

## Best Frequent Flyer Programs Determined by 7.1 million Ballots

7.1 million ballots by frequent flyers from around the globe were counted in this year's Freddie Awards.

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Recognizing the best of travel loyalty programs, Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards has been named frequent flyer Program of the Year for the fourth consecutive year. Marriott Bonvoy held the top spot, for the twelfth time, taking the highest honor among hotel programs in the Americas region at the 2019 Freddie Awards. The Freddie Awards were on Thursday, April 25th, hosted this year at the CR Smith Museum, Ft. Worth, Texas. 7.1 million ballots submitted by frequent travelers from around the globe were counted in this year's campaign.

Internationally among airline loyalty programs, Norwegian Reward is Program of the Year for the Europe/Africa region and Virgin Australia Velocity received the Program of the Year Freddie Award in the Middle East/Asia/Oceania region. Among hotel programs internationally, Le Club AccorHotels was named Program of the Year for the Europe/Africa region and IHG Rewards Club took top honors as Program of the Year in the Middle East/Asia/Oceania region.

In the popular credit card category, Chase Bank was a big winner by issuing the Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards Premier credit card. American Express Membership Rewards took top honors in the Middle East/Asia/Oceania region while Norwegian Reward won in the Europe/Africa region with their credit card issued by Bank Norwegian.

Also announced were the 210 Award for programs whose value vote rating was trending higher (up-and-comers). Winners in this category included Aeroplan, Caesars Rewards, TAP Miles&Go, NH Rewards, ANA Mileage Club and Club ITC.

The Freddie Awards represent excellence among travel loyalty programs around the globe and rate the best programs in six categories: Program of the Year, Best Promotion, Best Redemption Ability, Best Customer Service, Best Elite Program and Best Loyalty Credit Card. Voters had six weeks to vote and were permitted to vote for programs in one of three global regions: Americas, Europe/Africa and Middle East/Asia/Oceania. Voting also was available in fourteen different languages.

The awards were announced this evening during a gala event at the CR Smith Museum in Ft. Worth, Texas. More than 225 airline, hotel and credit card representatives attended the ceremony, along with frequent flyers who voted in this year's awards. "We are delighted to once again allow frequent flyers throughout the world the opportunity to select the travel loyalty programs that they believe have achieved excellence," said Randy Petersen, founder of the Freddie Awards. "This is not an elitist view of these programs nor a popular vote, but rather the 'best' are determined by the votes of those who spend a great deal of their life on the road and in turn are appreciative of the value they bring to their members."

The Freddie Awards were first introduced in 1988 and are named after the late Sir Freddie Laker, who attracted fame (and a knighthood in the United Kingdom) for pioneering low-cost air travel across the Atlantic in the 1970s. They are known as the "Voice of the Frequent Flyer".

The presenting sponsor this year was **Barclays**. Supporting sponsors included Ascenda, Collinson, Points and BoardingArea. The Freddie Awards trophy was custom designed by Society Awards.

And the winners are:

Americas

Airline

Program of the Year — Southwest Airlines - Rapid Rewards (4th consecutive year)

Best Elite Program — American Airlines - AAdvantage (8th consecutive year)

Best Promotion — Avianca - LifeMiles

Best Customer Service — Southwest Airlines - Rapid Rewards

Best Redemption Ability — Southwest Airlines - Rapid Rewards

210 AWARD — Air Canada – Aeroplan

\*\* The 210 Award is given to the best scoring program that is ranked by fewer than 10% of voters. It's meant to recognize an up and coming program delivering value to members that may not yet be on the radar of as many frequent travelers.

Hotel Category

Program of the Year — Marriott Hotels - Marriott Bonvoy (for the 12th time)

Best Elite Program — Hyatt Hotels – World of Hyatt

Best Promotion — Marriott Hotels - Marriott Bonvoy

Best Customer Service — Caesars Entertainment - Caesars Rewards

Best Redemption Ability — Marriott Hotels - Marriott Bonvoy

210 AWARD — Caesars Entertainment - Caesars Rewards

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Credit Card

Best Loyalty Credit Card — Southwest Airlines - Rapid Rewards from Chase Bank

Europe & Africa

Airline Category

Program of the Year — Norwegian Air – Norwegian Reward

Best Elite Program — Aeroflot – Aeroflot Bonus

Best Promotion — AIR FRANCE/KLM – Flying Blue

Best Customer Service — Aeroflot – Aeroflot Bonus

Best Redemption Ability — AIR FRANCE/KLM – Flying Blue

210 AWARD — TAP Air Portugal – Miles&Go

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Hotel Category

Program of the Year — Accor Hotels – Le Club AccorHotels

Best Elite Program — Marriott Hotels - Marriott Bonvoy

Best Promotion — IHG – IHG Rewards Club

Best Customer Service — Accor Hotels – Le Club AccorHotels

Best Redemption Ability — IHG – IHG Rewards Club

210 AWARD — NH Hotel Group – NH Rewards

Credit Card

Best Affinity Credit Card — Bank Norwegian – Norwegian Card

Middle East & Asia/Oceania

Airline Category

Program of the Year — Virgin Australia – Velocity

Best Elite Program — Virgin Australia – Velocity

Best Promotion — Virgin Australia – Velocity

Best Customer Service — Virgin Australia – Velocity

Best Redemption Ability — Virgin Australia – Velocity

210 AWARD — ANA – ANA Mileage Club

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Hotel Category

Program of the Year — IHG – IHG Rewards Club

Best Elite Program — Hyatt Hotels – World of Hyatt

Best Promotion — IHG – IHG Rewards Club

Best Customer Service — Accor Hotels – Le Club AccorHotels

Best Redemption Ability — IHG – IHG Rewards Club

210 AWARD — ITC Hotels – Club ITC

Credit Card

Best Affinity Credit Card — American Express Membership Rewards

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