

# EUROPE'S NIGHT OF TOURISM TRIUMPH



It was a night of elation - and some disappointment - at this year's World Travel Awards Europe Ceremony held in Antalya, Turkey on Friday 1st October.

The industry's top brass - including CEOs and directors of leading travel companies, government ministers and tourist board chiefs - all gathered to battle it out at the most important evening of the year in European travel and tourism.

Although it's been a tough year for aviation on the continent, there have been a few notable exceptions. Turkish Airlines picked up the award for "Europe's Leading Airline Business Class" following 12 months in which it posted record profits, grew market share and continued its global expansion. Meanwhile, KLM's unrivalled air travel experience in the face of such a tough market led to it being voted "Europe's Leading Airline".

The luxury sector continues its recovery, led by two of Turkey's brightest hospitality stars - Mardan Palace won "Europe's Leading Luxury Hotel" and Cornelia Diamond Golf Resort & Spa collected "Europe's Leading Luxury Resort".

And there was even more good news for Turkey, which also walked away with "Europe's Leading Meetings & Conference Hotel" for Rixos Sungate, "Europe's Leading Tourist Board" for the Turkish Culture and Tourism Office and "Europe's Leading Destination" for Istanbul.

Europcar received the award for "Europe's Leading Car Hire" for an incredible eighth year running. P&O Ferries was awarded "Europe's Leading Short Sea Ferry Operator", Lisbon was crowned "Europe's Leading City Break Destination" and Easyjet took away the trophy for "Europe's Leading Low-Cost Airline". The award for "Europe's Leading Marketing Campaign" went to 'Welcome to Yorkshire'.

The biggest applause of the night was saved for the Special Achievement Award which this year was presented to Talha Görgülü for his outstanding achievement within the Turkish travel industry. His "A Group" Travel Agency, Kayitur, brings millions of tourists to Turkey while his charter operation SKY Airlines now flies to 50 destinations with a fleet of 17 state-of-the-art aircraft. In 2006, he set a new benchmark for style, not just in Turkey but worldwide, by opening the Adam & Eve hotel in Antalya.

There were awards too for travel companies, organisations and destinations in over 50 individual countries across Europe.

Swissotel Krasnye Holmy Moscow won the award for "Russia's Leading Hotel", Minos Imperial Luxury Beach Resort & Spa took away the title for both "Greece's Leading All-Inclusive Resort" and the "Mediterranean's Leading Family Resort". Leopolis Hotel was awarded "Ukraine's Leading Hotel" and Grace Santorini received the award for "Greece's Leading Boutique Hotel".

VIPs in attendance included Ilhan Açıkgöz, President of GETOB; Sururi Çorabatir, President of AKTOB; Çemil Uğurlu, President of Betuyab, Andres Erm, CEO of Leopolis Hotel; Talha Gorgulu, Kayi Group Chairman; Tahir Gorgulu, Kayi Group CEO and General Manager of Sky Airlines. Jason Ngoben, Executive Director of Economic Development for City of Johannesburg; Hamdi Topcu,

Chairman of Turkish Airlines and Mohammed Al Amiri, CEO of Amiri Consultancy.

The world-famous Fire of Anatolia dance act provided the entertainment for the evening as the stunning cast of 45 dancers stepped, stomped and swirled to traditional folk music from the Black Sea to the Balkans. Hosting the event was Turkish presenter and journalist Seda Akgul. Other entertainment on the night included The Magic Drifters.

### **Thousands Voted**

The winners were selected with the help of thousands of industry professionals worldwide who have been voting online.

Graham E. Cooke, Founder and President of World Travel Awards said that in addition to the prestige for their respective companies and destinations, the winners also gain considerable commercial benefit.

“Because of its global reach and reputation, World Travel Awards is unique and regularly referred to as the ‘Oscars’ of travel and tourism”, said Cooke. “This means that consumers are increasingly using our portfolio of winners as a reliable and independent guide when booking their travel.”

Established 17 years ago, the awards are committed to raising the standards of customer service and overall business performance throughout the international industry.

“What is so encouraging is the strength demonstrated by European travel and tourism in the face of adversity. Tonight’s winners represent the cream of the industry, and those players that are leading the continent’s recovery,” he added.

Winners of the regional ceremony will now go on to compete in World Travel Awards 2010 final in London, immediately before World Travel Market on Sunday 7 November.

Log on to [www.worldtravelawards.com](http://www.worldtravelawards.com) for a complete list of winners for the European region.

### **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 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: 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.

### **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

#### 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 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.

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