



Amsterdam RAI

Amsterdam RAI Convention Centre, a top rank venue for meetings

How is it possible that Amsterdam still occupies such a prominent place in the world rankings of conference cities? The staff of the Sales and Marketing Department of Amsterdam RAI Convention Centre have a ready answer.

Maurits van der Sluis explains: "We have Europe's most enjoyable, innovative and international compact venue. And this is due in no small part to the city of Amsterdam."

Amsterdam RAI works continuously to upgrade its facilities and thus achieve an even greater return from the advantages of its compact venue. Besides making optimal use of the existing capacity it is building a new multifunctional Expo Foyer that will also double up as the Netherlands' largest ballroom.

The venue's accessibility is already excellent since it is situated alongside Amsterdam's orbital motorway and is just a quar-

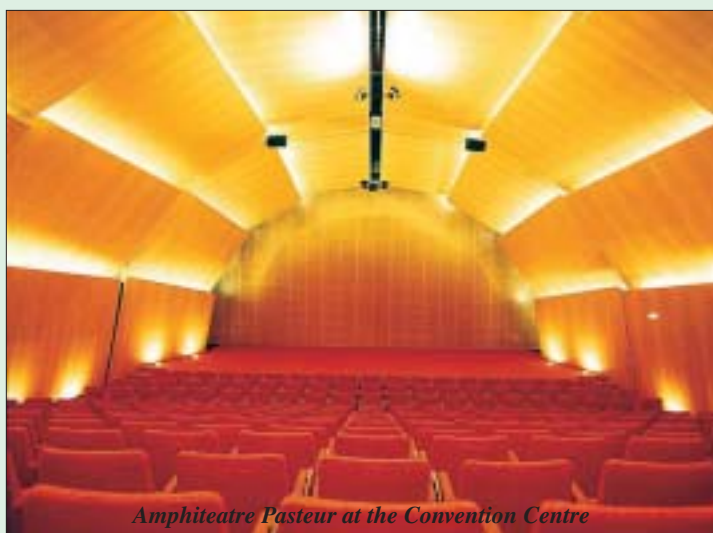
ter of an hour by car or six minutes by train from Schiphol Airport. And when the new metro line from Amsterdam's central station will be completed, accessibility will be even better.

Maurits van der Sluis continues: "Small and medium-sized conferences and events are just as dear to us as the really large events. In fact, this is also where our multi-functionality really pays off." A compact venue has yet another advantage. Van der Sluis explains: "For mega congresses we are able to shift the boundaries between the exhibition venue and the conference and meeting centre."

Exhibition halls can be converted into conference rooms or foyers that can accommodate small sub-exhibitions focusing on particular aspects."

Lyon Convention Centre: a new name, a new identity

The opening of the new Salle 3000 will take place next June: it will be one of the most up-to-date European facilities



Amphitheatre Pasteur at the Convention Centre

2005 was a very good year, the best since the Convention Centre opened in 1995. They cleared the 10 million euro turnover mark, which is over 20% better than in 2004. 320 events were held and the number of national and international conventions increased 50%

compared to 2004. An undeniable success.

Could you summarize the main coming attractions?

"In 2006, we will have the International Hydrogen Congress, the National Paediatric Conference, the World Patchwork & Quilt Expo, the

Convention for the National Federation of French Cinemas, the World Congress of Emulsion. The line-up for 2007 includes Ebmt, the European conference on blood and marrow transplantation, the Annual European Congress of the Reproduction and Embryology Society, and this list is far from exhaustive.

Salle 3000 was also designed for shows. Are you ready to start hosting cultural events?

"Hosting events for the entertainment industry is a very specific field which also falls within the remit of our group. We also work in close collaboration with the producers of shows, who consider Salle 3000 as unique in Europe."

There is already a constant stream of shows booking up the dates. From January and throughout the year, this activity is an integral part of our life.

There will be the Derviches Tourneurs and Les Théâtrales de Lyon, as well as the opening shows in the Biennale de la Danse in September, and many more."

G. S.

Palau de Congressos de Catalunya awarded 2006 best overseas conference centre

The Palau de Congressos de Catalunya has been awarded 2006 Best Overseas Conference Centre in the 2006 Meetings & Incentive Travel Industry Awards, held last 20th February at the Royal Lancaster Hotel (London) and attended by around 600 industry professionals, emphasizing the presence of the best British events agencies, such as Rand, World Event Management, Skybridge, BI and Jack Morton, as well as the main venues finders: Banks Sadler, Ibr, Ccd, among others.

The M&IT Awards recognizes and rewards excellence, and are the result of voting by the most important events agencies and the readers of Meetings & Incentive Travel magazine – with votes audited and verified by the independent Audit Bureau of Circulations.

The Palau de Congressos de Catalunya was nominated in the Meetings category, sponsored by World Event Management, together with Cape Town International Convention Centre, Grimaldi Forum (Monaco) and Palexpo (Geneva). Ramzi Shuaibi, Deputy Director of the Palau de Congressos de Catalunya, said: "We are very proud to receive this prestigious award. All the team really deserves it as it is the result of our hard work to reach high quality standards and offer the best service to our clients, as well as keep the facilities of the Palau up to date."

This award positions the centre as a referent in the meetings industry, both in the national and international markets.