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Press Release

Kerala Blog Express initiative wins ‘Oscar’ of Indian Advertising

Kerala Tourism global blogger driven campaign wins ABBY Award

Thiruvananthapuram, April 20: After setting the blogosphere alight with memorable travel narratives from across God’s Own Country, Kerala Blog Express – Kerala Tourism’s pioneering blogger outreach programme – has gained added traction.

The third edition of the initiative, which saw 30 influential bloggers from 25 countries set out on a fortnight coach trip across Kerala to soak in the state’s culture and heritage, has bagged the much coveted ABBY award – the Oscar of Indian advertising – in the Social Media (Outreach) category.

Conceived by Stark Communications, Kerala Tourism’s creative and brand management agency, Kerala Blog Express (KBE) 3.0 beat out campaigns from a competitive pool that included corporate giants such as P&G, Pampers, Amazon India, Cadbury Choclairs, Flipkart and Asus India as also high-profile marketing drives for the Star World show *Quantico* and the movie *Talvar*.

The accolade augments the destination pull created by on-the-road stories from the bloggers, who are considered the last word in global travel and carefully chosen for the trip on the basis of their nationality, blog quality, popularity, followers and social media reach, as they experienced a unique opportunity to explore and expound on Kerala’s many attractions.

From February 15-29, the select group – among whom were travel, lifestyle and food bloggers, photographers and Vloggers – covered more than 2,300 km across the state from Thiruvananthapuram to Wayanad in a specially branded luxury coach.

Besides experiencing such iconic Kerala offerings as backwater cruises in Alapuzha, houseboat stays, Kathakali performances, Ayurvedic spa massages and picturesque sojourns in Thekkady and Munnar, among others, the bloggers discovered the simple charms of eating with their hands at sadyas and the pleasures of village life.

There was also a special pit-stop at Muziris, the rediscovered ancient port that stands as testament to Kerala’s tradition of commerce and cosmopolitanism. The Honourable President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee had launched the Muziris Heritage Project in February.

Though most of the bloggers were first-time visitors to India, over the course of two weeks immersed in the native traditions, scenic vistas and friendly people of God’s Own Country, they have become de facto ambassadors of Kerala – sharing and spreading their experiences on their



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platforms and channels, recommending the state as a choice destination to their followers and even acting as travel agents to prospective travellers.

Since its launch in 2014, KBE has received over 2,500 registrations and around 72,000 votes from travelling enthusiasts who select from a nominee list that features the biggest names in the travel blogging community. The nominees who get the highest votes are chosen: The polls have allowed 87 travel bloggers from 35 countries to participate in the programme's three editions.

If KBE 1.0 created significant buzz worldwide about Kerala as a tourist destination, that momentum has carried over and been sustained in the second and third seasons, which have seen added attractions and ever increasing participation. This year, participant registrations hit a new high with more than 1,000 bloggers from 66 countries registering for the event.

Over its run, the KBE has been featured in over 500 blog articles globally. With over 24,000 tweets, the KBE's Twitter page has a reach of six million – the first two editions of the KBE had about 200,000 and 500,000 impressions respectively on the micro-blogging site. More than 5,000 pictures have been shared via Instagram. The initiative's Facebook album has received more than 28,000 likes while the official website of has over eight lakh views.

The programme's sustained efficacy and creative excellence has lead to the ABBY – short for Advertising Club Bombay, a dynamic platform for professionals from the marketing, advertising, media, research and public relations fraternity – award, the biggest and most prestigious advertising awards show in the country attended by more than 2,500 professionals.

The Abby is the latest feather in Kerala Tourism's cap, with its recent multimedia campaign for responsible tourism 'New Worlds' bagging the prestigious Golden City Gate Award -- dubbed the Oscar of Tourism communication – last month at the world's leading travel trade show, the Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin (ITB-Berlin) 2016.

Earlier this month, Kerala Tourism's 'Visit Kerala' films and 'Slow Down' print campaign, urging metro residents to take a break from their hectic, monotonous and virtual lives to experience Kerala, garnered a number of gongs at the Madras Advertising Club Awards (or MADDYS) 2016.

As well, Kerala Tourism had earlier won the Ulysses Prize of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation for its contribution as a global leader to sustainable tourism.

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