

Where creativity and service meet

Event planners choosing Malta for their conferences and incentives can expect to receive five-star service and creativity from both suppliers and venues alike

For such a small island - just 8km by 15km - Malta has a high profile in the MICE industry and is well respected among event planners for its ability to cater to events of all sizes, from small high-end incentives and board meetings to large annual conferences and exhibitions.

The Mediterranean gem, along with sister islands Gozo and Comino, combines stunning natural beauty with five-star infrastructure, excellent standards of service, great access and good value for money.

Air Malta operates flights to and from all the major airports in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, meaning international groups are well catered for. UK groups can choose from twice-daily flights from London Heathrow, up to nine flights a week from Gatwick and regular flights from Manchester, Birmingham and other regional airports. Other carriers flying from the UK include BMI and budget carriers Easyjet and Ryanair, both flying from London and regional airports.



IMAGE COURTESY OF EC MEETINGS

Once groups have arrived in Malta, St Julian's is an ideal hub and the place to stay for five-star properties. With Hilton Malta, Intercontinental, Le Meridien, Radisson, Corinthia hotels and Westin all owning properties in the area and offering meeting space, there is no shortage of options for groups looking for a well-known international brand. Hilton Malta is designed with business in mind, offering 410 rooms and 16 purpose-built meeting rooms, including the Grand Master's suite for around 1,400 delegates, while the 282-room Le Meridien's conference centre can host 400 delegates.

Five-star hub

But the beauty of St Julian's is that all the five-star hotels are within walking distance of one another, making it ideal for large conference groups that require several hotels. For example, cosmetics giant Oriflame is hosting its Gold Conference in Malta in August 2010 with more than 5,000 delegates staying across 13 hotels. There are

also a number of high quality restaurants serving traditional Mediterranean and more modern international fare in St Julian's making it ideal for dine-arounds, and plenty of bars and clubs for delegates to party the night away once the hard work is done.

For groups that want to add a team-building or incentive element to their programme, local DMCs can offer a wealth of creative ideas, from simple beach games on the island's many stunning beaches to treasure trails through the winding streets of Valletta. Gastronomy groups can enjoy activities such as bread making, olive oil and wine tasting, or stop off at a bee farm to sample Maltese honey.

Fans of the great outdoors can head out to sister islands Gozo and Comino, where trekking, mountain-biking and jeep rallies are available, while out at sea, delegates can enjoy snorkelling and scuba-diving in the turquoise waters off Comino or get competitive with a "Battle of the Seas" activity, which involves

groups being split into two gulleets and recreating the epic siege just outside the Blue Lagoon with water pistols and canons.

Malta is not short on unique venues, from the stunning Mediterranean Conference Centre to Palazzo Parisio, a lavish 19th-century palace. Why not host a gala dinner in Valletta's Upper Barrakka Gardens overlooking the harbour? Or enjoy an intimate reception at Casa Rocca Piccola?

Event planners are also guaranteed the highest levels of service with Malta's Quality Assurance Scheme in which DMCS are audited, and those that meet the criteria are given a quality seal. Quality-assured DMCS are listed on the Visit Malta website.

CONTACT

Malta Tourism Authority
Contact Marie Anne Barthet Brown
Tel +44 (0) 208 877 6993
Email marieanne.barthetbrown@visitmalta.com
Web www.visitmalta.com/miceuk

CASE STUDIES

Client Novell
Event Platinum Partners bi-annual event



IT firm Novell holds an event twice a year for its Platinum Partners, and has worked with agency Event IT for several years. Novell's top 50 partners and executive team attend the event. The event consists of a two-day meeting with a welcome dinner at the hotel on the first night. Westin Dragonara was chosen as the venue. Novell UK channel communications manager EMEA Michelle Dyos said: "Cost was a major factor - it was exceptional value, without compromising on the five-star experience. The hotel ticked all the boxes on service, event space and location."

The itinerary included a tour of the ancient walled village of Mdina and dinner at De Mondion, within the Xara Palace, an old palazzo. Dyos says: "The destination and the team working on the event understood our requirements, the need to entertain guests from different countries and to inform in a stress-free environment. We are working with Event IT on our next meeting in Amsterdam in May."

Client Gas Company
Event Conference

A major gas company organised a conference at the Hilton Malta in 2009, and decided to return to the venue in May 2010. The hotel welcomed 65 international delegates for the 2010 event, which consisted of a main meeting, held in the hotel's main meeting room, Portomaso, whilst additional break out sessions were held at the hotel's business centre, consisting of eight syndicate rooms all next to each other.

Both Portomaso Suite and Hilton's business centre overlook the Portomaso Marina. Coffee breaks, registration, lunches and receptions can be held in the foyers whilst enjoying views of the marina.



In the evening, a cocktail reception was held by the pool, followed by dinner in a gazebo, that had been set up on the hotel's grounds consisting of an olive grove overlooking one of the property's four pools.