

Cuba's Hotel Nacional wins prestigious award once again

Orestes Urgellés

• CUBA'S Hotel Nacional reaffirmed its condition as a leader among the country's hotels, winning - for the third time - a 2017 World Travel Award, considered the tourist industry's Oscar.

The prize is awarded on the basis of a vote, and a world wide participation campaign among tourism experts and professionals.

The Awards, the main travel industry prizes of this kind internationally, are granted by a jury that recognizes excellence by region, on the basis of a series of criteria, in hotels, travel agencies, and airlines.

The elements which contributed the most to the Hotel Nacional's selection once again were its historical-cultural attributes and the authentic Cuban atmosphere evident at the facility, recognized as a World Heritage Site, a National Monument, and part of UNESCO's Memory of the World.

Members of the staff at the iconic hotel have been honored with the National Vanguard distinction for 20 consecutive years, and dedicated this year's accomplishments to Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz and Ernesto Che Guevara.

World figures who have stayed at the hotel, affiliated with Gran Caribe chain, include writers Rómulo Gallegos and Ernest Hemingway; artists Jorge Negrete, Pedro Vargas, Agustín Lara, Frank Sinatra, Eva Gardner, Nat King Cole, Libertad Lamarque, María Félix, and Mario Moreno (Cantinflas), Tin Tan, among others.

Those who work at the hotel, led by managing director Antonio Martínez and union secretary José Felipe Soto, are jubilant to have won the award recognizing the excellent services they provide clients.

MORE FACTS

The Hotel Nacional was not the only Cuban facility nominated in this category, although its outstanding



Hotel Nacional de Cuba.

services gave it a lead over the rest. The Gran Hotel Manzana de Kempinski, Hotel Florida, Iberoestar Parque Central, Meliá Cayo Coco, and Meliá Cohiba, were also nominated.

Voting was conducted online from March 22 through July 19 this year.

Among other prizewinners were The Oberois Udaivilas, in India; Pullman Sydney Hyde Park, Australia; Gran Hotel Ciudad de México; Belmond Gran Hotel, Russia; Constance Lémuria, Seychelles; Hotel Le St-James, Canada; and La Mision Hotel, Bolivia. (www.worldtravel.awards.com) •

Turnat 2017 concludes



• THE 11th edition of Cuba's International Nature Tourism Event, Turnat 2017, was held in Baracoa, in the eastern province of Guantánamo September 26-30, and was devoted to the promotion of the island's natural attractions and the consolidation of Cuba as a destination for nature tourism.

More than 150 participants from 12 countries visited important sites such as

Alejandro de Humboldt National Park, a World Heritage Site; Bariay National monument, where Christopher Columbus landed; as well as protected areas in the Maniabón karst hills; the Chorro de Maíta waterfall; Taco Bay; Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere reserve; and the Yumurí River.

With a view toward future commercialization, presented were new travel

routes focused on coffee, chocolate, and Columbus.

Also presented to travel agents, tour operators, ecologists and conservationists in attendance was information on the management of the Cuban archipelago's most representative landscapes, as well as efforts underway to restore environmental damage caused by Hurricane Irma.

The event's exchanges proved valuable to professionals involved in this type of tourism, while the leadership of Cuba's Ecotur travel agency was recognized for its successful organization of natural excursions.

During the closing session of Turnat 2017 in La Punta recreation center, the next such gathering, Turnat 2019, was announced. (PL - ACN) •

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Pelayo Terry Cuervo

EDITOR

Arlin Alberty Loforte

NEWSROOM EDITOR

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NEWSROOM & ADMINISTRATION

Avenida General Suárez y Territorial Plaza de la Revolución "José Martí", Apartado Postal 6260, La Habana 6, Cuba. C.P. 10699
Tel.: (53-7) 881-6265 / 881-7443
Switchboard: 881-3333 Exts 119 / 176
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WEBSITE INTERNET

<http://www.granma.cu>

E-MAIL

informacion@granma.cu

ADDITIONAL PRINTING

CANADA

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SPANISH

Inés Miriam Alemán Aroche
Tel: 881-6265

ENGLISH

Marie Chase
Tel: 881-1679

FRENCH

Frédéric Woungly-Massaga
Tel: 881-6054

PORTUGUESE

Miguel Ángel Álvarez Caro
Tel: 881-6054

GERMAN

Ute Michael
Tel: 881-1679

ITALIAN

M.U. Gioia Minuti
Tel: 832- 5337 / 881- 6265

CIRCULATION AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Omar Quevedo Acosta
Tel: 881-9821