

Property WEEKLY

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Community malls take off... 9



News

Is there a negative correlation between Emaar's financial results and its share price? There seems to be, if its recent performance in the stock

Freehold

Not content with building landmark projects in Dubai, the developer of the Dh500 million Emirates Financial Towers is looking to

Commercial

International fashion labels have cottoned on to the fact that they could have a good thing going by putting their

Residential

Saying it with graffiti seems to be the new communication tool in a Jumeirah suburb. But long-time residents in

Oman classification to help hotel properties

A new tourism accommodation classification system has been put together in Oman ahead of its formal launch in May. Inspections based on the new system will commence in June.

This represents six months of work on the part of Middle East Strategy Advisors (Mesa) working in tandem with Oman's Ministry of Tourism.

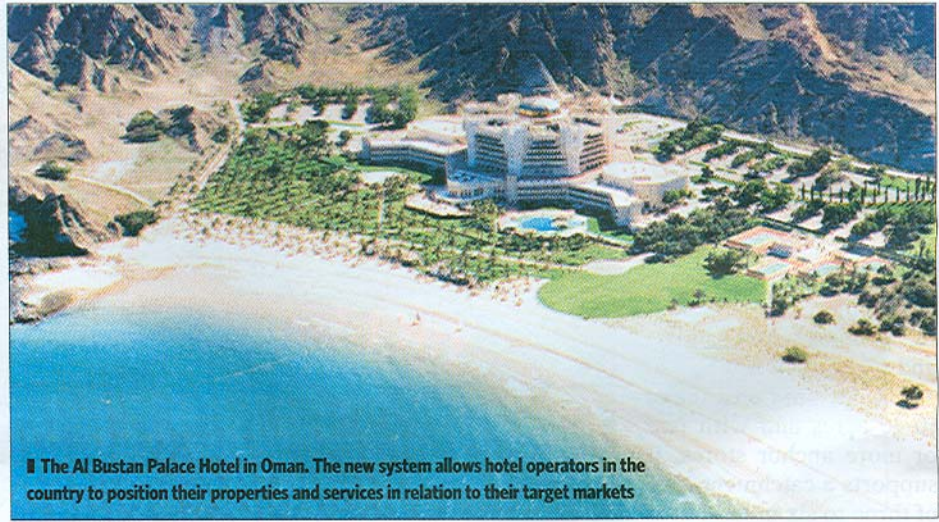
"The scheme has been developed to benefit all stakeholders; first and foremost the tourists, secondly hotel operators, third tour operators, travel agents and travel web portals and last, but not least, Omani hotel inspectors who have undergone intensive training," says Glen Osmond, Managing Partner of MESA.

Hotel operators can use the criteria to position their properties and services in relation to their target markets. The classification scheme will assist tourist professionals, tour operators and travel agents in creating specific packages for their clients wanting to visit the sultanate.

The classification allows the ministry to oversee the quality of management and operations of tourist facilities throughout the Sultanate. It also clarifies requirements for the development of new properties.

The system also reflects the requirements of international regulations such as the EU directives protecting consumer standards and rights with regard to their holiday experience.

It is based on international best practice research, combined with detailed assessment of local regulation, requirements and specifications. Other features provide for an easily comparable framework, room for



■ The Al Bustan Palace Hotel in Oman. The new system allows hotel operators in the country to position their properties and services in relation to their target markets

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future development and focus on the qualitative aspects of tourism accommodation such as product and service.

A 15-strong joint task force, which included members of the ministry's Department of Investment Services and Quality Control, completed work on the new classification. A team of inspectors trained by MESA will roll out the new processes. They will act as advisors to the industry rather than pure controllers. In parallel, the ministry will make the initiative a core message of international marketing for Destination Oman.

Over and above physical minimum requirements, the classification covers subjective criteria such as ambience, the quality of facilities and furnishings, and consistency in the quality of service available at each tourism accommodation facility.

Says Sven Gade, MESA's Director of Travel & Tourism Development who led the project, adds: "The new system provides objective information in international comparison while taking into account the specific requirements of the Omani industry."

The system is based on international best practice research and detailed assessment of local regulation