

'Night of the Year' for Europe's Tourism Industry



Europe's top destinations and leading travel companies will gather under one roof on Friday 1 October at the Rixos Premium Belek, Antalya, Turkey.

All will be hoping to walk away with the most sought-after achievement in the travel and tourism industry - the World Travel Awards Europe Gala Ceremony trophies.

The awards, described by the Wall Street Journal as the 'Oscars' of the global travel and tourism industry, has helped improve quality, value and customer service over the past 17 years.

Nominees include some of the most respected and successful travel names in the business including Europcar, TAP Portugal, Turkish Airlines, Hilton Hotels, Lufthansa, Hertz, Mardan Palace, Tui Travel, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, and The Rocco Forte Collection.

The evening, attended by the region's major company CEO's, tourist board chiefs, association leaders and Government Ministers is set to be a spectacular affair.

Entertainment for the evening comes in the form of the world-famous 'Fire of Anatolia' dance act. This stunning cast of 45 dancers step, stomp and swirl to traditional folk music from the Black Sea to the Balkans. Traditional Turkish dancing with a collaboration of ballet and modern dance, the performance is backed by swirling Turkish music and drumming. Fire of Anatolia also holds the Guinness World Record for the fastest dance performance with 241 steps per minute.

Hosting the event is Seda Akgul, a familiar face on Turkish TV including TV8. Other entertainment on the night includes The Magic Drifters.

European nominees are among 5,000 nominated companies across more than a 1,000 categories, including airlines, cruise companies, destinations, resorts and hotels in 162 countries.

The highly contended title for Europe's Leading Airline sees Air France, Alitalia, British Airways, Iberia, KLM, Lufthansa, SAS Scandinavian Airlines, Swiss International Airlines, TAP Portugal and Turkish Airlines fighting it out for the coveted title.

Meanwhile, competition is rife among the countries up for Europe's Leading Destination. The contenders are Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Crete, Dublin, Dubrovnik, Istanbul, Lisbon, London, Pafos, Paris, Prague, Rome, Tallinn, Venice, Vienna and Vilnius. Italy has the highest odds being the only country to have two destinations nominated.

Going head to head for the title of Europe's Leading Marketing Campaign are: Expedia.com, "Where you book matters"; Spanish Institute of Tourism, "Spain, a country to share"; STA Travel, iPhone campaign; The Hans Brinker Budget Hotel Amsterdam, "The Worst Hotel in the World"; Thomas Cook, 2010 Marketing Campaign; Visit London, "Only in London"; Visit Denmark & Expedia, Joint

Campaign and Yorkshire.com, "Welcome to Yorkshire".

But it's the struggle between hotels, large and small, that are likely to see the fiercest competition.

Battling it out for the highly sought after title of Europe's Leading Hotel are Aquapura Douro Valley, Portugal; Castel Monastero, Italy; Ciragan Palace Kempinski, Istanbul, Turkey; Donbass Palace Hotel, Ukraine; Dubrovnik Palace Hotel Conference Centre & Spa, Croatia; Grand Hotel Lienz, Austria; Hotel Le Bristol Paris, France; Hotel Ritz Paris, France; Lešić Dimitri Palace, Croatia; The Ritz-Carlton Powerscourt, Ireland and White Pod, Switzerland.

Leading the way in hotel sustainability, the following nominees are all eager to gain the coveted title of Europe's Leading Green Hotel: Apex City of London, England; AquaCity Poprad, Slovakia; Ariston Hotel, Italy; Bedruthan Steps Hotel, England; Chateau Mcely, Czech Republic; Choupana Hills Resort & Spa, Madeira; Hotel FOX, Denmark; Ice Hotel, Sweden; Kolarbyn Eco-Lodge, Sweden; Radisson SAS Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland and Strattons, England.

In addition to overall Europe categories, there are awards for 57 countries including: Andorra, Belgium, England, France, Greece, Iceland, Monaco, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey and more.

Travel industry professionals throughout the world have been voting online for their preferred companies and organisations during the past four months. Voting has now closed and votes counted ready for the big night.

Consumers increasingly use the list of winners as a reliable guide and means of reassurance when choosing their holiday. Companies and destinations that finish up on the winners podium, receive extensive commercial benefits and global profile.

For a full list of nominees for Europe log on to worldtravelawards.com/nominees.

Rixos Premium Belek, the leading resort hotel in Belek's Ileribasi district will be hosting the event. Main sponsors include Turkish Airlines and World Mobi.

Winners of the Europe Gala Ceremony go through to the final of the World Travel Awards in London on Sunday 7th November, immediately prior to World Travel Market.

About World Travel Awards

The World Travel Awards was launched in 1993 to acknowledge and recognise excellence in the world's travel and tourism industry. Now celebrating its 17th Anniversary, the awards is regarded as the very highest achievement that a travel product could ever hope to receive. Votes are cast by 183,000 travel professionals which include travel agencies, tour and transport companies and tourism organizations in over 160 countries across the globe.

Votes are cast globally by fellow industry professionals in over 1, 000 different categories.

Attended by senior executives from major travel companies, operators and destinations, WTA events are universally respected as providing established, top level networking opportunities, regionally and globally.

The World Travel Award's official list of worldwide media partners includes: BBC World News, eTurboNews, Breaking Travel News, CNBC Arabiya, Khaleej Times, Trav Talk, Trade Arabia, TTN, Travel Daily News International, Focus on Travel News, New Focus Travel Magazine, Tourism Review, JAX FAX, Travel & Leisure, Travel & Leisure Golf, Xenios & Xenios World.

Contact

Lauren Brady, T: +44 020 7872 5643, E: lauren.brady@worldtravelawards.com

www.worldtravelawards.com

About Turkish Airlines

Being established in 1933 with a fleet of only 5 aircraft, Star Alliance member, Turkish Airlines is today a 4-star airline company with a fleet of 145 aircraft flying to 166 destinations around the world, comprising 39 domestic and 127 international destinations. Turkish Airlines is a member of the Star Alliance network which was established in 1997. Overall, the Star Alliance network offers 21,200 daily flights to 1,172 destinations in 181 countries

Contact

Fusun Ilkay, T: +90 536640 0808 or +44 7958 508510, E: fusunilkay@thy.com

About Rixos Hotels

Rixos Hotels, established in 2000, is one of the world's fastest growing, luxury hotel chains. Dedicated to offering traditional Turkish hospitality and a unique spa experience in the finest surroundings and luxury ambience, the Antalya based group currently owns and operates 7 premium resorts & villas and 5 city hotels in countries as diverse as Turkey, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Libya.

The Rixos portfolio of exceptional properties is sited in prime and historic locations. With more than 6,000 staff serving 12 properties, the Rixos Hotels have developed an innovative guest experience that blends the best of the new and old. Designed to offer a unique luxury long stay experience, the Rixos villas are beautifully furnished. Tailor-made service with private butler and concierge is the ultimate choice of the world's most distinguished travelers. At the heart of every Rixos hotel is a revitalizing Wellness and Spa Center with an authentic Turkish Hammam, offering a unique spa treatment, menu and atmosphere.

Rixos Hotels is continuing its rapid growth with particular focus on Eastern and Middle Europe, the Mediterranean Coasts, North Africa and the Arabian Gulf region. The group's vision and mission is to become a brand leader in the premium global hospitality industry.

Contact

Gamze Kocer, T: +90 507 290 06 90, E: gamze@manifestopr.com.tr

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