



February 2015

## PUBLISHERS NOTE

Dear Reader!

First of all – I would like to thank you for your lovely feedback on the launch-edition of MICE:destination! It is indeed highly motivating to receive your positive comments. For those that had not yet the opportunity to download a copy – [please click here to obtain your edition.](#)

**MICE:destination**

In this NEWSFLASH, we keep you up to date with two hotel group developments: Marriott has signed a definitive agreement to acquire the Canadian Delta Hotels and Resorts brand, management and franchise business and the Minor Hotel Group is expanding into Europe and South America, starting with the takeover of 6 Tivoli properties.

We update you on the [development of the meeting destination Copenhagen.](#) Denmark, impressing us with a 26% growth in won meetings and conference bids – and with an [Update on the development of Thailand's market](#) – which recovered with very strong 4th quarter results in 2014.

In Germany, the Hamburg Senate announced the [official opening date of Hamburg's prestigious Elbphilharmonie Concert Hall](#) in January 2017 – which will add a splendid venue to the vast German portfolio. And the [German Maritim Hotel Group announced contracts](#) with the cutting-edge MICE technology companies Braehler and Kuchem.

Did you already see the I LOVE NEW YORK app? [Find details in the right column.](#) And right underneath, in the right column, we're featuring a USA Special on renovated Conference & Meeting Properties : 5 re-openings with significant made-over conference facilities have been announced last week.

Lastly – we invite you to apply for the MITM Euromed 2015 Meetings and Incentive Travel Market, Calpe, Spain hosted buyer programme – see the right column. And ITE & MICE Hong Kong is also open for pre-registration.

As always, we deliver the news into your mailbox and the pdf edition of this newsletter is available for download. Do you think your colleagues and co-workers would be interested in this newsletter? Click here to forward this edition of NEWSFLASH.

Best regards

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## MINOR HOTEL GROUP MAKES STRATEGIC ENTRY INTO EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA

Minor Hotel Group (MHG), owner and operator of hotels and resorts in 19 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Africa and the Indian Ocean, announced that it has made a strategic acquisition of six hotels and over 1,600 keys in Portugal and Brazil, and the Tivoli Hotels & Resorts brand for Brazil. The milestone EUR 168 million investment represents MHG's entry into the hospitality sector in two new continents and establishes Portugal and Brazil as MHG's two strategically-chosen countries for future expansion into Europe and South America.

The Brazil acquisition includes two properties: the 220-key Tivoli Sao Paulo Mofarrej in Sao Paulo, and Tivoli Ecoresort Praia do Forte, a 287-key resort in the heart of an ecological reserve on the coast close to Salvador in Bahia. In addition to the two properties, the acquisition comprises a strong hotel operating platform and the intellectual property rights to the Tivoli Hotels & Resorts brand for Brazil.

The acquisitions of four Tivoli properties in Portugal include the 306-key Tivoli Lisboa

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MITM Euromed, Calpe, Spain – Registration now open for Hosted Buyers

The registration for hosted buyers is now open for MITM Euromed taking place this year in Calpe, Spain

in the capital city of Lisbon; and three properties in the Algarve, one of Europe's premier tourism destinations: the 383-key Tivoli Marina Vilamoura; the 196-key Tivoli Marina Portimao and the 293-key Tivoli Carvoeiro. The Portugal acquisition comprises four properties that are being leased to a third-party who owns the Tivoli Hotels & Resort brand for Portugal.

The six hotels will continue to operate as Tivoli and Tivoli Collection, the two brands within Tivoli Hotels & Resorts. Tivoli is a member of Global Hotel Alliance which three of MHG's existing brands (Anantara, AVANI and Per AQUUM) also belong to.

[www.minorinternational.com](http://www.minorinternational.com)

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at the award-winning AR Diamante Beach Hotel, Spa & Convention Centre\*\*\*\* from May 6-8 2015.

In addition to AR Diamante Beach Hotel, sponsors include Calpe's City Hall. As housing and the Meetings and Incentives Travel Market will be hosted both in the hotel, participating buyers will not only be able to create valuable business relationships, but also to view the hosting property – AR Diamante Beach Hotel, Spa & Convention Centre\*\*\*\* - which has been awarded in 2014 by Condé Nast Johansens as the Best Hotel for Events and Conferences in Europe – in full swing.

To register for the event, please go to [mitmeuromed.com/buyer-application.html](http://mitmeuromed.com/buyer-application.html)

[See more details!](#)

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## ITE & MICE Hong Kong 2015 welcomes Buyers & Trade to Pre-register



The 29th ITE (leisure) and the 10th ITE MICE will be held concurrently from 11 – 14 June at Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. We welcome outbound Tour Operators, Corporate Travel / Association Buyers to apply our Buyer Program for great saving in hotel and other benefits including possibly FAM tours ([click here to apply now](#)), and other travel trade [click here](#) to pre-register as visitor!



ITE & MICE features some 650 exhibitors (85% from abroad) from around 50 countries, with exhibits and products for Asia. These and related seminars in two trade days highlight MICE, trendy themes like Overseas Wedding, Cruise and Sport Tourism etc. For details, please visit [www.itehk.com](http://www.itehk.com) or contact the Organizer -TKS email: [travel@tkshk.com](mailto:travel@tkshk.com)

## MICE APPS

### USA: I Love New York Announces Launch of Mobile App

Empire State Development's Division of Tourism announced the launch of a new, free I LOVE NEW YORK mobile app to promote New York State tourism. Through the app, users and visitors on the go can easily explore the best of travel in the State and more effectively get information on thousands of destinations, attractions and events, including Path Through History and Taste NY locations. The Division also announced the launch of a new television ad, designed to further grow the State's tourism industry. The ad can be seen here and began running today in major markets, in-state as well out-of-state, on early morning shows and cable networks.

The free downloadable app features:

- A simple step-by-step concierge function to quickly find the perfect travel itinerary;
- Location-based alerts for top destinations;
- Hundreds of unique events that can be saved to the device's calendar app; and
- Dozens of curated adventures.

The app also provides instant access to Google maps, a service that helps visitors navigate their way to places to stay, food and drink locations and attractions, and can be personalized with the use of interest-based filters to help visitors plan the perfect vacation or outing.

The I LOVE NY app is initially available for iPhone and Android devices. To download the free app, visit the iTunes or Google Play app store on your device or go to [www.iloveny.com/mobile](http://www.iloveny.com/mobile)

[See more details!](#)

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## CANADA: MARRIOTT SIGNS DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE DELTA HOTELS AND RESORTS

Continuing its rapid global expansion, Marriott International, Inc. announced it has signed definitive agreements to acquire the Delta Hotels and Resorts(r) brand and management and franchise business from Delta Hotels Limited Partnership, a subsidiary of British Columbia Investment Management Corporation for C\$168 million (approximately USD135 million).

The Delta brand comprises a diverse range of hotels and resorts with 38 hotels and 10,000 rooms in more than 30 cities across Canada. Delta offers a fresh approach to the guest experience, including its new ModeRoom guest room designs, innovative use of new technologies, and new properties, such as its flagship Delta Toronto located at the hub of Canada's hottest high-rise neighborhood, South Core. When completed, the transaction will increase Marriott's distribution in Canada to more than 120 hotels and 27,000 rooms, making Marriott the largest full service hotel company in Canada.

The transaction is subject to receipt of certain third party and governmental consents, including by the Canadian Competition Bureau. Assuming receipt of the necessary approvals, the parties expect to close the transaction in the second quarter of 2015. Marriott does not expect the transaction will have a material impact on its 2015 results, excluding one-time transaction and integration costs.

[www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) - [www.deltahotels.com](http://www.deltahotels.com)

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## DENMARK: EVENTS BUSINESS UP 26% FOR COPENHAGEN

As the books are closing on 2014, it has been yet another record-breaking year in terms of events secured for the future. 72 international conventions and 341 corporate meetings and incentive leads corresponding to more than 367.000 nights

## USA – RENOVATED CONFERENCE & MEETING PROPERTIES

California: DoubleTree by Hilton Fresno Convention Center Opens Following USD7 Million Transformation

Hilton Worldwide and DoubleTree by Hilton

were added to the list of events taking place in Copenhagen in the years to come, which makes 2014 the fourth consecutive record year in terms of bid and lead wins. This reflects the organisers' awareness of Copenhagen's appeal making it a world-class meetings destination.

The university city Copenhagen has a long tradition as a knowledge hub with an especially strong reputation within clean-tech, life-tech, human rights and IT, to mention a few key fields, all of which are important for those who arrange association congresses. The city's strengths were mirrored in some of the bid wins for 2014.

The increase in won bids and leads from 2013's 57 and 271 respectively, equals an increase of 26%. This record-breaking result is due to the close cooperation between Wonderful Copenhagen CVB, the partners in Meetingplace Wonderful Copenhagen and VisitDenmark. 2014 was also record-breaking in terms of room nights and airport traffic with 9 million commercial room nights and 25,6 million airport passengers.

Copenhagen - attractive host city?

Copenhagen's infrastructure is ranked one of the most efficient in the world and has also been ranked world's most walkable city. Public transportation makes it easy to navigate, and the city is home to the world's busiest bicycle lane used by 36,000 cyclists per day.

In 2014, Copenhagen was once again ranked the World's Most Livable City, cementing its reputation as a clean and safe destination offering a high quality of life for Copenhageners and event attendees alike. Add to that, Copenhagen offers that extra something having made sustainable meetings management a key priority and focusing on meetings design, recently embodied by the Danish Meetovation Concept. Both of these aspects have strengthened the city's profile as an innovative and sustainable destination.

[www.visitcopenhagen.com](http://www.visitcopenhagen.com) - [www.meetincopenhagen.com](http://www.meetincopenhagen.com)

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## GERMANY: HAMBURG'S ELBPHILHARMONIE CONCERT HALL TO OPEN JANUARY 2017

The Hamburg Senate announced the opening of the cities long anticipated new concert hall and cultural landmark, the Elbphilharmonie, for January 11, 2017. Preceding the inception of the concert hall, the building's 120 feet high plaza, which will feature panoramic city views, will become accessible to the public as early as November 2016. With most major construction cranes gone, the stunning Herzog & de Meuron-designed Elbphilharmonie is now fully visible.

Set at the tip of the Sandtorhafen, the Elbphilharmonie is already the prominent center piece of Hamburg's HafenCity, a former docklands area-turned fashionable waterfront district. Praised as an architectural and cultural highlight of epic proportions, the Elbphilharmonie ambitiously stretches out over the Elbe River like the bow of a gloriously illuminated ship. The glass façade on top of the solid brick foundation -- a former cocoa warehouse - seems to be floating above the water. Even in its not-yet-finished state, the building is breath-taking and in 2014 some 30,000 toured the construction site.

The Elbphilharmonie's Grand Hall will provide seating for 2,100 people. Resembling other major concert stages around the world, the Grand Hall was designed to place the orchestra and conductor in its very center, surrounded by steep terraced seating rows which allow for a close up and personal experience of the performance and orchestra. Responsible for optimal acoustics is one of the world's leading specialists, Yasuhisa Toyota, who designed the hall's special „white skin“ surface, comprising of 10,000 gypsum fiber panels, as well as the 50-tonne reflector.

Orchestra in residence of the Elbphilharmonie will be the esteemed NDR Symphony Orchestra, one of the first major radio orchestras in Germany, founded right after WWII.

Two smaller concert halls, a restaurant, a hotel as well as 45 luxury apartments will also be housed in the building.

[www.hamburg-convention.com/en](http://www.hamburg-convention.com/en) - [www.hamburg-travel.com](http://www.hamburg-travel.com)

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today announced the opening of DoubleTree by Hilton Fresno Convention Center, following a comprehensive \$7 million renovation that includes modern design updates to the lobby, guest rooms, fitness center, pool areas and more. The 321-room hotel offers several dining options and is ideally situated directly across from the Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center and near the Tower District, home to restaurants, nightclubs, performing arts venues, galleries and other attractions. The hotel also offers convenient access to Yosemite National Park, Fresno State University and Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

With over 27,000 square feet / 8.230 square meters of flexible function space, including a main ballroom and 18 separate meeting rooms, the hotel is also ideally-suited to accommodate meetings, weddings and other events ranging anywhere from 10 -- 1,500 attendees. For smaller group meetings, the hotel offers the Meetings Simplified by DoubleTree by Hilton package from USD39.95 per person, which includes the meeting room, basic meeting WiFi, meeting room supplies including a flipchart, markers, extension and power cord, and all day non-alcoholic beverage service.

[See more details!](#)

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**Florida: DoubleTree by Hilton Jacksonville Airport Opens Following Renovation**

DoubleTree by Hilton today announced the opening of DoubleTree by Hilton Jacksonville Airport, conveniently located just 200 yards from the main terminal of Jacksonville International Airport. Formerly an independent hotel, the property reopens to guests following a dramatic multi-million dollar renovation that includes modern design updates throughout the lobby, guest rooms, meeting spaces and restaurant. Unique views of the nearby airport's runways may also be seen throughout the property.

With 11,000 square feet / 3.353 square meters of function space covering three levels of the hotel, DoubleTree by Hilton Jacksonville Airport is an ideal venue for meetings, conferences, banquets and other business or social events. Two ballrooms, two board rooms and four breakout rooms are suitable for a wide range of audiences and purposes. For smaller group meetings, the hotel offers the Meetings Simplified by DoubleTree by Hilton package from USD15.00 per person, which includes the meeting room, basic meeting WiFi, meeting room supplies including a flipchart, markers, extension and power cord, and all day non-alcoholic beverage service.

[See more details!](#)

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**Florida Keys: Hawks Cay Resort - New Meetings Locale Brings The Outside In**

Hawks Cay Resort's semi-secluded location on

## GERMANY: MARITIM HOTELS ANNOUNCES THE MOST CUTTING-EDGE EVENTS TECHNOLOGY FOR ITS HOTELS

The nationally and internationally active Maritim Hotels group is repositioning itself with regard to its conventions and events management. Since 1st January 2015, two prestigious companies specialising in technology for events, conferences and conventions, Kuchem and Braehler, have been in charge of events technology and technical support at the Maritim Hotels in Germany. The contract was signed by the three parties at the end of 2014.

Maritim Hotels is Germany's largest private provider of convention facilities. Every year, the 36 Maritim Hotels across Germany host a wide range of events from small conferences to corporate parties and national and international conventions with up to 6,800 participants. From now on, Maritim will be relying on extra input from Braehler and Kuchem for support in its in-house technology and expanding its own technical facilities.

The two leading specialists for conference and convention technology provide complementary technical equipment where necessary, offer support for technical planning and supervise entire events in their role as all-round service-providers.

The contract drawn up between Maritim and Braehler and Kuchem is intended to be the basis for a long-term collaboration. Included in the service package is the provision of audio, video, presentation, IT, lighting and stage machinery as well as conference and interpreting technology. The two companies work exclusively with renowned manufacturers and prestigious Braehler technology, known for its aesthetic and functional appeal. Kuchem and Braehler also support Maritim Events Management with the technical conception, planning and execution of events.

[www.maritim.com](http://www.maritim.com) - [www.braehler.com](http://www.braehler.com) - [www.kuchem.com](http://www.kuchem.com)

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## HONG KONG: EXCITING CULTURAL AND ARTS EVENTS ARE COMING

There will be parades and marching bands, towering floats and a symphony of lights, dancers and acrobats, excited crowds and the throwing of beads, and finally soaring fireworks lighting up the sky and the harbour. Yes, the Chinese New Year approaches and once again Hong Kong prepares for the party.

It all starts with the now-famous Illuminated Night Parade, a favourite festive event among Hong Kong residents and visitors since 1996. Since that year the event has received worldwide recognition: in 2011 Forbes declared the Hong Kong celebrations as one of the '10 Best Events of the Year' and the Lonely Planet BlueList of 2007 selected the parade as 'one of the best value entertainments around the world'.

And it's all due to happen again as Hong Kong, Asia's World City, prepares to welcome the new year on the first evening of the Year of the Sheep -- 19th February -- with the theme 'Sweet 20 -- World Party'. The event is organized by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and title-sponsored for the 17th year by Cathay Pacific Airways. Once again, enormous floats with elaborate decorations and colourful illuminations will light up the streets of Tsim Sha Tsui. In addition to the floats, cheerleaders, dance troupes, roving costumed characters and thousands of musicians in marching bands will accompany the Year of the Sheep mascot past the excited crowds.

The Opening Ceremony will take place in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza, harbourside in Tsim Sha Tsui. Tickets are available for the Opening Ceremony, while those who prefer to watch from Hong Kong's vibrant streets can do so for free. And after the event, the fabulous floats will be on display at Lam Tsuen in Tai Po from 20th February to 1st March. At night the floats will once again be brilliantly illuminated, providing visitors with wonderful photo opportunities and fantastic memories. There will also be colourful stage performances by international performing groups at various locations around town on 20th and 21st February. All in all, it's one of best times to be in Hong Kong.

[www.DiscoverHongKong.com/ca](http://www.DiscoverHongKong.com/ca) - [www.discoverhongkong.com](http://www.discoverhongkong.com)

Duck Key, in the lower middle Keys combines multiple venue options with its attractive surroundings and an impressive list of onsite activities. The property with the largest meeting and conference space in the Florida Keys has recreated itself to allow its magnificent ocean surroundings to become the centerpiece of every meeting on its property. The result is a captivating setting for groups, inside and out.

The now 20,000 square feet / 6,096 square meters of entirely renovated, barrier-free meeting space created an inspiring area that is as beautiful as it is intriguing. Walls, carpeting and even fixtures now reflect the aquamarine life located just steps from the meetings area. Walkways and meeting room entrances are now located outside under a covered awning, not buried in an interior hallway corridor, maintaining the connection between water inspiration and experience sharing as a meeting objective. Accommodating now up to 600 persons the hotel has also upgraded the technology structure to fulfill today's demands. Beside the meeting space, renovation includes:

- A complete lobby redesign
- Expanded Tranquility Pool for adults with cabanas, lounge area and adults-only restaurant
- Enhanced spa design with a new relaxation lounge
- A new Marina Walk serving as an entertainment destination within the resort (2015 completion)
- A new build restaurant overlooking the Marina Walk, which will include multiple private event options and will feature plenty of outdoor seating areas (2015 completion)

A group recreation guide full of new activities to complement the enhancements is available.

[See more details!](#)

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### Missouri: Chateau On The Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center Completes Renovations

The AAA Four-Diamond Chateau on the Lake Resort, Spa & Convention Center in Missouri has completed the renovation of its 301 guest rooms and suites, and the renovation of all of its smaller meeting rooms. In addition, the resort added a new Executive Board Room with state-of-the-art A/V and technology capabilities, and enhanced all of its meeting space including its Great Hall ballroom with new LED lighting, new flex-back banquet chairs, and new „linenless“ meeting tables. Situated in the picturesque Ozark Mountains overlooking scenic Table Rock Lake, the resort features 43,500 square feet / 13,259 square meters of meeting space all on one level and is widely recognized as one of the finest resorts in the Midwest.

The resort's new 684-square-foot / 208- square-

And once that party is over it will be time for an avalanche of arts events to commence.

[Click here to read the full article on www.micemm.com](http://www.micemm.com)

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## THAILAND REGISTERS RECORD YEAR END GROWTH; THAILAND TOURISM FORUM 2015

Thailand Tourism Forum 2015 by STR Global revealed that Thailand's tourism industry has turned the corner after a very difficult 2014, bouncing back in the fourth quarter with strong growth according to exclusively released data.

Thailand Tourism Forum 2015 was held at InterContinental Bangkok attracted more than 500 delegates from throughout Asia to gather insights from industry leaders on Thailand's tourism industry.

The positive news for the industry was welcomed as STR's Area Director for Asia Pacific Jesper Palmqvist revealed the staggering decline for most of 2014 with year-over-year (YoY) occupancy falling by -11.3%, mostly driven by Bangkok, which saw a decline YoY of -16.2%. This is against a backdrop of almost half the year at -20% and worst months where it was over 30% down.

However, recovery started to emerge late Q3, and in Q4 numbers really turned around for Bangkok. After the dismal start to the year, RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) increased by +2.5% YoY in the last quarter.

Occupancy in December for Bangkok was one of the highest ever recorded by STR Global since 2000 and when comparing quarters, Q4 2014 showed the best occupancy Bangkok has seen since 2006. Moreover, RevPAR was the second best Q4 for the last decade suggesting that six to nine months is the new recovery time norm for Bangkok.

Delegates also heard the story of Thailand's key resort markets, where Phuket occupancy fell by -5.7% YoY and Koh Samui decreasing by -1.6%. It was positive news for Chiang Mai where occupancy decreased -4.2%, but RevPAR growth was positive, driven by upward ADR movement. Hua Hin was also able to hold rates up well but Pattaya suffered more, due to a -10% decline in occupancy YoY.

### Thailand Tourism Forum

Thailand Tourism Forum is an annual event held every January and organised by AMCHAM Thailand and leading hospitality consultancy C9 Hotelworks. Now in its fourth year it attracts leading industry speakers and a growing number of delegates from around the region, topping 500 in 2015, as it establishes itself as the leading hotel business event of the year in Thailand.

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meter Executive Board Room features advanced audiovisual and technology capabilities that includes a 54" touch-screen HD television with speakers built into the boardroom table, which can seat 20 persons.

The resort offers 20 meeting rooms, including the 32,000-square-foot Great Hall, and three corporate board rooms in addition to the new Executive Board Room. The resort's smaller meeting rooms are now equipped with new meeting tables and LED lighting new carpets, and new wall treatments.

The resort also features a private 54-seat theater for special presentations, high-speed Internet access in all meeting rooms, a 24-hour business center, on-site Audio/Visual service with state-of-the-art A/V equipment and technology, complimentary Wi-Fi in pre-convene areas, and outstanding banquet and catering services.

[See more details!](#)

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### Washington DC Area: The Westin Arlington Gateway Upgrades Its Meeting & Event Space

Last week the Westin Arlington Gateway, just steps from Metrorail that connects the hotel to Washington, DC, completed a full renovation of its over 17,000 square feet / 5,182 square meters of meeting and events space.

All nine meeting rooms, including a boardroom and all pre-function areas, have received a complete refresh, from the new carpet to the ceiling treatments. Several of the pieces of artwork that add a calming tone to the space have been upgraded as well and new a refresh of colors throughout the space.

The Westin Arlington Gateway is located in the vibrant Ballston neighborhood of Arlington, just two blocks from the Ballston Metro Station, providing direct access to Washington, D.C. Surrounded by countless restaurant and shopping options, offer guests relaxation after a long day of work or play. This upscale hotel offers 336 rooms and it's Pinzimini Restaurant & Lounge, an award winning restaurant enjoyed by guests and locals alike, serving breakfast lunch and dinner.

[See more details](#)

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