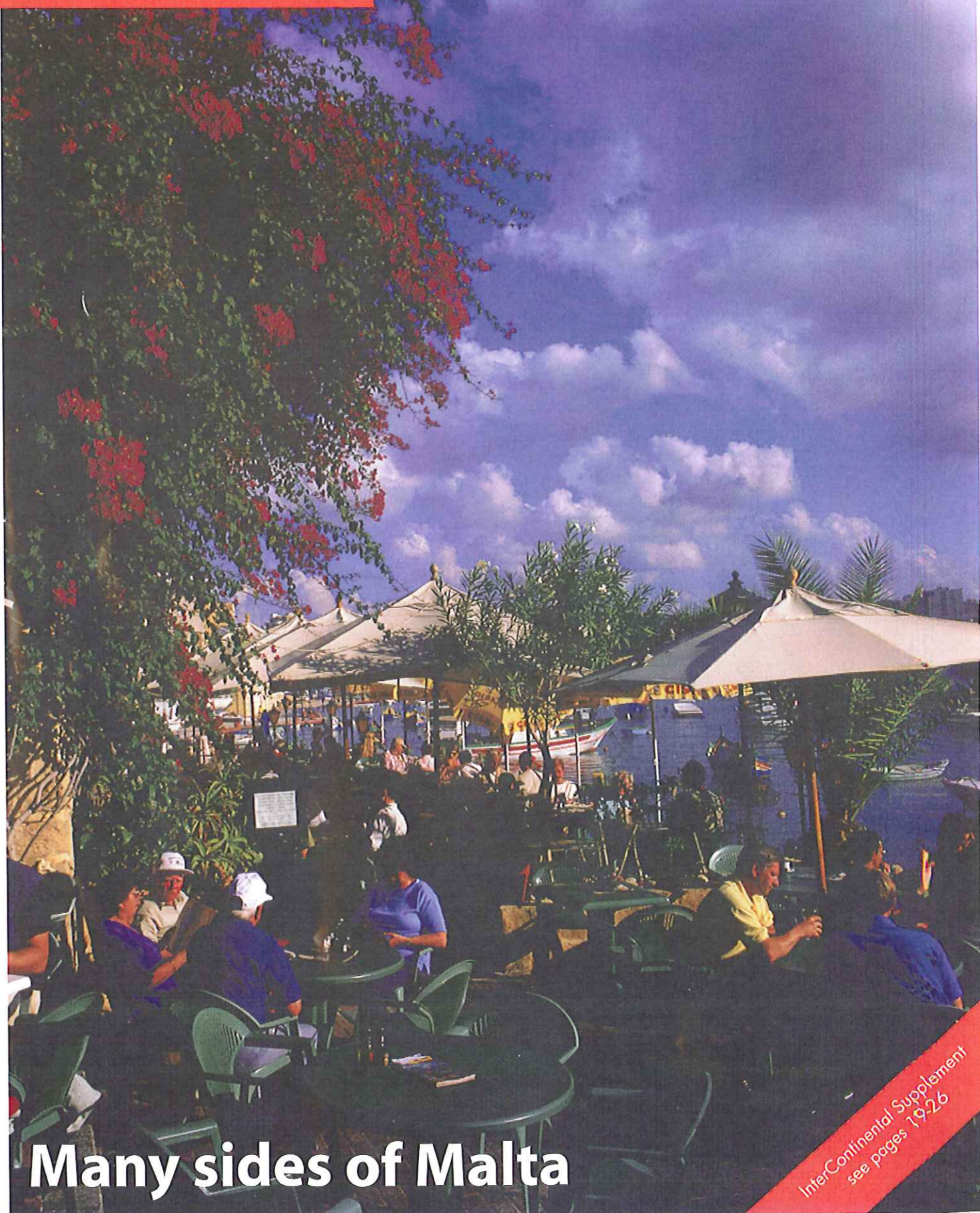


ITCM

Incentive Travel & Corporate Meetings



Many sides of Malta

InterContinental Supplement
see pages 19-26

Modern Merseyside • Red Sea's Port Ghalib • Hotel News



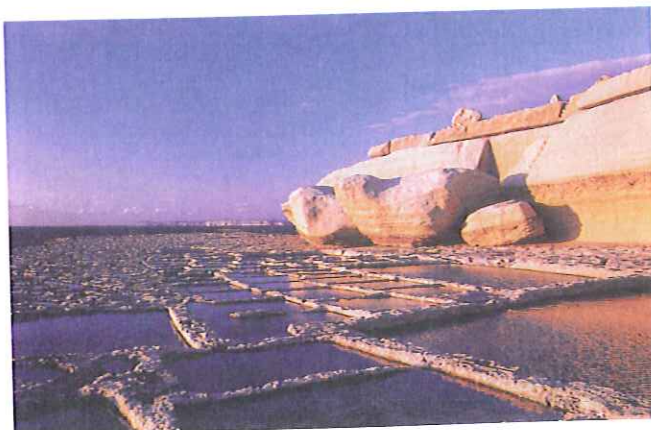
Malta is a mix of destinations

Malta is a small country of three islands, but there are clusters of hotels and conference facilities in different areas, each with a flavour of its own.

The main island, itself called 'Malta', has the main conurbations. It is the gateway to the country from all sources. Being so centrally placed in the Mediterranean, Malta is convenient for flights from West and East Europe; from Africa (it is no problem for groups that have a day available in their itinerary to include Libya as an excursion); from the East Mediterranean and the Far East; and from the USA, where Malta has a high profile reputation as a meeting place.

For at least 15 years the

Malta Tourist Authority has had the objective of upgrading the destination to make it more and more suitable for corporate groups. It is now still a popular family holiday place in the vacation months, but it becomes very much a corporate destination during those shoulder and off-peak months that are most convenient to event organisers.



Rich source of excursions

Malta's assets would be virtually wasted if a conference organiser did not provide a leisure programme. This is where Malta comes into its own. Its history is astonishingly fascinating and complex – mainly due to its location at the heart of so many ancient empires and historic military struggles.

It has archaeological remains from cave-dwelling peoples who occupied the islands thousands of years ago. St Paul is said to have been shipwrecked in Malta when travelling to Rome. It was the staging post for Crusaders on their way to fight in the Holy Land and the haven for nursing the wounded on their return to Europe. Napoleon used Malta when he took a seaborne army to fight in Egypt.

It evidences many influences from neighbouring Italy on the one hand and North Africa on the other. And, so much more recently, the whole island was awarded the George Cross by Britain for the stalwart way the Maltese people withstood a merciless battering in World War II as the Germans attempted to eliminate what was a major obstacle to their plans for conquering North Africa and, they hoped, Egypt. Malta was for

decades a vital base for the British navy.

An ancient city such as the former walled capital of Mdina, and the ramparts and harbour of heavily fortified Valletta, the present capital, have historic buildings that are being put at the disposal of reputable DMCs who can use them as the venues for banquets and themed parties. There are also a host of country houses, castles and villas around the islands that are known to the DMCs willing to find something extra special for their client companies.

It is probably accurate to say that Malta has an overpopulation of DMCs, but that works to an organiser's benefit. Competition is fierce and there are a number of long-established DMCs with an abundance of experience in handling upmarket groups. Organisers can ensure they are working with a company that is well-connected on the

islands and that can provide a list of worthy and recent testimonials.

Valletta, the living museum

The Republic of Malta's tourism industry is very lucky to have Valletta as its capital. It is really a living museum. Every type of visitor can fall in love with it. Built on steep cliffs running down to one of Europe's best natural harbours, the city streets are narrow and lined with a variety of ancient buildings and then suddenly there is a picturesque square with the imposing St John's co-cathedral that will fully repay anybody spending a couple of hours inside.

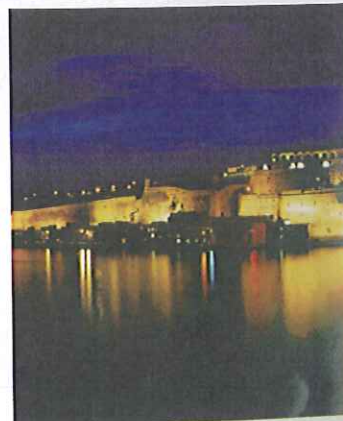
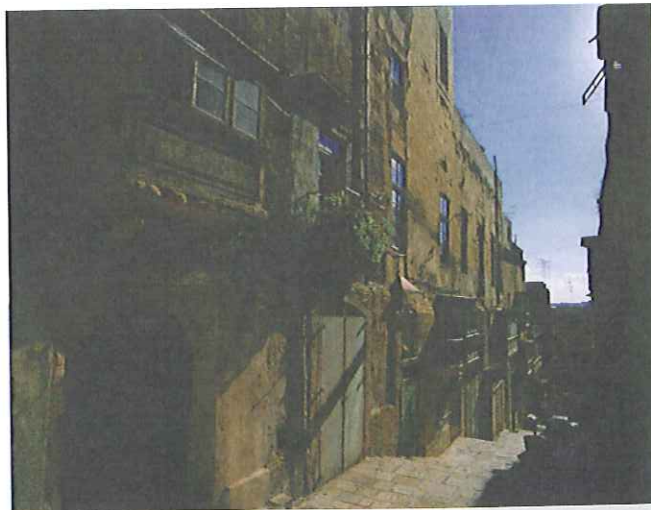
There are innumerable quaint cafes, bars, restaurants and shops and on the battlements there are gardens with hundreds of photo opportunities.

Right in the centre of town is the unrivalled

Mediterranean Conference Centre. As long as 400 years ago it was a hospital run by the Knights of St John for the wounded returning from the Crusades. Its former hospital ward is now, at 600ft, Europe's longest banqueting room and the imagination can run wild on how these arch-ceilinged spaces can be dressed to create a memorable environment for a celebration dinner. Built within the Centre is a modern auditorium with comfortable tiered seats.

Alongside the Centre is an underground cinema that shows The Malta Experience. This is a 45-minute multi-visual review of the country's remarkable history and serves as a valuable background to any excursions that a group might then make.

The two prime hotels in Valletta are the long-established Phoenicia and the brand new Excelsior. The Phoenicia stands lordly just





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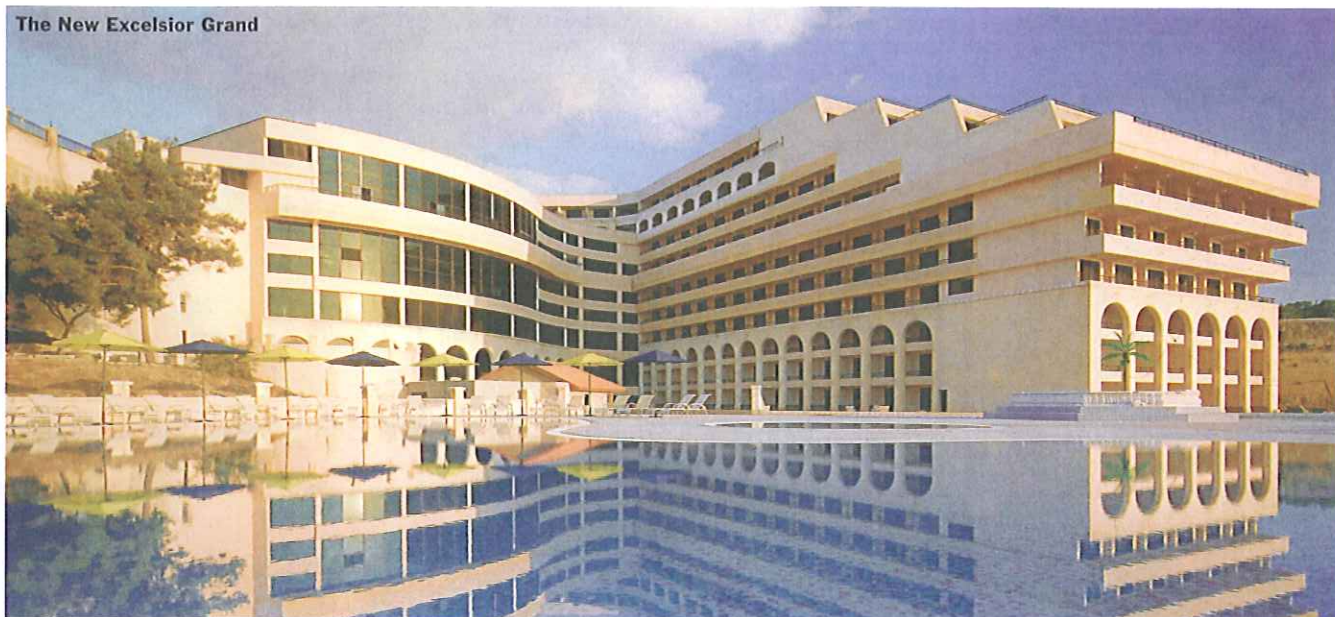
For more information contact CIT Unit:

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AIR MALTA

The New Excelsior Grand



outside the city's main gate and is convenient for any group wishing to potter in the capital or enjoy a treasure hunt around its streets and attractions.

The Excelsior Grand Hotel has just opened. It is built on a hillside right on the Grand Harbour. Its ballroom is immediately accessible from the road at the top, very convenient for bringing in any vehicles for presentation at a product launch. It can seat as many as 850 delegates theatre style. There are 11

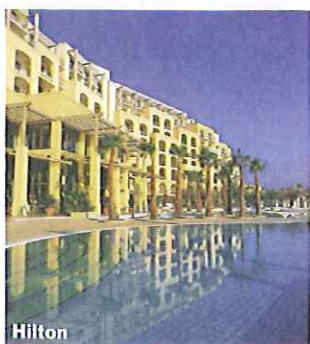
meeting rooms in total.

The lowest of its 7 storeys is at sea level. As a consequence, the rooms, restaurants and meeting facilities enjoy unrivalled views across one of the world's most magnificent harbours.

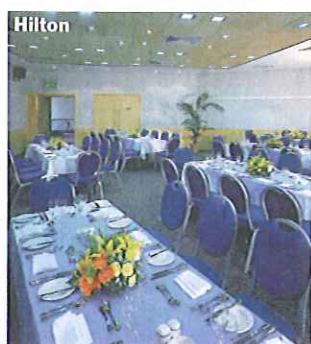
With 424 rooms and suites, 5 restaurants and 4 bars, indoor and outdoor pools, spa, gymnasium and tennis courts, it is one of the Republic's biggest and most comprehensively equipped hotels. The Excelsior Grand is the first hotel project for



The New Excelsior Grand



Hilton



Hilton

its owners, a Hong Kong construction company, and they have not spared on the investment in order to make it a flagship for the islands.


St Julian's and Sliema are always buzzing

A short taxi ride from Valletta is the biggest concentration of conference hotel facilities, St Julian's and Sliema. They are by the sea on the East coast and buzzing with restaurants, cafes, bars, discos and nightlife. This is the location of the dominant Hilton Malta. The hotel and its adjoining Conference Centre stand on a high point looking out over the bays and the marina. There are 4 floors of meeting rooms providing accommodation for from 60

to 1,400 delegates.

Within a short distance of each other are the Westin Dragonara, Radisson St George's Bay, Corinthia San Gorg, InterContinental Malta and Le Meridien St Julian's. All have conference facilities and all have a track record for dealing with upmarket corporate groups.

There is now another new arrival in the district that is setting high standards of luxury. This is the Palace Hotel. It share a site with The Victoria Hotel, on top of a steep street with views across the sea. The Victoria has the ancient Palazzo Capua alongside that served as additional accommodation and conference facilities, as its gorgeous suites



Combine 500 years of Maltese history
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The Grand Hotel Excelsior in Valletta is Malta's newest and brightest star.

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We extend this hospitality to every corporate delegate.

Our conference and banqueting facilities seat up to 1,000 delegates with a total of over 4,000 square meters of delegate space in thirteen different venues.

For even larger conferences, the Mediterranean

Conference Centre (MCC) nearby – in association with the Excelsior – holds a further 2,300 seated delegates with venues for every possible hospitality format.

In fact, the Knights of St. John built the MCC originally to house their famous 16th-century *Sacra Infermeria* or Holy Infirmary.

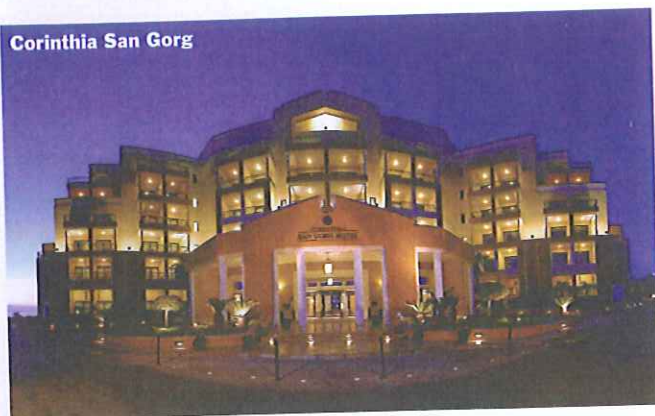
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Corinthia San Gorg



Corinthia San Gorg



Le Meridien



Le Meridien

and elaborately decorated and furnished rooms attract top clientele. Now, the Palace Hotel has been newly built alongside and has incorporated the Palazzo into its own facilities, giving a wide choice of amenities to client companies.

Qawra and St Paul's are a favourite alternative

Not far north along the same coastline are the twin towns of Qawra and St Paul's, making up the two sides of a peninsula jutting out into the Mediterranean. These are smaller conurbations but with all the buzz of the bigger towns. They are very popular with holidaymakers during the vacation months, but have attractive MICE facilities.

The 4-star Suncrest Hotel has long been a favourite with British group organisers. It has 453 rooms, all but 24 with balconies.

The four conference rooms

are conveniently located at ground level and are named the Poseidon, Athena, Zeus and Apollo, all with natural light. The Poseidon can hold 350 delegates theatre style.

The hotel has a popular leisure and sports centre on the waterfront.

The name St Paul's Bay derives from the belief that when St Paul was shipwrecked on his way to face trial in Rome, he was able to drag himself to safety on a large, very flat island in this bay. The island is unpopulated and close to the seafront. It is not unknown for Malta's DMCs to take a group on a cruise, announce that there is engine trouble and land the corporate passengers on this island in an emergency – where they discover, to everyone's obvious astonishment, that there are tables laid for a feast, with wine waiters ready to hand out glasses of good cheer.

In view of St Paul's Island is the Dolmen conference

Suncrest

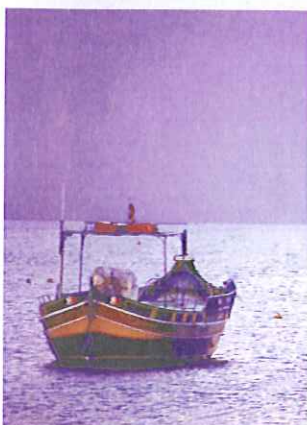


Suncrest



English-speaking

The Maltese people are bi-lingual in English and Maltese. This makes it easy for English-speaking visitors, although some of the local place names are tough to get one's tongue around. A fascinating early morning excursion is to the fish market in the picturesque port of Marsaxlokk, for example.



hotel. A dolmen is a very large sacred stone from the Neolithic period and there is one in the hotel. The property has 375 guestrooms and the Oracle Conference Centre that can cater for 1,100 delegates.

The exclusive north of Malta

As one travels further north towards the point where the ferries cross to the island of Gozo, there are more conference hotel facilities of a high standard. A short drive from St Paul's across the narrowest part of Malta is the exclusive Radisson SAS Golden

Sands Resort & Spa. It has 337 rooms and suites, a spa and leisure centre, extensive private beach, 12 meeting rooms all with natural daylight, adding up to 2,000sqm of meeting space.

Further north, in sight of Gozo and the tiny island of Comino, is the Ramla Bay Resort Hotel with 187 rooms and suites. Its 3 special-purpose meeting rooms, the Solaris, the Meteora and the Aurora, can cater for up to 390 people. It has a private sandy beach and an indoor and outdoor pool.

Gozo – another contrast

The island of Gozo is a complete contrast to the island of Malta. It is largely agricultural, with sweeping acres of farmland and hills crowned with ancient churches. It takes an hour to drive to the ferry from Valletta and an hour to sail across. However, there is now a speedier way

of getting there. Seaplanes fly from Valletta's Grand Harbour in 20 minutes, so small groups can be offered an excursion to Gozo even in a crowded programme.

There are two main hotels on Gozo. The Ta'Cenc is located on a hill, with panoramic views over the countryside and to Comino and the island of Malta. There are just 83 rooms in 400 acres of gardens, both landscaped and wild, allow-



Suncrest Hotel

Malta

for great meetings,
enjoyable incentives
and superb food

The Suncrest Hotel Malta is located directly on the seafront overlooking the picturesque bay of Qawra. It boasts fantastic unspoiled views of the crystal clear Mediterranean sea.

All but 24 of the 453 rooms (including 86 suites) have a balcony

The ground floor Conference Centre has 5 meeting rooms for 30 to 350 delegates and 36 additional hotel suites serve as syndicate rooms, each holding 25 people.

Six restaurants serve mouthwatering dishes from pizzas to local and international cuisines.

Suncrest Hotel, Qawra Coast Road, Qawra, SPB 1902 Malta
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Air Malta

Air Malta is able to fly delegates into Malta from a growing number of destinations worldwide. The airline has a dedicated MICE unit that can assist organisers to select the most convenient flights and identify the most economical prices. It can be reached on 00-356-22999 381 or email cit@airmalta.com.mt.

ing each room to have its own terrace or garden. In addition to conventional meeting rooms, the Ta'Cenc is fortunate to have a medieval castle, the Palazza Palina, in its grounds. DMCs and event organisers have made the most of this in setting up banquets and parties with a medieval theme in an authentic environment.

The other main hotel is the Kempinski San Lawrenz. In contrast, it nestles in a secluded valley on Gozo and is built to hark back in style to an ancient hunting lodge. It is built of local cream sandstone and blends with the environment.

It has five meeting spaces of different sizes, ample outdoor space for receptions and activities, a fine dining restaurant, its own kitchen gardens and an Ayurvedic Spa.

Mdina not to be missed

No picture of Malta as a corporate destination would be complete without mention of Mdina. This is the former capital of the country and stands on the highest point

of the island, encircled still by massive rampart walls to be entered through a single gate. There are restaurants and cafes built into the walls. The views from the walls are breathtaking.

Mdina has narrow streets and surprisingly large open squares, bordered by the palaces that were the homes of the nobility through the ages. It has to be included on any group's tour of the island's attractions as a visit to Mdina gives lasting delightful memories.

One of these is now a hotel called Xara Palace, a member of Relais & Chateaux. With less than two dozen rooms and suites, but all decidedly luxurious, the hotel will accept mini-groups.

Even more unusual venues

There are scores of castles and palaces, even old jailhouses, in the towns and

countryside of Malta. Access is not freely available to the public, but a good local DMC has the means of gaining permission for them to be used as a venue for a special event. In turn, of course, the revenue helps the owners to maintain and refurbish them for posterity.

Quite different, however, are two other unusual venues. One some history behind it in that the MFCC is a mammoth marquee that was originally created to hold events in Wembley (England!) whilst the stadium was being demolished and rebuilt.

It is 18 metres high and provides usable exhibition of conference space of 7,000sqm. It can seat 10,000 people. MFCC stands for the Malta Fairs and Convention Centre. Alongside is a service marquee of 1,200sqm used to house kitchens and bars during an event.

Another surprise venue

is at Hal-Faruq. It is the MonteKристо project that has been 'created' ('built' is not quite the word as most of it has been excavated below ground) to combine the very distinct activities of tourism, leisure, meetings, incentives and wine and beer production.

The site is 22,000 sqm in area and has 2.5kmn of underground tunnels. Above and below ground there are a winery, a brewery and wine storage areas that also serve as venues for banquets or meetings.

There is a waxworks to illustrate Malta's arts and crafts and there is a vast underground chamber, illuminated by natural light through a glass dome in the roof, that has been fitted with the decor of a castle. There are tiered benches so that up to 800 spectators can watch the re-enactment of knightly jousting and battles.

There have been scenes staged there with 50 actors and 16 horses and there have been displays of falconry. One Christmas party was held underground for 2,000 guests.

Your contact at Visit Malta

For further details and brochures on Malta's facilities and services, contact Marie Anne Barthet Brown, Senior Marketing Manager MICE on 020-8877 6993 or email her on marieanne.barthetbrown@visitmalta.com



Let's meet



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