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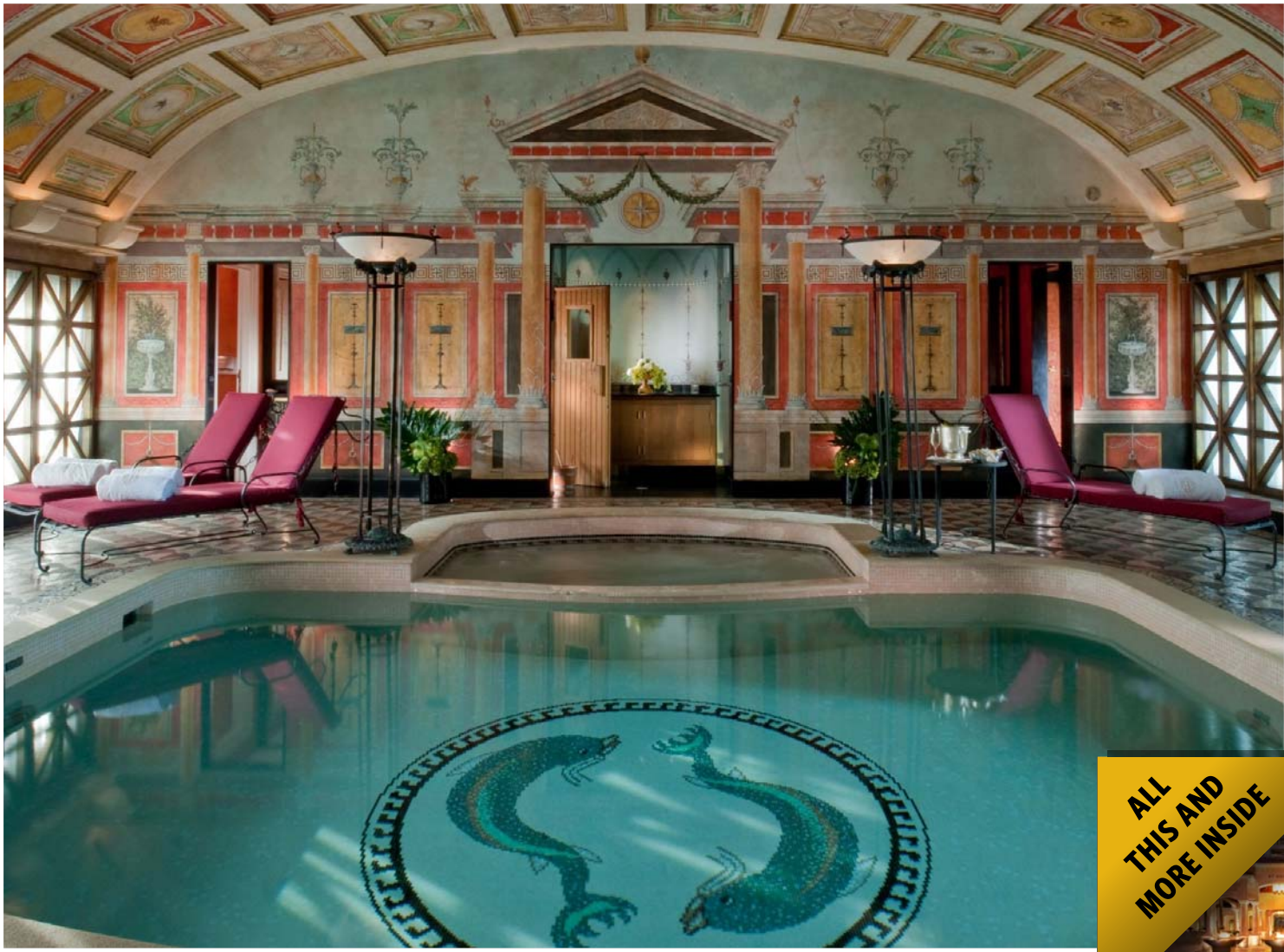
An overview of the latest developments in the region



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GIBTM gets christened IBTM Arabia

The former GIBTM show was recently christened IBTM Arabia with a new location.

The event will now be held at the St Regis Hotel Saadiyat Island Resort from 10-12 February 2015.

The key features of IBTM Arabia 2015 includes an exclusive, closed door event format based on mutually matched business appointments, more touch points for exhibitors and buyers.

In addition to an all-inclusive pricing structure, the new event will also accommodate a one-to-one ratio of hosted buyers and exhibitors.

"The new concept is a result of



10-12 February 2015
Abu Dhabi

feedback to us from key industry stakeholders including those from private and public sectors, as well as other professional MICE organisations," said Lois Wilcox, exhibition manager, IBTM Arabia.

IBTM Arabia will feature up to 200 exhibitors, who will be able to meet with same number of planners representing the regional and global MICE industry - 50% regional and 50% international, from Asia Pacific, Europe, North

America and South America.

The name change also provides synergy with the other shows within the IBTM Global Events portfolio.

"The unique concept for the Middle East's leading MICE event is now similar to IBTM America, IBTM India and IBTM Africa, although the latter two are table top events, the content and concept is virtually the same.

One of the integral changes is that we have now effectively levelled the playing field," said Wilcox. IBTM Arabia is held with the support of Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau.

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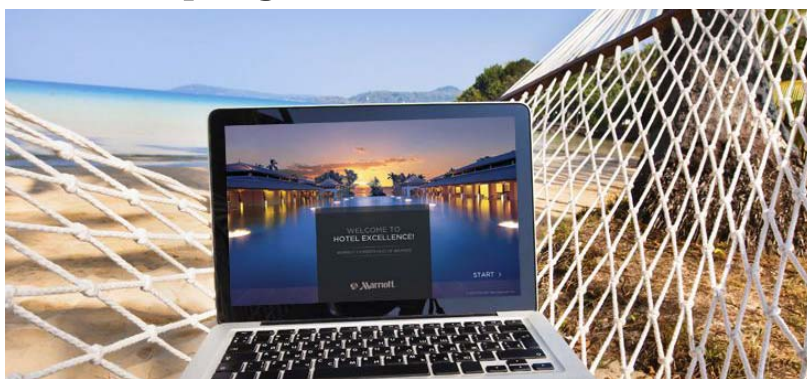
Marriott updates its HE! programme

Marriott International Inc has updated its Hotel Excellence! (HE!) training programme to help professional travel agents in this ever-changing travel industry.

The program features tutorials and a technology platform to bring continuing education to agents in a flexible and convenient format.

The updated HE! programme provides a broad overview of the hotel industry, while at the same time educating agents about Marriott's innovations and expanded portfolio.

Specifically, the training includes



information around transformation of the flagship Marriott Hotels brand, as well as details on the company's newest hotel brands

– the Autograph Collection, AC Hotels by Marriott, Moxy Hotels and Protea Hotels.

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Westin announces global health partnerships



Westin Hotels & Resorts recently unveiled details on its year-long Westin Well-Being Movement with addition of two new nutrition-focused partnerships with SuperChefs™ and The Juicery.

The newest member of the brand's Well-Being Council is also dietician Ashley Koff RD.

In a bid to highlight wellness and healthy eating, Westin has teamed up with SuperChefs, a group of doctors, dentists, dieticians, chefs and other experts to educate kids on importance and fun of eating smart.

The extensive new menu includes eight signature dishes created and tested by kids.

Costa

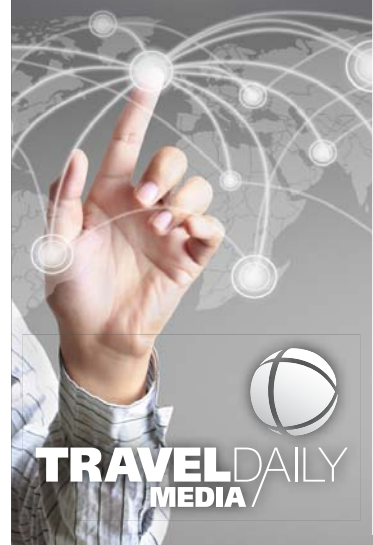
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flynas adds flights to Tabuk, Ha'il, Al-Qassim



flynas announced launch of new domestic destinations from King Khaled International Airport.

The airline effective 23 September will commence operations with one flight daily to Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Airport in Tabuk and an average of four flights per week to Ha'il international Airport.

In addition, the airline will operate daily flights from King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah to Prince Naif Bin Abdulaziz Airport in Al-Qassim starting from beginning of October 2014. As part of its 2020 strategy that targets transporting 20 million passengers a year by 2020, the has recently begun to expand its operations both domestically and internationally.

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Agents' guide



ADDF revenues up for H1

Abu Dhabi Airports announced its half year results recording a sale of AED 487.9 million.

This represents a rise of 11.5% compared to first six months of 2013 (AED 437.6 m). The total number of transactions in the period was just over two million, 12.8% higher than the first half of 2013.

A number of new retail outlets opened in the first half of 2014, including 2 new multi category Duty Free stores in the newly opened Terminal 3 Bus gate facility & Pier, refurbished UAE souvenir stores in both Terminals 1 & 3, and

introduction of a new 'Fragrances of the World' store in Terminal 1.

New developments and openings have contributed to growth in sales, with top performing categories being fragrances, luxury fashion and jewelry.

Abu Dhabi Airports' chief commercial officer Mohammed Al Bulooki said: "The continuing improvements and additions of new retail outlets at Abu Dhabi International Airport are clearly making their mark on the company's commercial revenues.

Passengers here benefit from a wide array of shopping, food

and beverages, and entertainment services that are available.

This will continue, with more brands expected to open in Abu Dhabi International Airport and take advantage of its growing status as a world leading global transportation hub."

During the period, Abu Dhabi Airports formally commenced the tender process for retail and F&B concessions at the Midfield Terminal Building, which is making rapid progress and will have an annual capacity of 30 million when it opens in 2017.

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Norwegian to acquire Prestige Cruises



Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings has confirmed it will acquire Prestige Cruises International, the parent company of Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

A definitive agreement has been reached for the US\$3.025 billion purchase, in a move that will allow Norwegian to offer a range of different brands targeted at different sectors of the market, similar to rivals Royal Caribbean and Carnival Corporation.

Oceania operates five ships with destination-focused cruises while luxury cruise brand Regent Seven Seas has three all-suite ships with a fourth to be delivered in summer 2016.

"The acquisition of Prestige represents an extraordinary opportunity for Norwegian Cruise Line to expand our market presence by adding two established, award-winning brands in the upscale cruise segment with loyal followings," said Kevin Sheehan, Norwegian's CEO.

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Royal Jet offers exclusive access too Milan Fashion Week



Royal Jet chaired by His Excellency Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan is offering the public a seat at the Milan Fashion Week showcasing the Spring/Summer 2015.

The special package includes a preview of collections from the top designers, a private shopping event and five-night experience.

The exclusive tour

includes private jet flights with Royal Jet through the VIP terminal, occupancy in luxury accommodation, car transfers, exclusive fashion designers hosted dinners, VIP access to a minimum of three Prêt à Porter Spring/Summer 2015 collection shows, private shopping events and invitations to the leading designers' parties.

Royal Jet Luxury Vacations (RJLV) has exclusive access to the designers' shows and has arranged private shopping events at Prada, Valentino, Etro, Gianni Versace, Roberto Cavalli and Giorgio Armani.

Taking place between 18- 23 September 2014, the tour is only available for up to a maximum of 18 ladies.

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Ethiad Airways opens a nursery

Ethiad Airways opened an aviation-themed nursery in Abu Dhabi for its employees.

The new nursery joins a range of services provided to the airline's employees to support their welfare and wellbeing, including the recent ambulance service, full-service medical centre, accommodation assistance and education support.

The Etihad Airways nursery was officially opened by Ray Gammell, Etihad Airways' chief people and performance officer.

Gammell was joined by Moza Al Shoomi, director of the child's department at Ministry of Social Affairs; Sue Jones, Kids Academy UK Founder; Khalifa Faraj Bin Hamoodah, Kids Academy UAE chairman and Samantha McClements, Kids Academy Group nursery director.

"The new on-site nursery will provide quality of care for children,



while helping our working parents and their families to balance roles and responsibilities of parenting with demands of full-time work," said Gammell.

As well as a nursery, the facility also operates an out-of-hours 'stay and play' crèche service.

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Oman Air conducts emergency exercise



Oman Air recently held an ultra-realistic full-scale emergency exercise in Muscat, involving all the airline's emergency facilities and teams.

The exercise was coordinated from Oman Air's emergency response centre, testing every area of the airline's operations and required participants to function in capacities that would be expected of them in a real aircraft accident.

It also aimed to promote preparedness by rehearsing and testing Oman Air's Emergency

Response Plan, conduct operational tests of facilities, equipment, IT hardware and software, and evaluate the internal and external mechanisms for delivering support to victims and their family members.

The airline has invested significantly in emergency preparedness and this exercise was the latest in a series. The national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman prepares to expand its current fleet of 30 aircraft with delivery later this year of the first of 20 new planes.

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EYE ON EUROPE

New London island airport plans ditched



The UK's Airports

Commission has rejected plans to develop a new London hub on an island in the Thames Estuary. The project, dubbed 'Boris Island' as it is being championed by London's mayor Boris Johnson, has been ditched in favour of the expansion of Heathrow or Gatwick airports.

Rather than having a single London hub, the commission ruled that "a system of competing airports" would better serve the needs of British travellers. The Board of Airline Representatives (BAR) added that airlines were "never convinced" by the island plan.

Rome doubles tourist tax



Rome has doubled its tourist tax. Effective immediately, a family of four staying at a four-star hotel in the Italian capital will now have to pay EUR96 (US\$126) in tax, compared to just EUR48 previously. The move has been criticised by the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA), not just for

the increase but also for the speed of implementation. "The finances of Rome must be in a desperate condition for them to resort to such a move. Five weeks' notice is an abject admission of failure in financial planning," said ETOA's CEO, Tom Jenkins.

Greece expects tourism boost after tomb discovery



Tourism authorities in Greece are anticipating an increase in visitor arrivals after a major archaeological discovery was made in the country. Locals and visitors are reportedly flocking to the Amfipolis site where an ancient tomb dating back from the 4th Century BC has been unearthed. And the Greek

National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) believes the discovery has sparked renewed interest in Greece's classical history. An excavation of the site, which is close to Thessaloniki, has uncovered two sphinxes flanking a flight of steps.

Emirates accelerates European growth



Emirates is moving forward with its European expansion plans, with the launch of a new route to Oslo following the recent start of Airbus A380 services to Frankfurt. The direct Dubai-Oslo route commenced this week and will now operate daily using a Boeing 777-300ER aircraft. And Emirates will further expand in Europe in the next two

months, with the launch of flights to Brussels on 5 September and direct services to Budapest on 27 October. The Dubai-based carrier now flies to 36 European cities.

London continues to drive European hotel development



London continues to see the strongest level of hotel development in Europe. According to the latest data from STR Global, the UK capital now has 5,110 new hotel rooms under construction, ahead of Istanbul (4,798 rooms) and Moscow (3,301). Five other European cities have more than 1,000 rooms currently being developed, including Amsterdam (2,020), Hamburg (1,678), Berlin (1,315), Munich (1,127) and Vienna (1,093). Including properties under construction and in the planning stages, Europe now has a pipeline of 910 hotels comprising 145,244 rooms.



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QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The new on-site nursery will provide quality of care for children, while helping our working parents and their families to balance roles and responsibilities of parenting with demands of full-time work”

Ray Gammell, Etihad Airways’ chief people and performance officer

China, India plan joint rail bid

Chinese and Indian companies are working on a joint bid for five high-speed railway projects in India. The China Daily reports that the Indian conglomerate Tata is in talks with an unnamed Chinese company about the bid for the high-speed rail projects. It is believed the Chinese partner could be bullet train manufacturer CSR Corp, although there is no confirmation of this. CSR has previously worked with Tata. “We like to use China’s technology and products because they are proven to be reliable and the cost is relatively low,” Vinayak Deshpande, managing director of Tata Projects, was quoted saying. “When the new Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India will make great efforts on railway construction and urban infrastructure, it brings big opportunities for Chinese companies.” Plans are also being considered to create new high-speed rail links between China and India, via Myanmar. Currently there are no high-speed rail lines in India, but the new government has pledged to develop a network of modern services across the country, starting with a bullet train link between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

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Coral Beach Resort attains HolidayCheck quality certificate

The Coral Beach Resort in Sharjah recently received a quality certification from HolidayCheck Switzerland. The HolidayCheck Quality Selection 2014 certificate of recommendation was presented to Jean Pierre Simon, regional general manager, Northern Emirates, Coral Hotels & Resorts by HolidayCheck CEO, Gilles Despas and head of B2B, Georg Ziegler. Simon said: “Peer reviews online are a key selling tool and sites such as HolidayCheck are growing in importance with their hotel listings



complemented by comments.” The Coral Beach Resort features 156 rooms along with varied dining options. The resort also offers the Rimal Club, children’s pool, indoor playroom and Kid’s Club as well as tennis (By Clark Francis Tennis Academy) and two outdoor swimming pools.

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