

KASBAH DU TOUBKAL UPDATE OCTOBER 2004

Summary:

- **Imlil Village Hammam** nears completion
- **Pictures from the fund raising event last April**
<http://www.kasbahdutoubkal.com/pics/thumbs3.htm>
- **Incinerator built in Imlil Centre**
- **Building Senior Leadership at the Kasbah**
- **Toubkal Summit**
- **Other news**
- **Kasbah du Toubkal short listed for Responsible Tourism Award**

Imlil Village Hammam nears completion



The funding for the village community hammam (steam bath) was raised mainly by the sponsored bike ride from The Eagles Nest (www.discover.ltd.uk), our educational centre in Southern France to the Kasbah together with the Kasbah Easter House Party. The ground for the hammam was finally broken in late April and the building progresses well. The shot above was taken in early October. The hammam is expected to be finished soon after the end of Ramadan towards the end of November, so all being well a combined end of Ramadan and Hammam opening festival will take place. As the work progresses and the villagers can see the progress expectations are growing. This is particularly so amongst the women of the area to whom this facility will have enormous benefit and its opening is eagerly awaited. Once complete locals will be able to use the hammam for the standard rate currently 6DH, non residents will need to join the Village Association for an annual fee of 100Dh. This should allow the hammam to generate surpluses over its running costs which will be used to fund other community projects. Thank you to everyone who donated to this cause. Some nice words were recently sent to me from Hassan Kacimi Secretary General at the Ministry of Tourism which touched us. We are sure he will not mind us sharing them with you and is perhaps a collective thank you from all the villagers.

“Happy to hear the Hammam will open in December. You are going to contribute to the happiness of the locals. It is a beautiful gift to the community. It is a pleasure receiving regularly good news from Kasbah du Toubkal. I know there is a lot of hard work behind” **Hassan Kacimi**

Imlil gets its own much needed incinerator



As the Kasbah becomes more successful our 5% levy has become increasingly serious and funds from the Village Association were used to build an incinerator below Imlil. The continually changing lifestyle in Imlil and the building of the tarmac road has of course meant more visitors and more rubbish so this incinerator is a much needed resource. Rubbish sensibilization still leaves a bit to be desired but with more rubbish bins and education things are improving.

Building Senior Leadership at the Kasbah

The Kasbah was chosen as a venue for an innovative European Leadership Programme for SABMiller designed by Apter International. <http://www.apterinternational.com>

“It is an astonishing place – the sort of place you need if you want new thinking in your organisation – the place and the spirit behind, is in itself a role model for socially responsible entrepreneurship, audacious vision and action, and an ongoing challenge of assumptions.” - **Steve Carter**

Toubkal Summit

Many of our guests (young and old) reach the summit of Toubkal 4,165 metres the highest in N. Africa. Recently Mike became aware that several friends, many working in tourism living in Marrakech, had not yet made it to the summit or even tried. Mike decided that they should have an opportunity of doing so and seeing what the Kasbah team has to offer in the way of support. So a date was set 11th/12th Sept and the mixed party set off. Fortunately the party included friend and professional photographer Alan Keohane (Alan used to do Toubkal almost weekly in his previous life as a Tour Leader) so there is plenty of photographic evidence including celebrations on the summit. Go to for photos etc. <http://www.kasbahdutoubkal.com/trips/trektoub.htm>

Toubkal whilst not being a doddle and needs to be taken seriously (we were very well supported by the Kasbah team of guides, cooks and muleteers, a big thank you to them) is wonderful, it allows the moderately fit or the enthusiastic/determined/able (barring altitude sickness) to reach a major 4,000 metre summit and experience the euphoria that goes with it.

People say the summit is even more spectacular in winter and the views outstanding;- perhaps that is a trip for another year!



Other News

- The Kasbah du Toubkal was rated in the top 5 Mountain Resorts in the world by The Independent. We were very flattered to be ranked amongst the top 5. The others being: Lilianfels Blue Mountains, Australia; Amanrila, Bhutan; Hotel Salto Chico, Chile; and Strawberry Hill, Jamaica.
- Kasbah Tamadot (part of Richard Branson Virgin Limited Edition) after some delays is about to open see <http://www.virgin.com/limitededition> for details. We have kept in close contact with this project since it started back in 1998 when Eve, Richard's mother realised that Luciano Tempo's creation of Tamadot was for sale. We wish them every success for their opening and feel sure that their different offering will add to the choice for visitors in the wonderful Asni/Imlil valley. Our collective challenge will be to try to

maintain what is special in the area (and the visitor comes to see) whilst encouraging appropriate development.

- Discover, Hajj Maurice and a few other friends have acquired a wonderful 6 hectare site full of mature olive trees a few kilometres from Tahanoute in the foot hills of the Atlas Mountains, equi distant between the Kasbah du Toubkal and Marrakech. Ideas/ plans for its development are at a very early stage to the point that all options are open. It may be, if felt appropriate, that other like minded investors might be sought. In any future development we would endeavour to encompass the vision we stated for the Kasbah “..... *would compliment the exceptional site and be of benefit to visitors and local inhabitants.*” To start with we have drilled 2 wells both giving good water supply (tested drinkable) and we are now providing water for the local inhabitants in the nearby village who previously had to walk 2 km. Picture below shows villagers collecting their water.



Kasbah du Toubkal short listed for Responsible Tourism Award

The Kasbah has been short listed from over 700 nominations. On August 7th responsibletravel.com launched The 2004 Responsible Tourism Awards with The Times newspaper (UK), World Travel Market and Geographical Magazine (Magazine of The Royal Geographical Society). The Awards will be presented at The World Travel Market on November 10th 2004 by John Stapleton and covered in a double page feature in The Times on November 13th, and in the February edition of Geographical. You can read more about the Awards at www.responsibletravel.com/awards

So we are keeping our fingers crossed for good news on the 10th November. A big thank you to everyone who nominated us, your help and support is really appreciated and gives us much needed encouragement.

Thank you for your support and we hope that if you have not been to the Kasbah it will not be too long before you do and for past visitors we hope that we will be able to welcome you again before too long.

Wishing you well

Mike McHugo and All The Kasbah du Toubkal and Discover Ltd