

YACHT PARTIES AREN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE ...

Mipim looks set to a frugal affair this year, with fewer big boats, less free champagne and virtually no Russian oligarchs. **Building** gets some tips on doing Cannes on the cheap

The sun is dipping over the Cannes skyline as a surprisingly kempt OS wearily slumps down on one of the many vacant benches. After glancing furtively from side to side, he whips out the first of a four pack of Fosters, greedily eyeing as he does so the frites (large, according to his professional assessment) being devoured by the figure on his right. Below, a small huddle of gaunt British delegates on the Croisette are trying to flog an imported case of chunky gold jewellery and English football scarves, hoping to make the most of the exchange rate to raise the money for a ticket home ...

Okay, it might not be *that* bad, but Mipim 2009 is shaping up to be a rather different occasion to its lavish predecessors. A conference famed for champagne-fuelled receptions, dinners in Michelin restaurants and extortionately priced cocktails is hardly conducive to the cost control necessary in these hardened times.

Delegate bookings for next week's event are already down by a third on the 29,000 who attended last year, and most UK firms are cutting back on the number of staff they send – some, such as Gleeds, by up to 70%. Invites to hosted meals and drinks receptions have become like gold dust as the corporate hospitality side of things has fallen into the Med – leaving many delegates facing the prospect of individual client entertaining.

Despite that, those going say it's still worth it, and that with some crafty budgeting it's still possible to impress *and* get the expense account past your boss. So here are Building's tips for how to do just that, courtesy of some Mipim veterans ...

WHAT WE'RE DOING **DIFFERENTLY****RICHARD STEER, SENIOR PARTNER, GLEEDS**

"We're reducing our presence by up to 70%, and we're not having stands or events. But it's still an important networking opportunity."

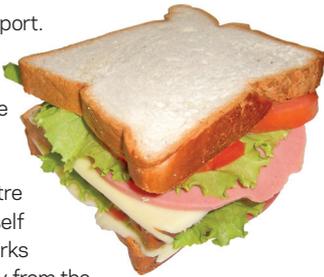
Cheap and cheerful tips

☉ Share a car from the airport.

"You tend to have 20 people standing in the queue, all going to the same place."

☉ Buy food in from places around the conference centre rather than in the centre itself

☉ Use accommodation perks sparingly: "The further away from the exhibition centre you are, the more cost-effective it is. You can have meetings in cafes rather than in the hotel."

**IAN METCALFE, FAITHFUL + GOULD**

"We are sending about half as many people this year, primarily because we don't think there will be as many people going. We are still doing events but toning it down. We still think it has value and is a chance to catch up with clients."

**Cheap and cheerful tips**

☉ Meetings in cafes can work and the London Stand is also good for meeting people.

TIM MOTE, FABER MAUNSELL

"We are sending half a dozen people and have a joint stand with ED&W. We aren't doing anything lavish. A couple of small dinners and lunches, that's all. I think it's going to be much more civilised than usual; you'll actually have a chance to talk to people! We are going by train - slightly cheaper and we've got our sustainability hat on. And I managed to get apartments that are right opposite the exhibition centre, so we haven't got to take a taxi all week."

Cheap and cheerful tips

☉ You can get the bus from the airport - it goes every half hour.

☉ Avoid places like the Carlton hotel bar because they're a rip-off.

☉ Avoid the restaurants along the Croisette and the beach, which are pricy. If you go behind the Rue d'Antibes, there are all sorts of little restaurants where you don't have to book.

PETER STOCKS, CUNDALL

"We have reduced our presence slightly - in the past we've had a presence on the London, Birmingham and Manchester stands. This year, it is London and Manchester. But it's pretty much as normal - we feel it is still important to be there and see people.

I'm flying on Monday evening because it is so much cheaper than flying out on Tuesday."

Cheap and cheerful tips

☉ The main thing is not to eat in the main hotels. There are lots of nice restaurants down the side streets.

THINGS YOU **WON'T SEE** THIS YEAR...

- ☉ King Sturge's annual do
- ☉ Davis Langdon's beach party - one of the hot tickets of previous years
- ☉ Sir Robert McAlpine's exclusive, expensive bash in the hills behind Cannes.
- ☉ A huge Russian delegation - it's hard to justify bringing your WAGs when even oligarchs are losing money
- ☉ As many yacht parties - those who are hosting are going for cheaper venues

AND FIVE THINGS YOU **PROBABLY WILL**

☉ More deals. Delegates will be under pressure to go home with something more useful than a hangover

☉ More senior staff. If firms are sending people, they want to make it count

☉ The familiar taxi queues on the Croisette. Budgets seem to matter less three bottles into the evening.

☉ Busier stands. With fewer parties to attend, people will be hoping to catch contacts in the conference centre

☉ The Mipim Majestic Club. This is the new name for the Carlton Club, a late-night networking event whose usual venue is being refurbished. It will include a pecha kucha - that is, a presentation format where invited speakers are allowed 20 seconds per slide to talk about their work.

WHERE TO EAT WITHOUT **BLOWING** THE BUDGET☉ **Le Comptoir de la Mer at 54 Boulevard de la Croisette**

Ian Metcalfe recommends this restaurant, which is particularly good for its fish, is ideally placed for the conference centre and open until 11pm.

www.lecomptoirdelamer.fr

☉ **Le Manoir in the old town on Petite Rue St Antoine**

Metcalfe also suggests this place as an affordable, old-fashioned yet friendly option. You can get a set meal for €36 or three courses a la carte for €45.

www.lemanoircannes.fr/lemanoircannex.html

☉ **Le Festival, near the Carlton**

Another that is handily placed near the conference centre, this is a large restaurant good for groups. It has an outdoor seating area should the weather pick up. The set menu is €43 for three courses. Open until 2am. "Great atmosphere, food and not expensive," says Tim Mote.

www.lefestival.fr



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