

With this e-mail you will certainly **gain knowledge to impress your clients, colleagues and friends.**

Here are interesting facts and news you may, or may not know:

> **Award for Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest**

The 2006 winners of the Business Traveller awards were revealed at a star-studded ceremony at the London Hilton Park Lane. The awards are recognised throughout the industry as the premier accolades for business travel and span 43 categories from hotels and airlines to car rental and luggage brands. The Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest was voted as **third Best Business Hotel in Eastern Europe**. This is not the first time for the hotel has been awarded by the readers of the prestigious business publication. Since 1995 - a mere three years after its opening - the Kempinski Hotel Corvinus has been listed several times as one of the top three business hotels in Central Europe.



> **Berlin is open all hours (almost)**

Thanks to Berlin's senate, **shops in the city-state can now stay open 24 hours a day during the week**. In November the senate voted to scrap a law forcing shops to close by 8pm. As of December 1st, shops can stay open for as long as they want from Monday through to midnight on Saturday, and can open their doors on up to ten Sundays a year. Berlin's authorities hope the change in opening hours will boost the local economy by encouraging more consumers spending as well as catering to a growing army of tourists. Many other German states have followed Berlin's example.



> **Bardot praises Slovenia's "new age" president**

Brigitte Bardot, the French actress turned animal rights campaigner, has praised Slovenia's reclusive **vegetarian President Janez Drnovsek**, calling him a **champion of environmentally friendly politics in Europe**. Drnovsek, who has battled cancer for years, lives a solitary life in a village outside Ljubljana, growing his own vegetables and baking bread. "Knowing that a president of a European Union country opposes experiments on animals is more than a consolation, it is hope," Bardot said in a letter to Drnovsek. Drnovsek, sometimes dubbed the New Age president, recently published a book promoting a **healthy lifestyle**, after his first book on **positive thinking** became a bestseller in Slovenia and neighbouring Croatia.



> **Best Hotel
 Architecture Award
 for Austria**

5 Awards for Members of design hotels

design hotels(TM) came out strong at the European Hotel Design Awards, which took place in London in November. The award winner in the category "architecture" recognizing excellence in hotel design was selected from entries for hotels that opened between June 2005 and June 2006. The award went to **wine & spa resort**

LOISIUM Hotel: Langenlois, Austria

The **wine & spa resort** designed by **American architect Steven Holl** presents itself as new, innovative fixed star in the hotel industry surrounded by the vineyards of Langenlois. For the first time, contemporary architecture and interior design serve as challenging facade for Austrian wine. **Wine and a state-of-the-art Destination Spa**, from the innovative line by AVEDA, are also a central theme of this hotel concept of the new generation.



The Croatian periodical "Croatia today" recently suggested that the **former Yugoslavian country** has joined China and the United Arab Emirates as a **top tourist destination for the next 5 years**. A change in the way Croatia has been advertising itself has done wonders for the tourism industry.

Bozidar Kalmeta, the Croatian tourism minister, has pointed out that his country is aiming away from the image of being a cheap destination offering just sea, sand and sun. He stressed that Croatia is now known as a **location of quality tourism with a host of attractions** to offer.

The shift has been made from offering cheap sunbathing breaks to stressing the significance of the **natural beauty of the untouched coastline**. Croatia is mostly known for its extensive coastline, now the centre of a new advertising campaign, presenting Croatia as the Mediterranean "as it once was". This campaign is aimed at turning tourist attention away from over-visited destinations towards the relatively **unspoiled Balkan south**. Indeed, Croatia boasts a range of various attractions including the **yachting paradise of Dalmatia**, the **white-sanded peninsular Istria**, the region Kvarner with **huge mountains overlooking dozens of islands** and the water sports centre in Porec. Such regions are most often highlighted in tourist marketing. Statistics concerning the numbers of tourists in Croatia have shown improvements in the country's development and stabilisation. In the first 8 months of 2006, the number of tourists at 7.94 million has doubled Croatia's population of 4.4 million with greater success coming from Japan and Spain.



> **Croatia's image
 change boosts
 tourist figures**

> **Czech Republic
among best in
freedom of press**

The **Czech Republic and Slovakia** are among the eight best countries concerning **media's freedom of expression**, according to the latest assessment of the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) organisation released on Tuesday. The Czech Republic occupies the fifth position, while Slovakia is eighth together with Switzerland.

According to the RSF's Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2005, the Czech Republic was ninth along with Slovenia, while Slovakia ended eighth last year, too.

RSF considers the most free countries **Finland, Ireland, Island and the Netherlands**. On the contrary, Cuba, Eritrea, North Korea and Turkmenistan are considered the worst countries for journalists to work.

Some Western democracies continued to slip back, such as the USA (now 53rd) and France (35th). The worst position among EU countries has Poland (58th).



If **you know anyone else** who is interested in news from our region, please let us know name and e-mail address.

I am looking forward to receiving your requests in the near future.

Kind regards,

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