

# DUBAI

Volume 5

# Meeting

## DCB goes live...

The new Dubai Convention Bureau website – [www.dcb.ae](http://www.dcb.ae) – is up and running, aimed at addressing every event planners' requirements when assessing Dubai as a destination.

The user-friendly site, the result of comprehensive research during the past year, provides an interactive service with enhanced facilities including venue search with mapping tool, a better planners' tool kit, marketing tools and sample itineraries for incentives and a one-click RFP form with a 24-hour response guarantee.

Other features include DCB team contacts, event calendar of future and past events, confirmed congresses for Dubai, and the DCB schedule of participation in industry exhibitions and events; a

comprehensive venue directory covering both hotels and stand-alone facilities, plus an image and news gallery.

Basic Dubai information is also included with details on travel, local public holidays, maps and more, plus useful web links to relevant government bodies and useful private company links.

Fast and reactive, the site emphasises the assistance DCB can provide with bids, convention planning, building attendance, onsite event service and destination and incentive information.

"Our resources enable DCB to specify bid criteria, research any market and

source endorsements from key regional contacts for any congress event as well as liaising between local government and industry." said DCB director, Jerad Bachar. "We provide a one-stop shop for organisers."

Further information is also provided on the Dubai Bid Alliance, the collaboration between both public and private sector stakeholders that provides meeting professionals with a bid package tailored to their requirements.

Visit [www.dcb.ae](http://www.dcb.ae) for more information.

## DCB brings more educational opportunities to Dubai

DCB hosted an INCON industry seminar in Dubai this past March. INCON, a group of professional congress organizers, held their annual board meeting in Dubai and at the same time, also volunteered speakers for an industry seminar. The event was attended by 80 delegates from Dubai based hotels, DMCs and PCOs.

Members of the INCON executive committee, Roslyn McLeod, arinex pty limited and Robin Lokerman, Institutional Division, MCI comprised the esteemed panel of guest speakers, in addition to Mustafa Gurbuz – Serenas

Tourism, Jerad Bachar - DCB, Sumaira Isaacs – MCI, Rob Nicholas – NPI, Medhat Nasser – Meeting Minds, and Gillian Taylor – ADTA.

The objective of the seminar was to continue to grow the professionalism and competitiveness within our marketplace by exchanging information and transfer knowledge and experience between colleagues, particularly sales and marketing staff.

The Dubai Convention Bureau is committed to further develop and increase Dubai's share of the International MICE market and special events, and has successfully partnered with; ICCA, MPI, IAPCO, ASAE and DMAI, all international associations who foster a global community for the meeting industry for such programmes.



## Towering success

The unveiling of the world's tallest building in January has sparked intense visitor interest, offering up a new perspective on Dubai's growth as well as a host of venue possibilities for event organisers.

The 800-metre Burj Khalifa at Downtown Dubai has smashed many records including those of the highest number of storeys, highest outdoor observation deck on the 124th floor and the tallest elevator service.

Five years in the making, it will host 12,000 people in apartments, offices and the hotel. It has 57 elevators, and took 22 million man hours to construct using more than one million sq feet of double glazed glass.



## Dubai Airlines stretch their wings

Announced for 2010, Emirates Airlines new routes include Tokyo, Amsterdam, Prague, and Madrid.

Three new destinations have joined the flyDubai network, with services now available to Bahrain; Baku, Azerbaijan, and Kathmandu, Nepal.



## Education focus at GIBTM

Three themes formed the core of the education programme at this year's GIBTM, which took place in the UAE at the end of March.

Event Planning Day included sessions on CSR and special events as well as a presentation by Ali Alsloom, president of Embrace Arabia, who looked at key cultural considerations (*see feature in this issue of Meet in Dubai*).

The Big Industry Research Day featured the launch of the 2010 Middle East Trends Report as well as presentations from SITE and MPI, while Industry Trends Day focused on content in meetings, inter-cultural training, technology and event trends.

Initial unaudited figures saw record numbers of Hosted Buyers, over 260 from 40 countries, up 10% on 2009. A total of around 7,500 meetings took place with the 220 exhibitors – up from 6,390 last year.

Further information on [www.gibtm.com](http://www.gibtm.com)

## ATM attracts business

The region's largest travel trade show, Arabian Travel Market (ATM), concluded earlier this month in Dubai racking up record figures with a 15 per cent rise in exhibitors to more than 2,100 and visitor figures up three per cent.

Billed as the most important ATM to date, given the challenges facing the travel industry following a year of global uncertainty, organisers Reed Travel Exhibition said the figures reinforced the signs of an upturn through the Middle East.

"Arabian Travel Market serves as a barometer to the health of both the regional and international travel and tourism markets," said Mark Walsh, group exhibition director, Reed Travel Exhibitions. "To put on one of the most significant ever instalments of this show, in the midst of some of the toughest economic conditions we have faced, speaks volumes about the Middle East's ever-important role as a catalyst for positive business potential, our industry's resilience and perseverance and the scope for future growth."

Regional tourism bodies and private sector companies represented a 15 per cent increase over last year's ATM figures, highlighting the area's credentials and the investment put in place to capitalise on future market potential.

"The UAE and the wider GCC has a critical part to play in driving forward the international travel industry's future," added Saleh Mohammed Al Geziry, DTCM director overseas promotions and inward missions.

"Dubai, within that context, continues to be a major player and through the utilisation of top-tier events such as ATM, we are well placed to showcase the emirate's diverse tourism portfolio to the international community and build strong business bridges that will be pivotal in long-term sustainability."

## Construction begins on The World Islands

Following reclamation work that has shaped the archipelago of islands offshore from Dubai, Kleindienst Group has become the first developer to commence construction on its project on The World.

Work began in February on Germany Island as part of six-island Heart of Europe development, and company chief executive Josef Kleindienst has promised that the first villas on The World will be visible by the end of the year – and that he expects the islands will become the most prestigious real estate in the emirate.

In addition, construction will also start shortly on the group's Monte Carlo island – touted as a 'party island' – with an aim to open beach, pool, restaurant and event facilities in time for New Year's Eve 2010.

## Stay and play offers from DFC

Following its takeover of the Al Badia championship golf club, InterContinental Hotels Group at Dubai Festival City has enhanced its meeting credentials with addition of an outdoor venue with capacity for up to 500 on The Lawn as well as four additional meeting rooms.

According to director of sales & marketing, Christian Pertl, the new venue complements existing

facilities at DFC which include more than 1,000 hotel rooms in three properties, a 3,800 sq metre Event Centre with two ballrooms plus a waterfront promenade and forthcoming marina.

"Meetings are a key segment for us, around 25 per cent, and it is our flexibility that makes us stand out – with a location on the waterfront but in proximity to the international airports," he said.

## Winning formula

The start of 2010 has seen another Dubai icon revealed as the Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse hosted its first race of the season in the run-up to the Dubai World Cup in March.

More than 1.6km in length with accommodation for 60,000 race goers, the grandstand contains the world's first trackside five-star hotel – The Meydan – a museum and gallery, IMAX theatre and corporate suites designed not only for race days but also as venues for meetings and incentives.



## Dive, dive, dive

As well as shop until you drop, The Dubai Mall has added an extra twist to its urban attractions – Cage Diving.

The Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo there now offers visitors the opportunity to jump in to the 100 million litre tank in a six-person cage using only snorkelling gear, and get up close and personal with more than 70 different marine species including 400 sharks and rays.

Also available are shark dives, glass bottom boat rides and a 270-degree walk-through tunnel experience.

## Jebel Ali Hotel reopened

Following a five-month extensive refurbishment, the 260-room Jebel Ali Hotel at the Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa complex has reopened with new-look rooms, public areas and meeting facilities.

The resort, one of Dubai's first located to the south of the city, features a new conference centre with six fully equipped meeting rooms that can accommodate conferences for up to 700 delegates, now including the latest technology in communication techniques, audio and visual aids.

The resort, which covers 128 acres, also offers outdoor event space for up to 2,500 on its beachfront lawns.



## Airport continues growth

Passenger traffic at Dubai International Airport rose 9.2 per cent in 2009, cementing its position as the world's fastest growing airport with a total of 40.9 million passengers, up from 37.4 million last year.

"Dubai Airports is setting the pace globally. Dubai International's performance as one of the world's fastest growing airports in 2009 is particularly impressive considering the traffic contraction seen globally," said Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, chairman of Dubai Airports and chief executive of Emirates Airline.

Only three other airports around the globe reported growth in 2009 – Cairo, Istanbul and Kuala Lumpur – according to figures from Airports Council International

Seven months of double-digit increases in passenger traffic at the end of last year are expected to be followed by a further increase of 13.6 per cent in 2010, with a total of 46 million passengers expected to pass through Dubai International Airport.

"Dubai International has capacity for 60 million passengers per year, and that will increase to 75 million passengers when Concourse 3 is completed in 2012," said Paul Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports.

## Taller and taller

As well as the world's tallest tower, another record-breaker launched in Dubai recently when the Rose Rayhaan by Rotana opened its doors on Sheikh Zayed Road. Upon opening, it has been certified as the tallest hotel in the world by the Guinness Book of World Records.

The 72-floor hotel features 482 rooms and suites as well as meeting facilities that include four board rooms and two multi-function rooms that can be divisible in two and cater for 150 delegates theatre-style.

## Playing around...

With the opening of the second of four designer golf courses at Jumeirah Golf Estates, Dubai now boasts seven 18-hole championship golf courses, and visitors can look forward to even more choice in future as the final two debut and the much anticipated Tiger Woods' Al Ruwaya resort in unveiled this year with its lush landscaping, stunning water features, boutique hotel and clubhouse.



## NEIGHBOURHOODS IN DUBAI

### Marina magic...

*As Dubai expands beyond its traditional city and beach environs, new neighbourhoods are opening up offering an exciting mix of restaurants, retail, entertainment and accommodation, and one of the most vibrant is the Dubai Marina beyond Jumeirah Beach*

One of the first big projects developed to extend the attractions of the emirate, Dubai Marina is a place where sleek mega yachts contrast with the 200+ soaring skyscrapers and a daily menu of new venues are opening up.

With easy access to the Mall of the Emirates and Ibn Battuta Mall, as well as the Emirates Golf Club, Madinat Jumeirah and the new Gold Souk, Dubai Marina offers a prime location for both leisure and business visitors ... as well as a lifestyle that epitomises the best of what Dubai has to offer.

Coffee and pastries overlooking the tranquil marina waters; a sundowner cruise with sightseeing potential around The Palm Jumeirah; a feast of eating options and market stalls at The Walk, fantastic Gulf views and evening cocktails at a sky-high observatory, or an early morning stroll along the sands are all part of the mix.

The site of many of Dubai's beach hotels including Le Royal Meridien and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi, Ritz-Carlton, Hilton Jumeirah, Habtoor Grand, Sheraton Jumeirah, and the newly opened Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach, it was primarily seen as a deluxe beach enclave, but recent development has seen the area become one of most lively night spots as well as a potential event venue with additional hotel and apartment accommodation as well as meeting rooms.

Around the Marina, Radisson Blu, Dusit, Nuran, Tamani, Grosvenor House, Marriott and, most recently, The Address are among the full-service hotel and residence options, many of which also offer up meeting venues with a difference.

At The Address Dubai Marina, located next to the new Marina Mall, extensive conference facilities and one of the region's largest ballrooms are key features – the 900 sq metre Constellation Ballroom overlooks the marina and can accommodate up to 1,000 guests while the foyer includes an outdoor terrace for pre-function.

The 200-room hotel also has 15 additional meeting rooms all with a 55-inch LCD display screen, a conference concierge desk, centralised coffee break area, business lounge with free Wi-Fi.

For waterside events, the Dubai Marina Yacht Club occupies a prime location astride the promenade with eventual capacity for 500 yachts, but landside facilities are equally impressive including the Aquara seafood restaurant, a cafe bistro, marine retail shopping arcade and the Al Dana meeting rooms covering 200 sq metres with capacity for up to 200, plus a rooftop garden terrace for small events and the 13-metre Athena Dubai motor yacht for offshore meetings and sunset cruises.

Across the beach-side of the marina, The Walk is currently making waves as the hotspot of Dubai as its myriad shops, cafes and restaurants open up and more use is made of its 1.7km of beach promenade – with free jazz concerts during the recent Dubai Jazz Festival and a heritage village set up for the Dubai Shopping Festival.

Described as the 'first outdoor seaside retail avenue' in Dubai, and reminiscent of South Beach in Miami, the 40 towers of Jumeirah Beach Residence provide a stunning backdrop for the buzzy atmosphere of beachgoers, family groups, couples and those seeking a convivial nightspot.



## Armani Hotel Dubai

The newly opened Armani Hotel Dubai is located within Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building that is set in the 500-acre Downtown Dubai neighbourhood. Described as the new heart of the city, Downtown Dubai also features The Dubai Mall, the world's largest shopping and entertainment destination and The Dubai Fountain, the world's tallest performing fountain.

Having a dedicated 'Grand Entrance,' the hotel features 160 luxuriously appointed guest rooms and occupies the concourse level to Level 8 and Levels 38 and 39 of the tower.

The hotel is home to 8 outlets – including three fine dining restaurants; the world's first in-hotel Armani/SPA, Armani/Privé, an upmarket night club; Armani/Ballroom, a 30,000 sq ft conference and banquet facility; and Armani/Pavilion, an outdoor multifunction area. Also first to the region are three unique retail outlets: Armani/Dolci, Armani/Fiori and Armani/Galleria.

# CULTURAL DUBAI

## Embracing the culture

Organisers are increasingly looking to imbue their events in Dubai with a cultural flavour of the region – a tactic that can reap rewards in terms of both business and pleasure

Aided by the emirate's dynamic transformation in to a 21st century metropolis, visitors can tend to forget the origins, history and traditions of the local citizens, or Emiratis.

But, according to cultural ambassador and presenter Ali Alsloom, an introduction to Emirati culture is beneficial in promoting the region, helping visitors understand, appreciate and enjoy their trip to modern Arabia, and can also help in the basic conduct of business here.

"It is an education process," he stressed. "We are in the Middle East, in the Gulf, an Arabic and Islamic nation ... and to address this you can take one of two directions."

"Either ignore it totally, forget the cultural issue secure in the knowledge that the UAE is a liberal and modern state and there are no worries in bringing an event here ... which is, in fact, what the majority of event planners do.

But, said Alsloom, a brief insight in to the culture should be essential to invest any event with a sense of place: "Why travel if you are not coming for authenticity, otherwise you could be in a five star international hotel or shopping for international brands in a modern mall in any destination."

One particular pet peeve is the showpiece of many events – the dune dinner with attendant belly dancer: "What individual tourists generally tend to take away from here are images of skyscrapers, sand, shisha pipes and belly dancing, but these last two are traditions from other Arabic destinations in different regions outside the gulf and are not particularly Emirati.

"We do want to meet expectations, but, for instance, we have a variety of scenery too with mountains, islands, coast and oases and it is not all about sand."

Apart from balancing the image of Arabia with reality, Alsloom has a serious point to make about how a little knowledge of local traditions can go a long way to ease the path of social and commercial interaction.

"It's not just about how to hold a coffee pot and shaking your cup when you have had enough, but also about our history, heritage, understanding, appreciating and accepting the people and the leaders as culture does affect business," he said.

"There are social niceties as body language is key, and there are distinct ways to say 'no' or interpret the signs if someone is saying 'no' to you or your proposal, for instance – and perhaps a dignitary might not turn up at an event, but organisers should know that might be because alcohol is involved."

Greetings and hand shaking, national dress code, marriage and Ramadan customs, the five tenets of Islam are among the most questioned topics, and Alsloom said there is a growing demand from corporations, event planners and government bodies to spread the cultural message – one that then makes potential visitors feel more secure about their trip.

It's an avenue explored for more than a decade by the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, headquartered in Bastakiya area of Dubai that offers guided tours of the Jumeirah Mosque and cultural breakfasts in its courtyard – famously visited by former US President George W. Bush in recent years.

Alsloom also offers cultural tours with his Embrace Arabia operation, inspiring & cooperating with local Emiratis to guide visitors around the museums, souks and sights of Dubai.

"For many, this might be the only opportunity to interact with a local," he said. "It's the only way to gain a cultural insight."

## Upcoming Congresses in Dubai

Event	Number of Delegates	Year
World Allergy Organization	3000	2010
TAFI Annual Congress	1000	2010
Microsoft TechEd	1500	2011
Human Genome Organization	1000	2011
Union of International Public Transport	4000	2011
International Diabetes Federation	15000	2011
International Bar Association	5000	2011
Congress of International Hospital Federation	2000	2011
Interferry	800	2011
APCO World Congress	500	2011
ISACA Asia Pacific Annual Conference	500	2011
Interferry	800	2012
Microsoft TechEd	1500	2012
World Congress of Cardiology	10000	2012
Microsoft TechEd	1500	2013