

## IN THIS EDITION

- **OTE plans an 'interactive' i-ZONE -- Information Zone – as a brand new networking feature at its Annual Business Forum in Prague in November.**
  - **The European Union defines what constitutes 'unfair' commercial practices as the Council of Ministers is set to approve the Fair Trading Directive.**
  - **A special OTE session will feature at the annual ARDA convention in Florida next month.**
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### **i-ZONE FOR OTE8 -- THE EUROPEAN TIMESHARE BUSINESS FORUM**

At a meeting of the Communications Council this month, plans were unveiled for a brand new 'interactive' feature to facilitate networking at the European Timeshare Business Forum (OTE8) in Prague\*\*.

At the conference venue, the **i-ZONE** (Information Zone) will be a major feature of OTE8. With a central seating area, it will also have special designated sections focusing on different parts of the timeshare business such as sales and marketing, finance, legal services, resort development, etc.

In feedback from past OTE conferences, networking has been regularly highlighted as a priority for delegates.

In other moves, the Communications Council has endorsed a working group's report to upgrade OTE publications. By summer **OTe-news** will be revamped and published with a complementary news bulletin that will be available only to members via an intranet link – more on this later.

At the same time, the Council reviewed options for upgrading the OTE web site. Also discussed: the programme for the OTE Road Show this summer in Italy, Madeira and the Costa del Sol. More details will be published shortly.

**\*\*Footnote: *The 8<sup>th</sup> European Timeshare Business Forum will be held at The Hilton in Prague. Dates: 3 – 5 November 2005.***

### **SO WHAT CONSTITUTES 'UNFAIR' COMMERCIAL PRACTICES?**

Officials in Brussels have defined what 'unfair' means in the new EU law aimed at curtailing sharp sales practices. The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive -- sometimes called the Fair Trading Directive -- is expected to gain formal approval in the coming weeks. The new rules will be implemented in 2007.

The Directive defines 'unfairness' to ensure that practices that really cause problems for consumers can be addressed without creating uncertainty and extra costs for honest businesses. This leaves room for business to innovate in developing new fair commercial practices.

According to EU officials, to be 'unfair' a commercial practice has to:

- Fail to comply with the usual standards of care and skill expected from a trader, and
- Be likely to constrain the average consumer's ability to take an informed decision to such an extent that he or she is likely to take a different decision from the one they would have made otherwise. For example, by misleading or coercing them into buying a product.

The EU believes the new Directive will replace the complex tangle of existing national rules and court judgements with a single, EU-wide regime. Business will be able to advertise and sell to all consumers in the EU on the basis of one common set of rules. Consumers will have access to a greater range of offers and be protected from unfair behaviour by businesses throughout the EU.

### **OTE SESSION SCHEDULED FOR THE UPCOMING ARDA CONVENTION**

Robin Mills, managing director, RMI Consortium, is to chair a special OTE session at the annual convention of the American Resort Development Association (ARDA) in Florida next month. As chairman of OTE's Communications Council, he will moderate the session on Tuesday, 26 April, from 08.30 to 10am. Other participants are OTE chairman Ward Woods, chief executive Anthony Arke and Preben Vestdam, CEO, RCI Europe & Middle East.

Like the 2005 European Timeshare Business Forum, the session at ARDA will take the OTE8 theme -- 'Taking the lead'. Participants will address a range of issues including how OTE can spearhead timeshare efforts in the European market with its 25 member states and 20 official languages. Other issues include:

- Support for member-companies to grow their businesses;
- Functioning as a gateway for European consumers to learn more about timeshare;
- Connecting consumers with timeshare businesses by establishing a uniform complaint handling system through the Vacation Owners' Independent Coalition in Europe (VOICE);
- Supporting ongoing efforts to promote best practice within the European industry and operating effectively.

Separately, OTE secretary general Peter van der Mark is to participate in ARDA's Global Marketplace session, which will also feature economic data from the Ragatz Economic Impact Study in Spain.

**Footnote:** *The ARDA 2005 Convention & Exposition takes place at Lake Buena Vista, Florida, from Sunday, 24 April to Thursday, 28 April at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel.*

## **OTE NATIONAL CHAPTERS**

### **GERMANY:**

#### **NEW CHAPTER ADDRESSES KEY ISSUES AT FIRST BOARD MEETING**

DBTW -- the new chapter of the Organisation for Timeshare in Europe -- has held its first Board of Directors meeting in Munich, to initiate an action plan focused on three areas: consumer complaints, communications and lobbying. The Board also reviewed possible joint activities that would help promote the timeshare business in the German-speaking markets. On behalf of OTE, Hans Jürgen Eggerss (Hapimag), Hans-Peter Hermann (RCI), and Anthony Arke (OTE) participated in the meeting.

**Footnote:** Kurt Scholl will be the official representative for Hapimag in the new DBTW set-up.

### **GREECE:**

#### **MARKETING DIRECTOR NAMED FOR NEW HOLIDAY CLUB**

Ralf Nolte has been appointed marketing director for Galaxia Vacation Club, the new timeshare venture launched this year by the N. Daskalantonakis Group, owners of Grecotel, the best known hotel brand in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean. He reports to John Macdonald, the club's chief operating officer. Previously Mr Nolte held senior sales and marketing posts at Anfi Beach Club in Gran Canaria.

### **SPAIN:**

#### **NEW MEMBERS JOIN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Following the annual general meeting of OTE Spain, three new members have been appointed to the Board of Directors. They are Jesús Jiménez, Parque Denia; Francisco Lizarza, Lizarza Abogados, and Atilano Sastre, Explotación Hotelera.

Other Board members are: chairman Carlos Vogeler, RCI Europe & Middle East; vice chairmen Manuel Fernández, Anfi del Mar S.A., and Eugene Miskelly, CLC Resort Developments; Carlos Paulsen, Club El Beril; George Roe, Intercorp; Miguel Rifá, Albori, S.L. and Chris Allen, RMI Consortium. Both OTE's chairman, Ward Woods, and Chief Executive, Anthony Arke, attended and addressed the Spanish AGM.

### **UNITED KINGDOM:**

#### **'MARATHON MAN' SEEKS SUPPORT FOR THREE CHARITIES**

Peter Hutchinson, Hutchinson & Co. Trust Company, is planning to run 42 kilometres in the London Marathon next month to win financial support for three deserving charities. To this end, he is seeking donations from colleagues and friends in the European timeshare industry.

The charities are Whizz-Kidz, a foundation providing motorised wheelchairs for disabled children in the UK; Project L.I.F.E., a Thai organisation saving young children from forced labour and prostitution, and Christel House, which is supporting the life and education of more than 2,000 children at five locations around the world.

To make a donation, telephone Angela Lenman on +44 1276 482004 with your credit card details. OR send a cheque payable to Hutchinson & Co. Trust Company Ltd-- London Marathon Appeal at Hutchinson & Co Trust Company Ltd, Priory Court, Tuscam Way, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3YX, England.

### **TRAVEL AWARDS FOR KETTERING CALL CENTRE**

The UK call centre of RCI Europe was named 'Central England Leisure Agent of the Year' at the 2005 Agent Achievement Awards ceremony in London. It was also runner-up in the 'Call Centre of the Year' and 'Best Leisure Air Retailer' awards.

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

### **JOINT VENTURE TO DEVELOP TWO TIMESHARE RESORTS IN CYPRUS**

Under the banner Parasol Vacation, two leading companies have joined forces to develop two timeshare resorts in Cyprus. Paradise Resorts Cyprus and Aquasol Hotels Group are in a joint venture to develop two beach properties -- Parasol Callisto Holiday Village in Ayia Napa and Parasol Aquasol Holiday Village in Coral Bay, Paphos.

Under the agreement, Paradise Resorts Cyprus will be responsible for marketing while Aquasol will manage the resorts.

Currently work is underway to convert 25 apartments to timeshare accommodation at each of the two properties. Marketing programmes are primarily targeting UK nationals. Parasol has agreements with local tourist organisations to operate within selective hotels.

Patrick O'Doherty, director of operations for Paradise Resorts in Cyprus, said the joint venture was in its infancy "as is the timeshare industry in Cyprus, providing us with the wonderful opportunity to get the formula right from the start". Under an affiliation agreement, RCI will offer resort owners the traditional week-for-week exchange programme.

According to Preben Vestdam, chief executive officer, RCI Europe & Middle East, Cyprus is "a very important market for us and represents lots of new opportunities for the timeshare business".

The Paradise Group is a timeshare pioneer in Europe with resort interests dating back more than 20 years. Aquasol Hotels Group is one of the largest hotel companies in Cyprus.

In a separate joint venture, Paradise has opened Paradise Kings Club in Paphos, the first, purpose-built timeshare property on the island. Its partner in the development is a local construction company, Kouroushis Brothers.

## **NORTH AMERICA**

### **FLORIDA MAN GETS 30-YEAR JAIL TERM FOR TELEMARKETING OFFENCES**

A Tallahassee court has sentenced Michael Craun to 30 years in state prison for aggravated white collar crime. He participated in a telemarketing timeshare scheme that

defrauded more than 100 victims out of \$125,000. Last October Craun entered a guilty plea as part of a plea bargain with state prosecutors. While in jail awaiting sentencing, he was discovered engaging in more acts of fraud. A new investigation was launched – hence the maximum penalty for his crimes.

## AND...

### **DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE TO COMMUNICATE TO THE INDUSTRY?**

If you have news about key developments, acquisitions, senior appointments and new products and services to share with timeshare professionals throughout Europe, then send the relevant information to: The Editor, *OTe-news*, Organisation for Timeshare in Europe, Rue Defacqz 78-80, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1060 Brussels, Belgium.

Or email: [info@ote-info.com](mailto:info@ote-info.com)

### **SPREADING THE WORD...**

If you have associates and contacts who would like to receive *OTe-news*, then register their names and email contacts with [info@ote-info.com](mailto:info@ote-info.com)

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*Ote is the pan European trade association representing the timeshare industry from all EU member states. It promotes best practice in the industry for the benefit of both consumers and the industry. All members are bound by a code of ethics which ensures the protection of consumers' rights. Ote also provides information and advice to consumers and offers a free conciliation service to consumers dealing with its members.*

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