALI AL HOSANI, ABU DHABI TOURISM AUTHORITY-MIDDLE EAST’S LEADING TOURIST OFFICE AND TATANA KUCHAROVA MS. WORLD 2006

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