

# WINGS CHAMBER

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## WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS KICKS OFF ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET Who Will Be Crowned the Best?

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 industry year takes place at The Address Dubai Marina, latest addition to The Address Hotels + Resort's portfolio in Dubai. Opened in October 2009, The Address Dubai Marina overlooks the world's largest man-made Marina and has a prime location in one of Dubai's most popular lifestyle districts. The hotel is a modern business destination with access to the entertainment and other exciting components of Dubai Marina.

Viewed as the world's most coveted accolade for operators because of the unique international role of World Travel Awards, the event is on Monday 3 May, immediately before Arabian Travel Market.

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

Mr. Marc Dardenne, Chief Executive Officer 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. Apart from the waterfront location, one of the defining features of the hotel is its rich conference and meeting facilities. 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 E. Cooke, Founder and President, World Travel Awards outlined why it was particularly appropriate the prestigious event should take place at The Address Dubai Marina. "Because of its impressive range of state of the art conference facilities, this hotel is already carving a reputation for major events such as this," he said.

"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."

Cooke added that the Middle East, as it has consistently shown in the past few years, is raising standards for others to follow.

"The Middle East has demonstrated to the rest of the world how to provide stunning infrastructure, impeccable service and immense creativity to attract consumers. The eyes of the global industry are watching with interest to see who will be the winners."

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.

In the running for Middle East's Leading Airline are Emirates, Etihad Airways, Kuwait Airways, Middle East Airlines, Oman Air, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

There's also fierce competition for the title of Middle East's Leading Beach Resort. In the running are: Al Hamra Fort Hotel and Beach Resort, Ras Al Khaimah; Al Qasr at Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai; Beach Rotana Hotel & Towers, Abu Dhabi; Danat Resort Jebel Dhanna, Abu Dhabi; Inter Continental Al Bustan Palace Muscat, Oman; Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa, Dubai; Jordan Valley Marriott Resort & Spa, Jordan; Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Fujairah; Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa; Mina A'Salam at Madinat Jumeirah; One & Only Royal Mirage, Dubai; Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort, Oman; Sheraton Coral Beach Hotel & Resort, Lebanon; The Chedi Muscat, Oman; The Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Dubai; The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina, Dubai.

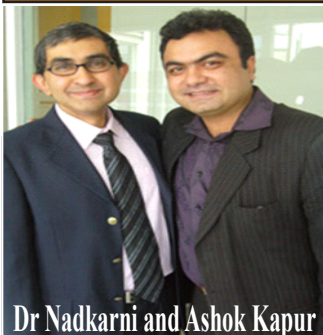
Contenders for Middle East's Leading Business Hotel are: Al Bustan Rotana Hotel, Dubai; Amman Marriott Hotel, Jordan; Crowne Plaza Hotel Dubai Festival City; Dusit Thani Dubai; Fairmont Bab Al Bahr; Grand Hyatt Amman, Jordan; Grosvenor House Dubai; InterContinental Abu Dhabi; InterContinental Amman, Jordan; InterContinental Dubai Festival City; Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Dubai; Le Meridien Amman, Jordan; Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai; Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Media City; Shangri-La Hotel Dubai; The Address, Downtown Dubai; The Fairmont Dubai; The Monarch Dubai; The Palace - The Old Town; and The Ritz-Carlton Doha, Qatar.

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**Dr Nadkarni and Ashok Kapur**

## The Challenges for India Outbound Tourism to ASEAN

**BANGKOK, 1 April 2010** The tourism industry in ASEAN is going weak at the knees and falling in love with India's rapidly expanding urban middle class.

If pesky issues of visas, food choices and prejudices can be overcome, the infatuation will grow into a long-term marriage of dependency and mutual respect.

Furthermore, Indian travel agents need to introduce Indian travelers to new products and experiences beyond trips to ASEAN's gateway cities for shopping and nightlife with quick add-on beach trips to Pattaya, Penang or Sentosa "to see and be seen".

These were some of the realities and issues emphasized by Dr Sanjay Nadkarni, Associate Professor at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management in Dubai. In his 29 March presentation entitled "Growth Drivers and Challenges for India Outbound Tourism to ASEAN," he told tourism industry leaders and students at Bangkok's College of Innovation at Thammasat University that if ASEAN's tourism destinations wanted to benefit from the Indian growth story they needed to create new offerings, sell them convincingly to the Indian travel agents and adapt to Indian needs.

Many Indian travellers to ASEAN destinations are first-timers. They are very dependent on travel agent advice. "When Indian travel agents say, 'I've been there,' it reassures the Indian traveller," said Dr Nadkarni.

However, many Indian travel agents only sell a limited number ASEAN packages. They are popular and profitable. Demand is high. So why change?

"We try our level best with travel agents to sell more than Bangkok and Pattaya," said Mr Ashok Kapur, CEO of Bangkok based Khiri Asia, which specializes in promoting holidays to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to Indian travel agencies. "We're trying to promote Chiang Mai and Cambodia, which has great hotels, entertainment and deep Indian cultural roots. It's quite difficult. Over 90% just want Bangkok plus Pattaya or Phuket."

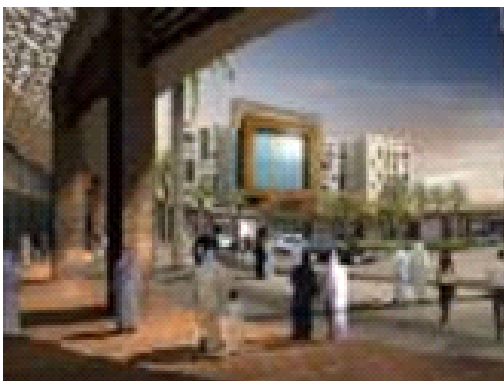
Dr Nadkarni told the audience there was huge new potential to be tapped in India's 2nd tier cities such as Hyderabad, Trivendrum, Ahmedabad and Amritsar. Cities with an affluent IT sector such as Bangalore and Hyderabad also have major potential for ASEAN destinations, even on long weekends in India.

The elusive single ASEAN visa for Indian tourists would drive growth and encourage more multi-destination holidays in ASEAN, but is unlikely in the near future, said Professor Walter

Jamieson, Director, Service Innovation Programme at the College of Innovation. "How ever, we are seeing steps towards joint visas for twin destinations that Indians often visit in tandem, such as Singapore and Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia," he observed. Dr Nadkarni noted that the number of Indian tourists taking more than one leisure trip a year was increasing at 16% annually, with the number of Indians taking three or more leisure trips increasing at a rate of about 200%. He noted that Indians are high spenders on shopping, prefer luxurious hotel properties and love to tell their social peers they have been to exotic locations such as Bali where a six-day holiday with flights can cost less than a domestic holiday to Goa or Kerala, which are both perceived as overpriced by many Indians.

Dr Nadkarni warned that the availability of an Indian chef can be a deciding factor when Indians book a group or MICE holiday. Many Indians are vegetarian for religious or health reasons. ASEAN destinations need to be aware that a group from north India will expect a different kind of Indian cuisine that a group from south India.

However, he noted that India was a good "all weather" market. "Indians tend to ignore travel advisories and will travel anyway. They have an innate sense of defiance," he said.



"ADNEC commences construction on landmark Al Ain Convention Centre district - Prestigious AED 3.5 billion project aims to boost Al Ain's potential as a business and lifestyle destination"



"La Martina welcomes 14 renowned polo players participating in Cartier International Dubai Polo Challenge 2010"

**KSA's outbound tourism rises, as increasing number of Saudis participate in specialised international conferences**

*Medical conferences in Bahrain, Paris and Barcelona highlight recent developments and practices in medicine and pharmaceutical industry*

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**Jean-Claude Baumgarten & Roger Dow  
WTTC AND USTA SIGN MEMORANDUM  
OF UNDERSTANDING**

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and the US Travel Association (US Travel) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, formally agreeing to share resources and to work closely together to promote the industry's interests.

"With so many issues affecting both WTTC and US Travel," said Roger Dow, the US association's President and CEO, "I am pleased that our two organisations, which share several of the same travel industry leaders as members, will work more co-operatively in sharing communications and research, as well as engaging more closely on future emergency preparedness issues to minimise the impact of future crises on Travel & Tourism. "We also look forward to working with WTTC on sustainability issues and other environmental concerns related to our industry," Dow added. "Our similar missions to increase Travel & Tourism, and promote awareness of industry-related issues, make this a natural move for our two organisations." In order to achieve these objectives, the two organisations will support each other's research, advocacy, communications and co-operative efforts.

"In addition to exchanging Travel & Tourism market data and information on marketing, e-commerce, emergency preparedness and sustainability," said Jean-Claude Baumgarten, WTTC President & CEO, "we will co-operate on developing a strategic plan to identify mutually agreeable industry advocacy platform positions.

"And we plan to expand channels for the exchange of WTTC and US Travel tourism studies and research," Baumgarten noted.

Last but not least, the two organisations will collaborate on mutually agreed meetings and events that will be held in the USA, or which are relevant to the US Travel & Tourism marketplace.



**ADNEC to advance Abu Dhabi's MICE development agenda at GIBTM 2010**

Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company (ADNEC) will support the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) in promoting the emirate's thriving meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) industry to the international markets during its participation in the GIBTM (Gulf Incentive, Business Travel & Meetings) Exhibition running from March 29 to 31, 2010 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre. GIBTM 2010 is a dedicated event for the MICE industry in the Gulf and Middle East region and will gather over 250 regional and international exhibitors for three days of networking and business.

Further, ADNEC will detail the alignment of its activities with both, the goals of local Abu Dhabi's 2030 Economic Vision, as well as the ADTA's 'Advantage Abu Dhabi,' (AAD) - a three-year initiative geared to encourage more business events in Abu Dhabi across 12 strategic sectors. "With 119 live events being staged at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre last year, 2009 was our busiest year yet. Under the guidance of our Chairman and Board of Directors, ADNEC is honoured to have made a key contribution in shaping Abu Dhabi's exhibitions and events industry," said Simon Horgan, ADNEC Group CEO.

"GIBTM provides an excellent platform for us to showcase our world-class offerings along with the other investments we are making to reinforce our

leadership in the regional business travel and meetings sector".

The Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre offers 73,000 sqm of prime exhibition space, inclusive of 12 halls totaling 55,000sqm. Hall 12 at the venue holds a permanent retractable seating system that can accommodate up to 6,000 seated and 8,000 standing visitors, which makes it the largest venue of its kind in the UAE. An 18,000 sqm visitor concourse is also available as event space within the venue, while 20 Capital Suites ranging from 82sqm to 236sqm in size offer fully-furnished meeting areas. Bigger corporate functions can be arranged at the 1,150sqm Conference Room A, which can accommodate up to 1,000 delegates, or at the 765sqm Conference Room B which can hold 600 attendees.

In addition, ADNEC has a 19,500sqm Water front Quayside marina linked to the venue via a 162m pedestrian bridge.

Further, ADNEC has the exclusive 1,500sqm Al Maa'rad Wedding Hall, a smaller 600sqm pre-function hall, a 150sqm Majlis and a luxury bridal suite, all of which combine to offer one of the most sought-after venues for weddings in Abu Dhabi.

ADNEC's AED 8 billion Capital Centre, comprising 7 hotels which are under development adjacent to the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, will further boost Abu Dhabi's prospects as one of the Gulf's top MICE destinations.

**"Bawadi Mall hosts exhibition on water conservation on World Water Day"**

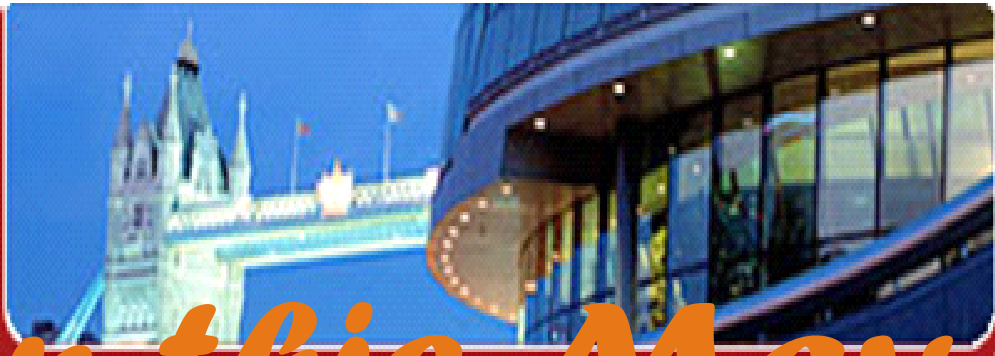


**"Bawadi Mall sees 200% footfall increase during GCC Traffic Week activities"**



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