

One-stop online shop for Scotland

SCOTLAND – Visit Scotland's Business Tourism Unit has unveiled a new website (www.conventionscotland.com) which it claims as being one of the most comprehensive in the industry worldwide.

The new site contains searchable details of more than 380 conference venues across the country, together with an index of support service organisations and direct links to the entire range of Scotland's venues and providers, says the national tourist board.

Visit Scotland UK marketing manager Scott Robertson says

the rationale for redevelopment of the site came initially from the recent integration of the 14 former Scottish area tourist boards.

"What the old website lacked was a guide to support services," he says. "It's an important new focus for us to have a pan-Scotland site."

"And before, if you wanted to find an individual venue like Turnberry, for example, you had to know that it was in Ayrshire. This isn't necessary now."

Head of Visit Scotland's Business Tourism Unit Caroline Packman says: "Websites are



Glasgow's recently re-opened Kelvingrove Museum

the first port of call when researching a venue or service. The BTU has therefore created a one-stop shop for researching and booking a business event

in Scotland. With so much diversity within our wide range of venues and services, this site will help make Scotland stand out from the crowd."

DMAI Brussels move Montpelier meet for AIPC

USA – Destination Marketing Association International is planning to open a new representative office in Brussels as part of plans to expand its worldwide coverage.

Following the DMAI's annual convention in Austin, Texas, last month, which broke all previous attendance records, president and CEO Michael D Gehrisch tells CMW that the association plans to follow two key aims in the coming 12 months.

"Two strategic areas that DMAI will focus on in the coming year include opening a global operation and office based in Brussels, and launching an accreditation programme for official destination marketing organisations.

"We strongly believe that an expanded global awareness and successful accreditation programme will assure DMOs and their customers of the highest levels of service and standards," he continues.

The Brussels operation is due to open either late this year or early next, says the association.

During the convention, which attracted more than 1,200 delegates from nearly 300 destinations worldwide, Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau president and CEO William D Tarbert was appointed chairman of the association's board of directors.

Next year's DMAI convention will take place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from 18-21 July.

FRANCE – The International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC) staged its yearly convention in the south of France in July.

Convention centre managers from all over the globe converged on Montpellier's le Corum conference centre from 16-19 July.

During the event, a series of presentations were heard, ranging from 'The role of marketing alliances' by Cairns Convention Centre's Geoff Donaghy and 'From public to private sector management models' by Gert Gundersen from Bergen, Norway, to 'How core PCOs are altering

industry dynamics', by MCI's Roger Tondeur.

This year the AIPC delegates further wrestled with the topics in workshops, from which many good conclusions were drawn.

At the convention, Quebec's Congress Centre was named the 2006 APEX Award winner, and it was further announced that Singapore's Suntec is to host the 2008 AIPC annual conference, although somewhat strangely there was no other candidate.

The 2007 conference will be staged in Graz, Austria, during July.

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News in brief...

Edinburgh extension

SCOTLAND – Edinburgh International Conference Centre last month received the go-ahead to start work on a £30 million (US\$55 million) extension to its existing facilities.

The works will include

construction of a 3,255 square metre expansion area, linked to the existing 1,200 seat conference centre, scheduled for completion in three years' time.

Marriott expansion

USA – Atlanta's largest hotel, the 1,675 room Atlanta

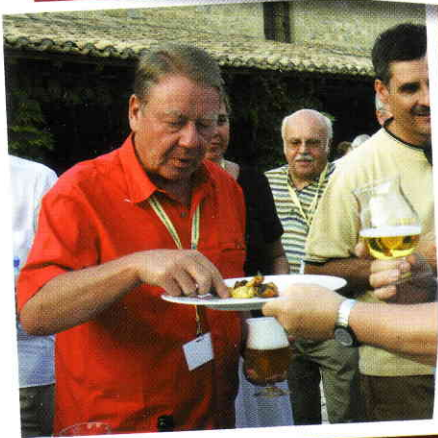
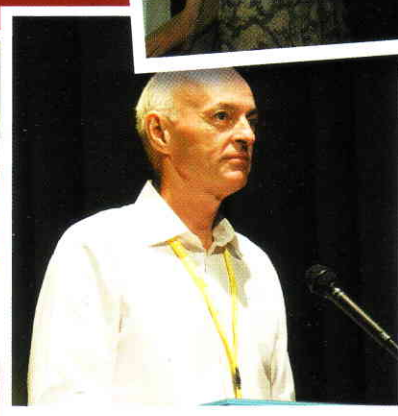
Marriott Marquis, has embarked on a two year, US\$100 million project to refurbish all public areas, and add an extra 3,700 square metres of meetings space to its current offering of over 11,000 square metres. Work is due for completion in the autumn of 2008.

GIBTM website launched

UAE – Comprehensive details of the first GIBTM meetings, incentives and exhibition industry show, taking place in Abu Dhabi from 27-29 March next year, are now available online at www.gibtm.travel.

AIPC passion for Montpellier

The International Association of Congress Centres, AIPC, gathered for its annual congress and AGM in the beautiful French city of Montpellier, 16-19 July. The main conference was in the Le Corum centre where delegates heard from many international speakers, and then got down to some new-style workshop sessions where issues raised were worked over in smaller groups. The networking side of the congress included a visit to a local bullring and Camargue horse stud farm, as well as a chance to get competitive with the boules. The Opera House provided the backdrop for the main dinner.



Top left: AIPC president Barbara Maple with Claude Pinault of Quebec Congress Centre, winners of the 2006 Apex Award. **Top right:** President of the Languedoc-Roussillon Region and founding force of Le Corum, Georges Frêche, welcomes AIPC to Montpellier. **Middle left:** The boules champions, beating the French in their backyard: Tim Husbands, Paul Colston, Stuart Quin, Stephen Norcliffe, Steve Piper and Jacquie Rogers. **Middle:** Suntec chief executive Warren Buckley. **Middle right:** Marc and Natacha Porchet from Lausanne. **Bottom left:** Edinburgh International Conference Centre's chief executive Hans Rissmann with his hands full. **Bottom middle:** MCI's Roger Tondeur in expansive mood. **Bottom right:** Local flavour where Montpellier meets flamenco.