

CHANGES IN MALTESE TOURISM



The tourism industry in Malta has had its ups and downs in recent times. On the one hand, December last year saw an impressive 15% increase in inbound tourism on the previous year, but on the other hand, this only disguised the fact that numbers were down 4% for the whole of 2006. There were positive results from the British, Italian and Dutch markets, yet negative ones from France, Austria and Norway. Taking into account that around 370 million Europeans venture abroad to other European states every year, spending huge amounts of cash as they travel, this element of the Maltese economy has to be addressed with a note of seriousness. What exactly are the Maltese tourist organisations planning to do in order to increase revenue from foreign visitors?

With competition amongst the Mediterranean nations always fierce in the tourism market, it sometimes takes extra-special measures and originality to get into pole position. This is precisely what the Maltese have set about doing. Chinese and Maltese internet experts have been working together recently to create a new marketing 'supersites' website. The website is unique as it contains only professional videos which not only advertise places to visit in Malta, but also lists local services and where exactly to find them. Local businesses are naturally enthralled by the launching of the new pages. The site is powered and optimised by the most powerful search engines. Each video remains there for one year and the site has so far been a success in terms of the amount of visitors it has received.

On a more local scale, the Maltese are aiming to enhance their agricultural and eco-tourism fields. In the capital, Gozo, farmers are trying to tempt tourists to visit their farms in order to try out the traditional methods of milking and shearing sheep. While this is, of course, not certain to be successful, it is certainly something different from what neighbouring nations have to offer.

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