



General Manager Avner On

## London Hilton Metropole is one of Europe's biggest

Two ballrooms each seat 1,600 – and there are over 1,000 bedrooms

If the whole of the London Hilton Metropole were visible from one viewpoint, then it would be a very significant landmark. But it tends to be known by one corner seen on Edgware Road near its tube station. The magnitude of this facility, the Tower Wing, the West Wing and the East Wing, is cloaked by the streets leading to Paddington Station.

'We can be considered the biggest hotel in Europe', claims General Manager Avner On and the statistics back him up. There are 1054 bedrooms. Two ballrooms can each seat 1,600. Being identical in shape and size, one above the other, delegates can be seated and fed in close proximity.

The hotel has three quite distinct entrances. One is dedicated to the ballrooms in the West Wing and even when a thousand people are attending a conference, guests in the East Wing can be unaware of their presence.

'We can', Avner points out, 'even close off that wing to provide a totally confidential and secure area if that is required.'

But he is also keen to

emphasise that the hotel has a thriving business in medium to small meetings. Here again the figures are impressive. 'We have 41 meeting rooms very convenient for delegate numbers such as 200, or 400 or 650, another wide choice



of rooms for about 20 or 25 people, as well as three Boardrooms designed for up to 16 to sit round the table together.

'Yes, we are a very big facility, but we ensure that the organisers of any event, big or small, feel they are important to us. We have a separate team dedicated entirely to the selling and management of the smaller events, who are not involved with the bigger bookings, which have their own dedicated team.'

When ITCM was at the hotel at the end of July, it was enjoying 97% occupancy of its guestrooms. 'We are fortunate in having a strong mix of



three kinds of business', says Avner. 'When one is low, the others are high. On average during the year, about one third of our business is conferences; another third FIT business travel; and a final third is leisure.' The hotel also has a strong mix of market sources. About 50% of guests come from outside the UK, with a very strong flow from the USA, very much due to the 300 rooms that each boast two double beds.

The main attraction, in addition to the wealth of facilities, is location. It is in walking distance of Paddington Station that has a direct express rail link with London

Heathrow. Eurostar has moved close with its terminal now at St Pancras. Euston Station is a near neighbour for rail links with the north of the UK.

'And, of course,' adds Avner, 'guests can walk in 10 minutes to Oxford Street.'

The location comes into its own when you visit the hotel's Nippon Tuk Asian cuisine restaurant and bar on the 24th floor. There are views over bustling Edgware Road, the tranquil stretches of Hyde Park, the unmistakable circle of the London Eye and even the high rise buildings of Canary Wharf and the City.