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## World Travel Awards: time for celebrations

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: Fashion, food and filmy promotions danced to a heady mix of Indian music and Western sets, as the World Travel Awards' Indian debut sizzled at The Leela Palace Kempinski here on Friday night. India was crowned "Asia's Leading Destination" and The Leela Goa scooped the "Asia's Leading Resort" trophy, but the gathered international crowd had much to cheer with their own awards. The award ceremony for the Asia, Australasia and Indian Ocean trophies was packaged to entertain.

The World Travel Awards were described as the "Oscars of the Travel Industry." And so, Cathay Pacific had every right to be on top of the world as it grabbed the "Asia's Leading Airline" award. So did Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, after it was named "Asia's Leading Luxury Hotel Brand."

There was much more. Huvafen Fushi took the top honours as "Indian Ocean's Leading Spa," and the Maldives Tourism Promotion Board, Avis, Air New Zealand and Changi Airport Singapore were crowned the best of their kind in the region.

Hosted by model and actress Salome Narayana Polaki and stand-up comedian Sunil Grover, the show had over 200 travel professionals, VIPs and media representatives from 16 countries across the region. Mixing music with the multi-course dinner was a band playing indigenous jugalbandhi.

Dancers followed with a medley of Indian forms. Adding glitz and a touch of glamour, models from "The Royal House of Mysore" sashayed on the ramp. Here's what Graham Cooke, founder and president of the World Travel Awards had to say on the event: "India, as one of the Asia-Pacific powerhouses in the global tourism arena, proved to be the perfect host for the fourth leg of our 2007 Grand Tour."

### Winners

The winners of the Asia, Australasia and Indian Ocean Awards will automatically be put forward as nominees in their respective global categories. The world winners will be announced at the grand final, the Annual World Travel Awards Gala Ceremony at the Turks & Caicos in the Caribbean on December 12.

The World Travel Awards were conceived in 1993 to acknowledge and celebrate excellence in the world's travel and tourism industry.

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