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طيران الخليج  
Gulf Air Oman Ministry of Tourism  
underscores need for  
cruise ship strategy

Cruise shipping is a success story for the Arabian Gulf States...



The Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Tourism has underlined the need for an Arabian Gulf cruise ship strategy given the steady growth of the cruise ship industry in the region in recent years.

The Ministry pointed out that cruise shipping is a success story for the Arabian Gulf States, with growth from the mid 1990s.

Growth is accelerating as a result of high passenger exchanges made possible by development of major aviation hubs in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha and Bahrain.

Further, the last three years have seen the entry of new cruise companies including smaller expedition cruise ships seeking to explore the coastline in closer detail.

Oman's Ministry of Tourism and cruise ports saw significant growth, with 2011 being a record year for cruise ship arrivals to Port Sultan Qaboos, Muscat, and further growth is expected in 2012. The Government of Oman is also

progressing with a master plan to transform Port Sultan Qaboos into a world-class cruise destination, while several other Gulf States are redeveloping their cruise ship facilities.

[Click here for full story.](#)

Shaza Hotels launches new  
luxury resort in Oman

Shaza Hotels unveiled plans for Shaza Salah - a luxury beach resort in Salah, Oman. The development was launched at a signing ceremony by Shaza Hotel's CEO Simon Coombs and Taameer Investment's CEO Suleiman Al Harthy, with the attendance of the chairman of the Golden Group of Companies, Sheikh Salim al Ghazali.

The resort is designed to cater for families, honeymooners, and luxury travellers. The hotel will feature a Presidential Villa, 80 luxury villas with private pools, 80 furnished hotel apartments, and 130 hotel rooms facing the Indian Ocean, many of which have their own private 'sky pool'. A resort of this standard is a first for Salah and is expected to enhance the tourism landscape of Oman's second largest city. Construction will begin in Q4 of 2012 and the resort is expected to open in 2016. [Click here for full story.](#)



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Inclusions: 2 nights accommodation in the Kookaburra hotel; Buffet breakfast daily; Return launch transfers from Holt Street Wharf in Brisbane to Tangalooma; Hand feeding of WILD DOLPHINS on one night of the stay; ATV quad bike tour; Access to over 80 activities, more than 40 of them are free.

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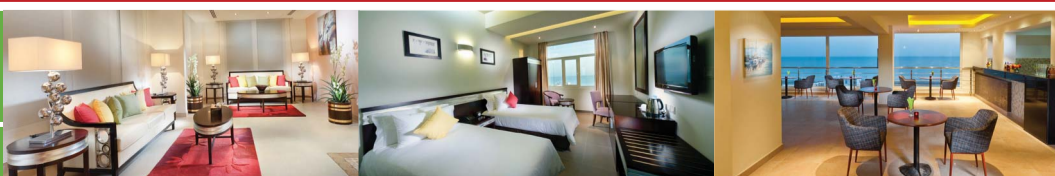
Offer only valid from April 1st 2012 to September 30th 2012. Not valid April 5th to 9th and August 16th to 26th. A minimum of 2 nights stay is required to receive the free tour.



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AT ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET

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## Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group inks distribution agreement with DOTW

DOTW to pull dynamic rates and inventory directly from Carlson Rezidor reservation system...



Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group announced the signing of a dynamic distribution partnership with Destinations of the World (DOTW).

The agreement will see Carlson Rezidor's collection of six global brands and 1,100 operating hotels, sold via DOTW's worldwide network of over 450,000 points of sales.

This agreement will allow DOTW to pull dynamic rates and inventory directly from Carlson Rezidor reservation system thereby increasing availability and adding incremental growth to the hotel groups business.

Yigit Sezgin, global director of sales and marketing at the Rezidor Hotel Group, commented: "Connecting into DOTW's automated system means that we will automatically increase inventory available from a small pool of a 100 hotels to over a 1,000."

Elaborating further Keith Fernandez, Group Managing Director, Destinations of the World said: "This direct connect partnership with Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group adds an additional 1,100 hotels to our portfolio, to best meet the needs of our distribution to over 450,000 points of sale globally."

[Click here for full story.](#)

## Floating Suite kicked off by Lootah Hotel Management

Lootah Hotel Management (LHM) announced the launch of the Floating Suite, a hospitality model that combines luxury with Arab maritime hospitality.

The suites could be rented for an overnight stay nearby Deira Palm. A varied cuisine option will be served on board.

There are two exclusive packages to choose from: The larger floating suite has three bedrooms and a closed kitchen. In addition, it has an indoor fishing area at the center of the suite entrance. The smaller suite has two bedrooms and an Arabic sitting area on the roof top. There is no fishing area for the smaller suite. [Click here for full story.](#)



## Royal Jet launches luxury vacations division



those seeking vacations outside of the present charter business.

The signing ceremony was attended by Shane O'Hare, President and CEO, Royal Jet and Paul Beacall, Co-founder and CEO of Eden Luxury Group.

"Our new partnership will offer affluent travellers a wider choice and greater flexibility when booking holidays," said Shane O'Hare. Royal Jet will be able to offer these bespoke holidays to its customers this summer.

[Click here for full story.](#)

Royal Jet launched a luxury travel division at the on-going Arabian Travel Market (ATM).

The division is a new partnership with Eden Luxury Group, adding value to Royal Jet's present air charter client base and create a total luxury travel solution for



## EYE ON EUROPE

### ★ Renaissance opens in Barcelona

Marriott International has opened the Renaissance Barcelona Hotel. Formerly known as The Diplomatic Hotel, the property underwent a complete renovation before reopening as a Renaissance.

The hotel's 211 rooms all now include iPod docking stations and flat screen televisions, while hotel facilities include a rooftop bar and lounge, a steak house, fitness centre, business centre and seven meeting rooms.



### ★ SAS sells off assets

Scandinavian airline group SAS is planning to sell six of its property assets. The company has signed an agreement with Swedavia to divest six properties in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo for a total of SEK1.78 billion (US\$264 million).

The assets comprise mainly hangars, workshops, warehouses and offices. SAS said the divestments were part of its '4Excellence' cost-cutting strategy.



### ★ Turkish expands European routes

Turkish Airlines will launch flights to three new European destinations this summer. From 28 May, the national carrier will launch two new routes, to the Spanish city of Bilbao and Leipzig, Germany. Both new destinations will be served four times a week from Istanbul's Ataturk airport. Then on 16 July Turkish will add four weekly flights from Istanbul to the Scottish capital Edinburgh.



### ★ KLM launches Dallas flights

Dutch airline KLM launched a new seasonal service to Dallas-Forth Worth International Airport in Texas. The new summer flights will operate five times a week, departing from Amsterdam Mondays,

Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 10.35am. All flights will be operated using an Airbus A330-200 aircraft capable of seating up to 243 passengers - 30 in business class and 213 in economy.



### ★ Dreamliner Makes Norwegian Debut in Oslo

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner landed in Norway for the first on Tuesday. The new aircraft flew to Oslo's Gardermoen airport as part of its global 'Dream Tour', and will spend three days in the country, before flying to Italy on Friday. Norwegian Air Shuttle has ordered three B787-8 Dreamliners, and the Dream Tour is intended to offer the airline's executives a first hand preview of the new aircraft.





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## Jumeirah rolls out iPads in hotel limousines

Jumeirah at Etihad Towers has recently introduced iPads to its fleet of chauffeured hotel limousines as part of a service to allow guests to conveniently stay connected throughout their stay.

In addition to complimentary Wi-fi access provided throughout the hotel to all visitors, the new service provides guests availing of the hotel limousine services with uninterrupted connectivity from the moment they are picked up at the airport, should they utilise the hotel's airport transfer service, as well as when travelling outside of the hotel. iPads for complimentary guest-use have also been introduced into the Jumeirah at Etihad Towers' Club Executive Lounge.

Jumeirah at Etihad Towers General Manager, Doris Greif, said, "The iPad services were introduced as part of our Jumeirah Stay Different promise knowing most of our international business and leisure clientele required immediate internet and email access."

## Cleartrip to invest significantly and expand localized operations in the GCC

Cleartrip has recently raised US\$40 million last year for its continued expansion and plans to invest up to US\$12 million over the next two years.

This week, Cleartrip announced the launch of its customized websites in Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

This move is part of Cleartrip's long-term strategy to explore new and dynamic markets with a full product range customized for each country.

In February, the company sold 600 air tickets and 100 room nights each day, reflecting a 120% increase over the last year.

After launching the new country-specific websites, the company is looking to increase these numbers to 1,000 air tickets and 200 room

nights daily by the end of 2012, according to Jae Hyung Kim, Cleartrip's president and head of business development.

"The US\$1 billion online travel market is set for significant growth in the region and our strategy is to ensure our performance, expansion and services match this growth," said Jae.

"Cleartrip has been localized for each country in the GCC and we are eager to showcase our ability to make travel simple."

[Click here for full story.](#)



## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"A strategy would look at opportunities to develop cruise activity from the GCC and international markets, as well as from the Gulf's inclusion in world cruise itineraries, and attracting a greater share of the cruises from Asia"*

Her Excellency  
Maitha Al Mahrouqi,  
undersecretary of  
Oman's Ministry of  
Tourism

## Bahrain Airport Company inks an agreement with Marhaba Bahrain



Bahrain Airport Company announced its new venture, with the signing of an agreement with 'Marhaba Bahrain' to provide its services at Bahrain International Airport.

Marhaba will be assisting passengers arriving at, transiting through and departing from Bahrain International Airport (BIA).

The signing ceremony, which was attended by Bahrain Airport Authorities, included representatives from the Civil Aviation Affairs (CAA), Police, Immigration, Customs Authorities, Bahrain Airport Company as well as representatives from "Marhaba Bahrain".

The agreement will allow 'Marhaba Bahrain' to provide a comprehensive range of premium passenger handling services at BIA including, but not limited to: meet and greet services on arrival and departure; transfer services; concierge/ porter service; hotel accommodation; lounges; visa processing; and chauffeur services.

The new services at BIA are scheduled to be available to passengers during the summer season of 2012.

## Bahrain looks to boost bilateral ties with South Korea



South Korea and Bahrain signed an agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation ('DTA') to promote economic co-operation and joint investment between the two countries.

The agreement details the taxing rights of each country and provides for the elimination of double taxation on income which may occur as a result of cross-border economic activities between the two countries.

In addition to the Double Taxation Agreement, a number of commercial, economic and cultural cooperation agreements were made between the two countries, including the launch of The Bahrain Korean Friendship Society, established with the aims of strengthening friendly relations and understanding between the people of Bahrain and Korea, and encouraging cooperative relationships in economic, cultural, sports, tourism and scientific fields.

[Click here for full story.](#)

## Concourse 3 testing programme underway

With construction of Concourse 3 on track for completion at the end of 2012, Dubai Airports has launched an intensive operational readiness programme to prepare the new facility for its opening in the first quarter of 2013.

"Concourse 3 will be opened to the public in the first quarter of 2013 once Dubai Airports is completely satisfied that it has passed all operational and service readiness tests," said Paul Griffiths, CEO, Dubai Airports. "We will not compromise on service," he added.

Last month Dubai Airports, together with its stakeholders Emirates, dnata, police, immigration and Dubai Corporation for Aviation Engineering Projects, kicked off its Operational Readiness and Airport Transition (ORAT) programme. During this period Dubai Airports, as the landlord of the new facility, will in phases take over responsibility of Concourse 3, as the contractors complete their work.

By the end of April, key elements of the facility, including the baggage handling system and train system linking Terminal 3 to the new concourse were in place and are due to be handed over to Dubai Airports for trials in the coming weeks. Most of the structural work on Concourse 3 is complete, with work now predominately focused on the activation of airport systems and completion of the internal infrastructure. [Click here for full story.](#)



## Development of Corp Executive Hotel Al Khoory Dubai complete



Hospitality Management Holdings (HMH) announced the completion of Corp Executive Hotel Al Khoory. It is the second hotel in Dubai and fifth in the region.

Owned by Mohammed Tayyeb Khoory and Sons, the hotel is slated to open later this month.

Michel Noblet, President and CEO, HMH, said: "Dubai continues to be a core focus for our group."

The emirate witnessed considerable improvement in RevPAR during the first quarter of 2012. We have other exciting projects under negotiation that will be unveiled shortly."

The hotel is located close to Jumeirah open beach and Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The hotel offers 208 deluxe and superior rooms (including 16 suites), it is equipped with the latest technology. The hotel will feature conference space for up to 150 delegates including multi-cuisine all-day-dining restaurant. [Click here for full story.](#)

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## ATM OVERVIEW

### Amadeus launches mobile traveller

Amadeus unveiled its Amadeus Mobile Traveller.

This fully integrated and complete mobile application is designed to support pre-trip, in-trip and post-trip functionalities and enable end travellers to fulfil their on-the-go travel needs.

Developed with the support of MENA region specialist partner Techmaster, Amadeus Mobile Traveller boasts a suite of planning and booking functionalities for real-time flight, car rental and



hotel bookings, taking into account social media integration and in-trip assistance services.

The application's unique integration with Amadeus Content Store means access to over 150,000 hotel properties worldwide, sourced from the region's most popular aggregators and wholesalers at effective prices.

Among other features are the click to call agent functionality, instant e-tickets, calendar synchronisation, trip tools including destination services, as well as online and offline payment support.

[Click here for full story](#)

### Jebel Ali International reveals new beachfront hotel



Jebel Ali International Hotels has revealed details of its new four-star Dubai Jebel Ali International Hotels, with the property scheduled to open for business at the end of the year.

Located on The Walk in the Jumeirah Beach Residence area, the unnamed hotel will be the only four-star beach property in Dubai.

The hotel will boast 341 rooms and suites feature sea views and balconies with interconnecting rooms also available for families.

The hotel will offer five restaurants and bars along with an executive lounge for guests staying in clubrooms and suites.

The hotel will also cater to business travellers, with a fully equipped conference centre and six meeting rooms, many of which feature natural daylight and shaded balcony space for breakouts.

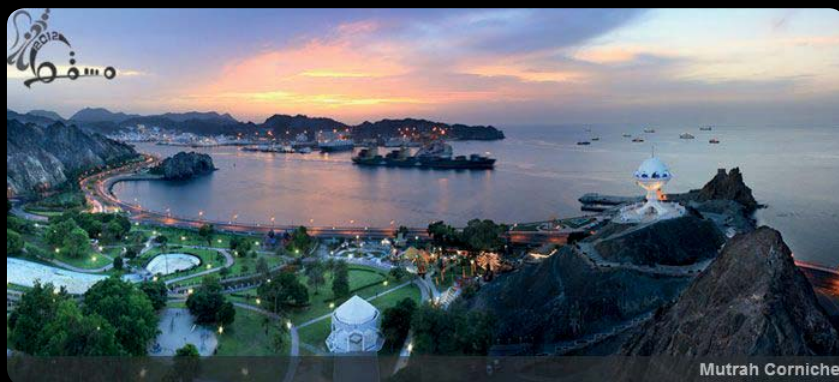
### Oman looks to room inventory growth

Her Excellency Maitha Al Mahrouqi, minister of tourism for Oman revealed that the room inventory in the Sultanate will rise from 12,000 currently to 20,000 by 2015, while airport capacity will increase both in Muscat and Salalah, reaching 12 million in the capital and three million in the southern city.

While creating jobs for Omanis is a priority, she said the ultimate aim as part of the Vision 2020 strategy was for the travel and tourism sector to contribute three per cent to GDP and beyond.

While Oman has already appointed overseas tourism representatives in 16 markets worldwide. These include the UK, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia plus Australia and New Zealand, the minister said the domestic tourism was also a priority since this market was year-round and can be relied on even during the lean season.

[Click here for full story](#)



### Global tourism to grow BRIC by BRIC



travelers globally with strong increases from the Indian, Chinese and Russian markets as well.

Moving closer to home, MENA and the Gulf countries in particular are expected to see positive growth from this year, with visitor arrivals up in across the region – increasing more than 10% in Saudi Arabia. [Click here for full story](#)

In its global overview of the travel industry presented as part of the World Travel Market (WTM) Vision 2012 conference series, Euromonitor International revealed its latest research findings at Arabian Travel Market.

Over the next five years, it is predicted that global growth will decline to an average of just below eight per cent, pulled down by the weakness of the Eurozone economies. This is due in part to high government debt, tight credit conditions and rising unemployment levels.

Worldwide, Euromonitor numbers suggest tourism growth is slowing averaging less than four per cent annually until 2016, whilst the average spend is also flat-lining. However, the new BRIC economies will perform, with Brazilians identified as the highest spending

### Chinese tourist gaining momentum

The rise of the Chinese tourist was in focus at the Arabian Travel Market with Lucy Chuang, MD of Global Sino presenting remarkable market potential to regional hospitality professionals.

Citing figures for the UAE, visitor numbers had grown 50% annually since the country was given approved status in 2009 by Chinese authorities – reaching 300,000 in 2010 with a spend of US\$334 million.

Chuang stated a typical Chinese leisure preference as a three-night package with a different hotel for each night – either 4/5/6 (one night in a four-star hotel, followed by a five-star and then six-star (Atlantis The Palm) or a 5/6/7 (finishing off in Burj Al Arab) – and she urged the region to promote this tiered concept to the market, particularly during the off-peak summer season.

A desert safari and shopping were priorities with designer goods high on the shopping list of the brand conscious Chinese travellers, while twin-bedded rooms were the number one request and an essential in that room was a kettle to facilitate the preparation of hot instant noodles or rice. [Click here for full story](#)



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