

# Attention to detail

As founder of Rocco Forte Hotels, Sir Rocco Forte has built a collection of properties in some of the world's most important cities. He's a busy man, but took the time to answer some questions from the *IMEX Daily* on the state of the industry, creativity and politics.

As somebody with properties around the world, how do you gauge the health of the meetings industry at present? Is it in a good place?

We have seen this business gradually increase over the last few years with spending now at pre-recession levels. We have seen growth in both the corporate group and leisure group areas. Our hotels are geared to providing tailor-made events to suit every type of requirement. Rocco Forte Hotels is about personalising the service to our customers' needs and this applies as much to the individual customer as to groups. We have some hotels like Brown's in London, Hotel de Russie in Rome, and Hotel Savoy in Florence which cater to smaller groups, roadshows and product launches. Our other hotels, Villa Kennedy in Frankfurt, Hotel de Rome in Berlin, Hotel Amigo in Brussels, The Charles in Munich, The Balmoral in Edinburgh and Hotel Astoria in St Petersburg, have also hosted car launches and much larger events. Verdura, our resort in Sicily, which has a 4000m<sup>2</sup> conference centre, has come of age in its sector, with numerous car launches, golf events, corporate reunions, and last year, Google took over the whole resort for its camp.

What are the key developments for Rocco Forte Hotels this year and next?

Rocco Forte Hotels has created our new C&I offering which will run through all of our hotels. We are offering new packages but also

presenting a promise of excellence across all of our hotels. To simplify things, we are launching Silver, Gold and Platinum packages, all of which will then be personalised and tailored to clients' individual requirements.

Our events team is split into specialist areas covering executive meetings, incentives, car and product launches and road shows so bookers and planners are working with true experts. Bookers will also benefit from complimentary accommodation for site visits and will be relieved to hear we have simple contracts and cancellation policies.

We will be offering new food and drink options, all absolutely fresh and seasonal with varied menu types. Coffee is important to us Italians (Anglo-Italians!), so coffee will be made by your own barista. Another fun aspect is the new Platinum package, which will treat delegates to a champagne party in the presidential suite with their own private photographer. All of this will be available for bookings from July.

This year Villa Kennedy is hosting the IMEX Politicians Forum. Do politicians in general take the meetings industry seriously enough? In many countries tourism is way down the list for politicians, even when it is one of the biggest contributors to the economy. The fact that the industry, by its nature, is diverse and made up of small units of employment, does not help. It should be noted, that when cities have gone out of their way to attract tourists through good exhibitions or fairs – Munich, Frankfurt and Milan to name but a few – the events have been very successful in generating business for the host city.

What more could politicians do to help the MICE sector?

Politicians could help the MICE sector by focussing on it to a greater degree, and by fully understanding the infrastructure that is required to support it.

A key IMEX theme this year is creativity. How can Rocco Forte Hotels help meetings organisers in this area?

For delegates to be stimulated, it's vital to start with a beautiful backdrop. Our spaces range from historic ballrooms, presidential suites, an amphitheatre, rooftops and open air courtyards, landscaped gardens as well as



the more traditional meetings spaces. Our teams can work with planners to make the event as dynamic as they like – whether with the food, by having live cooking demonstrations or picnic-basket lunches, or taking the delegates out of the hotel for creative incentives – historic locations, tournaments, treasure hunts, and master classes.

Any advice for first time visitors to Frankfurt? I would say not to underestimate the city. There are some excellent cultural attractions such as the Alte Oper, Museumsufer or Stadel museum. There are also some very lively restaurants and bars such as Zenzaken and The Ivory Club. Of course though, my favourites are the JFK bar and Gusto restaurant at Villa Kennedy where you can sit in our courtyard enjoying dishes created by Fulvio Pierangelini, our renowned Italian chef.

Stand F555 [roccofortehotels.com](http://roccofortehotels.com)



## Japan Airlines reboots onboard Wi-Fi offering



JAPAN Airlines has expanded its in-flight Wi-Fi service to cover more European, North American and long-haul Asian routes.

The service has been available on Boeing 777-300ERs since 2012 but will now be included on nine Boeing 767-300ERs and three Boeing 787-8s as well.

Customers in every cabin class are now able to send and receive emails, update and navigate their social networking service using their own wireless Local Area Network devices during the flight.

The airline has also developed an app for the Apple Watch which provides passengers with information about domestic flights – including flight status and boarding gate details – as well as boarding procedures and

notifications at the airport. Passengers can countdown the exact time to their flight in increments of ten minutes, giving them worry-free time to shop, eat or relax before their flight. With a two-dimensional QR code, passengers can board flights, go through security check points and enter airport lounges using their Apple Watch.

JAL worked with digital agency IBM Interactive Experience to support the development and design of the JAL Countdown app, which is also available for the iPhone.

The airline aims to continue expanding services to help passengers board more speedily and smoothly.

Stand F500 [jal.co.jp](http://jal.co.jp)

## Campaign promotes Istanbul past and future

ISTANBUL'S Convention and Visitors Bureau is promoting the destination under the slogan 'A Tale of Two Cities', highlighting the city's high-tech modern infrastructure as well as its history.

Current infrastructure projects include a third airport opening in 2018, which will cater to 150 million passengers, making Istanbul the largest airline hub in the world.

A new road tunnel, 'Eurasia Tunnel', will pass under the Bosphorus River to connect Asia and Europe. It will be located one kilometre away from the Marmaray Tunnel, a 76 kilometre underwater tube tunnel that enables passengers to pass under the Marmara inner sea by train.

Stand E400 [icvb.org.tr](http://icvb.org.tr)

