

A FESTIVE AND COLORFUL FOLKLORIC EXTRAVAGANCE FROM PANAMA INVADES NORTHERN EUROPE

During the month of February, the cold airs of Holland, Norway, Finland and Sweden will be filled with the warmth and flamboyancy of Panama's rich syncretism. The Danza de los Diablicos or "Dance of the Little Devils" will be performed by a colorful group of Panamanian dancers and musicians in the streets of these cities.

The dance is the most noteworthy event in La Villa de Los Santos, a town renowned for the folklore and for its Festival of Corpus Christi which lasts two weeks and is celebrated each year 60 days after Easter Sunday. The Danza de los Diablicos as it is performed in Panama --which is the highlight of the festivities featuring more than 100 performers in various costumes-- originated in the Spanish kingdom of Aragon and became one of the utmost folkloric expressions in the rich syncretism of Panama's culture.. The dancers wear a flamboyantly tropical gargoyle mask that depicts the face of a dragon/devil and its genesis is found in the Bible where after an epic battle, narrated in the Apocalypses, the Archangel Saint Michael battles the dragon (Lucifer) and throws him out of Heaven. The original mask is made from hand painted papier maché and ornamented feathers. The costume is made of cotton drill fabric and painted with charcoal for the black bands and Achiote (Bikka) for the red ones.

With these activities European countries will be able to appreciate and experience a small part of the unique cultural experience Panama has to offer.

These events form part of a new direct merchandising strategy that for 2009 the Authority of Tourism of Panama is implementing due to the changes in the world economy. The yearly budget is being relocated to conquer the European market, which is the main goal for this year.

The dates and cities the Diablicos will start their tour are:

Helsinki, Finland: Shopping Mall Sello

Dates: Monday, February 2 and Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Hour: 10- 16

Stockholm, Sweden: Shopping Mall Täby Galleria

Dates: Friday, February 6, Saturday, February 7 and Sunday, February 8, 2009

Hour: 10-16

Copenhagen, Denmark: Shopping Mall: Fields

Dates: Tuesday, February 10 and Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Hour: 10-16

Oslo, Norway: Shopping Mall Aker Brygge kjøpesenter

Dates: Friday, February 13 and Saturday, February 14, 2009

Hour: 10-16

There will also be a sweepstakes that by entering our web site www.visitpanama.com and completing a form, you will be able to win a round trip ticket for two to Panama, all expenses paid, to participate in the Diablico and Congo's Biennial Exhibition on March 13, 2009 in the Caribbean town of Portobelo. ¡This is a wonderful festival and the best time to come to Panama!