

Destinations:

Excellent Introduction To Unique Attractions

> London-Karen Dabrowska

Dracula's playground in Transylvania and a gorilla park in Gabon were among the weird and wonderful 'different' holiday options promoted at Destinations the leading consumer travel showcase held in London from February 1st – 4th.



Now in its 13th year, the exhibition attracted over 54,000 passionate travellers all keen to check out the thousands of travel choices and exclusive deals. The show certainly lived up to its slogan 'come and discover the world in a day'.

Muslim and Middle Eastern exhibitors included Libya, UAE, North Cyprus, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and Turkey.

Morocco and Tunisia, veteran exhibitors at London's international travel shows were keen to promote 'something different: villas for rent in Tunisia and the Saidia resort in Morocco, which will open at the end of 2007. Sahbi Hmida set up Tunisia Simply Villas in August last year. "I studied tourism and wanted to open a travel agency", Hmida told Islamic Tourism. "But a small person can't complete with the big companies so I had to branch out and do something different". Hmida relies on his website

www.tuniasimplyvillas.co.uk for promotion. Mediterranean-Saidia is the latest development by the Spanish company FADESA which is building a remarkable residential and tourist complex located in Saidia, a picturesque village with a long tourist tradition on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. There are six luxury hotels, a marina, three golf courses, a commercial centre, clinic and an extensive range of inclusive services for the apartments and villas in this complex.

Anatolian Sky promoted Turkey and North Cyprus as holiday destinations. Before the show, North Cyprus launched an impressive advertising campaign on 100 red buses travelling through the heart of London and 50 central London underground stations. Oasis Overland marketed an ambitious Silk Road Exploratory Trip passing through Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Jordan,

Syria, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and ending in China.

While Oasis Overland is for the younger generation eager to put up tents or sleep in simple guest houses, the Silk Road and Beyond caters to well heeled retired folk.

Craig Baguley, the manager of Arkno Tours London office observed that Libya is becoming the in destination. "Everyone is talking about Libya – people have discovered the Roman and Greek cities and other magnificent historic sites".

While many Arab and Muslim countries were a bit backward in coming forward to promote their unique tourist sites and destinations, the exhibitors who made the effort to attend the show displayed a commendable professionalism in the literature they presented and in the design of their stands. ■