



After all the Christmas and End-of-Year Festivities, January is a time for starting anew and building up the strength to face Carnival which will soon be upon us. January is also a month of major fairs and promotional events publicising a wide variety of holiday destinations. As usual, the Madeira Islands will be represented at many of them to disseminate their charms further and further afield.



The Madeira Islands Walking Festival 13 to 17 January 2009

The Madeira Official Tourism Board, with the collaboration of the British journalist and photographer, Terry Marsh, shall be holding a Walking Festival in January, on the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo. The 2nd edition of this festival shall take place between 13 and 17 of January 2009. The Madeira Islands Walking Festival is an organised group walking programme, in levadas (waterways built by man during the colonisation of the archipelago) or in trails, with specialised guide, during 5 consecutive days. A total of 17 walking routes have been chosen, all having been classified and recommended by the Regional Government of Madeira. The

participants have at their disposal a list of 4 walks per day, with a range of durations and levels of difficulty.

The festival also comes with a strong social component, as the participants shall have the opportunity to visit and get to know the Madeira Islands, and to discover the Laurissilva forest, which has been officially designated as World Natural Heritage by UNESCO, while, at the same time, spending a week together with visitors from several different nationalities, all with one common interest - that of enjoying an active and healthy holiday, in direct contact with nature.

You may keep abreast of information about this festival by checking out Madeira's Official Tourism Website, in an area which can be accessed through the site www.madeiraislandswalkingfestival.com



MOF 2009 - Madeira Orienteering Festival From 28 to the 30 January

The Funchal Mountain Club (Clube de Montanha do Funchal - CMF) and the Madeira Official Tourism Board (DRTM) shall be holding the Madeira Orienteering Festival between 28 and 30 January 2009.

Orienteering is a recently discovered sport in Portugal, but has already been around as an organised sporting activity for some 100 years (the first sporting activity of Orienteering is reputed to have been held in Bergen, in Norway, in 1897), and is also one of the sporting activities to have seen the most spectacular growth in recent years. Here, the competition blends well in with leisure, within a space that provides permanent contact with

Nature. Each person chooses his or her rhythm, depending on the personal challenges set, discovering his or her real self while, at the same time, having the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. For further information: <http://mof2009.com/mof/>.



Twelfth Night Songs 5 January

On the evening of 5 January, the Madeiran folk-singing group Encontros da Eira will be performing traditional twelfth night songs in Funchal's Municipal Garden Auditorium

The Encontros da Eira Cultural Association collects, preserves and disseminates traditional Madeira music. The group has recorded several disks and given many concerts and is a reference in the world of music in Madeira today.

This show, which is part of the New Year's Festivities Programme for 2008-2009, involves 100 performers, runs for 90 minutes. Entrance is free.

PROGRAMME

6:00 pm - Entertainment on Avenida Arriaga and Avenida do Mar featuring groups of bagpipers, the Madeira Party Group and the São Gonçalo Theatre Group

9:30 pm - Opening of the show at the Municipal Gardens, where the group Encontros da Eira will perform "Cantar os Reis, Cantar as Janeiras" (Sing the Kings, Sing the New Year Chants).

Performances by the Casa do Povo da Ribeira Brava Concertina Group, Tuna Delas and the group Seca Pipas from Ponta do Sol

Distribution of gifts to people from several groups who helped at the last performance

São Martinho Folk Group with 'Cantiga dos Reis' (Sing the Kings) and a traditional subject for a quartet

'Silêncio... Vamos Ouvir Cantar o Fado' (Silence... Let's Listen to the Singing of the Fado) with Mónica Pinto, accompanied by César Abrantes (on the Portuguese guitar) and João Alvarez Sá (on the viola de fado - a Spanish-style guitar) Encontros da Eira with various traditional Madeiran subjects.



Carnival 2009

From 21 to 24 February

The Carnival festivities, one of the Madeira Islands' main attractions, will once again be filling the centre of Funchal from 21 to 24 February. For a whole week, the city will wake up to the sound of philharmonic bands, samba and carnival music to brighten up the whole downtown area.

The night of Saturday the 21 is time for the Float Parade to hit the streets and show the immense creativity of the different troupes that will be taking part in this parade full of life, colour and more than one thousand revellers. After travelling the beautiful route, the participants will gather in Praça do Município for a ball where, in a magic environment of sounds and fantasies,

they and the public will dance for hours.

Another feature of this festive time is the Cortejo Trapalhão on Shrove Tuesday, which is when Funchal explodes with merriment. Thousands of cheeky revellers from all over the region spend the afternoon parading in front of a crowd of locals and foreigners who can't resist the fun of the daring caricatures. At the end of the parade there is a variety show in Praça do Município, including the prize-giving ceremony for the best floats and costumes.



Madeira Specialist - Stage 2 of the Programme starts in January 5 January 2009

The first stage of the Madeira Specialist programme, which greatly exceeded all expectations, has been completed. Stage 2 starts on 5th January 2009.

At the pre-registration stage, there were around 80 applicants for this on-site or distance training course involving specialisation in the tourism services offered by the Madeira Islands. Over time, it became firmly established and by the end of the first stage, 250 professionals had enrolled and were completing the programme, which was a pilot programme in the country. It now moves on to a new stage, with a more specialised approach. Here, these, and other, professionals can register for

individual courses such as golf or congresses and incentives, or they can complete the course and go for certification, earning a diploma as a "Madeira Specialist".

The purpose of the Madeira Specialist course, which began in April 2008, is to give travel agents from all over the country greater knowledge about the Madeira Islands as a tourist destination, thus enabling them to achieve maximum potential in their sales.

By interacting with the programme content, students acquire knowledge and skills relating to the excellent products and services that the Madeira Islands can offer as a tourist destination, so as to enable them to gain recognition as a "Madeira Specialist".

This content will be made available on the internet, enabling a flexible study programme, both in terms of location (distance learning) and time (asynchronous study).

As far as the structure of the information is concerned, there are 7 courses with intercalated and/or final assessment periods distributed as follows:

Course 1 - Madeira Island: an excellent destination

Course 2 - MI - Meeting Industry

Course 3 - Golf in Madeira

Course 4 - Country Estates (*Quintas*) in Madeira and Rural Tourism - Where the Past meets the Present

Course 5 – Porto Santo Island: an alternative destination

Course 6 - Ecotourism: Nature as a backdrop

Course 7 – Events, Culture and Traditions

The process will culminate in a final proctored certification examination as a “Madeira Specialist”.

The idea is to create incentives for training actions that give a real feel for the destination.

The Madeira Specialist course, not only provides travel agents with powerful tools for getting to know the destination, it also offers students the incentive of trips to Madeira. In this context, 50 trips will be awarded, 25 to the best students completing the course, and a further 25 to be raffled amongst all those that complete the course. This is to encourage them to do the entire course, as there may well be many students that are only interested in a certain subject.

The trips, which include flights, room and board, will be organised in such a way that the “prize winners” get to know all the potential of this tourist destination personally. It is estimated that this will involve three days (two nights) packed with experiences and discoveries. The trips will take place at three separate times, April and October 2009 and March 2010.

In the future, there are plans to replicate the Madeira Specialist programme outside Portugal, especially in the Madeira Islands’ traditional markets.

Registrations can be made via the link <http://www.apavtform.pt/madeiraspecialist/>.



Madeira voted the 6th best island in Europe by the readers of Condé Nast Traveler

Madeira is one of the 10 best islands in Europe according to the readers of the highly regarded magazine Condé Nast Traveller. In its latest edition, they voted Madeira Island sixth out of its Top Ten.

The vote, which was held over the last few months and published in the November issue of the magazine, confirms the idea that Madeira Island combines nature with high quality accommodation and services, establishing it as a sophisticated destination for a demanding public. There is also evidence of another relevant factor, which is related to the hotel units. In this respect, the Region is also in the list of “25 Top Europe Resorts”, with Reid’s Palace in 21st position. It is worth remembering that in previous editions, the Quintas da Madeira hotels had already been highly regarded by the readers of this magazine, especially Quinta da Casa Branca (architecture), Casa Velha do Palheiro (Golf), Quinta da Bela Vista (Tradition) and Quinta do Monte (History). The Madeira Autonomous Region has consistently been accumulating awards and nominations in internationally prestigious magazines, nevertheless, an award by Condé Nast Traveller which has a monthly circulation of over 800,000 copies, bestows unequalled recognition on the destination, as it will be seen by over 3.5 million readers.



Image of the Madeira Islands promoted by Sian Lesley

The Regional Government of Madeira has awarded the “*Estrelícia Dourada*” Award, to the ballerina Sian Lesley, who has worked on shows at the Madeira Casino for 26 years. This is in recognition of the contribution that the artist has made to the promotion of the image of the Madeira Islands, in the eyes of tourists.

The reason behind this award lies in the contribution that Sian Lesley has made, through her art and her creation of a Ballet Company, to the shows that have been put on at the Madeira Casino, between 1979 and 2008, thus promoting the image of the Region to tourists. It also takes into account the fact that her performances have dignified and encouraged tourism in the Madeira Islands, especially and more specifically, the supply of diversified hotel services, which have always been adapted to the customers’ expectations and met with approval.



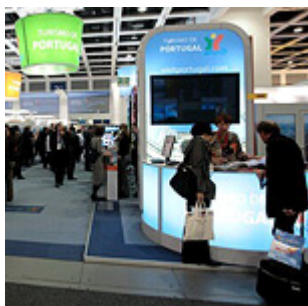
Calheta Beach Hotel is among the top 100 hotel units in the world for good environmental practices

Recognition comes from the TUI tour operator, which last week gave it an award.

The unit, which is situated by the beach and had already been certified as an ‘Eco Hotel’ by the German TÜV Rheinland environmental management company, sees this award as further recognition for the work that it has been developing over the last four years.

Calheta Beach was awarded the ‘TUI Umwelt Champion’ prize, which is awarded to the top 100 hotels in the world, with respect to good environmental practices such as: efficient management of all energy

resources (water, gas and electricity), correct separation of rubbish produced, the use of only biodegradable products, continuous training in good environmental practices, and the preparation of safety and operating files for all products and machinery at the unit.



Madeira Official Tourism Board (DRTM) to strengthen promotional actions this month

In January, the Madeira Official Tourism Board (DRTM), together with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association, will implement around 16 promotional actions for the Madeira Islands as a tourist destination, in the domestic and international market.

The first international event, the 21st REISELIV Tourism Trade Fair will take place at Norges Varemesse, in Lillestrøm (Oslo), Norway at the beginning of the year, from 8 to 11 January. This is one of the most important tourism trade fairs in Scandinavia.

From 9 to 11 January, the DRTM will take part in the Exponoivos Trade Fair in Lisbon. This event is especially dedicated to the honeymoon market, and there will be a 54m² stand representing the Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM).

As in previous years, the 17th Forum du Tourisme Luxembourg (VAKANZ) will be held in Luxembourg from 9 to 11 January. Here, the Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM) will have a modular stand.

The VAKANTIBEURS Tourism Trade Fair will run from 13 to 18 January at Koninklijke Jaarbeurs in Utrecht, Holland. Portugal will be represented with its own stand, which will feature most of the Portuguese promotional areas, including the Madeira Islands. This is joint action involving the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) and the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M).

Between 15 and 18 January, the Swiss capital, Berne, will host the BERN FerienMesse Tourism Trade Fair. This is the stage for countless events of great interest to the Swiss tourism trade, which is looking for new destinations and products to present to a very demanding clientele. The Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M) will be there with their own stand.

At the same time - from 15 to 18 January - Reed Messe Wien in Vienna, Austria will host the FERIE Tourism Trade Fair, the largest tourism fair in the Austrian market. The Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM) will be represented by the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M), with a Destination Module integrated in the Portuguese Tourist Board's stand.

On the same dates, the 23rd MATKA will be taking place at the Helsinki Fair Centre in Helsinki, Finland. Here the Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM) will be represented by the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M), with a Destination Module integrated in the Portugal stand.

Just like last year, the 15th EXPONOIVOS NORTE 2009 Trade Fair, dedicated to wedding Services and Preparations will be held during EXPONOR - the Oporto International Trade Fair, from 16 to 18 January, and is open exclusively to the public. The Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM) will have a 9m² modular stand.

From 17 to 25 January, the Stuttgart Trade Fair and Exhibition Centre in Germany will hold the Caravanning, Motoring and Tourism (CMT) multi-product trade fair. Here, the Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM), through the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) and in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M), will have its own stand.

As usual, the Madeira Islands will be present at the 21st Lisbon Travel Market (BTL) with a dynamic 1,080 m² stand. This is the largest event of its type in Portugal and it will take place at the Lisbon International Trade Fair (FIL), in Parque das Nações, from 21 to 25 January 2009. At 11:30 am on 21 January, the traditional Press Conference will be held in Auditorium II of the FIL Meeting Centre. The Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT), in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M), will once again be present at the most important Irish tourism trade fair, Holiday World, as a part of the Portugal stand. This will take place at RDS Simmonscourt, in Dublin, the Irish capital, between 23 and 25 January.

Also between 23 and 25 January, Copenhagen in Denmark will host another FERIE Tourism Trade Fair. Here, the Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM) will, through the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) and in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M) have a Destination Module integrated in the Portuguese Tourist Board's stand.

At the same time, from 23 to 25 January, the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT), in partnership with the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M) will have its own stand at the VACANCES Tourism Trade Fair to be held in Halle 7, Geneva Palexpo, in Geneva, Switzerland.

In a month where there are countless promotional actions, the FITUR International Tourism Trade Fair is one of the most important. This is the main tourism trade fair to be held in the Iberian Peninsula. It

is held at the Parque Ferial Juan Carlos I in Madrid, from 28 January to 1st February, and Portugal has once again has ensured that its will be present with a stand covering all the regions in the country, including the Madeira Islands.

The first European Cities Marketing (ECM) 'Meet Europe' Workshop will be held at the Newseum in Washington D.C., the capital of the United States, on 28 January.

ECM is the main organisation in Europe for promoting and linking the interests of parliament and the tourism sector. The event consists of an interactive workshop, where interviews with representatives of American MI associations are scheduled in advance. There are also discussion panels and an informative presentation on the subject being debated.

Finally, we go back to Switzerland and the FESPO Tourism Trade Fair, which will be held at the Messezentrum in Zurich, between 29 January and 1 February. Here the Madeira Autonomous Region (RAM) will be represented by the Regional Secretariat of Tourism and Transport (SRTT/DRT) and the Madeira Islands Promotion Association (AP-M) with a modular stand.