



A rather fruity venue

IT was Laura Richards of the Conference Business who first took me to Scala's at Flemington Markets – an Italian café/delicatessen/wine/food establishment, in the thick of fruit and vegetable land.

As close to Italy as you are likely to get, up until now I have kept its existence fairly close to my chest.

Breakfast here is a banquet and the coffee and ricotta cake, the stuff of poetry.

Talking with owner Frank Canturi it struck me that it would make a great venue for an Italian themed function.

A night at La Scala.

A prohibition mafia era event, perhaps?

One complete with opera singers, guests dressed as gangsters and flappers, Italian music and singers.

Frank agreed and said he had his own birthday party with 70 people, best of all, he said, "there's no problem with making a noise at the markets."

If you're intrigued, email: frankcanturi@hotmail.com



EEAA reaches into Qld

AN April events program that will showcase the new Royal International Convention Centre (RICC) and include a briefing on Brisbane's economic development agenda, is being held by the Exhibition and Event Association (EEAA), as it extends its reach into the Sunshine State.

Joyce DiMascio, general manager EEAA recognising the growing importance of Queensland in the expo market as a driver of major consumer and trade shows said, "It's a timely and important opportunity for EEAA members from Queensland and members who do business and plan to do business in the

state to attend this event.

"We will also take the opportunity to brief members on the latest Market Monitor findings regarding the health of the industry," said DiMascio.

Three key events to be held on 23 April are the EEAA Member Forum, EEAA Young Stars & Leaders Table, and an EEAA Board Meeting.

The EEAA Young Stars Program is also expanding its footprint into Queensland.

The committee, chaired by Brad Booth, chose to hold their next event in Brisbane following demand for a platform for younger members of the EEAA to share their views, ideas and experiences as well the opportunity to make a greater contribution in the work of the Association.

Check the EEAA website at eeaa.com.au for further details.

New rooms offer

FOUR Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour will have four brand new heritage meeting spaces opening today.

Adding an additional 300sqm of new space, these four unique spaces, known as The Heritage Meeting Rooms, bring the hotel's event spaces to 21 with a combined total of approximately 2,000 square metres.

The Heritage Rooms comprise the restored features and sandstone of the historical Corn Exchange Warehouse built in 1887 - the oldest surviving market building in Sydney.

"As the largest hotel in Australia with 672 rooms and 21 unique event spaces, this addition strengthens the Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour as a market leader in conferencing and events," said general manager David Fraser.

A new roof top bar, 'Bar Eleven' on level 11 with panoramic views of Darling Harbour has also just opened.

A special Heritage Meeting Rooms introductory offer gives 20% off minimum spend and room rental for new events held April-June - for details see www.fourpointssydney.com/meetingoffers

Mantra adds Crawford

RICHARD Crawford has been appointed as development manager for Mantra Group, with the aim of facilitating the firm's ongoing rapid expansion plans.

It's an appointment reflective of strong growth for the group which has 17 projects – both new and acquisitions - in the pipeline across the Asia Pacific.

Mantra recently opened its first Asian property, the Mantra Nusa Dua in Bali.

Sunlover MICE offer

SUNLOVER Reef Cruises have a special group MICE offer on their Moore Reef full day cruise.

At \$119 per person, which is a saving of \$71, it includes – one person free per 10 paying passengers, one free soft drink voucher per person, free use of Lycra suits if required, and a 20% discount off Seawalker Helmet, Diving and Introductory Diving.

Valid for new bookings only and available until 31 March 2014 - for details see sunlover.com.au

BestCities new chair

NEETA Lachmandas-Sakellariou, Singapore Tourism Board's assistant chief executive in charge of business tourism development, conventions and meetings, exhibitions and conferences and enrichment, has been appointed chair for 2013 of the BestCities Global Alliance which targets international meeting planners.

"Coming from Singapore, where knowledge exchange is a key value proposition for business event organisers and delegates, I look forward to applying some of my own learnings to pioneer new ways to deliver better results to our clients, and create new business opportunities for our partners," she said.

Joining her on the Board are representatives from all other BestCities bureaux – Berlin, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Houston, Melbourne and Vancouver.

Lindy to Luxperience

SYDNEY

based luxury and experiential show

Luxperience, taking place 2-4 September

this year, has announced the appointment of Lindy Andrews as its new Director of Sales & Partner Alliances.

The move sees Luxperience deepen its expertise in MICE, with Andrews having significant experience including roles at Novotel Manly and the Panthers Group of venues.

She also created an online media portal for the Australian business events industry that ranked number one globally for key MICE industry search terms.




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A PROJECT to build the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere was approved recently in Melbourne.

Cutting the tape on a 1,273-foot tower called Australia 108, it will house a 288-room hotel, and is set to become the tallest hotel in the world.

The five-star, luxury hotel designed by architect Nonda Katsalidis, is to feature a number of triangular shapes jutting out from the building, inspired by the Southern Cross stars.

At a cost of around \$600 million, the yet-to-be-named hotel will according to its designers, have a "hovering" lobby that spans two floors.



Two more at Moreton

MORETON Hire has added two new starters to their growing business development team.

Livia de Vos with a strong career in the events industry, previously held positions of event manager and



more recently account manager at Cievents, joins the team in Brisbane.

Monique Cribb joins the



Moreton Hire team in Victoria.

With a background of 10 years in the events industry, Cribb worked venue

side at Accor both in sales and operations and knows what it takes to create seamless events.

ZOOm in Cairns

GUESTS can fly through a tropical rain forest and smile at a crocodile without leaving their hotel with Pullman Reef Hotel Casino's new ZOOm accommodation package.

Cairns ZOOm is set in the Wildlife Dome on the rooftop of the hotel and is the world's first Challenge Ropes Course to be placed in a wildlife immersion exhibit.

Priced from \$255 per night the package includes overnight accommodation, breakfast for up to two adults and a ZOOm One Activity which includes entry to the Wildlife Dome.

The ZOOm experience offers adventure at varying heights and levels of difficulty from Mid-ZOOm to Hi-ZOOm.

It consists of 65 elements of crossings and ziplines including one which goes directly over the hotel's very much alive four metre saltwater crocodile, Goliath.

The Wildlife Dome also features the PowerJump, a free-fall adventure with a 13m drop, while the Dome-Climb offers spectacular views of the city and surrounds.

Bookings are subject to availability - call 07 4030 8888 for more information.

Brisbane makeover

SILVERNEEDLE Hospitality has announced details of the redevelopment of the Chifley at Lennons hotel in the Brisbane CBD, with construction by Hutchinson Builders to commence starting from today.

The multimillion dollar project will see the property transformed into the world's first NEXT Hotel - SilverNeedle Hospitality's new flagship hotel brand.

Targeting the "modern business traveller," the project will also revitalise the Queen Street Mall precinct with a new exclusive luxury retail space alongside the 300 room NEXT Hotel.

Construction is anticipated to be complete by mid-2014.

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Aussie Copper Skillet bronze

THE distinction of becoming the IACC Conference Centre Chef of the Year and the winner of the prestigious culinary award – the Copper Skillet, was awarded at the IACC-Americas annual conference to Pascal Marcin of Dolce LaHulpe in Belgium.

Australian Jason Palermo of the MGSM Executive Hotel & Conference Centre took out the bronze and Shane Brassel from the USA - Charles F. Knight Executive Education & Conference Center, the silver.

Marcin's winning dish was a delicious sounding sweet lamb with basil and diced blue beef.

A fondue of leeks in chicken stock, red pepper seared with lemon and coriander, potato and purple asparagus tips in virgin olive oil with thyme, finished off with a fresh garnish, celery leaf, dill, basil leaf, olive oil and sea salt.



Pictured above is Copper Skillet winner Pascal Marcin receiving his award from Peter Stewart, President of IACC.

Malaysia looms large at IT&CM

WHEN IT&CM China (Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings China) is held 17-19 April at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Centre, Malaysia will have the largest booth for the South East Asian (S.E.A) region and fourth largest international booth.

Participating for the third time, the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) will be joined by 15 industry partners including the Sabah Tourism Board, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and Reliance Conventions & Events.

Andaz Maui to open

OPENING in the US summer is the Andaz Maui at Wailea.

Situated on Maui's Mokapu Beach, the 15-acre property will be Hawaii's first LEED® certified resort.

Featuring 297 guest rooms and suites, and seven luxurious villas it offers more than 15,000 sq ft of meeting and event space; a full-service spa, retail and fitness facility and two restaurants.

See www.maui.andaz.hyatt.com.

MEA Masterclass now open

AN inspiring and comprehensive business program- the MEA Masterclasses -is being offered for delegates throughout the MEA 2013 National Conference.

Being held alongside the main program, they are designed for business principals, executive managers, directors and business owners.

There is a maximum of 30 delegates per session and no fee to attend; however it is essential to book your attendance.

Sessions on Monday 06 May include 'Master the art of Mindfulness' with Peter Bliss and 'Legally what you need to know' presented by Matt Crouch from Hodgkinson McInnes Legal.

On Tuesday 07 May Darren Keppie from LinkedIn will speak on 'Connecting to the World's Largest Professional Audience,' followed by 'Innovate to Prosper' with Roger La Salle from Matrix Thinking.

To book email your name and session to conference@mea.org.au



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Cairns Advantage

CAIRNS Delegate Advantage
Program, which was launched
at AIME, went live last week for
delegates of Spillcome 2013.

It's a program that is available to
all conference organisers and one
that offers access to value adds
and discounts on restaurants,
retail and tours across Cairns - see
businesseventscairns.org.au

MEL Parkroyal win

TAKING out the gong for Best
Airport Hotel Australia/Pacific for
the second year running is the
Parkroyal Melbourne Airport.

Now in its 14th year, the hotel
was feted at the Skytrax 2013
World Airport Awards that
recognises the leading airports
and airport hotels globally.

Singapore's Changi Airport was
another winner, taking out the
World's Best Airport award.

Camps and the 'getting' of China

WHEN Spaniard Jordi Camps,
cofounder & general manager of
China a la Carta, led a high-end
incentive group from Spain to
China, his first experience of the
country, it was such a disaster he
nearly lost his job.

"The Chinese didn't get who we
were and what we wanted to do
and experience.

"They had their own agenda
- one that saw us continually
being taken to souvenir and craft
shops we were not interested
in, whilst the hotels were not up
to the five-star standard we had
requested.

"I was never going again," he
said, that is until his father who
had business in China persuaded
Camps to go with him.

What he learnt is, the China he
had been shown and the China
he discovered, had nothing to do
with each other.

Leaving behind a career in
multinational companies, he set
up China a la Carta and decided
to help other travellers not make
the same mistake.

Camps, who now lives in
Shanghai, has developed a deep
respect for the Chinese culture



and has since learnt to write over
1000 Chinese characters.

He runs his company in concert
with Yang Fan who was born and
raised in Beijing.

In an interview last Friday
Camps told **BEN** he was in
Australia to introduce his
personalised, high-end product to
the FIT and incentive markets.

"We get what people need and
deliver value together with great
experiences.

"Everything is custom made,
there are no catalogues, that's
not what we do," he stressed.

Enthused by his visit to Australia
and how well China a la Carta has
been received, he was delighted
to already have five incentive
trips on which to quote - more
info at www.chinaalacarta.com



Getting to Know: Ipswich, Queensland

by: Jill Varley

Ipswich's industrial past means it doesn't always get a good wrap, but like other former industrial cities, Ipswich recognises that its heritage is one of its greatest assets.

It's Queensland's oldest provincial city and the award-winning Workshops Rail Museum is where the very first train to run in Queensland steamed out.

Here you can ride on an historic train and hold a conference or event in one of its unique spaces.

Located just 40 minutes west of Brisbane, Ipswich is a city with more than 500 parks, wineries, cafes and restaurants. One that hosts regular national and local festivals and events such as the Queensland Open Golf Championships, drag racing at the Willowbank Raceway and Queensland 400 V8 supercars at Queensland Raceway.

A semi-rural destination, it has all the attractions and facilities of a progressive city, where some of the finest examples of domestic architecture date back to the 1800s.

There is much on offer in the way of accommodation and the 4 ½ star Metro Hotel Ipswich International has both 97 well-appointed rooms and apartments and seven fully equipped conference and meeting rooms able to cater for between ten and 450 people.

Floating Images is the only hot air ballooning outfit close to Brisbane where groups can enjoy this activity, while other high-flying options and transfers can be taken with Pterodactyl Helicopters.

They can fly to the Greg Norman designed Brookwater Golf Club where you can dine at Drift, which overlooks the Club's picturesque, flooded gum fairway.

Drift can provide corporate catering on the green, while an open-air stadium can take up to 2,500 people.

