

# Al-Moltaqa

## The Arabian Travel Market - Dubai

Dubai - Ali Shakiry & Motaz Othmane

As Dubai grows in importance as an investment and international tourism centre, prestigious exhibitions are being held in the emirate, including the Arabian Travel Market, also known as Al-Moltaqa (the forum).



Al-Moltaqa received the title of «Exhibition of the Year», because it won first place among 440 events organized in 32 countries. It recorded the strongest growth among international tourism exhibitions, in respect of its area and the number of participants and visitors. It is the second biggest exhibition of the Reed Group, the

international leader in organizing tourism exhibitions and conventions.

This year Al-Moltaqa's area increased by 30%: India, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates of Dubai, Abu-Dhabi and Shareja put up larger stands. The 73 new participants also contributed to the increase in the exhibition area.

Similarly, the number of professional visitors who came to Dubai to participate in this exhibition increased. They included those invited to the «Hosted Buyers Programme». On the last day of the exhibition the local residents came in their thousands to quiz exhibitors about their products. The stands of the Czech Republic and Bulgaria ➤

## Exhibitions

attracted a lot of interest and visitors asked for detailed information as they planned their next vacation.

The organisers adopted the slogan "just a drop" and donated the proceeds from some of the ticket sales to provide drinking water for the victims of the tsunami.

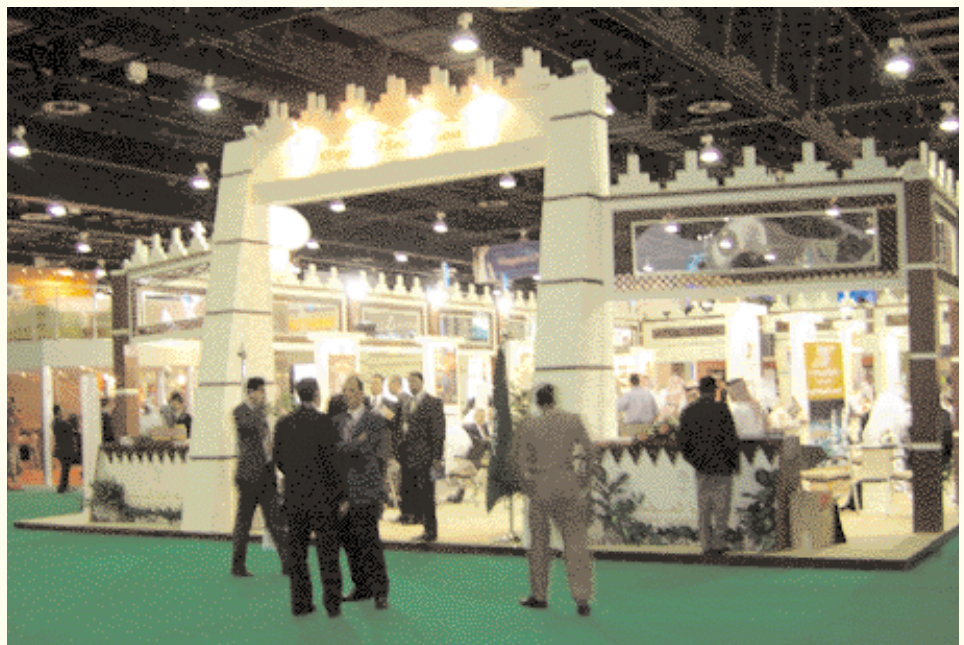
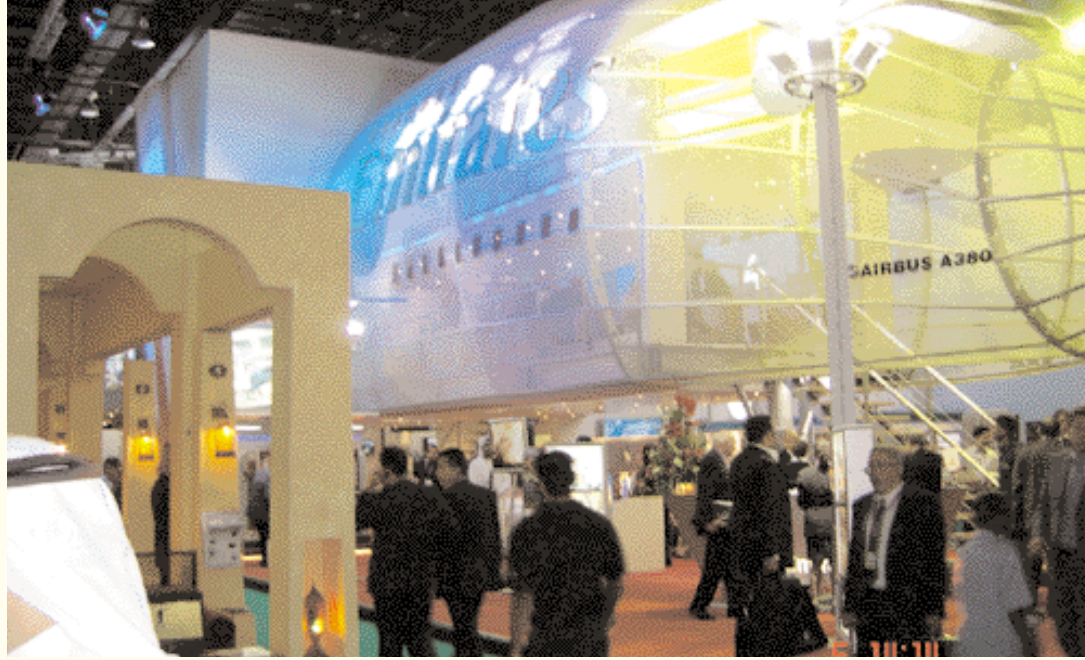
The Islamic Tourism team was very active during the exhibition. We were keen to meet our friends and interviewed Mrs. Susanne Jouzy of the Syrian stand. She informed us about the excellent results achieved by the Market of Tourist Investment organized in Damascus last April, where more than 60 tourism investment projects in Syria were displayed.

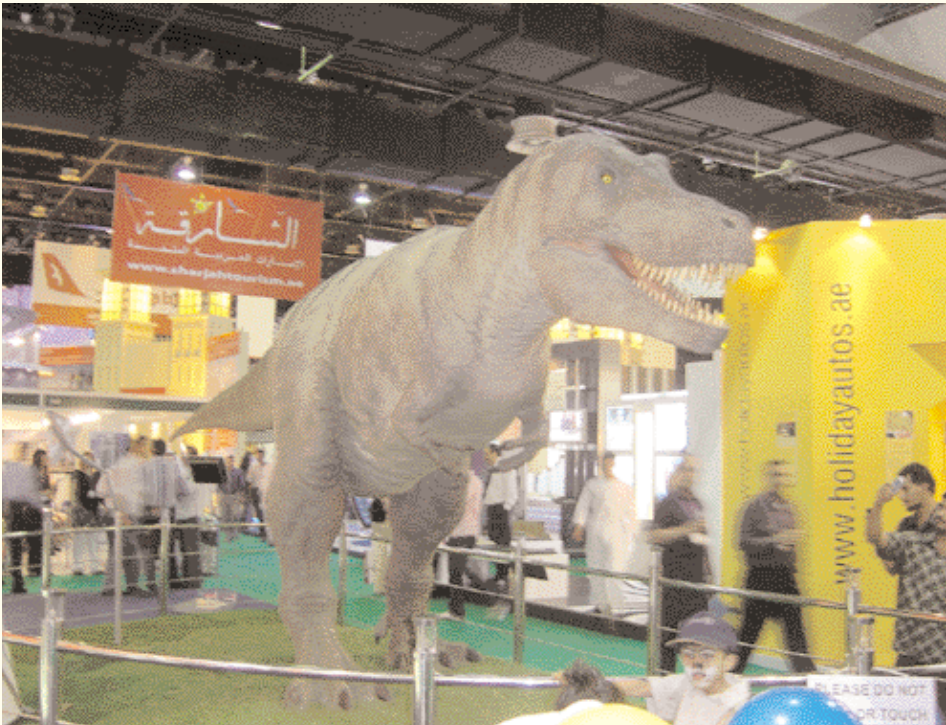
We also had a meeting with Mrs. Mouna Fares of the Lebanese stand who informed us about the preparations undertaken by the ministry of tourism to welcome Arab tourists this year. Lebanon recorded an excellent tourism season last summer. Mrs. Fares was eager to see a continuing influx of large numbers of Arab tourists this year.

At the Jordanian stand, we attended the press conference held by the Jordanian Board of Tourism Promotion, the Authority of Al-Aqaba and the Jordanian Association for Nature Protection. The Jordanian ambassador to the UAE was also present. The participants presented a brief preview about the evolution of tourism in Jordan. Copies of Islamic Tourism were distributed at the meeting. Our team also attended the ceremony organized by the Union of Arab Tourist Writers to honor Dr Taybi Khattab, regional director of the Moroccan National Office of Tourism.

We met our friends on the Saudi Arabian stand and distributed copies of the magazine to visitors who were especially interested in the article of the publisher Mr. Shakiry on Haj in issue number 16. At the Qatari stand we met Mr. Abdul-Rahim Ibrahim, Director of the gigantic "Loaloo" project (the pearl) a unique, underwater construction. We then toured all the Arab stands.

At the Asian stands, we met Mr. Siam Sul Lussa, tourism promotion director in Indonesia and attended his press conference. He was asked by one of the participants about his promotion plans for ➤





the Middle East. He answered: «We began with Islamic Tourism magazine and we are going to continue with them and with various media».

India had a large stand at the exhibition. Many different sectors of its tourist industry

were involved. We met Mr. Jajoria, the regional resident, who invited us to a reception, during which he described the facilities offered to Arab tourists by various Indian states. We also interviewed Mr. Elvis Gomez, President of Goa tourism and the

director of Kerala tourism. We toured the stands of Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Korea, which were all very popular this year.

We then visited the European stands. On the Austrian stand we spoke to Dr Peter Furlinger who appreciated the copies of our magazine handed to him, particularly issue number 10 which had an article about Vienna. A banner in front of this stand was decorated with words from a song by the famous Egyptian singer Asmahan, about the Austrian capital: « The evenings of pleasure in Vienna are livened by a breath of paradise ."

We also met Mr. Mehemet Basel, Director of North Cyprus tourism, to whom we presented the issue which had an article on his country. He highly appreciated it and thanked us. Miss Sylva of the Czech stand was interested in our magazine and invited us to visit her country and write about the tourist attractions. We also interviewed Mrs. Maria Massarova, director of the Prague International Tourism Company, as well as other officials on the Greek, Finish, German, Italian, Spanish and French stands.

Mr. Biser Yalamov, President of the Council of Tourism of Bulgaria, assured us that Arab tourists are very interested in his country, which has good relations with the Arab world. He told us that the number of tourists increased annually by 20%, and that hotels were continually renovated and the tourist infrastructure augmented. He talked about tourist attractions such as the Black Sea resorts, green mountains, historic monuments and many museums. He added that his country was well aware of the needs of Arab tourists and their families. He also indicated that the temperature in summer doesn't exceed 32°. This was perfect for Arab tourists, who were especially fond of Varna resort on the Black Sea. Arab visitors also appreciated the varied Bulgarian cuisine.

Islamic Tourism was invited to various functions hosted by the participants. We stayed in the luxurious hotel City Seasons, with large, magnificent rooms. The hotel is close to the main shopping malls and the airport. It is managed by our friend Samir Aziz, who placed all its facilities at our disposal. ■