

Copenhagen's choice of environmentally friendly hotels, restaurants and attractions is making it a popular choice with eco-minded planners. Emma Allen reports



Wheel deal: a cyclist passes the Royal Library in Copenhagen

Green queen

As a city that prides itself on its 'green' credentials, it seems more than fitting that Copenhagen has been chosen to host the UN Convention on Climate Change, in 2009.

Set to bring an estimated 10,000 people to the Danish capital, including a number of high profile world leaders, the event promises to be an important showcase for Copenhagen, and will give visitors the chance to try out the city's eco-hotels, organic restaurants and environmentally-friendly transport options for themselves.

Organisers point out that certain clients, keen to reflect their own CSR and environmental policies, are becoming increasingly drawn to cities with a green image. Research by Wonderful Copenhagen Convention Bureau shows that 97 per cent of all meeting venues and hotels have taken measures to reduce environmental impact, and close to two thirds have strategies for cutting water and energy use.

Lucy Hay, an account planner with Zibrant, has just returned from Copenhagen and will be taking a large group out for an incentive next year. "One of the first things that you notice is that the city is very environmentally friendly and clean," she points out. "Most of the locals travel by bicycle or on the metro system and all the hotels are proud of their CSR policies, which is something that more companies seem to be requesting."

For Hay, the city has a number of other pluses for organisers too, including an easily navigable compact centre and a wide choice of hotels with decent facilities and modern technology.

One issue that can arise, however, is cost. "Copenhagen is a great city – we've just put one of our staff on a familiarisation trip – but it's still a difficult sell," explains John Lawson at AYT. "Perhaps the weather is one reason, but also, people's understanding is that it is expensive."

Being pricey is a perception that

Copenhagen struggles with, admits Visit Copenhagen's marketing manager Jonathan Cohen, but he stresses that Denmark is a quality driven product that offers added value.

For Cohen, it is the city's ongoing regeneration and refreshing of its offer that further strengthens its appeal for groups. The UN summit, he explains, has pushed forward a number of key new developments. One of the biggest is the new Tivoli Congress Centre, due to open in 2010. Set to become Copenhagen's second major congress venue, after the Bella Centre, its largest conference room will have space for up to 2,500 and a maximum capacity of 4,000 people across the entire complex. A brand new hotel will also be built, creating 400-bed spaces.

Elsewhere, the Copenhagen Towers development, located in the new Orestad quarter just outside the city centre, promises to be another striking landmark. Consisting of a four-star 365 bedroom hotel opening in 2009, as well as exclusive

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WHO to contact

JONATHAN COHEN
VISITDENMARK UK
 Tel: 0207 201 3977
 E-mail: jc@visitdenmark.com

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conference and office facilities, the Towers promise to be a convenient meeting option with the airport just six minutes away by metro.

Near the central station, and helping to regenerate the area, is another brand new meetings venue, DGI-byen, scheduled for completion in 2009. Inside will be a 450-seat auditorium, several smaller conference rooms for 25 to 115 people, and a restaurant with panoramic views over Copenhagen.

Copenhagen's natural setting, with its 4,500 thousand miles of coastline and clean beaches, gives it a clear edge for groups looking for water-based activities. From yacht or catamaran sailing, to Viking cruises, one of the best ways of seeing the country is to get out on the water according to Soren Damstrup at Destination Management Copenhagen.

Further afield, either a 30-minute train journey across the Oresund bridge or a high-adrenaline rib ride across the water opens up the southern Skane region of Sweden. ■

'Copenhagen's setting gives it a clear edge for groups looking for water-based activities'



Rebecca
Brooks
Zibrant

Building works

In September 2007 we were asked to deliver an exciting one-night staff incentive, with a team-building element, to motivate and reward 100 staff in the construction sector. It had to be in a European destination with good flights from both Birmingham and London Heathrow.

Copenhagen seemed the perfect location for this energetic group. The city offered a great mix for everyone. The minimalist Square Hotel, which was chosen because of its central location right on Town Hall Square, just a few moments walk from the shopping street Stroget.

Upon arrival guests were transferred straight to Nyhavn Faergetro

restaurant, in the heart of the "old" part of the city, for a typical Danish platter lunch. After lunch, the group was divided into teams for a treasure hunt by bicycle, starting with a boat transfer along the stunning city canals. For dinner, we went to the trendy Soren K restaurant, on the ground floor of the stunning Royal Library building, which we followed with a short, light-hearted awards ceremony before going on to local bars.

The event was a huge success, with all objectives achieved. Copenhagen was considered to be an ideal destination for providing a team bonding, fun trip to reward staff.

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