

MALTA

Enterprising Spirit of an Industrious Nation



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Harrods to Fly Malta Flag

If you still haven't made it to Malta then you are in for a treat closer to home next year. **Joseph Zammit Tabona**, in his capacity of High Commissioner of Malta in the UK, is spearheading a massive undertaking to launch a 4-week Malta event at Harrods from 5-31 March 2012. Harrods, the



quintessentially luxury department store will be flying the Maltese flag and will have six shopfront windows dedicated to showcasing Malta, with a further 360 square metres on the third floor displaying Maltese products and goods. Top Maltese chefs will be cooking up a storm and the exhibition will be promoting not only Maltese cuisine, foods, wines and beers but also the country's legendary welcome, cultural heritage and tourism offerings. "The idea is to start with our ancient history, bringing visitors right up to modern day Malta - emphasising the enduring link between the past and present. The exhibition will also be an opportunity to highlight the 70th anniversary, on 15 April 2012, of Malta as a George Cross Island," explains Zammit Tabona.

However, the initiative will go beyond simply exhibiting the delights of visiting Malta. Zammit Tabona envisages corporate events being held by, "Malta Enterprise, FinanceMalta and the MFSA; key players from the banking and real estate sectors will likely be involved in the B2B meetings I will be organising. The idea is for accountants, lawyers, bankers and hedge fund managers to host breakfast meetings, lunches or receptions in Harrods for their UK clients."

Nonetheless, while the Malta showcase at Harrods will definitely give visitors a taster of what the nation has to offer, there can be no substitute for taking an actual trip to the archipelago - whether it is for business or pleasure.

Leveraging Regional Aptitudes



BY SORCHA HELLYER & GABRIELE VILLA ▶ Malta, despite being a resilient success story in the EU, rarely makes the global headlines. So when the tiny island nation became the focus of the massive evacuation effort from troubled Libya, the influx of international journalists who descended on the islands was quite remarkable. Suddenly images of reporters standing against the stunning backdrop of Valletta's bastions, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, were being beamed around the world. Malta's role as a humanitarian hub, for those escaping the turmoil in Libya, was being positively lauded and the country received some well deserved recognition.

Prime Minister David Cameron spoke with warm gratitude about Malta's instrumental contribution to the repatriation of UK citizens, "I thank the Maltese Prime Minister personally on behalf of the country and, not for the first time in our history, we should pay tribute to Malta and her people for the role they are playing."

When Cameron welcomed Gonzi to Number 10 in May this year, there was a strong nod of acknowledgement about the critical role Malta plays in the region. Apparently keen to explore with Gonzi what the two countries, "Can do to help make progress in North Africa and the relations we have with the countries of North Africa," Cameron explained, "I think your experience, knowledge and relationships will really help us to understand that region better." This is important recognition for Malta, a country that, because of its status as the smallest EU microstate and its distance from Brussels, has often seemed sidelined.

As Dr John C. Grech, a prominent economist and Maltese businessman, points out, "We are examining how we can increasingly make Malta a location which foreigners look to when



they want to do things regionally and when they want political accessibility. We use diplomacy to get our point across and we do this despite our limitations; using our geography, the spirit of the Maltese to survive and our ability to be dexterous, in order to actually deliver value."

Grech, also an academic who teaches Economic Diplomacy at the Mediterranean Academy for Diplomatic Studies at the University of Malta, holds true the belief that diplomacy is the essence of the way that we manage our relations with other people worldwide; confirming that, "In reality we are living in a period where, particularly in the Mediterranean, Malta's role is very central. We fight for our humanitarian role because we believe it is exactly this kind of role that our size and our location lends itself to. However, I also feel that we can take a number of political and business

initiatives that could make a difference." Malta as a springboard to the MENA region is a theme that is increasingly being elaborated upon by both government and business leaders alike.

Given its finite local market, Malta has always been outward looking. It enjoys excellent relations with neighbouring countries and has lent its expertise to those nations. Malta's positioning, as the southernmost EU member, with a sophisticated economy also makes it an attractive destination from which to launch activities into North Africa. Stability in the region is a must, but current incumbent Gonzi believes that, "These are countries that have enormous resources and all this potential. If we are there, if we have a long-term vision and we partner with them, I am quite sure it's a win-win situation for all of us." He is quick to point out that, despite what the scaremongers might say, "Developments in North Africa may not have a negative impact on Malta - quite the contrary in fact. I believe there is an excellent opportunity for the region to grow using Malta as a logistics hub."

The stability of Malta's political and economic climate play an important role in drawing both leisure visitors and business to the islands. Alan Richards, CEO of HSBC Malta, judiciously points out, "Malta has had a good crisis in the sense that there hasn't really been one. Malta has had no housing crisis, no banking crisis and no sovereign bond crisis. The Maltese economy has performed relatively well and showed much greater resilience than we might have hoped for when the global troubles began in late 2008." Malta is in an enviable position, as Gonzi said at the end of the first half of 2011, "With a growth rate of 3.7%, the country has surpassed both European and euro area averages and is one of the front liners."

The Prime Minister is candid in saying, "Probably now the challenge will be to keep this growth sustainable." Many perceive that Malta's unique selling point is the availability of highly skilled or highly qualified personnel at an appropriate cost for all areas of the expanding economy. The month of April 2011 registered Malta as having the 5th lowest unemployment rate within the EU; standing at 6.2% compared to the average of 9.4% recorded in the EU27. Gonzi qualifies this by saying, "The challenges we face now are actually the challenges faced by success stories. Thus far the key element of all the burgeoning sectors has been our ability to provide the adequate numbers of highly qualified personnel and human resources."

However, success in attracting big businesses to invest in operations in Malta, in sectors as diverse as finance, IT, aircraft maintenance and tourism means that there is mounting pressure for the government to address both current and future needs with vision. Demands for the provision of the right level of staffing are

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David Cameron - British PM

Malta's Musical Ambassador



Under a canopy of stars, the rousingly passionate, yet somehow velvet voice of **Joseph Calleja** rings out against the backdrop of the lantern-adorned church of Floriana in Malta. To experience an open-air concert on a balmy July evening, is already quite a treat; but to feel yourself uplifted by the ardour and intensity of this impressive maestro of song is another experience altogether.

Born in Malta in 1978, Calleja started singing as an altar boy at the age of six and released his first solo recording for Decca, *Tenor Arias*, when he was only 26. Chosen by Edward Fenech Adami, the then President of Malta, Calleja performed a private concert for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip on the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Malta in 2005.

Today, aged 33, Calleja has already established himself as one of the most promising tenors of his generation. Genuinely proud of his native land Calleja

asserts, "Malta is very rich in history and culture. I am very proud of my nation and my nation is very proud of me; I always try not to disappoint the people of Malta. No matter how many times I go abroad, I always feel very happy when I come back home." Calleja has undoubtedly placed Malta on the map of classical music and his latest recorded recital, appropriately named - **The Maltese Tenor** - is bound to be the source of even more national pride. Upon release in May it became an instant bestseller in Germany, debuting high on its classical chart as the top vocal recording. Calleja undoubtedly hopes his new album will wow his UK fans in much the same way when it is released here on 25 July.

Malta's Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, the Environment and Culture, Dr Mario de Marco commends Calleja, dubbing him, "A Maltese icon who symbolises Maltese creativity." Dr de Marco believes this new album will help market Malta abroad, remarking, "Joseph Calleja's numerous achievements overseas, and the high regard in which he is held within international classical music circles, make him one of Malta's greatest ambassadors."

A glorious past. A promising future.

With a multi-national legacy and a historic tapestry of events and achievements, Malta has evolved to become a unique nation, possessing an impressive track record and a robust ambition for the future.

Vision 2015+ sets out Government's plans for Malta to become a centre of excellence in the Mediterranean in seven core areas: financial services, ICT, manufacturing, tourism, health, education and establishing sister island Gozo as an eco island.

think
malta

TOURISM

Enchanting in Every Season



Mdina



Marsaxlokk



Isle of MTV

For over 7,000 years Malta has been a place of respite for daring explorers mapping the seas, travellers traversing the globe, fisherman reeling in Mediterranean delights and even local farmers nurturing olive groves and grapevines. Situated at the apex of the East-West maritime crossroads, successive waves of civilisations, from the Phoenicians, Romans and Arabs to the recently departed British, have all sought claim to this discrete land mass. Despite having no natural resources to speak of, Malta has long captured the imagination of new arrivals with its sparkling azure waters, vibrant bougainvillea, not to mention its natural harbours which offered refuge from the tumultuous mainland in times past. Today, visitors continue to flock to the archipelago - composed of Malta, Gozo and Comino - to soak up the glittering sun, uncover the jewels of the sea, experience the unheralded hospitality of the Maltese and, of course, to take in all that seven millennia of recorded history has left behind.

Malta's unique topography takes visitors' breath away from the moment they set foot on the islands. A microcosm of the Mediterranean, the seascape is a rugged coastline interspersed with quiet coves and pockets of red and golden sand. With the plethora of wildflowers in spring, the rocky countryside is a botanists delight; from the stunning Dingli Cliffs that drop off dramatically, remote and far removed from the madding crowds, to the terraced terrain that gently rolls away into the astonishing blue seas, teeming with wildlife. Under a hot summer sun the translucent waters are enticingly inviting to swimmers and water sports fanatics alike. For those who shy away from balmy, sun-drenched destinations in the height of summer, there is the year-round possibility to savour the mottled blue waters and Maltese rays. Thanks to the temperate climate that does not oscillate wildly with the seasons but is moderated by the surrounding sea; even in the middle of winter, the water temperature hovers around 15 degrees celsius, pleasant enough for an open water, wreck or cave dive at Cirkewwa or another of Malta's premier sites. What's more, this year St George's Bay in St Julians and Bugibba Bay in St Pauls were awarded the prestigious full Blue Flag for supreme quality water. Malta now officially has the second cleanest bathing waters in the EU.

Even with strikingly pristine waters and 90 superb bathing sites, Malta is more than simply a summer holiday destination; it is an island nation that lives and breathes 365 days a year. During the so-called shoulder seasons (outside of the main summer months), Malta welcomes visitors with open arms and is perfectly equipped to cater for them - quite unlike a number of its Mediterranean

Malta's unique topography takes visitors' breath away from the moment they set foot on the islands

neighbours. As Chairman of Corinthia, the Malta-based luxury hotel chain, Alfred Pisani insists, "We are alive in all respects, the country and the atmosphere continue no matter the season." An entrenched maritime history is a testament to this. For centuries, naturally deep harbours and Malta's central Mediterranean location encouraged a vibrant shipping industry. The ports themselves are steeped in legend, having

moored at various times a range of sea craft from various lands, among them ancient Phoenician vessels and the Royal Navy. Today, Grand Harbour, long noted as one of the safest natural havens in the Mediterranean, is frequently host to superyachts and cruise liners. Seafarers from around the world have discovered that Malta's temperate climate, crystalline waters and central location make for an ideal base from which to launch a sailing holiday. While possible throughout the year, the ideal season lasts from April to November when yachters can most thoroughly enjoy the 150 miles of indented coastline dotted with secluded craggy inlets that are inaccessible by foot. Malta has also been recognised as a perfect location for winterizing yachts, with excellent repair facilities and reasonable rates. For those who are not "fairweather sailors", the natural coastline provides enough shelter from the open seas to enjoy a sailing holiday no matter the season.

The pinnacle of Malta's annual yachting season is the unique Rolex Middle Sea Race in October. Now in its 32nd year, the 606-mile course is noted as one of the most awe-inspiring in the world, beginning and ending in the magnificent Grand Harbour. From Malta, the racers head north towards the waters of Sicily, through the Strait of Messina, around the islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa, catching glimpses of Stromboli's active volcano. Participants could not ask for better breezes in and around the Maltese islands, with year-round prevailing north-easterly Mistral and southerly Sirocco winds to fill the sails.

Back on land, Maltese history is a feast for the culture vulture. From Mdina to Valletta - the old and new capitals, and from Vittoriosa which hosts Birgu waterfront to Rabat in Gozo which hosts the Citadella, there are acres of architectural delights to marvel

at. A veritable treasure trove of heritage and culture, Malta, over the past 10 years has also become a main stop on the cruise circuit. The island is brimming with breathtaking spectacles for disembarking passengers. With more historical and cultural monuments per square mile than any other country, Malta boasts no less than three UNESCO World Heritage Sites for its diminutive 121 square miles. Grand Harbour alone welcomes approximately 700,000 cruise passengers annually who arrive in the capital Valletta. It's not hard to see why this fortress city has become a regular stop on Mediterranean itineraries: originally constructed to deter the Ottomans, the city's impregnable walls reveal some of Europe's most exquisite palaces, gardens and numerous churches. In a one-day excursion from the ship, visitors encounter countless cultural wonders, including the 16th century St John's Cathedral. An apogee of magnificence, and one of the island's 365 sites of worship, it houses priceless treasures such as Caravaggio's masterpiece "The Beheading of St John the Magnificent." Another perfect specimen of noble architecture is the Grand Master's Palace; inhabited by the Grand Masters until 1798 and now occupied by the President of Malta, this building is one of many indelible links between the country's past and present.

Outside the capital, the historical offerings are just as abundant. At every turn, one can walk amongst well-preserved Roman temples,

Christian catacombs and British forts, all the while imagining how history has reinvented itself with each new occupier. Many of the most intriguing architectural sites date from the presence of the Knights of St John, who retreated to the island from Jerusalem in 1530 and became the Knights of Malta. The flourishing trade that grew up under their watch financed the splendid Baroque palaces and refined settings; many of which are now used by both local and international clientele as venues for upscale events and weddings.

It is phenomenal backdrops like these that have undoubtedly inspired filmmakers to chose Malta for location filming. Playing host to foreign productions since 1953, Malta's incredibly diverse landscape and rich architectural variety can double for virtually any other Mediterranean country. Moreover, a long tradition of fine craftsmanship means that there is a pool of skilled set builders who have worked in Malta on impressive films like Gladiator, Troy, The Da Vinci Code, Munich and Agora. Most recently Brad Pitt, has for the second time been on location in Malta; this time for the filming of World War Z, slated for release next year. Despite its remarkable abundance of historical locations, Malta is also globally recognised in the film industry as having the largest water tank facility in the world - perfect for all those underwater shots.

To truly step back in time visitors should visit some of Malta's prehistoric temples, some of which pre-date Egypt's pyramids. Scattered across the archipelago, they are thought to have been used for ritualistic meetings by the world's most ancient civilisations. One breathtaking example, Hagar Qim, which means "standing stones," dwarfs Stonehenge in numbers and layout. Even more startlingly impressive are the labyrinthine Ggantija Temples in Gozo. Perfectly melding tradition with contemporary cosmopolitanism, Malta's varied cultural offerings are plentiful. A vibrant events calendar

pulses throughout the year, with both annual and one-off events catering to all age groups and tastes. Maltafest, the yearly three-month long celebration of the arts, attracts a wide array of talent, while the International Jazz Festival has struck a chord in the Grand Harbour for the past decade. Attracting youth both locally and from across Europe, the Isle of MTV Malta recently wrapped up, with Snoop Dogg as the headlining act. The free concert attracts crowds of up to 50,000 every year and with artists like Lady Gaga and Black Eyed Peas it's not difficult to understand why Malta has become a music magnet.

Beyond all of these attractions, there remains however, one most remarkable aspect that appeals to visitors; it is the authentically warm welcome greeting them. In true Maltese fashion, this hospitality also has deep-seated roots reaching back centuries to when the islands were home to a multicultural melting pot of traders. Nowadays the journey is significantly shorter than the weeks and months those traders endured by ship. Just a couple of hours by plane from anywhere in Europe, arriving in Malta will no doubt somehow feel homely and yet deliciously exotic - a little like one of the many scrumptious Mediterranean dishes that the locals serve. Come summer, come winter, come any time of year, Malta's astonishing myriad of offerings are on the menu.

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Snorkelling in crystal clear waters



Ggantija Temple



Nautically Yours



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It's not...it's Malta - the so-called best kept secret in the Mediterranean - just waiting to be nautically explored by you!

Malta's maritime industry has in fact developed to the extent that the country constantly features on the map of a number of the most elite super yachts from the Mediterranean and beyond. The geographic positioning of Malta means that it is within one or two sailing days from most rivieras in mainland Europe and just a one or two-hour flight away from most European airports. This has established the country as a popular destination for all those boat owners who seeking a quiet, private holiday within a discreet environment which, at

the same time, offers all possible amenities and services - be it for work or pleasure.

Across the world Sunseeker endeavours to offer excellence to all its clients, be they charterers or new boat buyers. However, this experience takes on a whole new dimension in Malta because boating and the maritime environment are instilled within the nation's DNA as much as its history and cultural heritage are. Clients of Sunseeker Malta can therefore enjoy all that the Sunseeker brand offers them, in terms of value and service, imbued with the passion that these seafaring islands exude.

Being located in the Maltese archipelago also means that Sunseeker is ideally placed to strengthen its brand within the Mediterranean region. The quality of its portfolio of boats means that Sunseeker has exceptional chartering operations to cater for your yachting needs. Moreover, it is poised to attract interest from the North African region. A professional and dedicated team of twelve operate Sunseeker's offices in Malta, offering an enticing opportunity to explore the beautiful coastline of the islands.

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ECO GOZO

A Commitment Towards a Better Future

Giovanna Debono - Minister for Gozo

Gozo, the second largest island in the Maltese archipelago, central to the Mediterranean basin, is known for its sublime coastline fading into lush countryside and its soft-paced rural character. Sufficiently developed to maintain sustainable economic activity, Gozo is a startling masterpiece wrought by nature and 7,000 years of cultural achievement. Driven by the desire to protect the natural environment, the Government of Malta has embarked on an ambitious, yet achievable, vision to shore up the existing values of sustainability and to transform Gozo into the eco-island of the Mediterranean by 2020. As one of the government's top priorities, their initiative - Eco-Gozo - aims to preserve the idyllic life of Gozitans by ensuring that its society develops responsibly; not only environmentally but also in terms of its economy and social fabric. It is therefore fitting that there is a ministry dedicated entirely to Malta's sister island. There is a uniqueness about Gozo that merits protecting, and as the Minister for Gozo, Giovanna Debono clarifies, "Progress is not being impeded, instead it is being enabled and directed in ways that render Gozo different and authentic. Our emphasis isn't on 'not doing,' but instead on 'doing it well.'" To that end, the initiative focuses on creating quality jobs for residents, developing sustainable energy, and cultivating a tourism industry that is linked to other areas such as agriculture, religion and health.

Since Eco-Gozo's inception two years ago, the population has responded positively. Proud to be participating in the protection of their land, many are involved in local schemes including the collection of rainwater and land and sea clean-up drives. Debono encourages the interest of the general public asserting that, "Eco-Gozo revolves around the collective identity of its people, generation-bridging and development." Currently, the Ministry for Gozo is focused on implementing sustainable education programmes in schools, awareness campaigns targeting the island's population and encouraging residential involvement. While the programme is centred on improving the quality of life of inhabitants, the ministry is also thinking beyond its borders. Debono adds that there is, "A genuine interest as to how Gozo can be more appealing for foreigners to visit, live, and invest in."

GOZO

Malta's Hidden Gem Awaits Discovery



The Blue Lagoon



San Blas Bay



The Cittadella

With today's ease of travel, off-the-beaten-path places like Gozo are few and far between. Only 25 minutes away from Malta by ferry or seaplane, visitors to this hidden gem discover a tranquillity so complete it is truly a way of life. With meandering country trails, valleys bursting with wildflowers and a spectacular coastline punctuated by tiny coves, red sandy beaches and turquoise inlets; sleepy villages are home to the island's 31,000 residents who welcome visitors as though they were family. Juxtaposing this rustic beauty, is Gozo's abundance of seven millennia of history and tradition. Thought to be the legendary Calypso's isle of Homer's Odyssey where he was held captive for many years, visitors leave this mystical place wondering if his imprisonment was actually by choice.

Markedly distinct from nearby Malta, Gozo is greener and far smaller – its pristine shoreline blending into unspoilt countryside. The people are a reflection of this beauty, brimming with the warmth and character that comes from traditions rooted in a rural ethos. Centuries of self-sufficiency and a more agrarian existence have left Gozitans deeply connected to the land with almost everyone cultivating at least a small parcel of terrain. Traditional limestone farmhouses dot the picturesque landscape, a number of which have been restored as villas so that guests can experience the rhythms of a lifestyle dictated by the seasons. Indeed, the array of accommodation facilities from award-winning hotels, to superb houses of character are scattered throughout the 14 different localities of Gozo; meaning that visitors can immerse themselves in the Gozo community vibe. Gozitans, being inhabitants of an outpost on the Mediterranean's oldest maritime trading route, have long welcomed strangers into their land; an experience that has made them incredibly open and impressively friendly. It is their warm-heartedness that is at the root of what makes for a memorable and delightful visit to the island.

The sun-drenched, rustic atmosphere is a rambler's paradise. Walks through the countryside retrace the steps of ancient pilgrims, follow shepherds' paths and pass by Baroque churches and isolated

shrines. While steep hills and rocky paths dip down to hidden beaches and jutting promenades. For cyclists, the open roads and winding lanes are almost entirely empty of cars and traffic lights. Lined as they are, with blossoming flowers, shrubs and traditional drystone walls – it makes for an inviting undulating landscape. Although riddled with trails, the island is small enough to traverse in just 15 minutes, lending itself to a sense of cosy security and welcome familiarity. Of course there are comfortable, less strenuous ways to see the island; you can go on a delightful journey savouring the sights with the improved public transport system and the hop-on-hop-off buses or alternatively you can take a taxi or rent a car.

Gozo's only city, Rabat - the tiny capital is also known by its British colonial name, Victoria - is aglow with honey-coloured limestone buildings. Perched on the city's hilltop is the imposing Cittadella, behind the walls of which the entire population slept until the 13th century for fear of attack by pirates and slavers. From the ramparts it is clear that layers of history are deeply embedded in this dramatic location; evidenced by the temple dating back to Roman times, the Knights of St John's impenetrable walls and the graffiti scrawled in the soft stone by idle soldiers hundreds of years ago. The Cittadella is also the keeper of deeply evocative stories, such as the Turkish invasion of 1551, which led to an almost complete enslavement of the population. This confluence of cultures - reflected in the Cittadella - is equally apparent in the city's rich and varied cuisine. Delicious dishes which make up the rich local cuisine reflect the influences of every civilisation and occupying power to have touched the shores of Gozo, from the 8th century Moors to the recently departed British.

A striking testament to Gozo's primordial past, the hulking Ggantija temples are the oldest free-standing structures in the world, predating Stonehenge by a millennium. Constructed entirely out of limestone, the island's only natural resource, each megalith weighs approximately 50 tons. In an amazing feat of advanced engineering, ancient Gozitans are said to have mobilised the entire population to create this complex labyrinth as a site for celebratory

and mourning rituals. As if this alone were not reason enough to visit Gozo, the island's 28 miles of sparkling coastline offers some of the most stunning, undeveloped beaches in the region. Tourists regularly come from Malta to swim in the shallow waters of Ramla Bay, or to brave the difficult but colourful hike down to the deserted San Blas Bay. An abundance of sheltered coves and well-preserved beaches, inaccessible by foot, await the sea kayaker; as does the rare pleasure of exploring caves and gullies once used by raiding pirates and smugglers. Moreover, the translucent waters surrounding Gozo are noted for some of the best scuba-diving in the world, with visibility in excess of 40 metres and a plethora of diving spots accommodating all levels of experience. For the most vibrant species of fish, daunting underwater chimneys, and startling drop-offs, divers head for Dwejra's Azure Window, the iconic arches recognisable from recent appearances in feature films. The more adventurous might take advantage of the three wrecks sunk a short boat ride away from Gozo's southern coast.

As far as Gozo is from the clamouring tourist trade, Malta's third island, Comino, is even farther. A sanctuary for birds, the island has a permanent population of only four. The island's buildings are few, but include a tiny chapel in which a priest, who travels daily from Gozo by boat, celebrates mass during the summer months. Although the island is the picture of tranquillity, summer tourists often crowd the Blue Lagoon - one of the archipelago's most popular snorkelling spots - beckoned by the loveliness of the amazing turquoise waters.

Besides the sea, the colours of Gozo are painted in the smiles of its inhabitants, in the rolling landscape and farm produce that is savoured at the tables of its local restaurants. It is a portrait of community spirit, rich in its diverse history and shared values. It is all this that has long attracted the neighbouring Maltese as a getaway from the hustle and bustle of their more metropolitan island. As mainland Europeans begin to truly discover the pleasures of Malta's sister island, this haven welcomes them to share in the peacefulness of the Gozitans - the prevailing spirit of the land.

A Luxury You Can Afford



Baron Holiday Homes, Zebbug

The UK is undoubtedly fond of Malta as a tourism destination and given its incredible climate, it's hardly surprising. Over 30% of the 1.3 million tourists that visit the islands are from the UK and the average stay is 8.5 nights. The number of repeat visitors is steadily increasing and the variety of different holidays – including romantic getaways to enjoy one of the stunning outdoor concerts and a stroll along the balmy seafront, city breaks to explore the cultural offerings of the island and family holidays to spend some sun-drenched quality time together – is a definite draw.

Despite being an island nation at the limits of the Mediterranean, Malta is extremely accessible with direct air links making it less than three hours away from London and Brussels. Malta itself is an ideal destination or can be used as a regional hub for a multi-destination holiday. Once you land in Malta, the journey from Malta International Airport (also known as Luqa) to anywhere on the main island is an absolute dream. The diversity of tourism offerings is astounding but for those who love nature and serenity, a visit to Gozo is a must.

A pleasant 25 minute-ferry ride takes you to Malta's sister island or you can charter a yacht and make your own way there. Of course you could always day-trip to Gozo but to fully relax and

appreciate its beauty a stay in one of the fabulous fully-converted houses of character or farmhouses is a luxury you can afford. Baron Holiday Homes, the main brand of Baron Group, is synonymous with excellence in upmarket holiday rentals of this kind. The group pays special attention to maintaining the magnificent architectural inheritance of all the elegant properties in its



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portfolio so that guests can enjoy an authentic experience, while at the same time providing all the amenities and conveniences modern life requires. It offers a concierge service that caters to all your needs; Baron can organise everything to ensure that your stay is the epitome of comfort; from a personal butler, chef, beautician or masseur to chartering limousines, helicopters, seaplanes and yachts on your behalf.

Of course no visit to Malta would be complete without the requisite visit to the enchanting cities of Mdina and Valletta. Distinct in their own ways, Mdina for its stunning inland views and nigh-deserted medieval streets; Valletta for its melding of history with modernity and its vibrant buzzing atmosphere, they will both leave their mark on you. Some believe, however that there is more collective work yet to be done to further raise the profile of Malta's capital city. Paul Simmons, easyJet's Director of UK Market, champions the repositioning of Valletta as a destination in its own right for the city break market. He says, "When considering a city break (which are often in the shoulder seasons and booked at short notice) I'm sure Valletta would most likely not be considered alongside more traditional options such as Venice, Rome, Amsterdam etc. But we all know that Valletta is a great city break venue with an excellent range of hotels, restaurants and cultural

heritage – it just happens to be on an island!" Coupled with the Malta Tourism Authority's drive to promote the islands, Simmons is happy for easyJet to do its part to, "Make the most of Malta's airlift connectivity and great hotel and conferencing products. As with city breaks, most of the potential of MICE is in the off season market, and so we just need to put Valletta into the consideration set."

Sun-kissed Wedding Days

It goes without saying that everyone wants their big day to go perfectly. There is undoubtedly one thing wedding couples pray for more fervently than anything. It is something beyond catering needs and their capacity as a couple to love and honour – and that is for the sun to shine. So if you are planning to get married - and you have not yet decided the location - it might interest you to know that, not for the first time, Malta has been voted as having the best climate in the world according to International Living Magazine. With 12 hours of sunshine a day in mid-summer, you are pretty much assured of a blissful wedding under the azure blue, sun-kissed skies of the Mediterranean islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino.

365 sites of worship – one for every day of the year – and innumerable locations for civil ceremonies ensure you are spoilt for choice. In a country bursting at the seams with thousands of years of history, you will not be left wanting when it comes to the venue for your reception. Around the island modern hotels with their multiple cascading pools and seaside locations can obviously cater for larger groups and



The Xara Palace Relais & Chateaux, Mdina - Malta



www.xarapalace.com.mt

in their own way these are magnificent. However, for the understated elegance of a 17th century restored palazzo there can be no better place than the famed medieval city of Mdina. Named the "silent city" for its demure untouched charm and quiet streets steeped in history, the former capital of Malta, feels more like a movie set and is the perfect location for a memorable wedding. Offering a first-class service that caters to your every need, The Xara Palace Relais & Châteaux - Malta's only 5-star boutique hotel - has a choice of venues which can host exquisite intimate seated receptions for 70 guests or grand stand-up receptions for up to 500.

The de Mondion Restaurant, situated on elevated terraces that form part of the original fortifications of Mdina, makes guests feel like they magically hold the beautiful island of Malta in the palm of their hands. With its breathtaking 180 degree view across the countryside and the deep blue Mediterranean sea clearly visible on the horizon, it is an idyllic venue to host a wedding party and guests will be further wowed by the creations of the chef. Alternatively, for those who prefer to have their feet on the ground there is The Piazza, the majestic square situated directly outside the front of the hotel. The splendid old buildings that form this square provide an impressive backdrop for that special wedding with a difference.

International clients choose Malta as their "wedding destination" not only for its picturesque venues, its friendly hospitality which is world renowned or its excellent climate; but also because the country offers the opportunity to extend the celebrations either side of the event. Wedding preparations take on a whole new dimension as do post-ceremony activities; with fantastic beaches, colourful landscapes and the rich cultural heritage to explore and enjoy. Essentially wedding parties come to Malta to celebrate the joining of the happy couple and end up getting happily swept off their feet by the beauty of Malta.

A determination for success.

Ideas do not grow on trees and before you know it someone else might do it. So if you want to discuss business, you want to do it fast.

With a single point of contact for investors, easy access to decision makers, readily available human resources and an attractive operational cost structure, Malta is poised to be nimble. Doing business in Malta gives you an edge.

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The Corinthia San Gorg Hotel, Malta
Below left: the main restaurant (left)
and the lobby (right)



The Corinthia Palace Hotel, Malta
Below left: the old Villa entrance (left)
and the lobby (right)



The inspiring Spirit of Corinthia

Since its humble beginnings in Malta nearly 50 years ago, the Corinthia Group's portfolio has expanded to include ten individually designed five-star hotels in Europe and North Africa. Alfred Pisani, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of International Hotel Investments and of Corinthia since its inception in 1962, has been the driving force leading the business from a one-hotel company to a diversified group; redefining, on his journey, the very meaning of luxury, hospitality and exclusivity especially in the markets Corinthia has operated.

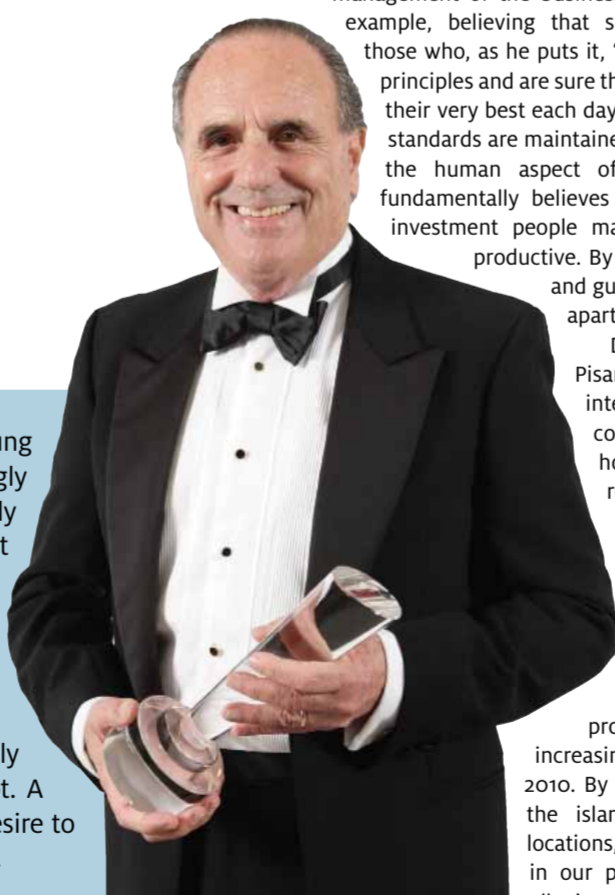


Above: (top, left to right) Corinthia Kharthoum, Corinthia Lisbon, Corinthia Hotel St Petersburg and Corinthia Tripoli.

Above: (below, left to right) Corinthia Prague, Corinthia Hotel Budapest and Corinthia London.

Right: Mr Alfred Pisani, at the Arabian Business Achievement Awards in 2010

Becoming a hotelier may not have been Alfred Pisani's chosen vocation as a young man; but a twist of fate set him on the road to where he is today. Surprisingly this has never hampered his innate ability to invest himself wholeheartedly and dedicate himself to the mantle he has taken on. Pisani is nothing if not passionate and determined in his attainment of every goal he sets himself and the Corinthia Group. His aptitude to turn his hand to the hospitality industry, whereas he once dreamed of a life of science, is evidenced in the incredible rise of the Corinthia Group, its award-winning properties and global operations. Corinthia is undoubtedly the very best example of the internationalisation of a Maltese brand; seeing the flag of his native land now fluttering in the London breeze must surely be a great source of pride for a man who started with almost nothing but debt. A true entrepreneur of our times, Pisani's vision, strong work ethic and exacting desire to triumph against all the odds is the kind of success story we all need to hear about.



After years of physical labour - in his characteristic hands-on fashion Pisani rolled up his sleeves and mixed concrete working as the contractor for his first hotel - and through an evolving aesthetic vision, the doors to the Corinthia Palace Hotel and Spa were opened in 1968 by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. It was Malta's first luxury hotel and, prescient in recognising the promising future of Malta's tourism industry, Pisani then went on to open a second hotel at St George's Bay. Corinthia is now definitively Malta's flagship hotel chain, making many Maltese proud. Next year will see Corinthia hosting the triennial Forum of the International Award for Young People (formerly known as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards). It is fitting that Malta, a former British protectorate which will be celebrating 70 years as a George Cross Island in 2012, should be the setting for this royal occasion that promotes accomplishment in young people. Certainly Pisani imbued the Corinthia brand with the same qualities from a very young age.

Its short and somewhat recent history as an independent nation belies the incredible amount of progress that has taken place in Malta since the British Navy withdrew. That said, the limited opportunities afforded by the tiny island nation were the necessary impetus for launching the global division of Corinthia in the 1980s. Since then, the Corinthia Group has expanded its international presence by focusing on city centres in emerging markets, including: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal and Russia. Rightfully proud of his group's achievements, Pisani's philosophy is that individuals, working as a team, must subscribe to hard work and dedication to ideas. Pisani insists, "If we all believe that the world can be a better place and work towards it, then one day it will happen."

Although Corinthia consults with local firms to help with establishing structures in new locations, the core team is always present, exuding the central tenets of the company. While each property reflects the local traditions and architecture, every member of Corinthia's extended family is wholeheartedly committed to honest, discreet and luxurious hospitality. Still very much involved in the day-to-day management of the business, Pisani leads by example, believing that success comes to those who, as he puts it, "Face reality, have principles and are sure that they have done their very best each day." He ensures that standards are maintained by emphasising the human aspect of operations and fundamentally believes that the physical and emotional investment people make in work is by far the most productive. By focusing on individuals, both staff and guests, the Corinthia brand sets itself apart from other trophy hotels.

Despite its growing global presence Pisani strives to keep the group's international general managers connected to the heritage and hospitality of Malta through what he refers to as the "Spirit of Corinthia." The island, he says, "Is an idyllic and unique place; not only is year-round tourism possible as a result of the temperate Mediterranean climate, it is also packed with historical treasures." It is unsurprising then that the Malta properties are thriving, with business increasing yearly and already up 8% from 2010. By having the general managers visit the island and experience the flagship locations, Pisani insists, "We try to bring out in our people bonding, commitment and allegiance which ultimately gives the true

character of what the company is. It is this soul that we then put into our hotels around the world." Pisani recognises perfectly that it is not the attractive building that makes the hotel - it is the warmth of the welcome, the service and the overall experience that the guest is given.

While Pisani has a meticulous eye for detail, from the design to the management of Corinthia's international properties, he has also expanded the business considerably. Three separately created companies handle various development aspects, including a construction management company, a development firm and a management company which oversees partnerships such as those with Wyndham Hotels and Ramada Hotels in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Just over 10 years ago the Corinthia Group went public as International Hotel Investments (IHI). Since then IHI has achieved significant capital appreciation with a balance sheet that now stands at €1.1 billion (£1bn).

In spite of the recent global downturn, Pisani confidently asserts that the company, "Sailed through this difficult economic period of three years quite comfortably." Always concerned with ensuring that business practices are ethical and in line with promises made, Pisani says, "My conscience is sound as far as the shareholders are concerned," knowing that the company has more than doubled what they have put in. IHI intends to launch a public offering of €150 million (£137m) on the London Stock Exchange by the end of 2011 in a bid to restore its free float to 25%. With more liquidity, the group plans to invest in major European and international capitals.

A major challenge IHI faces is the crisis in Libya, which Pisani acknowledges impacted the group's performance in the first half of 2011. The relationship between Corinthia and Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company (LAFICO) dates back to 1974 when Pisani sought institutional investors to offset his large bank loans. Since its establishment, Corinthia Hotel Tripoli, has been known as the best performing hotel in the group and was recently complemented by the Palm City 413-unit residential complex. Further developments are planned for late 2011 if the crisis cools. Until then, the group's Tripoli properties remain operational despite the repatriation of the majority of its foreign staff. Although Pisani notes that a prolongation of the turmoil will more than likely necessitate a postponement of the London offering, he expresses sincere hope for a peaceful end to the strife soon. He poignantly remarks, "I was

seeing so much progress taking place in Libya, with so much good construction and infrastructure being developed." Meanwhile, the company has reassured trading partners and suppliers that doing business with IHI does not infringe on UN or EU sanctions, since LAFICO is a minority shareholder in a Maltese-registered company which has over 4,000 shareholders.

Pisani's determination to grow his Malta-based business has certainly paid off, as evidenced by Corinthia's emergence as a leader in the luxury hotel market. Recently the group was the recipient of the "Award for International Achievement" for innovative expansion, at the Arabian Business Achievement Awards ceremony in Dubai. Pisani is certainly no stranger to accolades, this one being just the latest in a string of awards that the company has received. 2010 saw its newly extended and refurbished five-star Corinthia Hotel St Petersburg being declared the city's "Best Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events Hotel" at the "Russian Business Travel & MICE awards". It is the first time a hotel in St Petersburg has won this prestigious title. The same hotel was also awarded the coveted title of "Europe's Leading Meetings and Conference Hotel" by the World Travel Awards. Closer to home this prestigious body also gave Corinthia's founding property, the Corinthia Palace Hotel and Spa, "Malta's Leading Hotel" award for the second year in a row. One thing is for sure, the group - headed by Alfred Pisani - seems unstoppable in its pursuit of global excellence in hospitality.

"If we all believe that the world can be a better place and work towards it, then one day it will happen"

Alfred Pisani,
Chairman & CEO of
Corinthia Group &
International Hotel
Investments

A bedrock of stability.

Investment decisions are risky matters. Stability secures investment yields over time, at minimal risk. Reputation, efficiency and reliability will allow you peace of mind even in times of turmoil.

Since independence in 1964, Malta has enjoyed political, economic and social stability. Fully integrated in the European single market, it is not only a reputable financial jurisdiction, but a well performing economy with sound fundamentals.

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malta



The Lobby Lounge



Luxurious accommodation



The Spa Lounge at ESPA Life at Corinthia

Capital of Luxury Welcomes Corinthia...

For its first foray into a highly sophisticated, well-established hospitality market, Corinthia could hardly have chosen a more challenging location. London, as home to one of the most discerning luxury audiences in the world, is a market that is rarely forgiving should you fall short of its expectations. Lucky then that Corinthia's select ingredients for appealing to this exacting clientele are pleasing the palate of its guests, which include Hollywood A-listers and the London jet-set alike. It is no accident of nature however. The carefully crafted combination of the supremely elegant exterior has been married with a thoroughly modern take on the original architecture inside, striking the perfect balance of fresh flavours; ideal for the impeccable taste of the esteemed clientele of Corinthia Hotel London.

With the 2012 Olympics just around the corner, the nation's capital has seen a slew of prestigious new openings all vying for a slice of the luxury pie. That said, Corinthia Hotel London has been long in the making, as finding the perfect location and premises that would meet all the criteria fitting for this high-end property was no easy task. Since his childhood, Alfred Pisani, Corinthia Group's founder, has had a certain fondness for and awe of the buzzing, inspiring capital which he terms "the Coolest City on Earth". No surprise then that London should be the focus of his much anticipated and ambitious debut into the highly developed hospitality market. Besides the Olympic spotlight that will be shining on the metropolis next year, it is an appropriate choice for Corinthia's continuing expansion. At the inception of the group, way back in the 1960s, UK funding was, in part, what allowed Pisani's growing aspirations to flourish and become a reality. While Pisani has the National Bank of Malta (now Bank of Valletta) to thank for the lion's share, one third of his initial loans came from funding (the provenance of which was the UK government) disbursed by the post-Independence Maltese government, to promote diversification of the economy and support tourism in Malta.

For five years, Alfred Pisani personally scouted spaces around London that would accommodate his vision of adding modern architectural flair to traditional grandeur. Having found an unbeatable location - perfectly situated in Whitehall Place, near Trafalgar Square, with commanding views across the Thames - Corinthia Group bid against 30 other companies for the former Victorian-era Metropole Hotel, originally constructed in 1885. Upon decommission in the 1930s, the Ministry of Defence took up residence until the building went up for auction in 2007. The Crown Estate awarded Corinthia the rights to this important property - testament to Pisani's evident passion for the sympathetic yet modern redevelopment that evokes the site's heritage and at the same time also stunningly draws the premises very much into the 21st century. Taking on such a significant project in 2008 - during the global economic turnaround - proved challenging, but Pisani is rarely, if ever, deterred from achieving his goals. As the group turns its attention to the more established metropolitan hospitality market, its sights are now set on Paris, Rome, New York and beyond. A culmination of decades of growth, the London flagship hotel opened in May to much fanfare and acclaim - so much so that it had already garnered the group the "Award for International Achievement" before the Corinthia Hotel London had even been inaugurated.

As one of the world class capitals of luxury, London may well have taken a hit recently but, as Pisani notes, even when the upscale market suffers, "The moment the economy recovers, people will once more be looking for luxury. The spirit of us humans is tremendous, and very often it comes out stronger following moments of difficulty, because suddenly all of our inventiveness, all of our energy surges again to the forefront." What is true is that Corinthia Hotel London is striving to offer the very best holistic experience available in London to date. Any initial teething problems of the launch have been ironed out with meticulous care and no expense, or attention to detail, has been spared in the completion of the €340 million (€300m) hotel, as it seeks to set itself apart in this highly competitive environment.

One inspired guest candidly commented in a recent review of Corinthia Hotel London that, "This not stuffy London luxury, it's a breath of fresh air for the contemporary luxury traveller." The same



Bassoon



The Northall



Star Studded G.R.E.A.T Event

In May Corinthia Hotel London's majestic ballroom hosted a sell out charity gala evening in support of the Gender Rights and Equality Action Trust (the G.R.E.A.T. initiative). In attendance were trustees Mariella Frostrup, Jason McCue, Karen Ruimy and Marc Carter with international and UK celebrities, influencers and philanthropists including Colin Firth and Livia Firth (both pictured), Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Chris Evans, Jemima Khan, Cuba Gooding Jr and Laura Bailey. The charitable night is reflective of Corinthia London Hotel's core values of warmth and hospitality, which are the basis of its exceptional service.

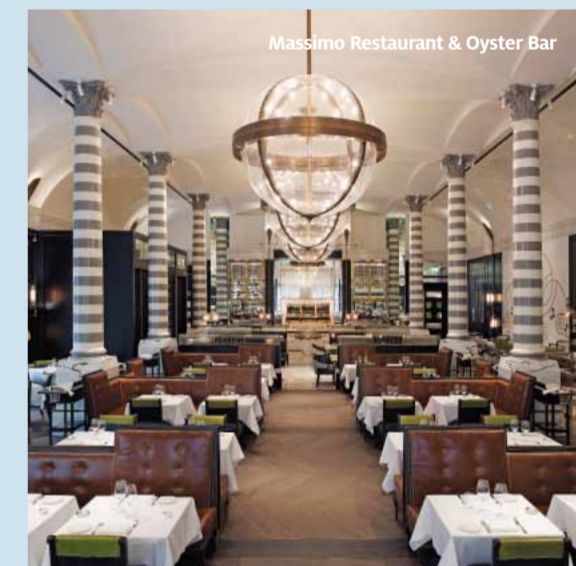
guest went on to point out that, "While the Corinthia brand may be a lesser known player, the quality of the hotel and staff already appear to be giving the London luxury scene a serious run for its money." Shunning both the aristocratic style characteristic of many of London's five-star hotels and the often overstated modern minimalism of deluxe designer properties, Pisani has not forgotten the importance of aesthetics. The beauty of Corinthia Hotel London is curiously difficult to categorise; but it has been captured in the high-vaulted ceilings and windows that have created public spaces flooded with natural light, in the spacious harmony of the rooms and suites and the striking white marble bathrooms, in which traditional touches like monogrammed chrome taps are coupled with in room high-tech entertainment.

Specially-commissioned signature art pieces adorn the lobby and reception; from the stunning Full Moon 1,001-crystal Baccarat chandelier designed by Chafik Gasmil which shimmers almost explosively in the lobby, to the unique "Based Upon" bronze works featuring the meandering River Thames on the reception desk and the bespoke lift doors whose delicate design was created using leaves collected in the nearby park. You get the distinct impression that this opulent yet quiet modern chic - which seems so effortless - actually conspires to seduce you and make you fall in love with your surroundings. Indeed, the group undoubtedly has high hopes that guests will be so overwhelmed by the "Corinthia Hotel London Experience" that it will become the place to see and be seen. A place to take high tea in the Lobby Lounge or to revel in the Bassoon Bar complete with its fabulous grand piano infinity bar. A place to enjoy the sumptuous offerings of the two restaurants - The Northall and Massimo Restaurant & Oyster Bar or to host a Charity Gala in the spectacular ballroom. A place to be pampered in ESPA's global flagship premises - the capital's largest spa and wellness facility or to rest in the privacy of one of the amazing themed suites.

In the short months since it opened, Corinthia Hotel London is certainly well on its way to achieving this goal having already played host to a myriad of high-profile guests including Colin Firth, Cuba Gooding Jr, Laura Bailey, Hugh Grant, Renée Zellweger, Johnny Depp, Kirsten Dunst and Deputy PM Nick Clegg, to name but a few. The hotel is certainly THE up and coming place to visit if you wish to be enveloped in luxury and tended to with the discreet but attentive service that is the "Spirit of Corinthia".

A Taste of Things to Come

The UK may not be well known for its indigenous cuisine, but that hasn't stopped London becoming what is likely the world's restaurant capital for its divinely vast choice of delectable eateries. A highlight of the new Corinthia London Hotel - Massimo Restaurant & Oyster Bar - is Chef Patron Massimo Riccioli's stroke of genius. World renowned as long-time owner of La Rosetta in Rome, his new incarnation brings Mediterranean warmth and vigour to fine dining in Central London.



Massimo Restaurant & Oyster Bar

Created by interior designer David Collins, the space mixes English architectural references with classic Italian influences, delivering a simultaneous feeling of grandeur and intimacy. The soaring ceiling, wall mosaics, iridescent grey-and-white-striped Corinthian columns and retro-modern chandeliers, dominate the symmetrically arranged dining area. Rich fabrics and fine marble evoke an eclectic yet harmonious mood and are offset by the cosiness of the leather seating reminiscent of old-style banquettes.

Featuring 150 seats in the main dining room and an oyster bar that can accommodate 50, the space manages to maintain a hushed ambience while creating an atmosphere of intimacy. Set apart from the main restaurant, an 18-seat private room offers bespoke dining where you can watch the spectacle of Massimo creating an array of lavish dishes in the adjoining state-of-the-art kitchen.

Chef Riccioli's menu is based on what he calls "fish integralism," or the use of every single part of the fish from tip to tail. His philosophy is admirable, as is his belief in sustainable sourcing and the use of seasonal ingredients. With the freshest of fish he composes selections of crudo delicacies, luscious yet simply-cooked fish dishes and offers up a rotating choice of oysters. A quintessential yet unbeatable daily homemade pasta rounds out the creations. Complementing the antipasti, piatti and contorni is the world-class wine list and an expert sommelier to help guests perfect their pairing. Just recently opened to the public, the restaurant has already proven such a hit with a certain top Hollywood actor that he dined there an impressive four times in 7 days.

Massimo Restaurant & Oyster Bar is located in the Corinthia London Hotel and has a dedicated entrance on Northumberland Avenue
For reservations call 020 7998 0555

Corinthia Hotel London's Desirable Digits

2 the number by which the room inventory was cut in order to reconfigure the interior

294 the number of amazingly spacious rooms created by the fabulous new design

300 the amount in millions of pounds sterling spent on the refurbishment of the hotel

45 the average size of the rooms in square metres

7 the number of sumptuous suites commanding stunning views the River Thames, Trafalgar Square and Whitehall Palace

490 the size in square metres of the largest suite

40 the number of Ferraris you could park in The Royal Suite

3,300 the size in square metres of floor space dedicated to pampering guests in the multi-level luxury spa

12 the number of exclusive Corinthia residences located beside the hotel

929 the incredible size of the floor area in square metres of the apartments in 10 Whitehall

A propensity for talent.

We have long discovered the secret of tapping human capital. Just like a little sapling, talent is honed with time, patience and the pouring of resources, maximising the power of technology.

As a business person, in Malta you will find affordable, available and malleable human resources and world-class education facilities for your children. It is also the reason why so many investors have made Malta home for over 40 years.

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YACHTING & AVIATION

Strategic Move to Malta - A Lifestyle Choice

As a seafaring island nation whose maritime DNA courses through its veins, it is no surprise that Malta's future relies on its crystal clear waters as much as the past did. A prime regional hub, Malta is an ideal location for cruising the Mediterranean and continues to garner a reputation as the jurisdiction of choice for ship registry.

The Malta Register is the second largest in the EU and is among the leading ship registers in the world. It enjoys a reputation of good-standing not only among international ship owners who are under the Maltese flag but also in the International Maritime Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and the competent EU institutions.

Certainly the government has sought to offer financiers, ship owners and charterers numerous operating and tax advantages when they register a vessel under the Maltese flag. Regarding such offerings, Dr Ann Fenech, maritime and mercantile law guru, says, "We recognise that clients need to be assured of a first-class service and value for money, irrespective of the fact that we are talking about major ship owners and persons whose net worth runs into billions. It is imperative that we continue to offer an optimum service at a competitive cost." Malta is well poised to do this with perks which include registration as an EU vessel and taxes based on tonnage rather than income.

Since 2006, Malta law provides for the registration of yachts and superyachts, under the auspices of Transport Malta - the authority responsible for regulating all transport in Malta. The Commercial Yacht Code and the country's growing status, has made it a desirable location attracting luxury vessels.



Grand Harbour Marina

Apart from the country's offerings including naturally deep harbours, state-of-the-art marinas, well-outfitted repair facilities and staff with generations of maritime expertise behind them; there are also the inherent aspects of Malta's climate, legendary warm welcome and cultural heritage which undoubtedly add to the appeal.

In the words of one industry expert from Camper and Nicholson's Marinas Kurt Fraser, whose passion for the country is palpable, "Malta is an ideal destination for the international superyacht fraternity and any old perceptions about the country are quickly dispelled once visitors have an opportunity to experience it firsthand." Fraser is not mistaken - Malta may not enjoy the same glitzy reputation as Monaco, Cannes and other jet-set locations - but what it does offer is a discreet yet thoroughly breathtaking environment in which the rich and famous can, and do, find sublime relaxation under the azure blue skies of these Mediterranean islands. The beauty of the enchanting architecture and culture, which is bound up in millennia of history, coupled with the most pristine waters in Europe are complemented by modern amenities, entertainment and personnel that will cater for your every need. Malta's lifestyle has

A prime regional hub, Malta is an ideal location for cruising the Mediterranean and continues to garner a reputation as the jurisdiction of choice for ship registry

a cosmopolitan vibe permeated by old world charm that few other countries can boast. Once you have experienced it you will come back for more.

Natural attributes aside, the government creating the right climate for registration has been a must. Essentially any vessel can be registered under the Maltese flag provided it is owned by a

Maltese registered company or by a person habitually resident in Malta. Malta boasts low company formation and ship registration costs, complete tax exemption for private yachts and ships over 1,000 gross tons and an effective tax rate of 5% and VAT exemption for the chartering of commercial yachts. There are also no restrictions on the following: the nationality of the ship owner, the nationality of the master, officers and crew. Moreover the sale or transfer of shares of a company owning Maltese registered ships and the sale and mortgaging of Maltese registered ships are subject to neither restrictions nor taxation. Another advantage is that there are no trading restrictions and Maltese ships enjoy preferential treatment in certain ports.

Building on the success of its shipping register, and its growing reputation as a centre of aviation excellence, Transport

Malta is now cultivating the country's standing for aviation registration. Spurred on by soaring aspirations and through financial incentives, the creation of superior structures for administration, training and supervision; Malta is aggressively targeting companies specialising in business jet services. One key result of this drive is a three-year partnership with the Swiss company Comlux Aviation, an aircraft management and VIP charter company. As Andrea Zanetto, CEO of Fly Comlux, explains, "Malta has been chosen as an operating base for a number of reasons, including the country's high standards of regulation, being an English-speaking country and its strategic position between Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Malta has a fast developing expertise in aircraft maintenance as well as other services like banking and legal support." With its robust and flexible legislation framework, in addition to an extensive network of double taxation agreements, Malta also offers potential partners various registration possibilities, even for "not-in-use" aircraft.

This year's legislative agenda will see Malta put in place a clear strategic vision of developing the aviation cluster business for complete integration. Comlux, among other companies, will be able to take advantage of the customer-focused one-stop-shop services handling everything from engine maintenance and software repair; maintaining the already high safety standards. Certainly Malta seems keen to cater for jet and yacht owners, whatever their needs.

GHM - the Jewel in Malta's Crown



Vittoriosa Waterfront

The entry of world-renowned Camper & Nicholson's Marinas (C&N) on the scene in Malta, surely heralded a new era in the country's illustrious maritime history. C&N operate a number of premier luxury marinas worldwide - owning three - all reflecting the C&N tradition of excellence in service, support, facilities, lifestyle and location. The first of these to be fully operational was the Grand Harbour Marina (GHM) in Malta. Home to C&N's corporate headquarters GHM is an appropriately prestigious location for a company that has well-founded faith in the huge potential Malta has to offer the yachting fraternity. The shortage of premier berths in the western Mediterranean, and promising statistics on new superyacht orders and launches have led to increased interest in Malta as a homeport for superyachts, reinforcing the prospective for growth in the country.

GHM's comprehensive local marine infrastructure provides for the berthing needs of an increasing global fleet of superyachts. The world famous Maltese Falcon - a regular visitor to Malta - owns a berth in GHM; likewise the Indian Empress and Abramovich's yacht, Pelorus (among others), frequently soak up the sights and sounds of the island's foremost marina. With approximately 250 berths, thirty of which are for superyachts of 30-100 metres, GHM's cost appropriateness has made it a sell-out in the mid-market.

Owners are literally queuing up to berth in the marina and - a victim of its own outstanding success - GHM is in the enviable position of having a waiting list of about a hundred, for mid-size yachts of up to 30 metres. As demand outstrips supply, plans are afoot to extend GHM. If they come to fruition, GHM would likely build a 135-metre berth, which will be one of the biggest marina berths in the Mediterranean, if not the world.

Currently GHM has limited berth purchase opportunities available, exclusively for superyachts. "We expect a high level of interest in the berths we have released for sale, as growing demand for superyacht berths exceeds supply, and this will be the case for years to come," says Kurt Fraser of C&N. The

company's aspirations for GHM and its reputation alone should be enough to entice yet more superyachts to permanently berth in the marina, but this is not all that Malta has to offer. While the destination is not seeking to directly compete with the Riviera, Sean Purdy of C&N candidly remarks, "Berthing in Malta is great because the climate is better than the south of France and the increasing level of facilities here for doing maintenance on superyachts is a definite plus."

Malta as a location for overwintering is an interesting economic proposition, just as the financial and tax advantages of registry under the Maltese flag are beneficial to yacht owners. Fiscal benefits aside, it should not be forgotten that the islands are an alluring cruising location in their own right and, in terms of sailing time, are also ideally placed - just an hour or two away from other popular summer destinations. Moreover, the positioning of GHM is astounding, Purdy clarifies, "The marina looks across to Valletta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

How many marinas in the world can boast such a location? I have been to plenty that overlook oil terminals or concrete works and yet here in Malta your view is of Valletta's bastions and Fort St Angelo which is a pretty astonishing setting."

However, the marina's appeal goes way beyond its stunning backdrop. Besides being perfectly placed to enjoy the Casino di Venezia and Birgu's divine eateries;

visitors and clients of the marina are also impressed by the many benefits GHM offers, including customs and immigration handling. "We see Grand Harbour Marina as the ideal homeport for superyachts. The support infrastructure - offering not only practical operational benefits, but also meeting the social needs of owners, their guests, captains, crews and their families - is unique in the region," Kurt Fraser of C&N affirms, and he is not alone in his assertion. Visitors to Vittoriosa's picturesque Birgu waterfront profess to be perpetually wowed by the beauty of GHM and comment that the imperative 24/7 service is delivered in the exceptionally warm Maltese manner, giving them the impression that they are coming home.

Camper & Nicholson's
YACHTING SINCE 1782
MARINAS

Human Energy - the Real Power Behind the Economy

As Malta's economy expands, so the challenges of recruiting qualified personnel augment. The growing sophistication of the country as a finance centre and a knowledge-based service economy, necessitates increasing numbers of highly qualified staff.

Among Malta's multiple competitive advantages and key selling points today, there is, however, one aspect that makes

it stand out from the crowd; and that is the exceptional quality of life that the country offers. Imagine your working day begins with the sun shining and your drive (or walk) to work taking a matter of minutes rather than a rain-soaked hour. Imagine the view from your modern office overlooks the dazzlingly blue sea and is perfectly located for you to enjoy a delicious light lunch bursting with Mediterranean flavours; or to stroll along the coast as you take a break from your "corporate environment". Imagine, that as your workday ends, you have time to go down to the marina and take out a yacht to enjoy the sunset casting its orange rays across the bastions of Valletta, creating a surreal honey glow while you sip your favourite tippie. All sound too good to be true? All sound like a million miles away from the life you live now? Well it is the reality of life in Malta - it's a lifestyle choice - and that's without mentioning the weekends that feel like a mini vacation.

There is a buzz surrounding these islands that is difficult to pinpoint but easy to be seduced by; to such a degree that many of HSBC's staff, seconded temporarily to Malta, often request an extension to their stay or resort to buying a property so that they can return for a regular "fix". Choosing Malta as your next career move could be the best move you ever make. A vibrant sense of community which champions family values and an envious social life of open-air pursuits and dining out awaits. Given its excellent educational establishments and low crime rate Malta is also an ideal environment to raise a family.

So you may ask yourself what you are waiting for. Opportunities abound in the finance and IT sectors in particular, as big names set up operations in the island nation. The rapid and consistent growth registered throughout the financial sector over the last few years - up by 30% in 2010 alone - and the consequent springing up of brokerage firms, asset management companies, fund administrators and insurance companies, has fuelled the demand for skilled and internationally-minded professionals to unprecedented levels. As Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi points out, "The financial services sector is fast becoming a key motor of employment growth for Malta". The industry relies on a quality workforce of nearly 10,000 professionals; of those, 1,000 have joined the market over the last three years - a clear indicator of the rate at which the sector is growing.

With a 413,000-strong population - 170,000 of which are active workers - the small nation is thus faced with the dual challenge of managing the brisk pace of economic growth and



securing a balance between demand and supply. As FinanceMalta Chairman Kenneth Farrugia says, "Despite the crisis that has wrought havoc across the globe, the negative momentum has not weighed at all on Malta; businesses have kept coming in," he continues, "The challenges we face this year aren't much different from those we experienced in 2010. We need to monitor and

manage human resources, service delivery and efficiency." While some are concerned about the future shortfall of talent and the consequential lack of cost competitiveness that may arise as a result, the government is committed to addressing these matters; incentivising university courses that will provide the kind of personnel that the burgeoning sectors require.

Enhancing the visibility of those sectors that are showing the strongest development prospects going forward, is a challenge that is currently being tackled by government officials and industry players alike. Utilising its expertise as a leading ICT and finance recruitment specialist in Malta, Castille Resources carried out a survey of the local job market. In business since 2006, the company, led by Matthew Camilleri, already boasts a first-class portfolio of both local and international clients including the Government of Malta's IT Agency and Microsoft. The survey revealed that many organisations were having increasing difficulty recruiting high-level and specialist roles. With this in mind, Castille Resources recently launched a new arm, Castille Executive - the first executive-level recruitment brand on the island. Catering specifically for entities seeking to fill senior positions with salaries over €50k (€44k) - Castille Executive places technical specialists, executive and non-executive directors, CEOs, COOs, CFOs as well as managers and heads of IT.

The Maltese government is confident that the reduced tax rate of 15% (on all income arising from specified employment contracts) it has offered to expatriates willing to relocate to Malta, will draw more highly skilled investment analysts and portfolio managers to the island. As Malta's need to attract fresh and highly qualified talent becomes more pressing, quality recruiting both locally and internationally is the key to success. Castille prides itself on excelling at this and, as Camilleri underlines, "The overall feeling in IT and financial recruitment in Malta for 2011 is one of optimism."

Castille Resources

Any further queries on Financial, ICT and Executive staffing in Malta can be addressed to Matthew Camilleri on mac@castilleresources.com

A warm and balanced lifestyle.

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Malta enjoys year-round sunshine, moderate temperatures and an interesting mix of rural and cosmopolitan feel. It is also a treasure trove to 10,000 years of history. Coupled with this is the warmth and hospitality of the Mediterranean people, a vibrant social and artistic scene and a European way of life.

thinc malta

FINANCE

Exceeding Expectations

As the global economy teeters between tentative upswing and continued uncertainty, Malta has not only emerged from the worldwide economic storm intact, it has also recovered at a more vigorous pace than most of its fellow European countries. This is quite an achievement for a country the size of Malta, especially given the perceived vulnerability of its open economy with its dependence on overseas markets. However, it is evident that Malta's nimbleness and ability to adapt to the new world order is a strength that has been capitalised on. Indeed, Malta's Prime Minister, Dr Gonzi proudly notes, "Even in the face of a global meltdown - that brought down not only financial institutions but also whole financial markets and countries - Malta withstood the external shock."

Today, Malta's proactive government is determined to maintain its hard-won reputation as being transparent, efficient, adaptable yet stringently regulated. These aspects of the country's business practices - combined with close proximity to European and North African markets, an amazingly ideal Mediterranean climate and state-of-the-art infrastructure - have enticed an influx of banks, hedge funds and insurance companies to its shores. "Not only did Malta's financial sector escape unscathed from the global crisis but the sector registered consecutive double-digit growth rates," Gonzi continues, "In 2010, the financial services sector grew by over 30% confirming its strong fundamentals and its potential as one of Malta's main economic drivers." This stellar performance derives from neither chance nor luck. He insists, "On the contrary, it is a powerful testament to Malta's robust regulatory regime and adherence to sound principles by our financial practitioners."

The true cornerstone of this system is the Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA), established in 1988 to modernise the country's regulatory framework and since then the sole regulator of every facet of the industry. While this streamlined supervision of credit, investment, trust and insurance institutions is essential to consistent economic performance, Gonzi confirms that this is not the whole picture. He asserts that true success lies in, "Solid and effective government policy and an entrepreneurial spirit willing and able to take advantage of the opportunities available. These, I would suggest, are present in Malta today."

Accession to the EU in 2004 and adoption of the euro in 2008 were undoubtedly key propellants towards international credibility and a growing interest in Malta as a domicile for financial service businesses. In the past 3 years Malta has received accolades from the European Commission and various leading institutions for its continued accomplishment and stability. Not without its own challenges, in particular its limited local talent pool, Malta has proven itself to be an increasingly appealing destination for entities operating in the field of finance. Minister of Finance, Economy & Investment, Tonio Fenech elucidates, "The country is now home to around 500 collective investment schemes, particularly alternative investment funds, as well as a significant number of retail and UCITS schemes." Emphasising this point, Dermot Butler of Custom House Global Fund Services which redomiciled to Malta notes that, "Over the past several years the country's position as a financial services jurisdiction has changed from 'Where is Malta?' to being recognised as the third European jurisdiction of any strength or credibility."

As the development of a cluster emerges, Malta is gaining critical mass as a hedge fund domicile; and the reality is that administrators are now asking themselves a different question entirely which is, "Can I afford not to be in Malta?" Interestingly, growth is being driven by new fund setups and redomiciliations from non-EU jurisdictions. 410 funds are now registered in Malta and 108 new fund licenses were issued in 2010 alone, signifying a 20% year on year growth.

International players in all areas of the financial services sector seem to be clamouring to join those who have already made the move to Malta. Indeed, a number of Fortune 500 companies have set up their captive insurance in Malta - names like Marsh counting among them. The jurisdiction has seen the redomiciliation of existing captives from other European and non-European domiciles. While substantial international interest in Malta as a captive domicile has contributed to the flourishing insurance sector, indigenous entities like Abacus (an associate company of GasanMamo Insurance) and Bee (a subsidiary of Middlesea Insurance) are also obviously leveraging the benefits their native Malta offers. According to the Insurance Management Association Survey 2010, assets under management have increased exponentially from €555 million (£500m) in 2008 to €1.1 billion (£1bn) in 2010. This quantum leap speaks for itself.

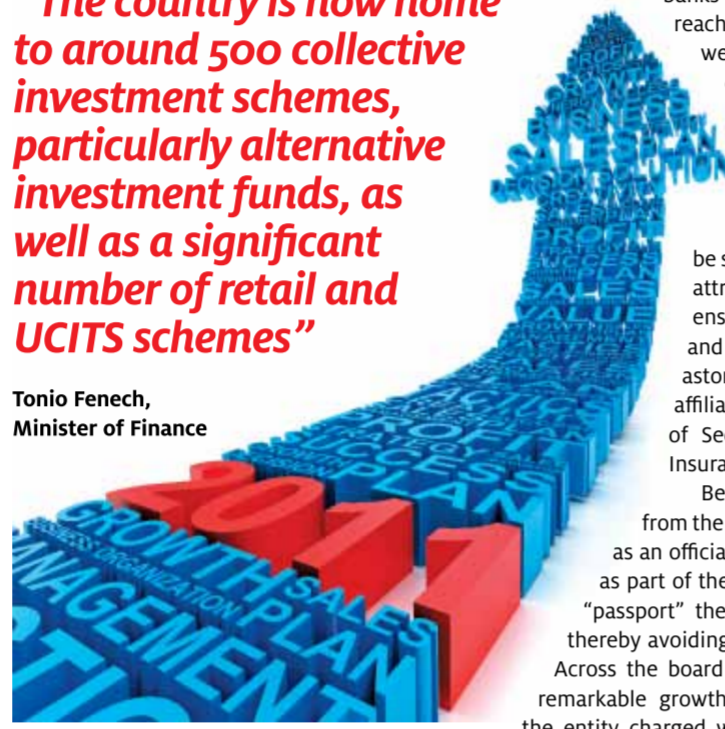
All these players are capitalising on the growing global status that the country enjoys. Undoubtedly being an "onshore" EU domicile, at a time when "offshore" jurisdictions are under increased scrutiny and pressure, contributed significantly to Malta's success in this regard. In particular it is the only full EU member state with Protected Cell Company (PCC) legislation and which also has an OECD compliant tax environment. The PCC structure has been seen as a key selling point for Malta post-Solvency II. This is because it potentially offers captive owners in Malta the opportunity to share the higher capital and management costs (expected from the new rules) in what is already seen as a cost-competitive domicile when compared to others. Anticipated to come into force in 2013, Solvency II is, in a nutshell, likely to require a lot of regulatory change for insurance companies in much the same way as Basel II did for banks.

In light of the worldwide economic clean-up and the now shifting European regulatory landscape, it is certainly refreshing to see that, according to the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness report 2010/11, diminutive Malta ranks 8th for "strength of auditing and reporting standards" (up from 12th the previous year), while the same study ranks Malta 11th out of 139th countries for financial market development (up from 13th in the previous year and 34th the year before that), demonstrating outstanding progress. However, perhaps even more incredible is the



"The country is now home to around 500 collective investment schemes, particularly alternative investment funds, as well as a significant number of retail and UCITS schemes"

Tonio Fenech,
Minister of Finance



country's position as having the 10th soundest banking system in the world (up from 13th last year). These rankings are significant by any standards but are even more impressive when you take into account the size of the smallest EU microstate, its status as a relative newcomer to the financial services market and the fact that these marked improvements were achieved during incredibly trying financial times.

Long established institutions like Bank of Valletta and HSBC Malta have obviously made a significant contribution to the WEF rankings. Malta's banking system has earned itself a reputation as one that is relatively conservative - habitually practising strategies that are prudent yet pro-business. The strong domestic banking sector belies the limited local market opportunities of a population of less than half a million. With deposits currently standing at €26 billion (€23.4bn) - an increase of 124% since 2004 according to figures from FinanceMalta. Moreover the banks' assets registered a year on year growth of 21% in 2010 reaching €49.5 billion (€44.5bn). Malta's banks are clearly well capitalised and their high liquidity ratios have been confirmed by an EU-wide stress test.

"Malta's banks adhered to responsible banking practice, maintaining solid capital positions which enabled them to ride out the financial turmoil," confirms Fenech, "The Maltese financial services sector as a whole, with a strong yet flexible regulator, proved to be stable through a difficult period and as a result continued to attract business to the island." Leading by example, the MFSA ensures that Malta maintains a business friendly environment and absolute adherence to EU regulatory standards, an astonishing 58 double tax agreements as well as noteworthy affiliations with, among others, the International Organization of Securities Commissions and, International Association of Insurance Supervisors.

Besides its PCC legislation, Malta has many inherent benefits from the cost effectiveness of human resources to the use of English as an official language and largely contained overheads. Furthermore, as part of the EU, captives and direct insurers established in Malta can "passport" their services and policy issuance into other EU countries thereby avoiding costly fronting fees and collateral security requirements. Across the board Malta's financial services sector has been experiencing remarkable growth. As Kenneth Farrugia, who heads up FinanceMalta - the entity charged with promoting Malta as a financial services jurisdiction summarises, "The numbers signifying the growth of the industry are compelling." He continues, "Really and truly 2010 was a good year, despite the dampening market environment abroad. I think 2011 will prove to be another impressive year. If you talk to the practitioners and operators they will tell you that the momentum has not slowed at all and businesses have kept coming despite increased problems and upheaval in Europe."

A Captive Market

Despite its rich culture and heritage, Malta has not rested on its historical laurels but has built up an enviable reputation for innovative financial services and products. Today it is home to one of the fastest growing and professional financial services sectors in Europe.

"Abacus" is typical of Malta's new wave of entrepreneurial firms adding to the island's reputation through its provision of risk management advice, Maltese domiciliation and ongoing professional services for insurance companies (including captives) wishing to operate in the EU.

Created as a protected cell company, Abacus is unique in being able to provide its own management cells to those insurance managers from other EU domiciles and "offshore" territories wishing to establish a presence in Malta. With its associated company GasanMamo Insurance, Malta's leading non-life insurer with over 140 employees, Abacus is ideally positioned to lead its clients through the domiciliation process and provide them with first rate professional services in Malta, the only full EU member state with PCC legislation.



abacus

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A Pleasantly Taxing Situation

Contrary to other Mediterranean countries which have hit the press with debt issues and potential bailouts, Malta was lauded earlier this year by the International Monetary Fund Malta for its effective policy issues in ensuring its stability and weathering of the global financial crisis. The country's attractive economic climate is very much in harmony with its physical climate - recently voted the best in the world - and both undoubtedly contribute significantly to the positive experiences had by those foreigners who choose to make Malta their home.

Very soon the government will be announcing five schemes that should increase Malta's appeal to high net worth individuals. Expatriates who take up residence in Malta are not taxed on their worldwide income but only on Malta source income and on foreign income remitted to Malta. As a primary incentive, the schemes will have a low flat rate of taxation and will categorise between EU and non-EU applicants. There will also be a new scheme for artists.

An indefinite High Net Worth Individual Scheme, closest to the previous Permanent Residency Scheme, would specifically apply to UK, Swiss and EEA citizens in receipt of a pension. Malta tax rules, based on the UK concept of residence and

domicile, make it particularly attractive to the British expatriate who would like to take up residence in Malta. The existence of a favourable tax treaty with the UK makes Malta a favourite destination for those that want to choose it as their retirement location.

The government of Malta has already put in place another scheme which took effect earlier this year. This aims to attract highly qualified personnel in the field of financial services. Effectively, once all the new schemes are finalised, Malta will be in a position to offer the most attractive fiscal incentives to potential

"Malta tax rules, based on the UK concept of residence and domicile, make it particularly attractive to the British expatriate who would like to take up residence in Malta"

John Huber



expatriates. The tax incentives coupled with Malta's rich culture and heritage, weather, Mediterranean lifestyle and European flair, go a long way to making Malta attractive as a permanent home.

Furthermore the fact that English is an official language greatly differentiates Malta from other popular destinations. There is no language "mayhem" - as law makers legislate in English and contracts are drawn up in English making the whole process straightforward. This avoids the hassle of, and dependence on, third party translators. In practical terms, English as the business language greatly facilitates daily matters as well as highly sensitive issues such as inheritance and tax matters.

Usually clients are interested in Malta's residency scheme as they benefit from a 15% tax rate. However, it is pertinent to view the whole scenario - such as pension payments, property held, property to be purchased, other assets as well as inheritance and wills - in order to fully assess the tax situation of each applicant. No tax solution is the same and the new schemes will allow further flexibility in ensuring that professionals can truly adhere to offering individual solutions to their clients.

For more information contact John Huber on info@johnhubermalta.com or +356 7949 7997

Malta Could Benefit from MENA Muddle



Dermot Butler,
Chairman of
Custom House
Global Fund
Services and an
international
expert in financial
services reflects
on the effect of
the "Arab Spring"
on Malta as a
financial hub

There has been quite a bit of media chit-chat about Malta's vulnerability to some sort of adverse fallout from what has been euphemistically called the "Arab Spring" - the apparent expectation being that it may suffer because investors and money managers will be nervous about the risk posed by Malta's proximity to the domino style of regional revolutions that may damage the country and therefore may make investors reluctant to use Malta as a financial centre. I do not subscribe to this negative approach - indeed, I think it's possible that the current unrest across the whole MENA region could actually have very positive results for Malta.

Historically Malta, which has been a proud member state of the EU since 2004, has been a much abused stepping stone between Europe and the Middle East but it also served as a highly strategic hub for many civilisations. Most recently it was a British protectorate until independence was granted a couple of decades after an extraordinary exhibition of national stoicism and courage

during World War II. Its geographic positioning at the edge of the Mediterranean rim has long made it an ideal springboard for all manner of business opportunities. Malta's insular topography has made it outward looking - north, south, east and west.

It seems likely that the regional unrest of today could take a very long time to settle down. Especially if dictators like Colonel Gaddafi and President Assad continue to dig their heels in the sand and hang on to power, whatever the cost. One hopes that the outcome is peaceful, but no one can afford to discount the possibility of even more chaotic regime changes resulting in tribal or religious conflicts, such as those experienced over the years in Lebanon and more recently in Iraq. It's easy to forget how many years it took for the Soviet Union to crumble, even if we take out of the equation the 1956 Hungarian uprising which was put down with ruthless efficiency - doubtless the envy of the Libyan Colonel. It's also many years since the days of Solidarity and Lech Walesa and more than a decade has passed since the first anti-Saddam rumblings were heard in the Middle East.

My point is that I think that it will be at least ten years, and possibly more than a generation, before stability is restored to the MENA region. And it will probably be at least a decade before even the most adventurous of investors will actually want to invest directly into countries which have experienced the political turmoil that we see in the news each day. However, I believe it is likely that many investors will return to invest in such countries by proxy, so to speak - for example through funds and companies that are themselves investing in the region. In my opinion, if Malta plays, with skill, the hand that it has been dealt, it could persuade the managers of many of those funds investing in North Africa to be domiciled in Malta as well as serviced and administered by Maltese entities. The same opportunities will exist, specifically in relation to funds investing in the Gulf region, but in this regard Malta will probably face some stiff competition from Singapore as an alternative financial centre. That said, Malta would not have got where it is today if it did not relish a little competition.



Louder than words.

Some tell us we do not blow our trumpets well enough. Truth is that we are more focused on getting the job done. Actions speak louder than words.

Malta is home to 1.3 million tourists per year, 290 i-gaming companies, 200+ foreign direct investors and 25 international banks. The tiny island boasts the registration of 100 private and commercial aircrafts and more than 100,000 vessels from around the globe. No need to speak to us...speak to them as they are our best testimonial.

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Given the new economic world order and the Arab Spring, it's not surprising that there is much talk of a paradigm shift in the way that business and international cooperation evolve. Long before this, Malta started implementing its own economic revolution. The country's trajectory has changed considerably in the past decades; rapidly experiencing a systematic transformation from a low-cost manufacturing base, to a knowledge economy hinging on the power of technology and advanced engineering. As Alan Camilleri, Executive Chairman of Malta Enterprise - the national economic development agency - highlights, "This has been remarkably achieved while still maintaining a very competitive

operational cost base which makes Malta all the more attractive for foreign investors."

Malta Enterprise, as its name suggests, is charged with the critical responsibility of actively engaging with investors in the global corporate world in order to introduce them to the country's business environment, all the while facilitating their entry into Malta. "Through a wide-ranging package of schemes and financial assistance mechanisms," explains investment guru, Camilleri, "We also seek to incentivise the growth and successful operation of both foreign investors as well as companies based in Malta, particularly those within the strategic sectors outlined in the government's Vision 2015." The initiative aims to establish Malta as a centre of excellence in the Mediterranean within the next 4 years, in key sectors such as tourism, advanced manufacturing, financial services, education and health service provision as well as in the creative and clean technology industries.

Always focused on concrete results, Camilleri cites practical examples of the government's successful promotion of Malta's offerings; "In particular there is an emergence of new sectors including financial and intermediary services, the aerospace industry, software and application development, in addition to pharmaceutical manufacturing. The next stage in this value-added ladder is the development of the life sciences and biotechnology industry as well as the digital entertainment sector." One interesting plan currently in the pipeline is the investment of approximately €27 million (€24m) in the establishment of a "Medical and Biotechnology Campus" which will start being developed in September this year. This will see the formation of a cluster similar to that in the pharmaceutical sector.



"We also seek to incentivise the growth and successful operation of both foreign investors as well as companies based in Malta, particularly those within the strategic sectors outlined in the government's Vision 2015"

Alan Camilleri - Executive Chairman, Malta Enterprise



Strides have been taken in other sectors; "In the past 2 years, Malta Enterprise has invested heavily in the establishment of an aviation park and in the upgrading of industrial zones," says Camilleri and the future sees a planned partnership with the private sector for Corporate Village - a €200 million (€176m) financial services and back-office hub within the Central Business District. "Interestingly, Malta is already a back-office hub for several businesses in the UK including; customer service centres, gaming companies, insurance firms, hedge funds, as well as software development and logistics companies. In truth, therefore, a significant number of UK businesses have service support centres in Malta."

Heading up Malta Enterprise, as the authoritative single point of contact for business, industry and foreign investors, Camilleri is perfectly placed to testify that, "The UK is one of Malta's major partners for trade and investment."

This is not only because of an intertwined history, but also thanks to the strong ties the two countries have built over the years. Moreover, Camilleri believes that, "Malta provides UK businesses with a quasi-British environment with the added benefit of lower operational costs and a highly efficient tax regime. For those companies wanting to tap the Mediterranean and North African markets, it is also an excellent nearshore location with a track record of political, economic and social stability; enjoying peaceful relationships with its neighbours." The Maltese workforce is multi-skilled, bilingual and most importantly English-speaking with a strong work ethic - a legacy of Malta's time as a British protectorate. This has undoubtedly also contributed to making British investors feel very much at home doing business in, and with, the country. This, coupled with the excellent quality of life enjoyed in the sunny islands, and the airlift to and from the UK, make for an exciting investment destination.

Naturally, given its small size, the island cannot compete on a global scale with larger and more mature markets. Identifying niche areas in which Malta can develop expertise is therefore key; as is developing its regional capabilities that can benefit both the local economy and those that invest in it. Perhaps this is what has, so far, allowed Malta to navigate the troubled waters of the worldwide recession and emerge relatively unscathed from it. "Malta has done well for itself and withstood the economic tsunami whose ripples are still being felt by our European partners," Camilleri says, all the while acknowledging that, "Our identity as a European country has bolstered our international appeal, and credit rating agencies have maintained their positive assessments of the country's standing. Our belief is that Malta is a safe and stable location for investment and an enjoyable one too."

Success Through Diversification

Kenneth De Martino, CEO of the KDM Group, was born with an enterprising character. From a young age he had an overwhelming aspiration to be a successful businessman; a driving desire that did not quite gel with his parents' vision of him becoming a doctor.

De Martino's career path began in the tourism sector; "Running Thomas Cook Malta," he says, "Moulded me and made me who I am today." When he struck a deal in 1998 with the London-based company his professional prowess was put to the test. He rebranded the office as KD Travel and from this single operation; which initially serviced only business travellers, De Martino evolved a quartet of enterprises to compete in the leisure and wholesale markets. Since then, he has led the group transforming it into a diversified portfolio of companies. Branching out into security, De Martino capitalised brilliantly on the Maltese government's bold privatisation of law enforcement. He successfully founded The Guard & Warden Service House and Securital, providing local councils with traffic monitoring and high-tech security solutions - immediately winning 80% of the market share.

Malta's impressively low crime rate might not warrant security against hard crime but De Martino firmly believes he is contributing to the betterment of Malta by creating a more orderly way of life. Never one to rest on his laurels, De Martino has always been inspired to further diversify and his group now consists of no fewer than 10 companies and 3 associate companies; including insurance brokering, travel services, property, leasing and HR consultancy.

Despite the limited market that Malta offers - with less than half a million inhabitants - De Martino is convinced that "Competition is healthy. By forcing an industry into a quality control competition, whoever is the best will win." And win, KDM has; having become the very first brokers in Europe to be given a PCC license for handling non-Malta-based clients. Indeed, KDM's ability to seize opportunities and design creative, income-generating solutions has been replicated in mutually beneficial relationships with foreign associates in Libya, Tunisia and Qatar. Today, the group remains focused on partnering its Maltese business acumen with that in the worldwide arena; an example of which is the current merger of its warden and security companies with noted international security company G4S, whose corporate head office is UK-based in Crawley, Sussex.

De Martino wholeheartedly believes in the success of such partnerships since KDM Group does not simply sell products to clients. He explains, "We could probably encapsulate everything we do by saying we work within the service industry. To that extent our vision and motto are very clear - Exceptional service from exceptional people."



Kenneth De Martino

Thriving Innovative Player

Since the turn of the century, information and communication technologies (ICT) has become a major focal point for the Maltese government. Malta's island status and its desire to transform itself into a knowledge-based, service economy makes connectivity absolutely vital to the country's development. With the increased weight given to this, the IT sector has thrived. Big industry names like Microsoft, Cisco and Oracle have all recognised the potential that exists to do business in Malta. IT academies have been set up to create a sound, educational platform to produce highly skilled graduates. Malta is a country with no real natural resources, save its people. Therein lies the true path to success for the nation. As Prime Minister Dr Gonzi points out, "Creativity is the way forward."

Seasus is a prime example of this resourceful and inventive dynamism that drives Malta. It was founded in 1995 at a time when the local ICT industry was still in its infancy. Its aim was to provide creative web development services for a variety of clients; it has since established itself as one of the leading development houses in Malta. Offering a one-stop-shop approach for all internet-based requirements, Seasus is dedicated to helping its clients exploit the advantages of new technologies through their integrated services, ranging from online payment processing, to corporate social media marketing and online gaming development.

Malta's impressive connectivity, the very lifeline through which, and for which, companies like Seasus conduct their activities, is critical for the internationalisation of businesses. More than this, the island's ability to transcend "borders" in this way demonstrates that there are no restrictions to its location. Thanks to this, and Seasus' pioneering approach to business, the company has successfully built a solid international client base in the UK, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the US.

Its young, dynamic and highly qualified team specialises in developing comprehensive e-business solutions, from the design of user interfaces through to e-commerce applications, system development or interoperability with clients' existing software systems as well as PCI-certified online payment processing. This enables Seasus to provide a truly integrated web presence with effective support backend business systems.

While the company is recognised as the first in Malta to deploy functional business applications and advanced games on Facebook, it is perhaps their experience and skill in the online gaming industry that will be of greatest interest to UK iGaming companies that have set up in Malta - the EU's top remote gaming jurisdiction - or elsewhere in the world. Seasus offers a vast array of services to this burgeoning industry including gaming platforms, custom game design and development, mobile-based gaming, online payment processing and setup consultancy.

SEASUS

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Ahead of the Game: Europe's Premier iGaming Destination

In 2004, in a prescient move that was to determine its future success, Malta was the first EU State to regulate online gaming. The strict, yet fair regulatory framework provided by the Lotteries and Gaming Authority (LGA), coupled with Malta's strong financial services industry, a full eco-system of professional and highly knowledgeable service providers and a fertile ground for investment were - and continue to be - the main magnets attracting online gaming companies to Malta. In the last seven years the number of operators licensed by the LGA grew from a handful to almost 290 operators holding around 400 licenses between them. Major entities now based in Malta include Betfair, Betsson, Unibet, Betclix, Expekt, Microgaming, Boss Media.

When asked what the ingredients of the sector's success were, Reuben Portanier, CEO of the LGA explains, "Positive results are hard to achieve, but even harder to maintain. The importance of having a thorough yet flexible regulatory framework is definitely critical. The Remote Gaming Regulations were articulated from the onset as being technology neutral, thus enabling Malta to evolve its regulatory approach at the same pace as technological developments. Such a key aspect then needs to be supported by various regulatory and economic pillars for sustainability. Thus, having political stability, a performing economy, a strong financial services sector, a strong banking sector, a gaming regulator that understands technology, and a pool of talented people with a strong work ethic, create the right conditions for investment."

Malta being part of the EU and the Eurozone obviously also contributes to the decision making process the operators go through when evaluating the country as a base for business. Moreover, the fact that Malta is an EU member state, allows it to be at the heart of the European debate on the future of online gaming in Europe. As Portanier says, "Malta follows very closely the developments that were, and still are, occurring at an EU level, as they cannot be ignored. Over the past two years, the online gaming market experienced important developments, with several countries regulating online gaming within national boundaries, others still adopting a monopolistic model, and some - like Malta - adopting a strictly regulated yet open market in line with EU treaty principles. Over the past 12 months, the EU also saw an influx of member states proposing different regulatory models as a move towards at least partial liberalisation. The challenges were there, are there and will continue to be there, in different ways and forms. Malta has never shied away from addressing challenges, and continues to be relevant in this sector; not only as it is the veteran regulatory jurisdiction in Europe, but also because of its acquired experience throughout the years which is an important factor in addressing these challenges successfully."



In the last seven years the number of operators licensed by the LGA grew from a handful to almost 290 operators holding around 400 licenses between them

'one-stop-shop' environment, where operators can make use of internationally renowned audit, legal and consultancy firms which are also specialised in the gaming industry." In fact, over 3,000 personnel are directly employed in Malta by licensed operators and an estimated 2,500 are indirectly employed by companies supporting gaming operators, stemming from consultancy, real estate, legal, audit professionals, IT and payment gateways.

Testament to Malta's successful positioning in this service-based industry, is the fact that a number of major players have made their operations in the country, their main operating entities. One such company is Betsson Malta which - with the acquisition of Betsoft, another remote gaming company - has now become the largest employer in the local online gaming sector. Employing 26 different nationalities, Betsson's workforce has swelled from 20 to 215, a third of whom are Maltese. Meanwhile its revenue increased from €10 million (€8.8m) to €170 million (€150m) in 2010, resulting in Betsson inaugurating in June its third expansion in Malta since 2006.

With success stories like this it is little wonder that Malta is keen to retain its position as Europe's top destination for remote gaming.

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