

# WINGS CHAMBER

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WORLD  
TRAVEL  
AWARDS



## ABU DHABI CAPTURES LEADING DESTINATION TITLE FROM DUBAI

### World Travel Awards Unveils Who Are the Best of the Best

Abu Dhabi has walked off with the coveted title of Middle East's Leading Destination in a shock announcement at this year's prestigious World Travel Awards on Monday 3 May at the luxurious The Address Dubai Marina

The news means that Abu Dhabi is the first destination to seize the region's most sought after title from Dubai. Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority also scored as the region's Leading Tourist Board. Etihad Airways saw a night of honours too, taking home a series of major awards including 'Middle East's Leading Airline', 'Middle East's Leading Airline Economy Class', 'Middle East's Leading Airline First Class', 'Middle East's Leading Airline Inflight Entertainment', 'Middle East's Leading Cabin Staff' and 'Middle East's Leading International Marketing Campaign'. Dubai's Burj Al Arab was also successful, presented with the 'Middle East's Leading Hotel' award.

Guest of Honour at the region's most important night of the year was HH Prince Bandar Bin Saud Bin Khalid, who was presented with the 'Middle East's Leading Personality of the Year' award.

He was joined by more than 400 senior industry figures in the travel industry, including His Excellency Sheikh Faisal Khalid Sultan Al Qassemi, Her Excellency Dr. Rajiha Bint Abdul Ameer Bin Ali, Minister of Tourism of Sultanate of Oman, His Excellency Jamal Al Hai, Senior Vice President of Dubai Airport, Bernhard Bohnenberger, Chairman & Managing Director of Six Senses Resorts & Spas, John Bullough, CEO of Aldar Properties, Ali H. Lakhraim, President & CEO of Millennium Hotels & Resorts, Ahmed Al Mammari, Vice President of Royal Jet Group and Peter Baumgartner, Chief Commercial Officer of Etihad Airways.

Rotana Hotels & Resorts, Emaar and Safar Travel & Tourism triumphed at the ceremony. Rotana, in particular, made a strong show of force, winning an impressive total of nine awards, including the highly sought-after 'Middle East's Leading Hotel Brand'.

Emaar took the coveted title of 'Middle East's Leading Tourism Property Development Company'; Safar Travel & Tourism was awarded with 'Middle East's Leading Business Travel Agency' and 'Abu Dhabi's Leading Travel Agency', both for the second consecutive year. Atlantis The Palm, Dubai and Qatar Airways won awards for 'Middle East's Leading Resort' and 'Middle East's Leading Airline Business Class' respectively.

The Yas Hotel, Abu Dhabi was voted unanimously as 'Middle East's Leading New Hotel'. Another unanimous vote was for 'Middle East's Responsible Tourism Award', which went to Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa, Dubai

In addition to the overall Middle East winners, there were award categories too for Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Makkah, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, Yemen, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujairah, Ra al-Khaimah and Sharjah.

Key winners in the regions included AKMC-Al Shohada Hotel, awarded 'Makkah's Leading Hotel', Six Senses Zighy Bay, named 'Oman's Leading Resort' and Regency Travel & Tours, first in the new category of 'Qatar's Leading Travel Agency'.

The full list of winners for the World Travel Awards Middle East Ceremony 2010 can be found by logging on to <http://www.worldtravelawards.com/winners2010-10>

The World Travel Awards, now in its 17th year and the global travel and tourism industry equivalent of the 'Oscars', is helping to drive up standards of customer service and business excellence throughout the world.

"The Middle East is a shining example to the international industry, even in the challenging times that this region and destinations worldwide have been experiencing in the past two years", said Graham E. Cooke, Founder and President of World Travel Awards.

"World Travel Awards believes that one of the key priorities in travel and tourism is making sure that companies and organisations have the right type of skills and training to underpin the industry and help create new jobs and prosperity for the region. As the Middle East industry becomes more sophisticated, these jobs are inevitably becoming complex and high value" he said. "Skilled people are the lynchpin of the Middle East's future growth potential.

"No travel and tourism company cannot hope to be successful in these awards unless they offer unparalleled customer service", continued Cooke. "The key objective, however, is alleviating inconsistencies of delivery.

"Too often customer service quality can fluctuate and create real challenges in maintaining a reputation for excellence - but this is clearly not the case for our winners! Without exception, they have reliably demonstrated outstanding service.

"I want to congratulate them all. Their contribution to global tourism is truly remarkable. They should be justly proud of their achievements." The overall winners will now compete against the crème de la crème throughout the world at World Travel Awards Grand Final which will take place in London (UK) in November, immediately before World Travel Market.

## Helicopters flying further to repatriate passengers, says PremiAir

PremiAir, the UK's leading helicopter charter company, is flying its twin-engined helicopters almost shuttle style between London and Dublin for executives stranded by the continuing closure of controlled UK airspace owing to Iceland's volcanic ash cloud. Since Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April the company has also carried out flights to and from Germany, Belgium and Paris, that is until the French ATC stopped all VFR (Visual Flight Rules) traffic.

"We had an idea to position a few helicopters over in Calais to bring people back to the mainland, but have been prevented to do that since the closure of French airspace," said Neil Gibson, PremiAir's Head of Charter and Management.

PremiAir grounded its helicopter fleet on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning but resumed commercial flying Friday afternoon after undertaking its own risk analysis and after in-depth dialogue with the engine manufacturers on its Twin Squirrel and Sikorsky S76 fleet. PremiAir also took advice from its own inhouse meteorologist and the company is constantly monitoring the situation. PremiAir is operating with some strict operational restrictions - flying its helicopters at lower altitudes. Flying VFR or under VMC (Visual Meteorological Conditions) is flying in weather conditions clear enough for the pilot to see where the aircraft is going



## Glamorgan Cricket penalty confirmed as 1 point

In accordance with 2009 regulations, Glamorgan Cricket were penalised 2 points in respect of the pitch used for their home Friends Provident Trophy match against Essex on 12 May 2009 that was rated "poor". Also in accordance with regulations, that penalty is carried forward to the replacement or equivalent competition in the following season. That competition has previously been determined as the Clydesdale Bank 40. In the light of the fact that in comparison with the 2009 Friends Provident Trophy only half the teams in the 2010 Clydesdale Bank 40 will qualify for the knockout stages of the competition, it is confirmed today that having reviewed an appeal by Glamorgan Cricket, to maintain a penalty of equivalent weight the ECB has confirmed the penalty as a 1 point deduction

# Premier Inn forges ahead with expansion by breaking ground at ADNEC's Capital Centre

242-room hotel being developed at a cost of AED 120 million will support ADNEC's busy programme of events



Premier Inn, the UK's biggest value for money hotel brand, has begun building its first hotel in Abu Dhabi and fourth in the United Arab Emirates, at a prime location within ADNEC's Capital Centre, marking further progress in the roll out of Premier Inn's aggressive regional expansion.

The new hotel to be ready by September 2011 will have 242 rooms, with the cost of development reaching AED120 Million.

Darroch Crawford, Managing Director of Premier Inn Middle East said, "We are delighted to have secured this prime plot in Capital Centre. Capital Centre's excellent infrastructure and proximity to Abu Dhabi's superb new events facility makes it an ideal location for Premier Inn".

Capital Centre, master-planned by ADNEC (Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company) is a micro-city of 23 mixed-use towers, including seven hotels. The development is adjacent to the gravity-defying Capital Gate tower, and the Gulf's largest exhibition centre, the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, which staged over one hundred events last year.

Simon Horgan, CEO of ADNEC Group said: "ADNEC is very pleased to support Premier Inn's debut project in Abu Dhabi. The thriving Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre is an engine for the Capital Centre development and as the

number and range of events we attract continues to expand, the need for a balanced portfolio of on-site accommodation requirements will increase. I am confident that ADNEC's plans to further develop the site will ensure that leading hospitality providers such as Premier Inn will benefit from being located in one of the most commercially viable destinations in Abu Dhabi."

The new hotel in Abu Dhabi, with its 242 rooms, will offer everything that a traveller would expect from a Premier Inn. All rooms come with en-suite bathrooms and are capable of comfortably accommodating a family of up to four. The hotel will also offer a contemporary restaurant (Bedouins), a bar (The Retreat), and a Costa Coffee outlet. A podium sundeck will feature a swimming pool and whirlpool spa.

Premier Inn already has three other hotels in the UAE, at Dubai Investments Park, Dubai Silicon Oasis and Dubai International Airport. With its new property in Abu Dhabi, Premier Inn continues to buck the trend of holding all activity until the market picks up. Instead, the company is forging ahead at a phenomenal pace with its aggressive regional expansion plans continuously demonstrating their commitment to being the number one budget hotel brand in the region. Premier Inn already has three other hotels in the UAE, at Dubai Investments Park, Dubai Silicon Oasis and Dubai International Airport. With its new property in Abu Dhabi, Premier Inn con

tinues to buck the trend of holding all activity until the market picks up. Instead, the company is forging ahead at a phenomenal pace with its aggressive regional expansion plans continuously demonstrating their commitment to being the number one budget hotel brand in the region. Fast transforming the region's value for money hotel market, Premier Inn provides a unique business model by offering excellent facilities with unrivalled customer service and consistent value for money, even during periods of high demand.

Crawford concluded, "Demand from travellers to the UAE seeking high quality budget hotel accommodation has been growing over the last few years and we believe we offer the best value proposition in the market without compromising on service."

Premier Inn is part of the Whitbread group in the UK and accounts for 70% of the group's profits. Results from a Morgan Stanley corporate travel survey suggested that hotel operators are likely to see another year of weak hotel prices in 2010, with revenues per available room (revpar) forecast to fall by 4 per cent in the US and 2 per cent in Europe. Despite this forecast and the economic climate, Premier Inn continues to buck the trend with its shares continuing to rise on the FTSE 100. This performance has allowed Premier Inn to push ahead with expansion plans in the region.



# GIFT GUIDE

## London Oxford Airport rallies to get Britain flying Will open for a continuous 48 hours when-go ahead come

In support of the UK aviation recovery plan, London Oxford Airport is putting plans in place to open for a continuous 48 hours as soon as it is notified that controlled airspace (IFR) becomes accessible. The airport has contacted all its resident business aviation operators and is also offering the airport up for use by commercial regional airlines who may need to provide additional services to

bring home stranded passengers from around Europe.

London Oxford Airport can handle aircraft up to Cat 6 size - large turboprops such as the Bombardier Q400 and BAE 146 Series regional jets, together with business jets up to the size of a Global Express and Gulfstream 5, as well as helicopters.



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# ICT TO HAVE ST. REGIS HOTEL AT NATION TOWERS

*Uniquely Located on Abu Dhabi's Corniche, The St. Regis Abu Dhabi will be within the Nation Towers Development*

International Capital Trading announced that its luxury development on the Corniche Nation Towers will have a St Regis Hotel. The news comes as the construction of the two towers is gathering pace.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (NYSE: HOT) has extended its development pipeline in the Arabian Gulf with the announcement of a second St. Regis hotel in the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

The St. Regis Abu Dhabi, will be located on the Corniche in downtown Abu Dhabi as part of the Nation Towers mixed-use development. Located at the top of one of the towers beginning at the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor, the hotel will feature 281 luxurious guest rooms, including 56 suites, signature restaurants, a connecting bridge restaurant, more than 4,800 square meters of ultra modern meeting and event space and over 3,000 square meters of dedicated health club with an outdoor swimming pool. Guests will also enjoy a beach club adjacent to the hotel which will also be operated by Starwood.

Owned by International Capital Trading, The St. Regis Abu Dhabi will dominate the Abu

Dhabi waterfront offering extensive views over the Gulf in a location that is both central to the business district and directly on the Corniche.

Located just a short drive from the recently opened F1 circuit, Ferrari museum, Gary Player-designed golf course and the Louvre, Guggenheim and Maritime museums, The St. Regis Abu Dhabi will provide an entrance into a captivating world of opulence offering a unique expression of its location.

The St. Regis Abu Dhabi is Starwood's fifth project currently in development in the Middle East, including The St. Regis Doha, The St. Regis Bahrain, The St. Regis Hotel & Residences Dubai, and The St. Regis Hotel & Residences Sa'adiyat Island, the latter representing the brand's resort debut in Abu Dhabi.

Mr Hamad Abdulla Al Shamsi, Chief Executive Officer of ICT said " ICT is proud to partner with the St Regis brand for its flagship development on the Corniche of Abu Dhabi. The signing marks another milestone for ICT who announced last year the award of the construction contract for the project. The combination of ICT's prime location Nation Towers development together

with the world class St Regis brand will provide arguably an unique luxury hospitality experience in Abu Dhabi"

"The announcement of our second St. Regis in Abu Dhabi is another sign of Starwood's commitment to developing its brands in the key destinations of the Middle East, where customized service is an integral part of the culture of hospitality," said Roeland Vos, President of Starwood Hotels & Resorts in Europe, Africa and Middle East. "We are honored to build on our existing relationships in Abu Dhabi and we are confident that this project will be another prestigious addition to our portfolios of luxury hotels."

Guests of The St. Regis Abu Dhabi will enjoy uncompromising personal care by the legendary St. Regis Butler Service. Available around the clock, St. Regis butlers take pride in attending to every detail and specification.

As the market leader in the region, Starwood currently operates more than 45 hotels throughout the Middle East with more than 20 projects in development.

## Federation of Indian Export Organization FIEO appealed to Government to immediately suspend export of raw cotton

### Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry launches "Cleopatra's Boutique Spa for Men" *Health club combines business & entertainment to form new social venue for Chamber members while promoting comprehensive development*

The Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has today (Monday, April 19, 2010) inaugurated a health and spa facility for its male members at its headquarters in Al Taawon, Sharjah, in the presence of H.E. Sheikh Sultan Bin Ahmed Bin Sultan Al Qassimi, Chairman of Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority. The new facility was built in co operation with Cleopatra's Boutique Spa, a leading health and wellness franchise in the UAE. The opening of the Spa was also attended by the SCCI Chairman Ahmed Mohammed Al Midfaa; SCCI Director General Hussein Mohammed Al Mahmoudi, SCCI; Saeed Obaid Al Jarwan, Second Deputy Chairman, SCCI; board members; senior businessmen; and management representatives from various companies. The new health club, which combines business and entertainment to provide a relaxing venue for socialization, is one of the major initiatives being introduced by SCCI to foster closer ties among its



businessmen members. The collaborative project with Cleopatra's Boutique Spa for Men reflects the Chamber's commitment to provide members with different kinds of services and facilities, create an environment that reduces work stress, and reinforce both social and professional communications within Sharjah's business community.

SCCI Chairman Ahmed Mohammed Al Midfaa, said: "This new health club is a unique initiative that integrates business, entertainment, and relaxation. It will significantly enhance communication and interaction between our members and enhance the outlook for Sharjah's investment

environment. This project reflects the Chamber's commitment to uplifting its modern vision through the delivery of high-class services to businessmen. Our strategic goal here is to create an integrated environment that can drive comprehensive development in Sharjah and throughout the UAE".

SCCI Director General Hussein Mohammed Al Mahmoudi said: "Our new facility will help visiting businessmen achieve a healthy balance in their lives through the use of modern world-class facilities that include all kinds of sports and health equipment. Therapeutic amenities such as a jacuzzi and spa are aimed at soothing stress and fatigue, while areas for squash, billiards and indoor swimming will keep our members highly entertained".

The Cleopatra's Boutique Spa for Men will operate from 7 am to 10 pm to fit the varying schedules of businessmen and maximize the daily use of the facility's services.



Tourism Authority of Thailand

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# Beauty has an address - Oman Oman's Summer Campaign Launched

Oman's Tourism Minister launches Oman's largest summer campaign in the GCC backed by the Ministry of Tourism, Oman Air and the Sultanate of Oman's leading hotels. The campaign includes trade workshops, shopping mall promotions across the GCC, and will be backed by an aggressive media campaign that consolidates Oman's marketing theme: *Beauty has an address ~ Oman*. The campaign runs from May to 1 October 2010, with sales through *Oman Air Holidays* and travel agencies.

ATM Dubai: Speaking at the campaign's launch, Her Excellency Dr Rajiha Abdul Ameer Ali, Oman's Minister of Tourism said "Oman's Summer Campaign is a highly competitive industry-wide initiative. The Ministry, Oman Air and our leading hotels/resorts and apartments have crafted packages for affordable short-breaks, family and leisure holidays. The packages are based on heavily discounted air fares, attractive accommodation rates, and include all taxes, with the incentive of an extra day free for a weekend or longer booking" she said. The campaign highlights Oman's continuing focus on integrated campaigns with key stakeholders. The campaign covers city-based accom-

modation, regional getaways, as well as Salalah's Khareef season.

Peter Hill, Oman Air's Chief Executive Officer said "ATM was the right place and time to launch the campaign because our GCC trade partners can see first-hand that we have packages that put Oman in the reach of all GCC segments. For our part, Oman Air has contributed heavily discounted air fares on all its 130 services per week between GCC destinations and Oman. It has never been more affordable to visit and enjoy Oman".

Oman's new tourism hotels and experiences (Six Senses Zighy Bay Resort and Spa's hide-away retreat, Swiss Bel's Masirah Island Hotel and Marriott's Hotel and Spa at Salalah) have joined the campaign.

Mr. Hill said "Oman Air's new services to Ras Al Khaimah (from 2 May) will provide better access to Zighy Bay from Muscat while additional services will be added for holiday makers to Salalah's Khareef and Tourism Festival".

## Major UK Carrier bmi Contracts with ARINC

Annapolis, Maryland, USA, April 27, 2010  
ARINC Incorporated has been awarded a Type B network communications contract by UK based bmi, the second-largest airline operator at London Heathrow International Airport and part of the Lufthansa Group, to provide external Type B messaging.

Under a contract awarded on March 3rd 2010, ARINC will provide its *AviNet*® Type B network service and a suite of Type B messaging applications to support worldwide Sales, Cargo and Passenger operations for bmi, bmi regional and bmibaby. Deployment is expected to be complete during May 2010.

ARINC's solution will optimize bmi's Type B environment with several efficient user applications. These will include ARINC's *AviGate*™ messaging hub that stores, routes, and forwards both Type X and Type B messages; *AviNet Xmail* service, which integrates IATA Type X Messaging with Type B and E-mail; and *AviNet MQ*, a cost-effective solution for Type B messaging on public networks with secure data transmission and encryption.

"ARINC has provided us with a solution to meet our requirements, both now and for the future," said Dave Edmunds, Head of IT Service, bmi. "They have also given us the flexibility to react quickly to changes in our market place."

"The award of this contract by bmi represents a major endorsement of ARINC's Type B messaging service," said Andy Hubbard, ARINC Aviation Solutions Director Europe, Middle East and Africa. "We believe our *AviNet* solution will provide bmi with a superior Type B messaging environment, as well as the most efficient messaging tools available to cover all of their communications requirements."

ARINC's comprehensive solution gives bmi the ability to "smart-route" internal Type B message traffic for added operational efficiency and lower cost. The *AviNet* messaging applications will also allow bmi to phase in the use of modern XML messaging at their chosen pace, as XML increasingly becomes an industry standard.

The second largest airline at London Heathrow, bmi operates passenger services to destinations throughout the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa.

bmi's global reach is further extended by membership in the Star Alliance network with 19,700 daily flights to 1,077 airports in 175 countries. bmi is committed to using the latest technology including E-ticketing, Online Booking and Self Check-in at both the airport and via the Internet, all with the aim of helping to smooth and speed up the pre-flight experience. The airline already boasts one of the best punctuality records of any airline operating in the UK and is committed to further enhancing the passenger experience. bmi is part of the bmi group which also comprises bmi Regional, operating business flights between UK and European destinations, and bmibaby, a low cost airline operating flights to UK and European destinations from four domestic bases. The bmi airlines are 100 per cent owned by LHBD Holding Limited. For more information, visit [www.flybmi.com](http://www.flybmi.com).

ARINC Incorporated, a portfolio company of *The Carlyle Group*, provides communications, engineering and integration solutions for commercial, defense and government customers worldwide. Headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland with regional headquarters in London and Singapore, ARINC is ISO 9001:2008 certified.

For more information, visit the website at [www.arinc.com](http://www.arinc.com).

## Taos, New Mexico: A New Center for the Renaissance of the Ancient Labyrinth

*This Summer Taos Invites Visitors to Return to Sacred Places A Tool for the Contemplative Practice of Walking Your Spiritual Journey*

*In this region of the American Southwest where spiritual traditions have been practiced uninterrupted by the Taos Pueblo Indians for at least 1,000 years, another ancient tradition is gaining acceptance; the contemplative use of the labyrinth.*

*Found in cultures spanning the globe, the earliest known labyrinth design was discovered on a clay tablet in Pylos, Greece, dating from 1,200 BCE. The Greek isle of Crete is also known for its labyrinth, the maze used to entrap the mythical Minotaur. During the Middle Ages labyrinth designs were incorporated into the floor patterns of Europe's grand cathedrals, most notably in Chartres, and in the Renaissance, "branching" garden mazes became popular in the palaces of royalty. [LabyrinthSociety.org/](http://LabyrinthSociety.org/)*

*Today, labyrinths are being constructed around the world as a tool for personal growth and spiritual transformation. Practitioners use these sacred, earth-based paths to conduct walking meditations, focusing on an issue or concern that is addressed through contemplation or prayer.*

*This Summer in Taos, eight labyrinths will be available to walk, without charge, in connection with the town's "Return to Sacred Places" travel destination theme. Beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>, and continuing through October, visitors are invited to be part of the reawakening of this spiritual tradition.*

*"New Mexico is one of the centers for this transformative spiritual energy," says Sandra Wasko-Flood, visionary artist and founder of The Living Labyrinth Center for Peace. <http://www.livinglabyrinthforpeace.org> "And Taos, with its 1,000 year old Pueblo, is at the heart of this blossoming Renaissance."*

*Wasko-Flood is curating many of the labyrinth-related activities including a photo exhibit of labyrinths from around the world that was first exhibited in the rotunda of the US House of Representatives in Washington, DC.*

*Rev. Wayne Mell, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Taos, is also an advocate for this form of walking prayer and has supported the construction of a labyrinth in the church's front yard that will be dedicated on July 18. "Walking the labyrinth can be symbolic of a journey to the sacred center," he says. "It's a practice that can appeal to all ages and faiths, as more and more people explore their spiritual pathways."*

*Katherine Costabel, who with her husband own the Adobe and Pines B&B, have constructed a beautiful 66-foot diameter labyrinth made of 4,670 pieces of slate and rimmed by 225 native plants. Having experienced her first labyrinth in Sedona, Arizona, Ms. Costabel believes that walking the path reminds one of her earthly journey. "Take something into the circle," she says. "Walk, think and pray and see if you can come to a conclusion." [Wwww.adobepines.com](http://Wwww.adobepines.com)*