

# Press Statement

For Immediate Release

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## Stars of Kuala Lumpur Tourism Industry Recognized at Gala Dinner

**Kuala Lumpur:** The Kuala Lumpur Mayor's Tourism Awards came to a resounding finale with the Award Presentation and Gala Dinner Event held at the Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Organized by the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Bureau under Kuala Lumpur City Hall, this year's event was the third edition of the tri-annual industry awards programme. The previous editions were organized in 2011 and 2014. Around 650 guests that included Kuala Lumpur tourism industry players, related government agencies and members of the media attended the event. The guest of honour for the evening was the Minister of Tourism & Culture, Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Bin Abdul Aziz.

The Mayor of Kuala Lumpur read the address of the Minister of Federal Territories, who could not attend the event. The Mayor mentioned that Kuala Lumpur was ranked as the 7<sup>th</sup> Most Visited City in the World according the Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index for 2016. The city received 12.02 million visitors, an increase of 7.4% from the previous year of 11.19 million visitors. And the total revenue garnered from this volume of visitors in 2016 was USD11.3 billion.

The Mayor emphasised on the importance of the tourism industry's contribution to the socio-economic growth and development of Kuala Lumpur through direct revenue generation as well as through employment opportunities. These

benefits extended beyond the tourism industry as related industries such as transportation, food & beverage, retail and entertainment all benefitted from the growth of tourist arrivals.

The main objectives of the Kuala Lumpur Mayor's Tourism Awards programme is to identify, recognize and reward the establishments and individuals who have strived to achieve the highest levels of excellence in their service delivery. The programme also seeks to benchmark the highest industry standards in an effort to encourage more industry players to improve their own service culture.

Since the inaugural Kuala Lumpur Mayor's Tourism Awards was held in 2011, this tri-annual programme has grown in stature and is eagerly anticipated by many in the industry. Over the years, more and more players have come to recognize the awards and what they represent.

While over 500 nominations were received for the 14 categories and sub-categories, only 449 were qualified for the first round of judging where nominee's submissions were scrutinised and shortlisted for the final round. For the final rounds of judging, the panels of judges conducted site visits and even sampled the products and services first hand. Continuing with the system of voting from the previous editions of the programme, the judges scores made up 95% of the total marks awarded to each nominee, while public voting made up the remaining 5% of the marks. Members of the public were invited to vote for their favourite establishment by logging onto the official awards programme website and registering.

The online voting system allocated between 1 and 5 points to each nominee within a category. These points were based upon the percentage of votes each nominee received from the total number of voters. Nominees that received 25% or more of the total number of voters got the maximum 5 points. Nominees that received between 20% - 24% of the votes were given 4 points, between 15% and 19% got 3 points, between 10% and 14% got 2 points and those that got below 9% got 1 point.

Not all categories however, included an online public voting component in the final judging process. The categories that had online public voting were those

that had a facility that was open to tourists and members of the public to visit or experience. These categories included; 5-Star Accommodation, 4-Star Accommodation, 3-Star Accommodation, Budget Accommodation, Fine Dining Restaurant, Home Grown Restaurant, Food Court, Tourist Attractions (Family Entertainment), Tourist Attractions (Arts, Culture & Heritage), Medical Tourism, Education Tourism and Shopping Malls.

The online voting period was for just three weeks from the 16<sup>th</sup> of April to the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. And in this short period the total number of online voters (based on unique registrations) for all categories was 39,901. This is a huge leap in numbers as compared to the 12,070 voters in 2014 and 4,718 voters during the inaugural programme in 2011.

The Chairman of the KLMTA 2017, Tan Sri Ong Hong Peng, stated in his opening address that he was delighted with this edition of the awards programme and the response it garnered from the industry players and from the public. He said that the reputation and prestige of the awards were key factors in getting good support.

*"The integrity of this or any awards programme is heavily dependant upon the quality of judges. The teams of judges for this edition of the programme are made up of individuals who are experienced industry veterans. They have the required experience and industry knowledge to know how to effectively identify the best nominee for the award,"* said Tan Sri Dr. Ong Hong Peng. *"Having got to know them over the course of the programme, I get a strong sense of passion, dedication and commitment from each of the 52 judges and Head Judges. Some of the judges have answered this call to serve the Kuala Lumpur tourism industry for the third time. These few committed individuals have had the opportunity to truly track the evolution of the programme over the years,"* he continued.

The judges for each of the 14 categories and sub-categories were made up of separate panels of experienced industry veterans and experts in their fields. Each panel was led by a head judge, who was responsible for ensuring that the judging was carried out according to the set criteria. The criteria for the judging process were based upon the vision set out in the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Master Plan 2015-2015.

This year's award recipients too were of exceptional standards, with the judging panels deciding to recognize not just the top scorers of the judging process with the top honours, but a new recognition was introduced. This year there will be a number of nominees in selected categories that will be recognized with "Certificates of Excellence". These certificates are to recognize those establishments that have achieved high levels of excellence yet narrowly missed out on the top award by a very slim margin.

In his address, Tan Sri Dr. Ong Hong Peng mentioned that the results of the judging session was very close and that many establishments were achieving high standards of excellence and that this boded well for the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Industry as a whole.

The sponsors for this edition of the programme were The Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Royal Selangor, The KL Hop-On-Hop-Off Bus, Arch Kuala Lumpur City Gallery, Canon Marketing (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. and Perfect Magic Network.

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