

The Slovenian Convention Bureau

Step Out of the Stereotype

The Slovenian Convention Bureau currently has 48 members, including convention centres and hotels, professional conference organizers (PCO's) and destination management companies (DMC's), the Ljubljana Convention Bureau and other related service providers. In a new series of articles, we take a look at their plans for 2007, their views on the past year and see what they are doing to attract more foreign guests.

By IGOR DRAKULIČ

We Are in the Centre

"Although we were reasonably satisfied with our 2006 results, we would like to see the Slovenian Convention Bureau be more aggressive in attracting bigger international conventions," said Mrs Nina Turuk from the sales and marketing department of Ljubljana's Hotel Lev. The hotel depends on event organizers and agencies to bring MICE events to Slovenia, which helps fully utilize its capacity. In 2007, the Hotel Lev will host six large conventions and seminars, each with more than 200 participants: the IOSOT Congress in July (the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament); the 34th annual meeting of the European Finance Association (EFA) in August; the 15th International Symposium on High-Voltage Engineering (ISH) in August; the annual conference of the International Association for Research in Economic Psychology (IAREP) in September; the 25th annual meeting of the European Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (ESOPRS) in September; and the IMMCA conference in September. "We intend to focus on effectively promoting our services, facilities and offerings at specialized trade fairs and markets. Our investments will be centred on technical equipment and education

for our technical staff. The Hotel Lev has 11 convention halls and can host events with up to 380 participants. Ljubljana and the Hotel Lev are ideal event destinations; the hotel is within walking distance of the city centre, we are hospitable and professional and MICE guests are the focus of our strategy," added Mrs Turuk.

Be More Courageous

Hoteli Bernardin (Portorož) organized more than 300 events of varying sizes in 2006 and, notably, this included a greater number of foreign events. Their business results met expectations. "We are particularly pleased with the fact that our traditional events continue to evolve and strengthen. In 2007, we intend to invest further in staff education, audio and video equipment upgrades and some facility improvements - all targeted towards



Matjaž Žnidaršič

offering the highest standard of service possible. We would like to send a message to potential guests; be more courageous when selecting a destination for your event. Step out of the stereotype of the well-known European destination. Choose Slovenia, where we consistently surpass every expectation of event organizers and participants - regarding our professionalism, flexibility

and hospitality as well as the country's natural beauty and uniqueness," said Mr Matjaž Žnidaršič, Hoteli Bernardin's sales and marketing director. ■

GO.MICE

Mr Gorazd Čad, a board member of the Slovenian Convention Bureau and former director of marketing for Hotel Mons, has established a new business tourism agency. The GO.MICE agency will focus on communication solutions in business tourism and educate



Gorazd Čad

companies on how to effectively organize conventions and other events. The agency will also provide MICE services (Meetings - Incentives - Conventions - Exhibitions) for both the business sector and the wider community.



Perla

A New Winning Combination

Over 600 employees, 535 parking places, 237 guest rooms, 19 suites and a large 335-seat conference hall - all these make the Perla Conference Centre a new winning combination. Why? You'll never know unless you find out for yourself, but they say it's because it's a world where your dreams are their biggest challenge. So, of course, we took the challenge and organized last month's Guest Star 2007 awards ceremony there. And yes, we won - four new guest stars.

By BARBARA REŽEK

The four-star hotel, which is located in the centre of Nova Gorica and recently opened a new wing costing EUR 18 m, is part of the Hit Group, one of the largest entertainment providers in Europe. In just 20 years, Hit has developed from a small F&B company into an advanced gaming and tourism group that strives to serve its guests in the best way possible and to fulfil all their wishes by offering them high-quality leisure services. The company is always on the lookout for interesting challenges, especially in European markets, and its innovative approach has earned it a considerable share of the gaming, entertainment and tourism sector.

Their centres and hotels combine entertainment, a myriad of gaming tables and slot machines, first-class concerts, superb restaurants, top-quality accommodation and other services aimed at providing their guests with both entertainment and relaxation - a total leisure package. The hotel is particularly convenient for business people, international conferences and meetings as well as for holidaymakers. Most guests come from Italy, so it should be no surprise that most of the winners

are foreign guests. An important instrument for stimulating the development of local areas and an indicator of the company's social awareness is its policy towards sponsorships and donations. The company sets aside almost one per cent of its annual gross turnover for these purposes. The majority of sponsorships are destined for sporting activities, in which the company commits as many resources as possible to those individuals

who directly support the sporting development of young people. Through these sponsorships and donations, the company makes a significant contribution to the general wellbeing of the communities in which it operates. At the same time, the company, as the motor behind the development of Nova Gorica and its surrounding areas, strives to promote more rapid growth throughout the entire Goriška region. ■



The pearl is growing

Tourist Booking System Website Up and Running

Ministry of the Economy and the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO) presented the recently launched central tourist booking system, which brings together everything that Slovenia has to offer to tourists in terms of accommodation, at www.slovenia.info. The system is going to provide a common promotional platform to all companies in the country which provide accommodation to tourists, including small companies whose offer had been dispersed so far. The system currently includes over 320 providers, who can offer accommodation to around 12,500 visitors. By 2008, the system is expected to cover 65% of Slovenia's accommodation capacity, which is currently estimated at 65,000. The system was set up by the Austrian Feratel Company and will be operated by the Kranj-based travel agency Odisej. The costs of the project totalled EUR 388,132.

Connecting Destinations

More than 300 participants (70 Slovene experts) attended the 2007 Enter conference, which took place from January 24th to 26th in Ljubljana. The 14th annual conference was organised by IFITT, the International Federation for IT, Travel and Tourism. The theme of this year's conference was "Connecting Destinations". As part of the ENTER conference, a Slovenian day was held. During the all day e-business seminar, presentations were given on the most striking issues of the e-marketing domain, including selected case studies from Slovenia and abroad. The seminar was aimed at representatives of Slovenian public and private sector companies.

Austrian and Central European Travel Business

ACTB 2007, a Central European specialized tourism fair, based on cooperation agreements between national tourism organizations of Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and "Die Donau-Danube Tourist Commission", was held in Vienna from January 28th to 30th. Eighteen Slovenian incoming agencies, hotels and associations represented the Slovenian Tourist Board, which used this opportunity to organize two study tours in Slovenia for more than 70 participants from 17 countries. The participants had the opportunity to visit Ljubljana, the Postojna Cave, the Coastal region and the Gorenjska region.

Top Level Health Tourism

Hotel Livada Prestige (part of Sava Hotels & Resorts) in Moravske Toplice hosted the "Top Level Health Tourism in Slovenia" conference on January 18th. The conference was organized by the BK Studio company and supported by the Slovenian Tourist Board. Health tourism is a new tourist niche, as more and more citizens from Western Europe are travelling to Central and Eastern European countries to obtain cheaper health and dental treatments and combining them with holidays. The share of self-paid healthcare services will increase in the future, representing an opportunity for combined tourist and health packages to Slovenia.

Calendar of Events

- 23. 2. - 25. 2., Rogaška Slatina
2nd Salsa Congress, Plesna šola Rolly
- 4. 3. - 6. 3., Ljubljana,
Conference GastroBizz, Grand Hotel Union
- 16. 3. - 17. 3., Ljubljana
10th Meeting of Slovenian Family Medicine Society, Cankarjev Dom
- 18. 3. - 23. 3. in 25. 3. - 30. 3., Ljubljana
Conference Forum Train Europe, Grand hotel Union
- 28. 3. - 1. 4., Bled
International Meeting of Writers PEN 2007, Albatros Bled
- 29. 3. - 1. 4., Ljubljana
Fair Tourism and Leisure, Gospodarsko razstavišče
- 16. 4. - 19. 4., Ljubljana
Conference SID - Berne Union Committee Meetings, Grand hotel Union
- 18. 4. - 20. 4., Ljubljana
Conference Hagleitner Hygiene, Grand hotel Union
- 25. 4. - 26. 4., Ljubljana
Conference L'Oreal, Grand hotel Union



The Slovenia Times MICE partner