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Front page



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Tuesday, August 7, 2007

Mqabba fireworks factory wins international contest

Natalino Fenech



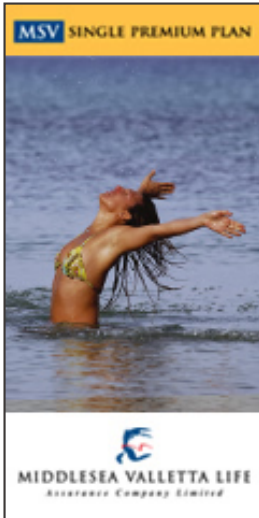
Let there be light: A dazzling combination of fireworks lights up the Roman sky in Italy during the Caput Lucis Festival held over the past five days. The fireworks were made by the St Mary's Fireworks Factory of Mqabba that went on to win this prestigious international contest, beating tough competition from England and Spain. Photo: Jonathan Mifsud.

Deafening cheers rung through the air at Mqabba at about 1 a.m. yesterday as fireworks enthusiasts at the St Mary's Band Club came to know that their fireworks had won the coveted world fireworks championship known as Caput Lucis Festival - the capital of light festival, on the outskirts of Rome in Italy.

The results of the festival, now in its fifth year, were announced in the small hours of yesterday and jubilant fans heard them live via a mobile phone.

Hearts began to throb faster when Spain was pronounced in the third place. When England - considered to be Malta's rivals in the festival - were named second, hopes rose higher.

As Malta was declared the winner, there were scenes of jubilation rivalled only by those expressed during the village feast.



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This was the first time that the band club has given a fireworks display abroad. Last year it won the Malta Fireworks Festival.

The other competitors were Italy, Romania, Slovenia, China and Japan.

The team of pyrotechnicians returned yesterday afternoon.

St Mary's Fireworks Factory of Mqabba is one of the most prolific pyrotechnic factories.

This year, they produced two displays for the Thomas Cooke conference, made the final display of the Malta Fireworks Festival on May 1 and prepared for their displays during the Santa Marija feast of Mqabba, apart from taking part and sweeping all honours in the Caput Lucis festival.

The festival is held in an area measuring some 80,000 square metres on the outskirts of Rome and is sponsored by the region of Lazio and the province of Rome.

As its name implies, it is one of the premier fireworks festivals in the world.

Participation in to the festival is by invitation. The St Mary's Fireworks Factory was chosen after winning last year's Malta Fireworks Festival. Mqabba were representing Malta.

All their fireworks were produced by the factory itself, in contrast with the other competitors who bought their fireworks from factories around the world.

England last year lost the first place to an Italian factory by just one point and were known to be very keen on winning this time round.

Mqabba scored 77 out of 80 points, with five judges out of the eight awarding Malta full points.

Some 100,000 people attended the first day of the festival and it is estimated that the event attracted over half a million people during its five days. Through this victory, Mqabba won the right to inaugurate the festival next year.

www.caputlucis.com

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