

Canadian

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## Hardware hogs!

### Canadians win big at Karisma gala

ANN RUPPENSTEIN

The majority of the 450 industry professionals on-site for the recent 8th Annual Gourmet Inclusive Vacation Consultant (GIVC) Awards by Karisma Hotels & Resorts (Dec. 11) were American, but a significant number of Canadian agents and tour operators still came out on top.

Held at the El Dorado Royale in Riviera Maya, Mexico, in conjunction with a four-day sales and marketing forum, the luxury hotel collection recognized its top-performing international travel consultants by distributing 100 awards in categories like Top Growth by region, Top 10 Producers, and Highest Category Sales, as well as honouring those who achieved Diamond Level sales status.

“Travel agents are essential to growing our business, and eight years ago, we committed to fully supporting the travel agent community with the debut of the GIVC program,” Alex Portman, senior business development manager – national, Canada, told Canadian Travel Press. “In Canada, Karisma channels all of its business through GIVC agents, and the awards give us an

opportunity to recognize their hard work.”

Veteran winner Kim Crosby of SunLovers Travel in Victoria, BC, who has taken home awards since its inception in 2008 – including the most prestigious Hall of Fame recognition in 2013 – received nods for Top 10 Wedding Producers – Azul Hotels, Diamond Level 5 and being the Top Selling Home-Based Agent in Canada.

“When I was introduced to Karisma Hotels & Resorts, I remember thinking this is a match made in heaven. Our philosophies were and are the same – a passion for providing an experience of service that goes above and beyond expectations,” she told Canadian Travel Press.

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Pictured at the 8th Annual Gourmet Inclusive Vacation Consultant Awards (l-r) are Jeroen Hanlo, VP of food & beverage operations at Karisma; multiple award winner Kim Crosby of SunLovers Travel in Victoria, BC; Mandy Chomat, executive VP of sales & marketing, Karisma; and Rienk de Jong, VP of sales & marketing, Karisma.

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Publications Mail Agreement No. 40063078.

## Agents should welcome NDC

MIKE DUNBAR

The retail travel trade need not fear IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC) currently being beta-tested by the first batch of member airlines. In fact, they should be wholeheartedly embracing the new XML Internet transmission standard since it puts them on an equal sales footing with carrier web sites.

And, if the Internet had been around in the 1960s, the airlines would not have

developed the computer reservations systems that are still – 40 years or so later – being used as the primary booking tool by the indirect sales channel.

That was the clear message delivered by NDC program director Yanik Hoyles during a one-day media blitz at IATA headquarters in Geneva.

According to Hoyles “airlines were ahead of the curve when they developed their distribution networks.

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“I’m grateful for their partnership and have many happy clients because of it. I’m honoured by their acknowledgement.”