



Bali meeting

ALMOST as good as being there, it was good to catch up with Bali's Ayana



Resort & Spa director of public relations Marian Hinchcliffe and Jan Milosevic yesterday.

This outstanding resort, set on 77 hectares and perched 35 meters above on Jimbaran Bay is not surprisingly popular with MICE groups.

Marian revealed that the resort's stunning Ocean Villas which are currently undergoing renovation, are due for completion in the third quarter of this year, while a refurbishment to all the hotel's rooms and suites had been completed - *Jill*.

Accor smells Melbourne trouble

INDUSTRY concern over the lack of Government support of the Melbourne Formula 1 Grand Prix's retention has triggered Australia's largest hotel group, Accor, to warn that Victoria's wider economy would suffer if the city was to lose this prestigious motor race.

As Melbourne's largest hotel operator Accor currently holds 96% occupancy for its hotels across the city and says they will be 100% full for Saturday night.

Accor Australia chief operating officer, Simon McGrath, said that the loss of the Grand Prix could send a signal to a wider audience that the city wasn't interested in maintaining its position as



Australia's "events capital".

More than a benefit for the weekend, McGrath said the Grand Prix had been the catalyst for the city winning many conferences and other major events.

"Last year it was evident that other cities were aggressively targeting events traditionally held in Melbourne because of their extensive economic value, and Sydney is looking to expand its convention and events significantly over the next few years which will provide even greater competition to Melbourne.

"The simple fact is that if Melbourne loses the Grand Prix, almost certainly Australia will as well, so the ramifications of any failure to renegotiate the agreement will spread far wider.

"It was a bold move to attract the Grand Prix to Melbourne in the first place, now it's time to ensure that the foresight and progressive thinking displayed in that initial decision isn't diminished."

Going, going...

THERE is now less than a month to see the popular exhibition *Renaissance* – 15th & 16th Century Italian Paintings from the Academia Carrara, Bergamo, at the National Gallery of Australia.

Featuring paintings by great Italian Masters - Raphael, Botticelli, Bellini - the exhibition opens at 9am to the public and is being run until the 9 April, with Premium Session tickets priced from \$50.

Monaco's Grace & style



IN the wake of the Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition, opened earlier this week by Her Serene Highness Princess Charlene and showing at the Bendigo Museum until 17 June, a roadshow delegation from Monaco hosted a lunch at the Park Hyatt Sydney.

Headed by Guillaume Rose of the Monaco Tourist & Convention Authority and accompanied by Benoit Badufle, director of sales & marketing - Asia Pacific, Monte-Carlo SBM Hotels & Casinos and Koji Ito, sales manager, Fairmont Monte Carlo, Rose reported a strong growth in visitations from the Australian market over the past 12 months.

Overall, visitations to the

Principality, for the past year were 79% leisure and 21% MICE.

With more than 700 events annually, including the Monte Carlo Rally, Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix and Rolex Tennis Masters, Rose said there was always a good time to visit.

For the MICE market, The Grimaldi Forum, was, he said the best Centre in southern Europe.

The Fairmont's Koji Ito who reported a 25% growth in Aussie visits last year, said the Fairmont is located on the hairpin bend in full view of the Grand Prix track.

Rose is pictured above right with Koji Ito, Alison Roberts-Brown from Monaco tourism and Princess Grace herself.



WOULD you eat from a toilet? Apparently many people do at a place called 'Modern Toilet' in Taiwan.

Commodos make seats, urinals make bowls and everything is all about the smallest room in the house!



Look Polished @ Vibe Hotels

vibe hotels

This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win a Look Polished @ Vibe package with an overnight escape for two adults courtesy of Vibe Hotels.

This fantastic prize includes one night accommodation at any Vibe Hotel across Australia, buffet breakfast for two, late check out and four mini nail polishes.

For your chance to win, simply send in your



answer to the following question to -

comp@businessesnews.com.au

In 25 words or less, tell us why you deserve the chance to be pampered and Look Polished @ Vibe this winter?

The most creative answer will win!

vibe hotels ben



MEA throws out rule book

DON'T go to MEA's National Conference, Open Your Mind, with preconceived ideas because this year they have thrown out the rule book.

MEA says the proliferation of virtual meeting alternatives is putting paid to old 'lecture' models, which were born in a time when

authoritative information was scarce - whereas now it can be found everywhere.

So how can conferences evolve to stay relevant to the exchange of ideas and remain a crucial component of the way we do business?

It's a subject MEA 2012 will tackle head-on by harnessing the power of the audience, to get them out of their comfort zone and embrace new experiences.

You can expect to experience an amateur talent quest with live

performances, mass-group brain storming and unconferencing, where the audience are promoted to participate and asked to interact by facilitators.

Following on from the conference's ban on PowerPoint (BEN 26 Feb), another method to be used will be Pecha-Kucha, a Japanese presentation technique.

Guest speakers include Ita Buttrose, along with stars of TV's The Gruen Transfer and the New Inventors.

"To get the benefit, you'll have to be there yourself," said Linda Gaunt, MEA, ceo.

"This is not information that can be emailed to you afterwards.

"It's your chance to be there and see first-hand ideas that can transform our industry."

To view the full program and secure your place at MEA 2012, being held on the 21-24, April 2012 at Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, visit the MEA website to register at - meetingsevents.com.au/sydney/



In-house AV awarded

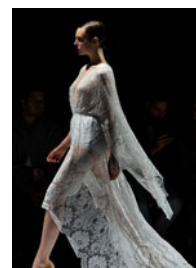
FOR the second year in a row, the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) took home the 'In-house AV Services Award' at the Victorian Meetings and Events Australia (MEA) Awards, held at the MCEC on Tuesday night.

The MCEC was also a finalist for the 'Business Development Person of the Year Award' - Prue Rogers, senior sales manager and the MEA and Ungerboeck Systems International Young Professional Scholarship - Abby Giese, sales administrator, Conventions.



Bolly fashion darling!

IF you are looking for an event to dazzle your clients, reward your staff or to just hang out with the fasionistas, what about Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Australia?



This exclusive invitation only event which brings together style, beauty, supermodels and celebrities to present the best in fashion, is offering limited Corporate Hospitality packages.

It's the only way for non-industry guests to attend, darling.

Held at the Overseas Passenger Terminal, Sydney Harbour, 30 April - 4 May 2012.

See mbfashionweek.com.au.

Lounging around Nadi

AIR Pacific's new 75-seat Tabua Lounge was officially opened this week in its Fiji home base at Nadi International Airport.

Located on the ground floor of the Departure Hall, the new Tabua Club Lounge is for the exclusive use of the airline's premium Tabua Club members.

Additionally, non-member passengers who wish to pay for the use of the lounge's services can do so for the sum of AUD\$40 (F\$75) per day.

Shane Hussein, Air Pacific spokesperson said "The new Air Pacific Tabua Club Lounge is an example of our continued commitment to enhancing the Fijian travel experience for our guests.

"It provides a quiet, inviting environment for leisure and business travellers to take timeout and extend their trip, especially during busier departure times."

Novotel gets a charge

WITH a total of 14 charge spots installed in and around Canberra, the Novotel Canberra has extended its environmental credentials with the installation of two public charge stations.

The charge spots which are located in the underground Novotel car park can support up to four electric cars at once.

Neil Paterson, gm said installing charge spots for electric cars was a key part of the Novotel's commitment to customer service and sustainability.

Pictured below are Guy Pross of Better Place and Neil Paterson, gm Novotel Canberra.



WIN A 2-NIGHT ULURU ENCOUNTER



To celebrate the \$10million redevelopment of Ayers Rock Resort's Uluru Meeting Place conference centre Voyages is offering a great prize to Business Events News readers.

The Uluru Meeting Place will feature striking contemporary interiors that reflect the Indigenous heritage of the location. Facilities include a new ballroom that can comfortably seat 420 people as well as a second ballroom that seats over 300. These two rooms combined can create a large area that is ideal for events and trade shows.

The prize includes two return economy airfares to Ayers Rock Resort from the winners nearest Australian capital city, return airport transfers, two nights accommodation in a newly refurbished room at the Sails in the Desert Hotel, dinner at the intimate Tali Wiru fine dining experience and a Desert Awakenings Small Group Sunrise tour.

All you need to do to be in the running to win this great prize, is to email your answer to the below question by COB on Friday 30th March to: voyagescomp@businesseventsnews.com.au

The most creative answer will win this fantastic prize.

In 25 words or less tell us what Uluru means to you



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EY ups Egypt route

A move by Etihad Airways to substantially boost flights to Egypt is expected to improve connectivity over the airline's Abu Dhabi hub to key destinations in Southeast Asia and Australia.

A total of 18 Airbus A320 services to Cairo are to operate weekly from June.

James Hogan, president & ceo, said "Despite the Arab Spring's impact, this route has continued to perform strongly and over the past eight years our services to Cairo have exceeded our expectations.

"Cairo is a special destination for us due to the established cultural and commercial ties between Egypt and the UAE.

"We expect to see continuing strong demand on this route, particularly from government and business travellers," he said.

Conferencing on agenda -TSAX

A RECENT survey by the Travelscene Corporate travel agency group has found that conferencing remains solidly on the agenda for the Australian corporate sector in 2012, with strong activity coming from a commitment to to maximise a return on investment within MICE strategies.

Conducted across a range of corporate expos including the Executive Assistant Network, Sydney, and RUI Explorers Conference in Perth, an overwhelming majority of respondents predicted their company's conference and events activities were likely to increase (61%) or at least stay the same (34%) moving forward in 2012/13.

Only 7% of conference activities are expected to decline.

"Market conditions in the corporate sector in Australia have been quite buoyant in the last year, domestically, corporate travel has exceeded all expectations with the mining, agriculture, health and education sectors being the strongest growth areas, and we expect this to follow through into the new financial year," said

Travelscene Corporate general manager, David Padman.

Conferences, he said are opportunities for creativity and development, growing networks, planting seeds and expanding knowledge but they also require organisation, time and money.

According to the survey, meeting content is more crucial than ever, at the same time hotel location and its amenities, as well as the destination city played an important role in overall experience.

"Australian businesses are continuing to support meetings and may even project to increase their overall meeting budgets, but as we continue driving business through unsure economic times, companies are wary about excessive spending for individual events, particularly costs related to travel and accommodation," he said.

BESydney wins twice

BESYDNEY won the 'Metropolitan Destination Marketing Organisation Award' and the Business Development Person of the Year' award at the MEA NSW & ACT gala awards.

GETTING TO KNOW: Coffs Coast, NSW

It's known as the Coffs Coast, a region of vast scenic wonders that stretches from Coffs Harbour to Port Macquarie and takes in the towns of Sawtell, Bellingen, Dorrigo, The Nambucca, Gladstone and South West Rocks.

Places right under the nose of travellers hurrying along the Pacific Highway to more southern or northerly destinations, yet too few step off the highway long enough to smell the 'local roses' and get to know the passionate people who live there.

Enthusiasts such as long time residents, tree changers and sea changers, who grow fresh produce, run guesthouses, own restaurants, grow grapes, make cheeses and collectively add an extra dollop of sunshine to the region.

Easily accessible, Coffs is located between Sydney and Brisbane and as a major tourism destination it offers a wide variety of accommodation and conference venues able to cater for almost any group size, from 10 to several hundreds or thousands of delegates.

The award-winning, week-long Ulysses AGM in May 2007 successfully catered for just under 6,000 delegates.

Most of the resorts and hotels are located within 10 minutes' drive from the airport and major conference venues, and range from 4½ star beachfront resorts to tranquil hinterland retreats.

"For the same cost of holding a business event in the city, organisers are able to fly their delegates here, accommodate them nicely and present them with a professionally organised conference in a memorable location," said Glenn Caldwell, Coffs Coast tourism manager.

Evidence of Coffs pulling power is their winning of the annual VIEW Club National Convention to be held over four days in September this year.

Previously held in capital cities, it is expected to attract 800 members.

"Conferences are an industry in themselves and generate enormous economic benefits for the area in which they are held," Caldwell said of the win.

