

Destination GOZO

June 2017

GOZO TOURISM ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER

“Successful people are not gifted, they just work hard, then succeed on purpose”



Inside this issue:

- Gozo Tourism Awards 2016 1
- GTA Annual General Meeting 2017 2-3
- The collapse of the Azure Window 4
- GTA signs UNWTO Global Code of Ethics 5
- National Enterprise Support Award (NESA) 5
- Congratulations 6
- World Oceans Day 7

Gozo Tourism Awards 2016

The Gozo Tourism Association organised its 9th consecutive Gozo Tourism Awards 2016. This event was held on 12th January 2017. This years' Awards were bestowed to the Gozo Tourism Worker of the Year, the Gozo Young Tourism Worker of the Year,

The winners were officially announced by Notary Public Dr. Paul G Pisani MIM., MA.,LLD. Chairman of the adjudicating board which also included, Mr Joseph W Psaila and Mr. Noel Formosa.



as well as the Gozo Tourism Entrepreneurship Award. The main objectives of these awards are to acknowledge, commend, encourage and thank all the workers and Entrepreneurs who distinguish themselves in the performance of their duties in the vital touristic industry in Gozo.

Mr. Jean Pierre Grech, Owner/Chef Patron of Zafiro Restaurant, won the **Gozo Tourism Worker of the Year Award 2016**, whilst the **Gozo Young Tourism Worker of the Year Award 2016** was won by Ms Moira Debrincat, Head Chef at Brookies Restaurant. This year's **Gozo Tourism Entrepreneurship Award 2016**, was won by Mr Franco Ciangura obo Ghajnsielem Local Council organisers of Bethlehem f'Ghajnsielem.

The Gozo Tourism Association council awarded also the **Lifetime Achievement Award in Tourism** to Mr. John Portelli for his investment and achievements in the tourism sector during a span of over 60 years, which contributed towards job creation and economic growth on Gozo.

These awards were presented to the respective winners by the Hon Dr. Anton Refalo, Minister for Gozo, who during his concluding speech emphasised the importance of the Human Resources in the Tourism Sector and while congratulating the winners thanked all the workers and the Entrepreneurs in the Gozitan Tourism Industry. Mr Paul Scicluna, Chairman of the Gozo Tourism Association also addressed those present. TVM journalist Keith Demicoli conducted the event.

GTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017



The Gozo Tourism Association held its 18th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 22nd February 2017 at the Grand Hotel, Mgarr, Gozo.

The Agenda of the Annual General meeting, included an address by the Chairman of the Association, Mr Paul Scicluna, the Administrative report by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Muscat, and the Financial report by the Treasurer, Mr Joe Muscat Sammut. The meeting was also addressed by the Hon Minister for Gozo, Hon. Dr. Anton Refalo, the Hon Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis, Minister for Tourism, and Hon. Mr. Antoine Borg, Opposition Spokesperson for Tourism.



In his opening address the GTA Chairman Mr Paul Scicluna said that during 2016, Gozo continued experiencing increases in the tourist arrivals on 2015. Mr Scicluna stressed the fact that the authorities concerned need to address the particular challenges faced by the Gozitan tourism sector particularly in strengthening tourism touristic product, the human resources in this sector, as well as the general cleanliness of the rural areas. In his speech, Mr Scicluna mentioned the connectivity to the Island and he stated the GTA is in favour of more connectivity especially by an airlink, as well as the improvement in digital connectivity through another fibre optic link.

The GTA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Muscat delivered a presentation on the administration of the Association during 2016. He gave an overview of the Gozitan touristic performance during last year. During his presentation Mr Muscat gave a detailed report of the work and initiatives undertaken by the Association during the course of the past year 2016.



The AGM was also addressed by the Minister for Tourism, Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis. Whilst acknowledging the work being carried out by the Gozo Tourism Association, the Minister for Tourism mentioned the positive results registered on Gozo. Minister Zammit Lewis stated that these increases also showed a shift in the accommodation chosen by the tourists, whilst noting that seasonality remained a challenging issue for Gozo. The Minister for Tourism stated that the positive results being achieved by Gozo's tourism industry are being translated into more investment, in fact since 2013 the Malta Tourism Authority received 35 applications for development in different types of collective accommodation. Finally the Minister Dr. Zammit Lewis commended the GTA for being proactive in contributing to this success story in tourism on Gozo.



The Minister for Gozo, Dr. Anton Refalo, stated that, once again Gozo registered an increase in tourist arrivals in 2016 when compared to 2015. Minister Refalo stressed that in order to sustain these increases, Destination Gozo, needs to continue improving on its connectivity especially with the introduction of a fast ferry service, as well as the investment in another fibre optic link. The Minister for Gozo stated that his Ministry is putting all its resources to continue improving the cleanliness of the destination especially in the Gozitan countryside. Yet he called for more responsibility from the public at large to stop dumping illegally in rural areas as these are well visited by tourists especially during the lean months. The Minister for Gozo concluded by mentioning that his Ministry is committed to continue supporting the tourism industry in Gozo, which is so vital for the Gozitan economy.

GTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

Nationalist Party Spokesman for Tourism Mr. Antoine Borg M.P. also addressed the AGM and said that this is his third opportunity for him to address the Annual General Meeting of the Gozo Tourism Association. He referred to the fact that the numbers in tourism both in Malta and in Gozo are increasing year in year out. However he stressed that no divide exists between Government and Opposition with regards to tourism. Hon. Antoine Borg stated that Air Malta remains concern to all stakeholders involved and stated that the Opposition will remain very cautious on this issue while it is always ready to contribute towards a sustainable solution for the future of the National Airline. The Opposition spokesperson for Tourism called on MTA to review its position and consider the re-introduction of a section within the Authority focusing on Gozo.



During this AGM the GTA council for 2017 was formed with the following members: Busuttil Mark (St. Andrews Divers Cove), Cachia Nick (Gozo Spirit B&B), Cassar Chris (Porto Vecchio Restaurant), Gatt Ludgard (Tamarisk Properties), Grech Rosie (Churchill Restaurant), Loportio Mario (Gozo Village Holidays), Meilak Brian (Baron Group), Mercieca Joseph (Country Terrace Restaurant) Muscat Sammut Joseph (Down Town Hotel), Rapa Joe (Ta' Salvina Restaurant), Scicluna Konrad (Links Travel) Scicluna Paul (Gozo Farmhouses), Spiteri Pauline (Mario's Rent a car), Spiteri Philip (Ta' Philip Restaurant), and Veranneman Amand (Dhalia Real Estate).



Other distinguished guests present for the Annual General Meeting, included, Dr. Chris Said, Shadow Minister for Gozo, Mr. Carlo Micallef, MTA Chief Marketing Officer, Mr. John Borg, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Gozo,

Ms. Esther Bajada, Director Tourism and Economic Development MGOZ, officials from both the Ministry for Gozo and the Ministry for Tourism as well as Malta Tourism Authority officials, other guests and GTA members from the various sectors of the Gozitan Tourism Industry.



THE COLLAPSE OF THE AZURE WINDOW



At the beginning of March , Gozo has lost one of its iconic beauties. The inevitable and the much feared has happened on the 8th March 2017. The flagship of the Gozitan touristic sites has sunk in its same birth place from where for thousands of years, it stood high and proud heralding one of the natural beauties our little island is endowed with.

All Gozitans and especially the touristic industry were so saddened with this expected loss. The much promoted Azure window is no more, and only millions of photographs remain as testimony of this touristic spot.

The Azure window was a tourist puller, as it is estimated that 80% of over the one million tourists that came to Gozo either for a day trip or for an overnight stay visited this natural attraction.

Although with the collapse of Azure window, Gozo has lost one of its iconic beauties, yet from emerging under water video footage, it seems that another underwater attraction has been created, as a legacy of this window.

The remains of the once majestic Azure window have now formed themselves into an interesting dive, served with several pass or swim through. The creation of such a natural dive site, will now enhance the already popular attraction of the Blue Hole which is already sought after by the Divers who visit Gozo.

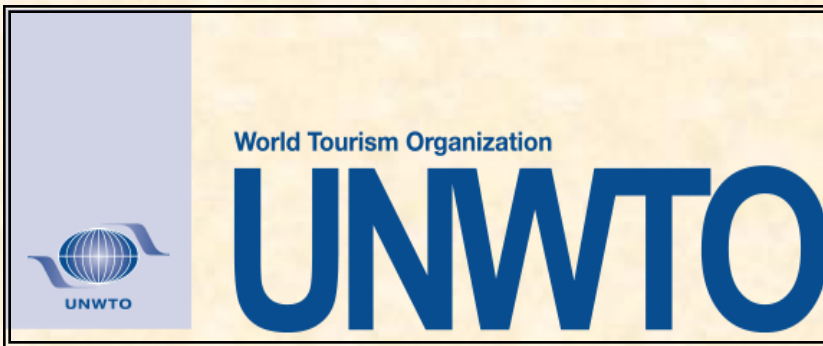
Various species of marine life have already started inhabiting the area and in due course this will be another added underwater attraction for the diving tourist. To this end, the Gozo Tourism Association calls on the Government and all Authorities concerned, to refrain from any form of intervention on this underwater area.

On the contrary the Gozo Tourism Association recommends Government to declare the whole area as a Marine Protected Area, thus minimizing the negative impact of fishing. Furthermore, the Association urges that the necessary resources are deployed in order to maintain and enforce this Marine Protected Area.

The Gozo Tourism Association believes that at this point in time all tourism stakeholders should synergize their efforts and focus on promoting destination Gozo through its many unique selling propositions. The Island's natural characteristics, the diversity and its authenticity, are the strongest marketing tools, Gozo is endowed with.



THE GTA SIGNS THE UNWTO GLOBAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR TOURISM

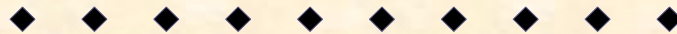


On Wednesday 24th May, 2017, the Gozo Tourism Association committed itself to adhere to the principles of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

The signing ceremony of the UNWTO's global code of ethics for tourism was held at Fort St. Angelo, in the presence of UNWTO Secretary General Mr. Taleb Rifai and the Minister for Tourism Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis.

The Gozo Tourism Association, represented by its Chairman Mr. Paul Scicluna, was one of the six local organisations that committed themselves to the ten principles of the Code of Ethics pledging their commitment towards corporate social responsibility, enabling access to adequate occupations, and to support and empower people at all levels of society by promoting a "tourism for all" mentality.

Minister Zammit Lewis acknowledged that endorsing the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism represents a strong commitment and that he is particularly pleased that Air Malta, the Gozo Tourism Association, the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association, the Federation of Associations of Travel and Tourism Agents, the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, and, finally the Valletta Cruise Port—all of which are Maltese professional organisations—are joining the list of the signatories to the Code.



On Thursday 25th May, 2017, the Commerce Department held the Awards giving ceremony of the 7th Edition of the National Enterprise Support Awards (NESA), at the Ministry for Economy, Investment and Small Businesses in Marsa.

The Gozo Tourism Association participated in these Awards in Section C, which was open to Public and Church Schools, Business Organisations, NGOs, Public Educational Institutions, Univeristy of Malta, Trade Unions and Professional Associations.

The Gozo Tourism Association was awarded the third Prize (Consolation Prize) with its initiative Entrepreneurship and Life Time Achievement Awards.

This Award was presented to the Chairman of the Gozo Tourism Association Mr. Paul Scicluna by Ms. Nancy Caruana, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Businesses



QUALITY ASSURED AWARDS



The Gozo Tourism Association would like to congratulate the three Gozitan Catering Establishments listed below, who together with their Maltese counterparts were awarded the Quality Assured Award for their respective Restaurants.

Il-Logga

Xi Xi Chinese

Xerri il-Bukkett

The Award plaque and certificate were distributed by the MTA CEO Mr. Paul Bugeja and Mr. David Mifsud, MTA Director Quality Assurance & Licencing, during a special event organised on Tuesday 30th May, 2017 by the Malta Tourism Authority, in one of the leading Hotels in Malta.

Meanwhile the following nine Gozitan Restaurants, had their Quality Assured Label renewed:

Country Terrace

DVenue

Il-Kartell

Il-Migjarr (Grand Hotel Mgarr)

Porto Vecchio

Pulena

Ta' Frenc

The Boathouse

The Stone Crab



Furthermore, the Gozo Tourism Association would like to congratulate also, the Brookies Restaurant, that won the Best in Class Award, and the Stone Crab Restaurant that was awarded the Best in Service and Hospitality during this same event.

Whilst auguring the above establishments, the Gozo Tourism Association, would like to invite and encourage other Gozitan Restaurants to actively participate in this Quality Assured Scheme, in order to ensure and keep offering an up to standard dining experience, in Gozo.





World Oceans Day was commemorated in Gozo on Thursday 8th June 2017 with underwater clean ups held at several popular Gozitan beaches by the Gozitan Diving Centres.

In the evening, the Gozitan Diving Centres, together with a number of foreign journalists representing different prominent diving journals and portals were hosted at a social gathering held at a catering establishment within the Cittadella. During this event the 90 minute documentary " Plastic Ocean", was screened while these guests were treated to local food and wine. Prior to this social gathering the guests were treated to a tour of the newly refurbished Cittadella.

This event was organised by the Gozo Tourism Association with the full support and collaboration of the Malta Tourism Authority and the Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development within the Ministry for Gozo. The foreign journalists were hosted by MTA, Tauchernet and local dive shops in Malta and Gozo as part of the event 'European Divers Meeting' held between the 5th and 9th June.

