



Lombok is calling...

BRINGING BEN to you in a timely fashion means I'm writing this from my seat on a Garuda Indonesia flight en route to Lombok.



As a member of the Australian Society of Travel Writers, I am travelling there to attend the annual AGM but also to report back on the destination for the Conference and Incentive market both from Lombok and Bali.

What has impressed me is the bespoke service our group received on arrival at the airport in Sydney, which included Garuda staff on hand to greet us, bags tagged before going on the carousel and our very own personal check-in line.

As one ASTW member remarked, "I feel special already."

Seated on the flight and about to take off, an on air announcement from the pilot welcomed the group to enthusiastic cheering.

It's the sort of welcome conference and incentive groups can expect, on this airline that has been picking up quite a few awards of late.

Actually, I feel I'm travelling in a parallel universe because the last time I travelled Garuda, at least a decade ago, it was not particularly memorable.

So hats off to you, Garuda - Jill.

MEA targets NSW students

MEETINGS & Events Australia is to present a one-day fully catered event, packed full of sessions aimed at students studying event related subjects.

MEA's NSW Student Insights will take place on Thursday 22 November from 10.30am-5.30pm

in conjunction with the NSW Professional Development Sponsor, SMC Conference and Function Centre.

Attendees will hear from recent MEA students and Young Professional Scholarship winners about their experiences in entering the industry as well as presentations from experienced events professionals.

ALSO, as great presentation skills are an essential part of every meetings and events professional's arsenal, MEA is offering a complimentary webinar on 31 October at 12 noon AEDT.

No matter if you are a regular presenter or are called upon to book, organise and brief speakers: the same rules apply; it's your job to ensure a professional presentation, says Meetings & Events Australia.



Meetings & Events Australia

This webinar is essential for anyone who wants to:

- Be more effective at presenting in your own meetings
- Win the loyalty of staff and clients
- Secure regular speaking slots to promote your business.

MEA's Rosemary Ferrari is joined by US presentation coach and public speaking guru Ken Molay, for a webinar packed with tips to help you deliver with confidence, build rapport with your audience and dodge common presentation errors that can detract from your message.

FINALLY don't forget to save the evening of Thursday 22 November for the NSW Christmas Party being held at the Deckhouse, Woolwich, 7.00pm – 11.00pm.

A ferry transfer departs 6.30pm from Aquarium Wharf in the CBD - more details to come so check out www.mea.org.au.

Silver Galapagos announced

AN abundance of wildlife including sun-basking land iguanas, giant tortoises, blue- and red-footed boobies, colourful marine iguanas, sea lions, penguins and Darwin's famous finches, will be that much more tangible when *Silver Galapagos*, the new name for Silversea's second small-sized expedition ship joins the fleet.

Currently sailing as the *Galapagos Explorer II*, Silversea has signaled its intention to maintain a consistent level of elegance throughout its fleet.

That will take effect after the all-suite, 100-guest vessel undergoes a major refurbishment in September 2013.

Karen Christensen, general manager and director sales and marketing Australasia for Silversea, commented "The Asia Pacific region already represents the second largest market globally for our luxury expedition cruises.

"The addition of *Silver Galapagos* to our fleet next year will open up many new opportunities for our experienced guests to discover one of the world's most pristine environmental destinations and its amazing wildlife."

Fullerton event pods

SINGAPORE'S famous Fullerton Bay Hotel has announced a new event space which will be custom built on Marina Bay.

Floating adjacent to the hotel, the newly built "event pods" aim to provide a "striking and unique experience in the heart of the city" - supported by the personalised services of the hotel's event specialists.

The 44 square metre pods can accommodate 30 people theatre-style, 40 for receptions, 20 for boardroom meetings and 20 in a banquet configuration.

Each has a massive HDTV, automatic blinds, sound system and an attached bathroom plus fantastic views - for info email events@fullertonbayhotel.com.

Get blanced tomorrow

SYDNEY will tomorrow night for the first time ever play host to the spectacular white dinner, Le Dîner en Blanc, which will take place at a "secret, iconic location".

The event, which is being supported by Destination NSW and is part of the Crave Sydney International Food Festival, will see more than 1500 guests dressed in all white enjoy an impromptu feast complete with white picnic tables, chairs, rugs and glassware.

Dîner en Blanc takes place in cities around the world each year including New York, Barcelona, Singapore and Mexico City.

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Ben Carnegie



Mantra's heavy metal

IT was a night of celebrations last weekend when the Gold Coast tourism industry partied at the Mantra Sun City, host hotel to the V8 Ute drivers during the annual GC600 event.

Guests were treated to a display of heavy metal of the four wheel kind, with over 60 race cars on display around the property including a \$600,000 McLaren – the never been driven luxury car was flown in direct from London for the occasion.

Mantra Sun City gm Michael Murtagh, said "It was an early indicator that the event was going to be a success when around 65% of our bookings were taken by March this year," he said.

During the weekend the Mantra restaurant catered for more than 600 drivers, crew and event staff at breakfast and at various other functions.

Hartley rejoins Sofitel

ANDREW

Hartley has returned to the Sofitel brand, as director of sales and marketing for the Sofitel Melbourne



On Collins and regional director of sales and marketing for Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.

Most recently director of sales and marketing at the InterContinental in Shanghai, Hartley is replacing Blair Weir who has taken on a new role at the Sofitel Vienna Stephansdom.

He has 18 years experience in hotels across the globe and has a wealth of sales knowledge and leadership skills in some of the Sofitel's key roles in the region.

"Having spent the last four years in Asia, I am delighted to be heading up sales and marketing for Australia, NZ and Fiji and to be based at Sofitel Melbourne On Collins, in the world's most liveable city," Hartley said.

Nemonic's Universal treat

ON Tuesday night a select group of corporate clients of Nemonic Concepts' Sue and Bill Wallace, who represent Somewhere in Africa, Sun International and Lion Sands, were treated to dinner at Christine Mansfield's Universal Restaurant.

Styled a 'Dinner with Friends' they dined on such sublime dishes as Cape Malay curry chicken salad, chermoula baked salmon with



goes nuts,' indescribably scrumptious and some even tried the Opium Hill 8 tea grown on the Thai slopes!

Pictured at Universal restaurant from left are: Bill and Sue Wallace with Svetlana Jovanovic, Unique Tourism Collection (centre).

Inset from left are: Jeanette Kruleitch, Travel Logistics; Universal's chef extraordinaire Christine Mansfield; Craig Walter, Unique Group Travel; and Gary Bender, World Corporate Travel.



Moroccan eggplant and cous cous and finished with Tunisian baklava pastry, orange cream, strawberries, pomegranate and rose syrup.

All tucked into Mansfield's signature dessert dish 'Gaytime

Club Med adds retail

CLUB Med will next Monday mark a milestone in the way its products are distributed in Australia, with its first ever 'in-store' boutique outlet.

It's being created in partnership with Sydney Eastern Suburbs travel agency Sabra Travel - a long-time supporter of Club Med - and will see part of the refurbished Sabra Travel store in Bondi Road fully branded by the upmarket operator.

Part of the Sabra team will be designated and uniformed as Club Med specialists dedicated to selling the group's holidays, while the other half of the store will continue to promote other travel products.

Senior Club Med executives will be in Australia for the launch.

Toga to Marysville

TOGA Hospitality has announced a major new Vibe hotel which will be constructed in country Victoria.

Vibe Hotel and Conference Centre Marysville (**BEN** breaking news Wed) will comprise 100 guest rooms including five suites, along with a conference centre suitable for up to 300 delegates.

The four star property, being developed in partnership with the Victorian government to help the region devastated by the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009, aims to play a "key role in the revitalisation of this stunning part of regional Victoria," according to Toga ceo Allan Vidor.

Construction of the \$28 million project, which will target a 5 Star Green Rating, is scheduled to commence mid-2013, with the first guests to be welcomed in late 2014.

It will feature a wine bar/pub, a restaurant/cafe, gymnasium, outdoor pool and a spa/health and wellbeing centre.



THE road to hell...

South Korean tech company LG, created an optical illusion to show off its new screens.

Trouble is they tried it out in a lift full of people, so that when they got into the lift the lights darkened and the floor seemed to fall away, revealing the shaft.

The unsuspecting lift users were horrified into thinking they were falling to their deaths.

Not such a good marketing ploy!

Shangri-La's newest China hotel

SHANGRI-LA has opened the Shangri-La Hotel in Changzhou, a major China business city.

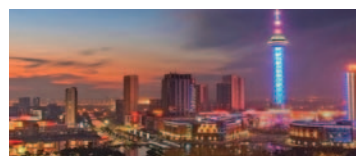
The hotel launch is the second collaboration between Shangri-La International Hotel Management Ltd and Qiaoyu Group, Changzhou following the successful opening of Traders Fudu Hotel, Changzhou in 2005.

Located within Wujin Hi-tech Industrial Park, the hotel will cater to business executives and corporate meetings.

The hotel is close to the historic "Ruins of Yancheng," the remains of a walled city that was founded over 3,000 years ago at the beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty.

With 350 guestrooms, the Shangri-La is the largest events venue in the city with more than 2,500 square metres of flexible space accommodating up to 1,500 guests.

The hotel also features a 1,500 sq metre pillar-free Grand Ballroom with nine-metre ceiling, intelligent lighting, the biggest LED screen in Changzhou and a platform for car access for automotive exhibitions and seven function rooms.





business events news

26th October 2012

Fly Qantas to the Middle East

QANTAS has been granted approval by the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority to sell fares between Dubai and Melbourne/Sydney.

Although its wide-ranging alliance with Emirates is still subject to ACCC approval, Qantas says it will pursue the new routes to London via Dubai regardless, and accordingly has also sought permission to carry passengers who disembark in Dubai.

That's good news for conference and incentive organisers wanting to access the huge range of unique product offered in the fast-growing emirate, as well as other nearby locations.

Qantas will commence its new London via Dubai A380 services effective from 31 Mar 2013, shifting its hub from Singapore.

Other Middle Eastern destinations are expected to be included in the Qantas offering, with the carrier's website currently showing availability for cities such as Muscat, Amman, Kuwait, Doha and Jeddah.

Year-round Dubai return fares start at \$2050 ex Melbourne.

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Team spirit at SCEC

IN a move that reflects the venue's ongoing commitment to the business events sector, two valued members of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre's management team have been appointed to roles on industry bodies.



They are director of operations, Stephen Wood who has taken on the role of chair of the Meetings & Events

Australia (MEA) NSW Branch Committee, while business development manager, Toni McAllister has joined the board of the International Special Events Society's Sydney Chapter.

Commenting on the appointments, Centre chief executive Ton van Amerongen said, "The Centre prides itself on the contribution it makes to the broader industry so I'm delighted that Stephen and Toni have taken on these additional roles which will help build our sector."



Finger on the fish

HERE'S something tempting to do during your next Port Stephens conference.

There's a new seafood dinner cruise where sailors cook fresh fish and prawns on the boat's barbecue while the team swims in a sheltered cove at sunset.

Sailing on the catamaran *Imagine* the relaxing, two-hour cruise departs from Nelson Bay every day until May 2013, with passengers able to spot Port Stephens' famous dolphins before the vessel anchors for the seafood dinner.

Find out more online at www.imaginecruises.com.au.



Mustering for NT meetings

A healthy number of C&I guests headed to the IVY on Wednesday night as the NT Meeting Muster 2012 rolled into Sydney.

The event was the third held in five cities that included Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide, with a smaller gathering to be held in Perth.

Causing a frisson of interest in the predominantly female audience was MC Russell Robertson, former AFL Demons player, who up until three years ago had never been to the Northern Territory.

"My vision of the Territory is like that of many other people who haven't there - hot, red and dusty," he said

Which begged the question why is he the NT spokesperson?

"Simply because I hadn't been there before," he said.

"Until I'd been there and seen things like the sunset over Uluru, I thought I'd seen it all.

"I was flabbergasted, it was a spiritual experience and I was a changed person," he said with honest conviction.

"I recommend the NT experience and if that equates to business, then I urge you to go."

MEANWHILE, getting a one up on other AIME exhibitors the NT operators were handing out invitations to join them to Spend an Evening with the NT@AIME, at Melbourne's Paco's Tacos, Tuesday 26 February.

Suite Fraser special

FRASER Suites Sydney, with its new function rooms, high ceilings, abundance of natural light and state of the art technology, is offering a Day Delegate Package Special with savings, from \$82 per person.

The package which is available for 20-100 people and valid until 31 March, 2013, includes: room hire, note pads and pens, iced water and mints, morning and afternoon tea and lunch.

For more information on the deal or to make a booking email sales.sydney@frasershospitality.com.



It sounds like a fun evening, so line up for an invite by emailing info@ntconventions.com.au.

Pictured above are: Scott Lovett, director Business Events, Northern Territory Convention Bureau & Fernando Lonergan, CWT Meeting & Events.

Inset is former AFL player, Russell Robertson after experiencing the Northern Territory for the first time.

Bintan's private estate

THE Sanchaya, a new private estate on the prime northern coast of Bintan Island, and part of a wider development project for Lagoi Bay, has inked strategic marketing partnerships with three leading hospitality platforms ahead of its opening, scheduled for the first half of 2013.

The partnership includes Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH) for its extensive presence and reach worldwide, Elite Resorts of Asia Pacific for its Asia focus, while Secret Retreats will navigate travellers seeking the ultimate in experiential travel.

Sanchaya forms part of a wider development project for Lagoi Bay and its surroundings, which will add private residences, hotels and private estates, commercial spaces, a golf course, and an international airport, in addition to the existing domestic airport.