

Strictly Embargoed Until Wednesday 8/4/09 12:00 pm BST



AIF Joins VisitBritain To Lure European Festivalgoers

- Association Of Independent Festivals Joins £1.8 Million Tourism Advertising Campaign
- 20% Discount On Offer To Ticket Buyers From Participating European Countries

12 NOON 8th APRIL 2009 – The Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) has negotiated to become part of a £1.8 million marketing initiative organised by VisitBritain. The European Value Campaign, launching in April, will go out across 18 key European countries, and is aimed at the 25-35 age group.

Using the slogan “*See More For Less*”, VisitBritain will focus on the benefits offered by the weak pound and Britain’s relatively compact land area, i.e. that visitors can take in many attractions during a short, inexpensive trip. It will include press advertising, direct mail, a web microsite and pr support. The inclusion of AIF in the scheme is a recognition of Britain’s independent festivals as cultural assets, and valuable enticements to tourists who may extend their stay and explore the country further.

AIF members are offering overseas visitors a 20% discount on festival tickets when they purchase through the VisitBritain site. AIF and its members will stand alongside the campaign’s major partners including Jurys Inn, easyJet and BritRail, representing a major marketing boon for AIF’s member festivals.

In brokering this deal, AIF has demonstrated its potential to give smaller festivals a larger presence, achieving collectively what its members could not achieve individually.

While British people have been forsaking native festivals in favour of more exotic locations in recent years, it is hoped that this campaign will boost the flow in the opposite direction, bringing more Europeans to Britain’s diverse independent music festivals. Each of the 18 countries included (with the exception of Russia) has a local language website where the tickets can be booked.

AIF co-founder Ben Turner, who brokered the deal, said, “*We’re delighted to announce this deal. VisitBritain have been completely open to our thinking and ideas, and share a similar understanding of the true importance of the Great British festival to UK tourism and creative culture. I’d like to think this is relationship that will grow and grow as we mirror the trend of*

people wanting to base international holidays around music festivals. We believe that this new genre of tourism is now officially recognised through VisitBritain."

AIF visionary and co-founder Rob da Bank added, *"Let's make no bones about it, the British festival market is the best in the world and we need to shout about it so this deal is great for AIF and for the independent festival sector as a whole. One of the reasons I wanted to set up AIF was so we, as independent festival promoters, all got talking and this deal would not have been possible without us existing as a collective of creative businesses."*

Laurence Bresh, VisitBritain's regional director for Europe, said, *"While Britain remains among the world's leading destinations, we want to make sure that visitors are aware of the great exchange rates they can get to travel here and the surprising experiences they have yet to enjoy. The Britain for Less campaign helps them make their money go even further with great deals on getting here and getting around, as well as places to stay and go, to eat out and shop."*

"The link-up with the Association of Independent Festivals is an exciting development for us, as the organisation have opened up the door to over 20 of Britain's finest festivals. The Great British festival is a major tourist attraction for our target audience so this deal is a great value added addition to our annual campaign."

Notes for Editors

The countries included in the scheme are: France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal and Russia.

About AIF

The Association of Independent Festivals is a not for profit body set up in 2008 to represent independent music festivals in the UK and Ireland. Founded by Bestival promoter Rob da Bank and Graphite Media's Ben Turner, the association's members range from the 40,000 capacity Creamfields in Liverpool to the 6,000 capacity Summer Sundae Weekender in Leicester.

AIF allows the promoters of some of the UK & Ireland's most innovative and successful festivals to speak with one voice when addressing the wider music business and government.

AIF aims to establish best practice for festivals in a variety of areas such as security, the environment and beyond, providing a knowledge base for festival promoters, as well as creating collective purchasing and marketing opportunities for its members.

Operating as an autonomous division of the Association of Independent Music, AIF is chaired by Alison Wenham (chairman of AIM), with the board comprised of representatives from Beautiful Days, Bestival, Big Chill, Bloom, Cornbury, Creamfields, Evolution, Field Day, Glade, Loud Sound, Secret Garden Party, Summer Sundae Weekender and Womad.

About VisitBritain

VisitBritain is responsible for promoting Britain as a world class tourist destination and for developing England's visitor economy. It has representatives in 36 countries around the world and has expanded into India, China, throughout Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia.

Provisional figures for 2008 indicate overseas residents made 32 million visits to the UK, down by -2% on 2007. They spent £16.4 billion, which before adjusting for inflation, is +3% up on 2007

Every year over 12 million visits are made by international consumers to the 46 websites that make up VisitBritain's global family of websites, www.visitbritain.com, which together provide information in 26 different languages.