

Dubai Duty Free celebrates Chinese New Year in style



Dubai Duty Free executives and officials from the Chinese Consulate to Dubai with Chinese staff and dancers

Dubai Duty Free officially launched its Chinese New Year celebrations on January 22 in Terminal 3 at Dubai International Airport.

The morning festivities were attended by Dubai Duty Free management and staff, headed by Executive Vice Chairman & CEO Colm McLoughlin, Chief Operating Officer Ramesh Cidambi and Executive Vice President Corp. Services Salah Tahlak, along with representatives from the Chinese Consulate in Dubai, including (Acting) Consul General Ms Tan Li and Vice Consul Wang Chen, and some Chinese media.

To kickstart the festive spirit in Concourse B, the Sindy Zou dance group welcomed the officials, guests and passengers by performing a traditional Chinese dance "Silk Road".

Ms Li was invited to join the draw for Dubai Duty Free Millennium Millionaire and Finest Surprise promotions.

Mr Neil H., a British national based in Dubai, won US\$1 million in Series 291 with ticket number 1927. A long-time participant in the Dubai Duty Free Millennium Millionaire and Finest Surprise promotions, Mr. H. was shocked to learn that he finally won the US\$1 million prize.

The second dollar millionaire was Mr Abhishek Kathel, who won in Series 292 with ticket number 2582. Kathel, an Indian national based in Sharjah, works as cabin crew for Air Arabia and bought his first ever ticket from The Craft Shop in The Irish Village.

Meanwhile, two winners were announced in the Finest Surprise draw. Mrs Leepika Ahluwalie, an Indian

national based in Dubai, won an Audi R8 RWS V10 Coupe in Series 1708 with ticket number 0380. Mrs Ahluwalie, who recently joined her husband in Dubai after getting married, bought her winning ticket on their way to Baku, Azerbaijan, where they went for their honeymoon.

Finally, Farhan Jawed Khan, a 14-year-old Indian national from Ranchi, won a BMW R 1200 GS Rallye Edition motorbike in Series 356 with ticket number 0323. His father, Mohmaad Jawed Khan, explained that he bought the winning ticket and put it in his son's name on their way back to India after living in Dubai for 24 years.

A regular participant in the Dubai Duty Free promotions since 2005, Mr Khan was no stranger to winning, as he had won a Porsche 911 Carrera Coupe in 2008 in Series 1347 with ticket number 0759.

"We are grateful to Dubai Duty Free for our second win and we'll continue to patronize your promotions by buying tickets online," he said.

After the draw, the Dubai Duty Free group and Chinese officials were led by Dubai Duty Free Chinese staff in traditional dress to Concourse C for the ceremonial cake-cutting and traditional drum dance, much to the delight of passengers.

Commenting on the Chinese New Year initiative, McLoughlin said: "We are privileged to be joined by the Chinese (Acting) Consul General, Ms Tan Li, and other representatives of the Chinese consulate as well as some members of the Chinese media to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

"Dubai Duty Free employs 814 Chinese nationals, and Chinese passengers account for 17% of our business, so it is appropriate that we mark this most popular festival which is celebrated all over the world."

Ms Li replied: "Thank you, Mr McLoughlin, for inviting us here every year to join Dubai Duty Free in celebrating the Chinese New Year. This occasion remains one of the most important occasions for the Chinese and Dubai Duty Free acknowledges the significance of this holiday to its customers through traditional festivities and offering special initiatives."

As part of the promotions over the coming weeks, Dubai Duty Free rolled out a Chinese New Year-themed concept with plenty of promotions across all concourses in Dubai International and Al Maktoum International airports.

Offers include a 20% discount for its top-selling Chinese cigarette brands, such as Chunghwa and Panda, and other regular promotions in various categories including liquor, skincare and luxury watches.

Alipay customers will have a chance to win a number of prizes for a total of 45 days.

Dubai Duty Free, which celebrated its 35th year in December 2018, has almost 6,200 employees, comprised of 47 different nationalities including 814 Chinese staff.

Also present at the celebrations were Sinead El Sibai, Senior Vice President - Marketing, Saba Tahir, Senior Vice President - Purchasing, Michael Schmidt, Senior Vice President - Retail Support, Sharon Beecham, Vice President - Purchasing, Mona Al Ali, Vice President - HR Service Delivery from Dubai Duty Free, as well as Jin Lei, Commercial Counsellor, and Hao Miao, Consular Attache, from the Chinese Consulate.