



# NEWSLETTER

## VALLETTA ALIVE FOUNDATION

December 06 – Issue No. 7

### **1 Christmas Drinks**

This year's Christmas and New Year's reception for members and supporters is being held on Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2006 at The Exchange Buildings Republic Street Valletta at 8pm. The Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, a VAF Founder Member, has kindly offered its main hall for the event free of charge. **Members and their guests are cordially invited to attend.**

### **2 VAF Website**

Preparations for a web site for the Foundation are progressing well. VAF issued a call for interest and carried out interviews with three shortlisted companies. It is hoped that the website will be on line early next year.

This website will be a significant step forward in the Foundations' plans to use all communication channels available to it to be able to disseminate its agenda, message, promote its events and initiatives, whilst provide useful information about Valletta. The Foundation is confident that the Website will be an appropriate representation of the Foundation's vocation and goals.

In the long term, it is intended to extend the scope of the website to include a business directory for the capital. The outcome of this second phase will be a listing of all businesses and entities which operate from Valletta, including non-commercial entities, such as clubs, parish groups and other social groups.

### **3 Renewed Interest in Valletta for Evening Leisure**

Following the successful organisation of the BOV Streets Alive in July and August by the VAF, the Malta Council For Culture and the Arts staged the Notte Bianca in Valletta on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2006. The success of both

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Bank of Valletta

events is confirmation of Valletta's natural suitedness to host such events and the attraction it provides to the general public. The perfect balance between leisure, culture, history and art – all endemic qualities of the city – adequately and appropriately made accessible to the public turned Notte Bianca into an overwhelming success.

The success of both events is evidence of the general public's interest in the Capital and willingness to discover Valletta and its peculiarities. Such initiatives, sponsored by Government or local entities, whether public or private, are initiatives that the Foundation welcomes and supports, since they strive and aim to fulfill the aspirations of the Foundation, that is, the regeneration and rediscovery of Valetta as a cultural, historical and recreational capital of Europe. Thus, the Foundation extends its support and congratulations to all those who participated and contributed in making the night a success.

**The Foundation had feedback from commercial establishments and from the Bank of Valletta that business was generally brisk during the four evening of the BOV Streets Alive. Moreover, initial reports, as yet unconfirmed, indicate that the money spent by the public in Valletta establishments during the Notte Bianca was extraordinarily high.** Results of a survey carried out by Ministry for Tourism and Culture are expected to be announced shortly.

The Foundation has initiated preparations for next year's BOV Streets Alive. It is intended to co-organise BOV Streets Alive with the Events Section of the Ministry for Tourism and Culture. A survey is being carried out amongst shop owners with the cooperation of GRTU.

Malta Council for Culture and the Arts are due to organise an evening leisure event in Valletta similar to Notte Bianca, but on a smaller scale. **This event is due to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2007.** VAF will be marginally involved on the commercial aspect of the event. The Foundation strongly urges shops and business to support such events.

#### **4 Bank of Valletta donates Computer, monitor and laser printer to VAF**

The Bank of Valletta has kindly donated a computer, monitor and a laser printer for use by the foundation in its new office the Exchange Buildings in Republic Street Valletta. Although second hand, the equipment is in excellent condition. In the meantime, the works for the new office are being finalised. Electrical sockets and lights are now in place and a new internal

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door is to be installed shortly. The Foundation will be linked to the internal telephone system of the Chamber and has also applied for a new telephone/ADSL line. Although a relatively small space, this new office enables VAF to better organise its administration.

Thanks to the Bank of Valletta and the Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise for their cooperation.

## **5 VAF welcomes Improved accessibility to Valletta**

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, the Foundation issued a press release which read as follows:

“The Valletta Alive Foundation welcomed two new transport services which have been introduced in recent weeks. These are the Park and Ride service to Valletta and the scheduled bus route no. 198 between the cruise passenger terminal and Valletta centre.

In a visit to the park and ride facilities, Mr. Alfred Zahra, Chairman of the Foundation expressed satisfaction that the “Park and Ride” has been so well received and that it is being used extensively by commuters to Valletta. Officials from the Foundation were shown around the park and ride facilities by Mr. Joseph Theuma, ADT Projects Implementation Manager.

Mr. Zahra praised the facilities on offer and the effective manner how the system is being run. Mr. Zahra also congratulated Government and ADT for the strategy for better accessibility to Valletta which, when fully implemented will result in improved access to residences and businesses in Valletta. It will also result in an improved urban environment with the pedestrianisation of Merchants Streets and other streets. Mr. Zahra urged for continuous monitoring of the “Park and Ride” and eventually of the Controlled Vehicle Access to Valletta to ensure that these will continue to serve the needs of the City and its many users.

Another important development in transport service to Valletta is the introduction of the bus route no. 198 from the cruise passenger terminal to Valletta. For a reasonable price of forty cents return, cruise passengers can now reach Valletta centre within a few minutes. The Foundation had lobbied government for such a service to be introduced because it believes that Valletta offers the best possible visitor experience for the cruise passenger, given the limited time available for sight seeing. Now that the service has been a success, efforts need to be made to increase the frequency. The Foundation congratulates VISET, the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads, the Malta Transport Authority and the Public Transport Association for the introduction of the new service.”

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## **6 Survey on Valletta Accessibility**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006, a press conference was held to announce results of a survey on accessibility in Valletta. The conference was addressed by Dr. Paul Borg Olivier, Mayor of Valletta. Dr. Malcolm Borg, representing Ministry for Urban Development and Roads was also present. The survey was carried out by MISCO and the results were analyzed and presented Perit John Ebejer, technical expert on the project. The survey, held in May 06, produced some interesting results. A report of the Times on the press conference (1<sup>st</sup> December 2006) is given as a addendum to this newsletter.

## **7 A New Service for Valletta Shoppers and retail outlets.**

Valletta shoppers will no longer need to carry large parcels on the way back home using public transport or the park and ride. Shoppers can enjoy their Christmas shopping without having to carry their shopping around. A new service will enable retail outlets to deliver the shopping to their home. Pony Express (Malta) Ltd. Is offering to collect shopping parcels from the outlets and deliver them at the home of the shopper.

The Foundation has received a proposal from Pony Express (Malta) Ltd. relating to this new service for Valletta. The Foundation feels that this will provide for added value for shopping in Valletta and is therefore supporting the service. For more details contact Pony Express on 21380941.

## **8 Valletta hosts CIT-U-M workshop**

In early December Valletta hosted a workshop meeting for partner cities of CIT-U-M. CIT-U-M, Citizens' Urban Mobility is the name of a European Union Funded project dealing with accessibility and urban transportation issues in cities and forms part of the URBACT programme. VAF is participating together with the Valletta Local Council who are assuming the role of lead partners, the Ministry for Urban Development and Roads, and Impetus Europe.

The workshop was attend by 15 delegates from Larnaca, Valladolid, Seville, West Athens, Alexandroupoli, Catania, Csepel and Valletta. The results of the accessibility survey for Valletta were presented during the workshop.

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## **9 Valletta Magazine**

In the October edition of this newsletter we had announced that VAF had identified a new publisher for the magazine on Valletta. Regrettably, the publisher did not receive sufficient cooperation from advertisers to make the publication viable for the long term. It is the Foundation's believe that a Valletta magazine would be an effective instrument to further raise the profile of the city. Hence, this development is a setback for the foundation.

On the other hand, VAF noted an increased coverage of Valletta in magazines. One magazine in particular, Modern Elegance, issue a whole edition dedicated to Valletta in early December.

## **10 Commerce in a Fortified Historic City The Experience of Valletta**

This was the title of a presentation made by Perit John Ebejer, VAF Secretary at a seminar on the Socio-Economic Value of Historic Fortified Cities on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The seminar was organized by the Restoration Unit, in the Works Division, Ministry for Resources and Infrastructure as part of the PAGUS 2D activities (Interreg IIIC programme). The presentation was made following an invitation made by the organisers to the Foundation. The paper dwelt on how the nature of the historic surroundings and the particular conditions and challenges that these present, influence the social and economic life of a historical city like Valletta. A copy will be made available to members upon request.

***Merry Christmas &  
A Happy New Year to all our  
members  
and their families***

## **ADDENDUM – TIMES REPORT 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006**

### ***Mobility and access survey***

## **Valletta is a relevant centre but transport is inconvenient**

**Michael Testa**

A survey on urban mobility and access to Valletta has shown that the city is relevant as a commercial centre, has an inadequate and inconvenient public transport service and is an attraction for evening leisure. Conducted by Misco, the survey was commissioned by the Valletta local council, the Ministry of Urban Development and Roads, the Malta Transport Authority and Valletta Alive Foundation. It was partly financed by the EU and was conducted before the Park and Ride scheme was introduced.

The survey findings announced by Valletta mayor Paul Borg Olivier yesterday show there is a strong awareness on the need to improve the city's urban environment with responses showing an overwhelming majority in favour of such improvements including a reduction of traffic in Valletta (82.1 per cent), the pedestrianisation of Merchants Street (70 per cent) and the upgrading of the bus terminus (88.8 per cent).

Six out of every 10 respondents said they occasionally go to Valletta in the evening, mainly for cultural activities, to go to a restaurant or a bar or to the cinema. According to the survey results, the perceived accessibility of Valletta in the evenings depends on one's circumstances and lifestyle, such as a car licensed to enter Valletta, the willingness to use public transport, the leisure activity the person prefers to engage in and when the individual prefers to go out. Most respondents - 79 per cent - believe buses should run later than 11 p.m.

Among those who do not work in Valletta, three per cent said they never visit the capital; 23.1 per cent visit only two or three times a year; 45.7 per cent go to Valletta once every two to four weeks and 26 per cent visit at least once a week. The reasons put forward by respondents who do not work in Valletta for visiting the city include shopping, 63.2 per cent; to obtain a service (like, for instance, passport, insurance) 39.7 per cent; leisure, 15.4 per cent; to visit friends or relatives, 8.1 per cent; work related, 3.4 per cent; and other, 3.4 per cent.

The findings highlight the strong attraction of Valletta as a shopping centre. The availability of numerous other services and the opportunity to engage in leisure activities reinforces Valletta's role as a commercial centre. Nearly 27 per cent of respondents "strongly agree" that public transport is unsatisfactory; 37.4 per cent agree it is unsatisfactory, 29.2 per cent disagree; 3.1 per cent "strongly disagree" and 3.5 per cent gave no answer.

Over 48 per cent claim to have difficulty using public transport because they find it inadequate and inconvenient. However, 45.5 per cent acknowledge that changes in recent years have resulted in significant improvements while 72.2 per cent note that getting to work with their own car is more expensive than public transport.

According to the survey analysis, weaknesses of the public transport system has a two-fold effect on accessibility to Valletta. For those using public transport, the excessive time taken to get to the city is problematic and reduces the perceived accessibility. The unreliability of public transport and the time spent to make a trip makes it more difficult for people to shift to public transport thereby increasing traffic on the roads and, in turn, increasing delays caused by congestions.

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