

World Travel Awards kicks off Arabian Travel Market

MORE than a thousand of the Middle East's greatest travel companies are battling it out to be winners of the coveted World Travel Awards.

The grandest night of the region's industry year takes place at The Address Dubai Marina, on Monday May 3, immediately before Arabian Travel Market.

The awards, described as the 'Oscars' of travel and tourism, is pledged to help drive up standards of excellence and innovation in all sectors worldwide.

Marc Dardenne, CEO of Emaar Hospitality Group and Emaar Hotels & Resorts said: "The World Travel Awards is an international benchmark for excellence in the travel and hospitality sector and it is our honour to host this Middle East event at The Address Dubai Marina. We are confident that the modern facilities and impeccable service at the hotel will make the



World Travel Awards a memorable event for the travel sector."

Graham Cooke, founder and president, World Travel Awards, outlined why it was particularly appropriate the prestigious event should take place at The Address Dubai Marina saying: "The Address Dubai Marina is one of the most impressive meetings venues in the region, setting the bar higher than ever before. We are bringing the 2010 World Travel Awards to the hotel because, quite simply, it showcases the very best the region has to offer.

"Much has been said and written about the region in the past year and, like virtually every other area of the world, the global economic downturn has presented many challenges.

"But what commentators had not reckoned on was the extraordinary determination, skill and powerful marketability of the Middle East as an outstanding tourist destination.

"I'm delighted that this resulted in

a positive end to 2009 with encouraging developments continuing to buck the trend in 2010."

A total of 114 categories are on offer and nominated companies are now campaigning to attract votes from agents and other industry professionals. In addition to overall Middle East awards, there are awards for Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, Yemen, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujairah, Ra al-Khaimah and Sharjah.

The World Travel Awards recently unveiled the host destinations for its 2010 Grand Tour.

After a rigorous selection procedure, Dubai, UAE, Johannesburg, South Africa, Orlando Florida, US, Antalya, Turkey, New Delhi, India and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, all emerged victorious.

Each will stage one of the six World Travel Awards regional ceremonies, with victors progressing to the Grand Final in London, UK, in November. ■

Passport to prizes

TRAVEL Agents' Day is back at this year's Arabian Travel Market (ATM) giving participants the chance to win a host of prizes.

Travel agents should make sure to pick up their TTN-sponsored passport as they arrive at the show and then simply visit the exhibitors featured inside to discover the answer to a question and get the passport stamped.

All fully-completed passports will be entered into a prize draw at the end of Travel Agents' Day, which takes place on Thursday, May 6.