

CYPRUS 2012: NOEL'S VIEWPOINT

You cannot open a Cypriot newspaper without an article praising the remarkable increase in tourists from Russia. Not only are the Russians travelling to Cyprus in their droves, but the papers all carry articles about enormous Russian investments on the island. If all these investments come about, then Cyprus will become a satellite state of Russia.

By the end of September, it was interesting to see that, after yet another stunning month of Russian arrivals (arrivals were up 51% in the month compared with the UK's 2% fall), we can now say that the Russians represent a very meaningful tourism force, being 34% of the total UK arrivals in 2011 and, in September, 37% of the UK figure.

There is no doubt that Cyprus has profited at the expense of Egypt, Tunisia and the Arab resorts in general. The Arab Spring has not helped tourism to the Arab world and it is unlikely that we shall see visitors flooding back to those countries in 2012. The fact that Turkey has not performed well this year, especially



Larnaca, Cyprus

from Russia and the UK, has also helped. After a few years of growth, Turkey has lost its shine and has become more expensive. However, we



AGTA Chairman - Noel Josephides

“Cyprus arrivals for 2012 from the UK will most likely be the same as those of 2011”

should be prepared for a very heavy advertising campaign from them in 2012.

The biggest error that the politicians in Cyprus will make in 2012 is to cut the tourism promotional budget. As soon as politicians see that the figures are improving then they believe that they will continue to do so even without any promotion - a big and very basic mistake. Politicians think they know how tourism works because they take holidays, fly in aircraft and stay in hotels. Tourism should be left to the professionals!

If Russia continues to grow at its current rate, then we are looking at 400,000 visitors next year. But, it won't happen. Such miracles just do not come about. Even though the Russian economy is doing well compared with that of the UK, we will not see such increases again. Remember, that Russian tourists are not the most popular and, in the UK, we are receiving an increasing number of comments from our clients about hotels being taken over by Russians. Perhaps the glitzy, Russian,

nouveau-riche tourist is what the Cypriots want, but they are not much liked by UK clients.

How the UK will perform for Cyprus in 2012 is anyone's guess. Bookings have started off well but, yet again, they always do. It's the old faithful who return again and again but, once we get to March, it's Greece, Portugal and Spain which make the running and Cyprus gets left behind. Cyprus is still not good value for money for the British tourist.



Aphrodite's Rock, Paphos, Cyprus

The saddest matter of all is the virtual withdrawal of Cyprus Airways from the UK leisure market. With just two daily flights from Heathrow, clients will forget the airline exists and go for its no-frills competitors. Out of Heathrow it is now up against Aegean Airlines, with its slick and very friendly on-board service, young hostesses and attractive aircraft. Cyprus Airways can never be low-cost, so it should concentrate on being the best on the Heathrow business route. For businessmen, Cyprus Airways has the best timings and it is quite capable of upgrading its service and catering which, over the last few years, has deteriorated.

So, taking all this into consideration, my reckoning about Cyprus' performance from the UK in 2012 is, overall, much the same as in 2011.

PLANET HOLIDAYS: STRICTLY COME DANCING!



Pictured with the 'Dream Boys' at the recent Wedding Show in London; Mathilde Robert (MD Planet Holidays)

WEDDINGS IN CYPRUS SET TO SCOOT AGAIN!

Stats show that more than 5,000 weddings visitors' weddings happen in Cyprus every year, the majority of these from UK. *Mathilde Robert, Managing Director of Planet Holidays and the 'doyenne of weddings'* to Cyprus had an uplifting experience at the last wedding show in London! Five strapping Dreamboys decided to give her the thumbs up for her superb 120 page Weddings and Honeymoon brochure. Cypriot Hotels and venues from east to west on the Island of Love are creatively featured in the Planet brochure, offering couples the best Cyprus has to offer for those looking to tie the knot abroad. And who was it that commented that the travel industry these days was hard work and no fun? For more info log onto www.planetweddings.co.uk

LINE DANCING!

Specialist Planet Holidays and the Louis Imperial Beach Hotel in Paphos are celebrating many successful years of Line & Partner dancing in Paphos, Cyprus. Planet Holidays has been organising Line & Partner Dancing Holidays to Cyprus for fourteen years and every trip is a huge success - this year's was no exception to the rule. And, as usual, daily dance workshops gave everyone the chance to learn new steps, practice new routines, before taking to the floor again every evening during the weekly or fortnightly stay. No matter how experienced (or novice) guests are, this trip guarantees fun-filled days & nights - not least during the Weekly 'Fancy Dress Evening'!

The popular winter sun resort of Paphos is located on the south west coast of the island of Cyprus. Local sights include the Tombs of the Kings, the Catacombs of St Solomon, Paphos Castle, Paphos Aquarium, the Houses of Dionysos and Theseus plus a number of museums. Car hire gives the chance to explore the wild and splendid Akamas National Park, scented with aromatic herbs, populated with rare bird species and gilded by a rugged coastline. And a visit to the Baths of Aphrodite, to find out if there is any truth in the myth, is also a must do. It is believed by some, that bathing in the pool will bring eternal youth and beauty, and that drinking the spring water will result in finding true love. For the greedy, we recommend doing both!

The 2012 event details are now available on line at www.linedancingholidays.co.uk Enthusiastic participants will once again enjoy a stay at the Louis Imperial Beach Hotel, one of the nicest and best value 4-star hotels in Cyprus! Dancing on the 180sq.m dance floor reserved exclusively for the Line Dancing group, will have everyone enjoying the chasse, grapevine, weave, triple step, shuffle step, lock step, kick ball change, mambo, sailor step, spiral turn, sugar foot and more! Each dance consisting of a number of walls - the direction in which the group dance and scoot! Over and above the fun of line dancing, all guests will be able to make the most of the Louis Imperial Beach Hotel facilities and perfect beachside location, plus enjoy the local shops and many archaeological sites nearby.

To join next year's trip visit: www.linedancingholidays.co.uk



Louis Imperial Beach Hotel, Paphos

APHRODITE HILLS RESORT: PROUD ANNOUNCEMENTS!



New Pirates Village at the InterContinental Aphrodite Hills Resort Hotel - See Page 4



WORLD TRAVEL AWARD (WTA) FOR APHRODITE HILLS RESORT:

The Aphrodite Hills Resort has won the 2011 WTA as the Leading Holiday Resort, Spa & Golf Course in Cyprus. This is the 6th consecutive award of its kind received by the resort since 2005.

APHRODITE HILLS GOLF COURSE – VOTED AMONG THE TOP 20 GOLF COURSES IN EUROPE!

Further great news for Cyprus & Aphrodite Hills Resort came about last month. The golf course at the Resort was voted among the top 20 Most Popular Golf Courses in Europe-‘ranked at the 19th position to be precise’ as stated by a spokesperson at the resort. This new achievement by the Golf course was realised after an internet survey by golfer voters (2,554) at a recent survey in September 2011.



ANNABEL CROFT TENNIS ACADEMY / APHRODITE HILLS TENNIS ACADEMY COOPERATION:

Starting in January 2012, the Annabel Croft Tennis Academy –founded two and half years ago by the former No.1 British tennis player and celebrity, Annabel Croft–will provide a unique and comprehensive 12 week teaching program at the Aphrodite Hills T/A. The program will feature 1 hour weekly classes suitable for all ages and all standards of play with regular competitive opportunities. ‘Annabel Croft, who has experienced

tennis coaching methods all over the world for over 25 years, believes that sessions need to be exciting and energetic with emphasis on good technique but most important of all – the players need to hit a lot of balls to improve. After her visit to the Aphrodite Hills Tennis Academy, Annabel Croft stated that she is very excited with this cooperation, as the tennis coaching facilities at the Aphrodite Hills Tennis Academy are amongst the best in Europe. Annabel believes that players need to have access to inspirational coaching and Aphrodite Hills surroundings

make it an ideal location for learning or practice.’

[Note: The Aphrodite Hills Tennis Academy, the biggest tennis academy in Cyprus, is firmly established as a world-class facility on the international tennis scene. The academy features 9 tennis courts –four clay and five hard courts– and attracts players of all levels to learn or improve their skills in the year-round warm climate and sumptuous surroundings. All of the hard courts are green set surfaced, making them suitable for continuous



Former No.1 Tennis Player and Celebrity Mrs. Annabel Croft

play in hot weather, whilst the clay courts provide players with an additional choice of surfaces to train on; both of which are used in tennis tournaments throughout the world and recognized as championship standard].

'A press release by the Aphrodite Hills Resort states: The Aphrodite Hills Tennis Academy is thrilled to participate in this new, high quality, innovative tennis program, which will be offered in Cyprus for the first ever time!'

NEW PIRATES VILLAGE AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL APHRODITE HILLS RESORT HOTEL IS NOW OPEN:

"At Aphrodite Hills children have always been looked after with tender love and care and with the introduction of this new updated children's paradise they will feel even more special! The Pirates Village is located at the heart of the Aphrodite Hills Resort and features a spacious indoor Kids Club for ages 3 -12 years, a separate baby Crèche which caters for babies 6 to 35 months, shaded play areas, an outdoor adventure playground including a bouncing castle and trampoline, a multi-purpose surface court and a 75m² children's swimming pool with active water slide, all within an area of 3000m².

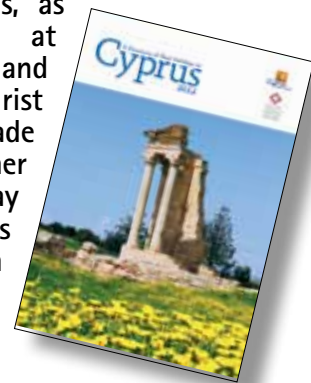
Pirates Village is operated and supervised by our Hotel's specialists trained in childrens care who look after our young guests".

"Fun packed daily activities designed by our recreation team include arts and crafts sessions, canvas painting, dance classes as well as fun water and sporting activities, to include water-polo, mini-football, mini-golf, junior Olympics, table tennis, tennis and basketball. Older children are definitely not left out as they can enjoy a range of fantastic

evening entertainment including; Karaoke, talent shows, camp-outs, disco and movie nights!"

AGTA 2012 CYPRUS BROCHURE

The 2012 AGTA annual members' brochure-directory has been launched during October 2011. The new brochure - complete with concise editorial covering Cyprus's holiday resorts attractions / events / and news - is, as always, aimed at promoting the Island as a quality tourist destination at trade and consumer travel and holiday exhibitions beginning with the World Travel Market.



AGTA WEBSITE

Updates & upgrades to the AGTA website www.agta.co.uk are currently being completed. Innovations to the site include a better presentation of members' listings in all categories. More importantly the click through facility to members' own websites and background page details will be vastly improved. Work to the site is on-going and new features for the site, including blogs / twittering are being considered.

NEW AFFILIATE MEMBER

MEDITERRANEAN HOTEL COLLECTION

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'Mediterranean Hotel Collection (MHC) was launched in April 2011 by Peter Ward. The MHC offers a range of Sales and Marketing services for Operators and Hoteliers tailored made to suit clients' needs and budgets'. MHC has the following properties in its portfolio.

Iliomare Hotel & Resorts: 5 star -2011 Conde Nast award winners (Blue Flag Beach & Green Keys), Thassos, Greece

Panorama Hotel Apartments: 4 star property in Tolon, Greece.

Kissos Hotel: A 3 star hotel with 4 star services in Paphos, Cyprus

END NOTE:

AGTA NEWS is a quarterly produced newsletter distributed to members and industry networking tourism partners. *We would welcome suggestions from members for important news (i.e. awards or out of the ordinary news) about their organisations /companies for inclusion in future editions of the Newsletter.* Comments on published items are also welcomed. Please e-mail any of these to the AGTA (UK) Secretariat: E mail: yannis@agta.co.uk

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