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**International Intelligence
Blazing an International Incentive Trail**

By [Alison Hall](#)

For the 14th year, a group of international incentive travel buyers and suppliers gathered for two days of intense networking and information-sharing at the exclusive Trailblazers Marketplace. The annual event is presented by a partnership of national tourist organizations that extend invitations to both buyers and suppliers. After a couple of name changes and a few changes in country membership since its beginnings in the early 1990s, Trailblazers is now set at six countries: Britain, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Monaco, and Switzerland.

Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac played historic host to the meeting in July, giving attendees an elegant front-row seat to Québec City's 400th anniversary party, happening throughout 2008. Perched atop the lovely walled city and overlooking the St. Lawrence River, the Grande Dame opened in 1893 with 170 rooms (at \$3/night!) and now offers 620 individually decorated guest rooms and 14 meeting rooms.

Trailblazers attendees heard quick updates from the six incentive destinations at an opening ceremony. The next day, buyers from incentive houses met with the suppliers. Naturally, much of the talk focused on budgets. The consensus, however, was that "buyers still want to buy," in the words of Paula Carroll, director of sales and marketing at Ashford Castle in County Mayo, Ireland. But it's taking creativity on both sides to make it happen.

All the more reason for face-to-face events where the suppliers from a destination can work together to help buyers build programs. "The Trailblazers committee does so much work," said Tracy Norum, CMP, vice president and general manager, Fox Premier Meetings and Incentives, Oshkosh, Wis. "Everything is so well thought-out. The appointments are all about sharing information and forming new partnerships, and at the social functions these partnerships turn into friendships. It's really an honor and a privilege to be here."

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Across Cultures

What's Up in Canada, Europe? Variety

Incentive travel planners attending the 14th annual, invitation-only Trailblazers Marketplace in Québec City last month received [quick updates from the six incentive destinations](#) in attendance: Britain, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Monaco, and Switzerland.

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Where in the World ...

Singapore Emerging as Asian Cruise Hub

The Asian cruise industry is exploding, with the number of cruise passengers forecast to increase by 44 percent by 2010 and 88.79 percent by 2015 (2.02 million passengers) over 2005 numbers. Singapore is poised to become the industry's hub, doubling its number of cruise berths when the new International Cruise Terminal at Marina South opens in 2010, according to Aloysius Arlando, assistant chief executive, Business Travel & Meetings, Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions Group, Singapore Tourism Board.

The new terminal will accommodate Genesis-class ships, which are the largest ships being built. It will complement the current two berths at the Singapore Cruise Centre at HarbourFront, with easy access to other parts of Singapore, including the Changi International Airport, which is a 20-minute drive.

Recognizing the growth potential, cruise operators are offering a wide range of itineraries that include Greater China, South Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Several of the world's leading cruise lines, including Star Cruises, Royal Caribbean International, Costa Cruises, P&O Princess, and Silversea Cruises have made Singapore their home port in Asia.

For a first-hand report on what else is new in Singapore, read [our On Location.](#)

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