

Middle East's Travel "Oscars" Revealed



Etihad Airways, Jumeirah, Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, Raffles and Royal Caribbean were among the names to emerge victorious at World Travel Awards 2011 Middle East Ceremony, held at the Armani Hotel Dubai on 2 May 2011.

The industry's elite - including CEOs of leading travel companies, government ministers and tourist board chiefs - attended the glittering gala event, which was headlined by Lebanese pop sensation, Elissa.

The Armani Hotel Dubai offered guests the opportunity to sample the ultimate in hospitality lifestyle, amid the magnificent setting of Burj Khalifa, the tallest skyscraper in the world.

Hailed as "The Oscars of the Travel Industry", World Travel Awards is acknowledged across the globe as the ultimate travel accolade, and celebrates those brands that are pushing the boundaries of industry excellence.

More than 462 organisations across the Middle East, spanning more than 125 categories entered the competition.

Etihad Airways was one of the big stars on the night, walking off with an impressive four awards, including the blue riband category "Middle East's Leading Airline", as well as "Middle East's Leading Airline First Class", "Middle East's Leading Airline Inflight Entertainment" and "Middle East's Leading Cabin Staff".

Meanwhile, Dubai's miraculous rebound coupled with its insatiable eye for invention led to the emirate being voted "Middle East's Leading Destination" as well as "Middle East's Leading Meetings and Conference Destination".

Abu Dhabi's continuing rise to tourism stardom was rewarded too as it took home a host of top honours, including "Middle East's Leading Tourist Board" and "Middle East's Responsible Tourism Award".

On an individual level, HRH Prince Al Waleed bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud was honoured as "Travel Personality of the Year" for the Middle East for his contribution to the global hospitality sector, which includes backing what is set to become the tallest building in the world, the mile-high Kingdom Tower in Saudi Arabia.

Graham E Cooke, President and Founder, World Travel Awards said: "The Middle East was the perfect region to mark the start of the World Travel Awards 2011 Grand Tour, setting the bar for the rest of the world to raise the standards of excellence in travel and tourism."

Voting is still underway for Europe, Africa and Indian Ocean, Asia and Australasia and The Americas. Regional events will take place later this year in Antalya, Turkey; Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt; Bangkok, Thailand and Montego Bay, Jamaica. The Grand Final will follow at the end of the year.

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 18th anniversary, the awards are 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: ABTA Magazine & ASTA Network Magazine, Breaking Travel News, CNBC Arabiya, eTurboNews, Khaleej Times, L'Agenzia di Viaggi, Trav Talk, Trade Arabia, TTN, Travel Daily News International, Focus on Travel News, New Focus Travel Magazine, Tourism Review, JAX FAX, Passport Magazine, Travel & Leisure, Travel & Leisure Golf, Xenios & Xenios World.

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About Armani Hotels & Resorts:

Armani Hotels & Resorts was established in 2005 under an agreement between Giorgio Armani S.p.A. and Emaar Properties, with the objective to develop, own and operate an exclusive collection of hotels, resorts and residences in the world's most important cities and holiday destinations. Armani Hotels & Resorts plans to open at least ten hotels and resorts within the next ten years.

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