

# Forthcoming Events

9 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Cocktail Reception in honour of the U.S. Exhibitors at Satte 2012. Hosted by Judy Reinke, Minister-Counselor for Commercial Affairs of the Embassy of USA and VUSACOM India.
29 <sup>th</sup> Feb to 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Coimbatore (Experience America) The Consulate is hosting a program in Coimbatore called 'Experience America' and covers 3 days, Feb 29 - Mar 02. We have scheduled the formal inauguration of Visit USA South India road show/booth on Feb 29 and presentations to the travel industry on March 1.  Venue: CODISSIA Complex (a trade centre in Coimbatore)  29 Feb: Morning: Inauguration of the Visit USA South India road show/booth by the Consul General and/or Minister Counselor for Commercial Affairs  1 March: Morning: Seminar/presentations to a B2B audience (half a day program) – please refer the other cities section for the schedule
5 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup> March	Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad: Destination USA programs Details on our website <a href="http://www.vusa.in">www.vusa.in</a>
15 <sup>th</sup> March	Visa Seminar at US Consulate, BKC - Bandra, Mumbai.
30 <sup>th</sup> March	Dinner Reception in Honour of U.S. Secretary of Commerce John Bryson”
May	Proposed VUSACOM Delegation to USA to explore new destinations.

## Launch of website [WWW.VUSA.IN](http://WWW.VUSA.IN)

The Indian Chapter of VUSACOM has officially launched its website, through which we keep everyone connected with the world of travel up-to-speed with activities, events and the latest news!



## Satte

To further promote the U.S. as a tourist destination, U.S. Department of Commerce has certified SATTE 2012 trade show. The show offers an excellent platform for inbound and outbound tourism and for learning more about U.S. destinations.



[www.vusa.in](http://www.vusa.in)



VUSACOM NEWSLETTER



### Message from Ashwini Kakkar



I am pleased to inform you that after a lot of brainstorming and deliberations we have decided to go ahead and form a revitalized new Visit USA Committee (VUSACOM).

This has been made possible due to the support of the U.S. Commercial Service of the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai.

Currently India stands at no.12 in tourist arrivals into the U.S., and our objective is to bring it to single digits.

I look forward to welcoming serious players from the Travel & Hospitality onboard VUSACOM and we would like to ensure our members that we mean business and effective and timely execution of our plans is going to be the cornerstone of VUSACOM.

Ashwini Kakkar  
President VUSACOM

### Message from Judy Reinke



Namaste!

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Executive Committee for its sincere efforts to form the India chapter of the Visit USA Committee. Worldwide the Visit USA Committees have done exemplary work in promoting the United States as a sought after tourist destination. My staff and I

are honored to be part of this initiative and will be firmly behind your every effort in promoting travel and tourism to American.

As President Barack Obama recently noted, "Let's realize that in the years ahead, more and more tourists are going to come from countries, with rapidly growing economies, huge populations and emerging middle classes; countries like China, India and Brazil." Clearly India is at the forefront of the President's strategy of building partnerships through people to people contacts, which will be a key towards improving trade and creating jobs in both the countries.

I also want to take this opportunity to inform you about the recent creation of Brand USA. Formerly known as the Corporation for Travel Promotion, Brand USA is a public-private partnership which was created in 2010 with the mission to promote international travel to United States in a coordinated fashion. Brand USA will launch its advertising campaign this spring, and continues to work closely with all stakeholders, including U.S. government officials, who are helping to maximize efforts to position the United States as a destination of choice for travelers. I warmly welcome you to visit the website of Brand USA [www.thebrandusa.com](http://www.thebrandusa.com) where you will be treated to thrilling pictures of my beautiful country and offered a wide range of excellent travel and tourism resources.

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Commerce, I thank Visit USA Committee for your leadership in promoting the United States as a tourist destination of choice. My office stands ready to help the travel trade in India learn more about U.S. destinations and attractions, as well as form partnerships that will bring our two great countries even closer together.  
Sincerely,

Judy R. Reinke  
Minister Counselor for Commercial Affairs  
Embassy of the United States of America, New Delhi

## VUSACOM Executive Committee 2011-12

**PRESIDENT**  
Ashwini Kakkar  
Mercury Travels

Bharat Patil  
Raja Rani Travel

Joseph Fernandes  
Aviareps

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Manoj Gursahani  
Travelmartindia

Dhananjay Saliankar  
Starwood Hotels

Karan Anand  
Cox and Kings

Hutokshi Marker  
Trail Blazer Tours India Pvt. Ltd.

Madhavan Menon  
Thomas Cook



TEAR OFF

## VUSACOM Membership Form

Please fill in your details

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company \_\_\_\_\_

Designation \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Years in Business \_\_\_\_\_

Membership of Any other Body like TAFI, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ Email Id \_\_\_\_\_

Office Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

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### Membership Fee

Membership Type: Travel Agent/ Tour Operator  
Amount: Rs. 5000/-

Membership Type: DMCs/ Hotels  
Amount: Rs. 25,000/-

### Membership Benefits

- Meet and interact with Various US based Travel delegations
- Regular Interactions with US Consul Officials
- Opportunity to be Part of the Pow Wow Delegation
- High Quality Networking with Peers of Tourism Industry
- Facilitate the VISA process and communication channels especially for the MICE market as this will help fillip the growth.
- Regular newsletters highlighting various happenings in the Indo-US Travel Corridor.
- Work closely and collaborate with various Tourism Bodies like ASTA, USTA, CTP etc
- VUSACOM will create awareness amongst its members about the various new destinations/places of attraction in the US.
- Facilitate B2B meetings between tour operators/ travel agents in India with the US based suppliers like hoteliers, airlines, DMCs, attractions, etc

### Official

The Application will be viewed by the Membership committee of the VUSACOM and we will revert to you shortly.

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## U.S. Consulate General Honorary Members



**Judy Reinke**  
Minister-Counselor for Commercial Affairs of the Embassy of the United States of America

**Richard M. Rothman**  
Commercial Consul, U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Consulate, Mumbai

**Marsha.McDaniel**  
Commercial Officer, U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Consulate, Mumbai

**Ali Asgar Motiwala**  
Commercial Specialist, U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Consulate, Mumbai



Ashwini Kakkar - MD Mercury Travel, Hon. Robert McDonnell - Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Peter Haas - US Consulate General & the Chief and Manoj Gursahani at Reception in Honour of Hon. Robert McDonnell - Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia

## Meeting with Assistant Secretary of Commerce; Governor of Virginia

Another event that stirred up quite some excitement for VUSACOM was the visit of Suresh Kumar, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, to Mumbai.

He was in the country leading a U.S. Department of Commerce education-focused trade mission from October 10th to 15th, 2011. Some of VUSACOM's core committee members met with Suresh Kumar, and exchanged views with him.

With equal delight, Committee members of VUSACOM met with Governor Bob McDonnell, of Virginia, who met with Governor Bob McDonnell, of Virginia, who was leading a high-powered delegation to India, as part of his effort to attract Indian investment to his state, and promote tourism and the Virginia wine industry.

He reached Mumbai on November 15, 2011, and VUSACOM discussed opportunities for promoting tourism to Virginia, with him, besides touching upon some other important issues.

## Launch Of VUSACOM (Visit-USA Committee) India Chapter, Likely To Add Momentum To Obama's Tourism Promotion Initiatives

The Indian Chapter of VUSACOM (Visit USA Committee) has been launched at a very exciting time. Its kicking off has coincided with the US of A's tremendous acceleration of efforts towards increasing tourism in general. The newly formed Indian Chapter of VUSACOM (Visit-USA Committee) is supported by, and will function under the guidance of the US Commerce Department. The Committee comprises of leading travel companies in India, and the number of members has been increasing rapidly.

During his unveiling of the US's tourism promotion strategy and initiatives, in Florida's Disneyland, on January, 19, 2012, President Obama said, "Let's realize that in the years ahead, more and more tourists are going to come from countries with rapidly growing economies, huge populations and emerging middle classes – countries like India."

Significant for India, among the new US tourism initiatives, is the expedition and simplification of the visa application process, and the creation of a task-force to promote travel to and within the United States.

NTA (National Trade Association) president Lisa Simon, said that the initiatives put the travel and tourism industry under the spotlight as a "key contributor to the nation's economic vibrancy". "With President Obama's action today, the travel and tourism industry has reached an all-time high in terms of vigor and visibility," Ms Simon stated.

Despite the global economic slowdown over the last few years, statistics show that Indians have spent 5 times more at premium retail outlets in the US! Indian tourists visiting America in 2010, spent an average of \$4390, totaling to a staggering \$2.86 billion for 6,51,000 visitors. According to a projection released recently, by The International Trade Administration (ITA), which is a body of the US Department of Commerce, the US anticipates a 50% increase in the number of travelers from India by 2016. It's no wonder then that the US commerce circuit believes that the much needed push for America's tourist industry will come from affluent Indians!

Speaking about working towards increasing tourist



arrivals in the US, Richard Rothman, Commercial Consul, US Consulate, stated, "We have laid out a strategy to help pull India up from her current position-12 to a single-digit one!"

Ashwini Kakkar, President of VUSACOM – India, who is steering the Indo-US tourism collaboration, said "VUSACOM is exhilarated about implementing its strategy for increasing Indian outbound traffic to the US. Membership to the VUSACOM - India Chapter, will comprise of companies or entities that provide or promote tourism and travel from India to the US such as airlines, car rentals, cruise liners, trade professionals, CRS companies, hotels, transportation companies, and the media. VUSACOM India has already begun activities to increase awareness among the Travel Trade!"

Among VUSACOM's current initiatives are: visa facilitation; an encouragement of group travel by organizing MICE (Meetings-Incentive-Conferences-Exhibition/Events); acting as a B2B platform for Travel Agents / Tour Operators, and facilitating meetings with various US travel suppliers; showcasing new emerging destinations; and supporting US programs for promoting travel.

In fact, on January, 24, 2012, VUSACOM launched an exclusive shopping privilege program called "The Key to Madison Avenue Card Program", in Mumbai. The program

is a public-private entity partnership between American Express, the United States Department of Commerce, NYC & Company, and the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District and its member-businesses. The cards will allow select Travel Agencies and Tour Operators to offer their affluent Indian clients V.I.P. privileges and deals at hundreds of boutiques in New York City's Madison Avenue! This much coveted card will be offered absolutely free!

"With this program, we hope that affluent travelers from urban India can contribute more to the USA economy", Richard Rothman commented. Speaking on behalf of the US Consulate and VUSACOM, he added, "This is just one among many initiatives that we have planned, to help the US tourism, and the Indian travel industry go from strength to strength".



Mark Mendes  
Discover the World Marketing

Rajiv Duggal  
Kuoni India

Sudhir Patil  
Kesari Tours

Monis Mahfooz  
Continental Airlines

Ravi Shankar  
Vacations Exotica

Shampa Dhali  
Marriot Hotels

Nalin Kapadia  
Incredible Vacations

Sanjay Arya  
Uniglobe - Keshav Travels

Sheema Vora  
Sartha Marketing Consultants

## Madison Avenue Event

January, 24, 2012



VUSACOM (Visit-USA Committee), flagged off "The Key to Madison Avenue Card Program" and had an interactive Webinar with Mr. Matthew Bauer, President of the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District, New York

VUSACOM flagged off a unique shopping privilege program called "The Key to Madison Avenue Card Program", in Mumbai.

The Program is a public-private entity partnership. It is a collaboration of: American Express, the United States Department of Commerce, NYC & Company, and the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District and its member-businesses!

Present at the launch, was, Richard Rothman, Commercial Consul, US Consulate, over a dozen Heads of India's leading travel and tourism companies, and members of the press! Matthew Bauer, President of the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District, spoke to the gathering from New York, via the Internet.

He explained that the card, which will be given to travel agents and tour operators completely free of cost, will entitle their select, high-end Indian clients to special deals and V.I.P. privileges in New York City's most prestigious shopping destination – Madison Avenue!





# Santa Cruz

## Our Beaches Are Just the Beginning

Santa Cruz is undoubtedly the quintessential California beach town. Surfers tote their surfboards through local neighborhoods on their way to the beach. Families relax on the sand as children splash and play in the water. Screams of delight drift above the waves from riders on the seaside rollercoaster, awakening nostalgic memories of summers past and inspiring a new generation. But while Santa Cruz is the classic spot to dig your toes into the warm sand and soak up the sun, the fun only begins at the beach.

Downtown Santa Cruz is also home to: The Museum of Art & History ([santacruzmah.org](http://santacruzmah.org)) which features changing exhibitions of contemporary art and Santa Cruz County history.

The Santa Cruz County Symphony [santacruzsymphony.org](http://santacruzsymphony.org). Founded in 1958 under the direction of Maestro John Larry Granger, the organization has grown to become one of the finest orchestras of its size in California, earning frequent critical acclaim.

Actors' Theatre ([www.santacruzactorstheatre.org](http://www.santacruzactorstheatre.org)). Serving Santa Cruz County since 1985, Actors' Theatre supports, champions, and provides a venue for the performing arts, with emphasis on the theatrical arts.

On a bluff overlooking Downtown Santa Cruz stands the last remaining original building of the Santa Cruz

Mission, the 12th Franciscan mission built in California. The structure houses historic exhibits and offers one of the best views in town ([www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=548](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=548)).

The University of California at Santa Cruz sits atop a sprawling hillside overlooking the quaint town and the gleaming Monterey Bay. ([www.ucsc.edu](http://www.ucsc.edu)).

Working your way back to the ocean, the Seymour Marine Discovery Center at Long Marine Lab offers an up-close view of fascinating sea creatures. ([seymourcenter.ucsc.edu](http://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu)).

Nearby, Natural Bridges State Beach is an ideal place for tidepool exploration. Bring your binoculars for seasonal visits to Natural Bridges State Park, California's only state park butterfly preserve. ([parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=541](http://parks.ca.gov/?page_id=541)).

Between Natural Bridges State Beach and the Santa Cruz Wharf, a two-and-a-half mile scenic path overlooking the bay skirts along West Cliff Drive. ([www.santacruzsurfingmuseum.org](http://www.santacruzsurfingmuseum.org)).

Santa Cruz's standing as the mainland's birthplace of surfing, combined with its natural beauty, arts, energetic nightlife, and magnificent beaches have lured visitors throughout the years. Discover for yourself the diversity of this wondrous beach town.

## Destination Feature

For more information about visiting Santa Cruz, California, visit [www.santacruz.org](http://www.santacruz.org).

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Down from the point, the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf stretches out a half-mile into the waters of the Monterey Bay. Lining the wharf are family-owned fish markets, seafood restaurants, a wine tasting room with a lounge and gift boutiques. Hop aboard a boat for a sightseeing excursion around the bay, or watch sea lions lazing in the sun at the end of the wharf. The wharf is home to a number of events throughout the year including Woodies on the Wharf and the Aloha Races and Polynesian Festival ([www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=648](http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=648)).

Set along Santa Cruz's Main Beach, adjacent to the wharf, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is alive with year-round excitement. Already Northern California's favorite amusement park, the legendary Boardwalk was named "Best Seaside Amusement Park," in the world by amusement industry experts. The Giant Dipper, the park's centerpiece, is a vintage wooden roller coaster that has thrilled visitors for over 85 years. Seventy-three hand-carved horses prance proudly to the music from two beautiful antiques, the park's original 342-pipe Ruth band organ and a showy Wurlitzer 165 band organ, at the famous Loeff Carousell, built in 1911 ([www.beachboardwalk.com/carousel](http://www.beachboardwalk.com/carousel)).

All this excitement sits on the edge of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary ([montereybay.noaa.gov](http://montereybay.noaa.gov)), one of 14 federally protected National Marine Sanctuaries in the country. The sanctuary is a huge source of pride for Santa Cruz County residents. Chartered sailing and whale watching tours from Santa Cruz Harbor allow you to catch sight of abundant marine life. Kayak and Stand Up Paddleboard rentals are also available at the harbor. Each December, the harbor waters are illuminated with festive watercraft during the Lighted Boat Parade - a wonderful way to usher in the holidays, Santa Cruz style. Public art also adorns the harbor, including a human sundial and an artistic rendition of a "shipwreck."

VUSACOM (Visit-USA Committee) at the new US Consulate which opened at BKC, Bandra, Mumbai recently and also had a meeting with US Consul General Peter Haas, Consular Section Chief David Tyler and US Commercial Consul Richard Rothman

## VUSACOM Delegation to the New US Consulate

The VUSACOM Core Committee had an excellent meeting with Peter Haas, David Tyler and Richard Rothman at their newly opened sprawling facility at the BKC.

Ashwini Kakkar, President spoke about the way forward and how VUSACOM plans to have a Pan India presence eventually and the main objective being to improve the footfalls of Indians arriving into the USA from the current 12th to single digits. Ashwini also shared the outcome of the meeting we had with Suresh Kumar and also acknowledged the role of Richard Rothman, Aliasgar and Marsha McDaniel of the Core Committee members.

Richard Rothman thanked the role played by Ashwini, Manoj and the Core Committee members and appreciated the progress made by VUSACOM in such a short span.

Manoj Gursahani, Vice President gave a formal presentation on the steps ahead as planned by VUSACOM (scope of presentation attached)

Peter Haas welcomed everyone and assured the delegation of his support to VUSACOM and also engaged in a meaningful dialogue with all the core committee members. He also introduced David Tyler, Consular Section Chief to the Group.

David Tyler also assured the Group of his support and in fact mentioned that he will delegate a representative from his Team who will be the point person to co-ordinate with on a day to day basis.

The VUSACOM delegation was then taken on a Tour of the new facilities and were shown the Consular waiting area which has 39 interview windows (4 fourfold increase), Multipurpose Room, Library (home to more than 10,000 books), Atrium etc.

The New Consulate is based on 11 acres and has already processed nearly 12,5000 non-immigrant visa applications since Nov 21.

