



Let's do it Galway moves into new home

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The main figure behind the Galway stopover of the Volvo Ocean Race, John Killeen, was handed the keys to the event's new media headquarters, Merchants Hall, by developer Gerard Barrett, at a ceremony last night.

A large number of local businesspeople were present at Merchant's Hall yesterday as yet another step in establishing the presence of the Volvo Ocean Race in the city was taken.

Festival Director Maria Moynihan Lee detailed the commercial opportunities for the business community including patronage packages which return half the value in corporate hospitality; retail and trade exhibition spaces; and business support packs which offer businesses the opportunity to showcase their support by dressing their premises in official flags and bunting.

"We are well on the way to our sponsorship goals and now we are asking businesses in Galway to support us in some small way," stated Moynihan Lee.

"The Galway Volvo Ocean Race will be showcased to a potential global audience of 1.8 billion people so it is imperative that we all work together to show the best of Galway and Ireland," she continued.

Marine Photographer and journalist David Branigan, who has covered five Volvo Ocean Races and visited 50 stopovers, gave the business community a photographic presentation on what other stopovers looked like and in particular he gave examples of what happens when the boats arrive at a stopover and when they depart.

Hospitality

"I have just returned from China and I can assure you that the Volvo Ocean Race staff and all the teams and families are looking forward to travelling to Ireland. Galway is perceived as the festival city and Irish people have a reputation for their great hospitality so we have to deliver on their expectations," said Branigan.

The evening finished with a presentation by Fiona Monaghan, General Manager Failte Ireland West. She said, "Failte Ireland

is pleased to be associated with an event of this calibre which has the potential to showcase Galway and the West of Ireland to 1.8 billion people globally. It is crucial that the tourism industry, the local business community and the people of Galway rally together to ensure the success of the Galway stopover. In addition to running an extensive domestic media campaign promoting the Festival, Failte Ireland will also be hosting a prestigious group of international journalists representing a variety of travel, lifestyle and food publications."

Gerard Barrett and his company, Edward Holdings, have donated the building to the race committee in support of the largest sporting event ever planned for the city and the West of Ireland. This central hub on Merchant's Road will act as the international media centre for the forthcoming Galway Volvo Ocean Race event from 23 May to 6 June.

Edward Holdings, a Galway based international property company, owned and run by Gerard Barrett, is a key sponsor to the event, with both organisa-

tions working in partnership to ensure the entire event is a huge success.

John Killeen, Chairperson of Let's Do it Galway stated, "We really appreciate the support that Gerard Barrett and Edward Holdings have offered us for both the Green Dragon racing campaign and the Galway Volvo Ocean Race stopover. Merchants Hall is one of the most attractive buildings in the city and is the perfect location for the media centre with its close proximity to the harbour area. We very much appreciate this significant contribution towards an event, which will showcase Galway in the global media."

Damien O' Riordan, General Manager of the internationally acclaimed and award winning **g Hotel**, which is a member property of Edward Holdings added, "The **g** is absolutely thrilled to be involved in such a prestigious event as the Volvo Ocean Race. The entire team at Edward Holdings are committed to this project and see it as a worthy opportunity to support the city, in light of this significant occasion for Galway."

