



New horizons

LAST weekend

I had the pleasure of not only being a guest of the Mercure Sydney Central hotel but of taking part in a walk of the suburbs that surround Sydney's Central Station - Ultimo, Chippendale, Redfern and Surry Hills.

This innovative event, devised by the Mercure, was to showcase not only the remarkable final stage of a major renovation to each of the hotel's 517 rooms but the renewal of the Central, Chippendale and Broadway regions of the city.

I'm going to write more about the remarkable changes taking place: of iconic residential

towers, with the world's tallest vertical garden, the UTS building with aluminium sheets perforated with a binary code, people friendly parks, urban sculptures and architectural innovation.

For now, I believe this walk is a must on a list of things to do in Sydney and an exciting add on to a conference or partner program.

The walk is one in a series of Sydney Architectural Walks, taken by a group of passionate architects which are a casual, conversational, narrative-driven meditation on a city that will really surprise you.

See sydneyarchitecture.org - it would make someone a great Christmas gift!

MEANWHILE in a note from PARKROYAL Darling Harbour, the deadline offer for their 'Strictly Meetings' offer (BEN Mon) is 1 June, not 30 June as previously stated. Jill



Return of the big wheel

THE announcement of Peter Rowland Catering as the exclusive caterer for Melbourne Star Observation Wheel bodes well for its imminent reopening.

The trouble-prone wheel, bought in October by Japanese firm, Sanoyas Holdings Corporation, builder of 81 Ferris Wheels who also builds, owns and operates roller-coasters, is currently undergoing commissioning, with Peter Rowland Catering now accepting bookings for functions from February 1, 2014.

Dedicated function space ranges from cocktails for 400 guests to a sit-down dinner for up to 250 people, while the Star Piazza, at the base of the Star, will have the capacity to host a cocktail reception for up to 1500 people, making it one of Melbourne's largest open-air event venues.

At 120 metres high, the Melbourne Star is double the height of the West Gate Bridge carriageway and equivalent to a 40-storey building.

Pullman heads North

ACCOR'S Pullman Hotels & Resorts brand last night held an event to formally welcome chef Justin North as its culinary ambassador, continuing a relationship which debuted about 12 months ago (BEN 14 Dec 12). North will oversee the culinary direction of the eleven Pullman properties across Australia.

Q Dining at Pullman Grand Quay Sydney will be the first restaurant to launch with North's consultation, opening in Jan 2014 with a "micro-seasonal approach" featuring fresh seafood to create a standalone dining experience on Sydney Harbour.



Guests will enjoy uninterrupted 360-degree views for up to 40 kilometres, encompassing the Docklands precinct, Melbourne's CBD, Port Phillip Bay and as far as Mount Macedon, Arthur's Seat and the Dandenong Ranges.

Karen Bolinger, ceo Melbourne Convention Bureau ceo said news of the partnership was exciting.

"Our clients are always looking for unique venues with quality catering and this partnership represents what Melbourne does so well, a collaboration with a difference."

MyCEB's winnings

THE Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) has announced "record-breaking international event wins" in a review of its 2013 results.

Within the period of 1 January to 31 October, MyCEB together with its partners has won an impressive 118 event bids with a total estimated economic impact value of RM 770 million (around A\$240m) – a substantial 21% increase from the 2012 review.

Fijian treasure...

FOLLOWING the completion of an extensive renovation program to Treasure Island, after the devastation caused by Tropical Cyclone Evan in December 2012, Treasure Island and Bounty Island Group's general manager, Scott Walton extended a true 'Bula' welcome to their very first guests on 1 December.

Paying tribute to the staff that had "toiled with huge passion and energy to make the on time reopening a reality," he said, they were "bang on target and it was a real team effort from everyone involved.

"As our guests will see for themselves when they arrive, Treasure Island has never looked as good in its entire 41-year history," he said.

The resort is now fully operational but will be formally reopened on 17 Dec by Fijian President, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau - exactly a year after the huge storm.

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crumbs!

WHAT the cluck?

USA Today reports that a company based in the US state of Kentucky is selling candles that waft the deep fried flavour of finger-lickin' chicken.



Get 'em while they're hot because they're sure to keep the taste buds at an all time high and in a perpetual state of hunger.

With KFC chicken candles, who needs room deodorisers?

"Your home can now smell like fried chicken all the time, without having to actually fry chicken," says Whit Hiler, co-founder of Kentucky for Kentucky, a business that promotes small-batch products from the Bluegrass State.

The candles are created using a special technique which involves actually frying chicken in the wax, plus some special additions - dare we say 11 secret herbs and spices?

The same company also makes a Kentucky Derby-themed candle, and no, it doesn't smell like a sweaty racehorse but has the delicate scent of an authentic southern mint julep.

As they often say, Only in the US of A!

Qantas boosts China connections

A LANDMARK reciprocal codeshare agreement has been signed by Qantas and China Southern Airlines, which Qantas Group ceo Alan Joyce says will significantly improve travel options for Qantas customers and open up new tourism opportunities for Australia.

The deal will allow Qantas customers to book on China Southern services from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth to Guangzhou – China's third largest city and its biggest transport hub – as well as four onward destinations within China.

Making it easier for Chinese travellers to visit more cities, China Southern customers will be able to book on 10 different Qantas routes within Australia and to New Zealand.

The agreement is part of the airline's strategy to offer the best travel options between Australia and Asia.

iVvy plans for growth

IVVY Event Software has confirmed the successful migration of its platform to Amazon Web Services, with the cloud-based platform providing a strong and scalable basis to support the firm's strong growth.

iVvy's offering includes a range of integrated event management products and event apps, using cloud and mobile technology, as well as a new Venue Management System.

CEO Lauren Hall said partnering with AWS offers iVvy and its clients "increased security and reliability while also providing an elastic solution to allow for increases in capacity in minutes."

Aggie Grey's becomes a Sheraton

ON the island of Upolu Samoa, one of the South Pacific's best known and historically significant hotels, Aggie Grey's Hotel & Bungalows, together with the much



newer Aggie Grey's Lagoon, Beach Resort & Spa, will join Starwood Hotels & Resorts group as the Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel and the Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort, respectively.

With a mid-2014 opening, following extensive multi-million dollar renovations, the hotels are owned by the Grey family, who also have an association with Starwood on the Le Meridien Resort in Tahiti.

The management deal marks Starwood's debut into the region, with Sheraton the first international hotel brand to enter the market.

Closed since December 2012, Aggie Grey's Hotel was a popular choice among the elite, from best-selling authors to members of the glamorous Hollywood scene - not to mention in recent years the cast and crew of US reality TV show *Survivor*.

Situated on the waterfront in the centre of Apia, the Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel, will feature 198 guest rooms and suites.

The hotel will also offer more than 17,000 square feet of meeting space, making it an enticing option for business event travellers.

The Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort, five minutes from the airport, with tennis courts and nearby golf facilities, will feature 140 guest rooms and suites all set on stunning lagoon beachfront on the west coast of Upolu.

"We are delighted to announce

this partnership and build on our already strong relationship with the Grey Family," said Sean Hunt, regional vice president, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Pacific.

"The Grey family has been an institution in Samoa providing superior service and amenities since the early 1900s".

Highland health fling

CONFERENCE facilities with a difference have been added to the established offering of the NSW Southern Highlands retreat, Solar Springs.

Situated on six acres in Bundanoon, overlooking Morton National Park, meetings and seminars can now be interspersed with a range of leisure and fitness activities including yoga, bush walking and cycling.

Meeting rooms are designed to accommodate a range of groups, with The Knoll Room designed for groups up to 12, and The Morton Room for teams up to 40.

Delighted with the success of the corporate event offering, Fiona Razavet, events coordinator at Solar Springs, says "We recently hosted a team from Thermomix, who went from meetings in the boardroom with the senior leadership team, to cooking demonstrations in our kitchen, to enjoying activities in the gardens.

Conference guests are offered delicious and healthy meal options, created by hatted French chef François Razavet.

For further information visit www.solarsprings.com.au.

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NYE hologram

THE Royal Australian Mint has developed a coloured hologram that captures the 2013 Sydney New Year's Eve fireworks celebrations.



The special edition \$1 silver proof coin features a holographic image of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Effect, which is revealed at midnight on New Year's Eve.

City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the commemorative coin would become a collector's item and would be the first in a decade-long series to be released on 1 January each year, creating an annual keepsake for tourists and locals alike.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge Effect will be based on the artworks of NYE13 creative ambassador Reg Mombassa, who has created an 'all-seeing eye' to symbolise the event's Shine theme.

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Luxe and daringly different

EVENT decorator Decorative Events & Exhibitions has been appointed as luxury tradeshow Luxperience's show builder and exclusive creative stylist.

The event, being held at the heritage listed warehouse venue Pier 2/3 at Walsh Bay, fronts the harbour and allows for a creative and well-appointed luxury design, in contrast to the pier's rustic vintage backdrop.

"Decorative Events & Exhibitions has participated at Luxperience since its inauguration and their commitment for the next two years is a testimony that they hold a strong belief in the show's ability to reach out to the right buyers both nationally as well as internationally," said Lindy Andrews, ceo of Luxperience.

Decorative Events & Exhibitions, md Mark Magennis said: "It is refreshing to see an exhibition organiser taking an innovative approach and daring to be different.

"We have designed a new exhibition system with a luxury feel that allows for interior styling and innovative branding options.

"It's a definite move away from the basic shell schemes that have been delivered in the past."

Luxperience, which takes place 31 August to 3 September 2014, has extended its early bird pricing to 13 December.

For further information visit www.luxperience.com.au.

Pan Pac's new ceo

BERNOLD Olaf Schroeder has been announced as the new ceo of the Pan Pacific Hotels Group, effective 2 January 2014.

A German national, Schroeder was most recently ceo of Jin Jiang International Hotel Management in Shanghai where he oversaw a portfolio of some 120 hotels with a total inventory of 35,000 rooms.

Prior to that he spent 14 years with Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts working in business development and hotel operation.



Face to Face with...

Roslyn McLeod, Managing Director, arinex



Business Events News recently caught up with Roslyn McLeod, MD of arinex, a leading Australian PCO, DMC and Events company. Diverted into tourism by a car accident in 1970, Roslyn became the first Japanese speaking tour guide for the Australian Tourism Commission and so began the journey for arinex.

What does your role entail?

A lot of responsibility and not just at arinex, as I serve on a number of boards. It's to oversee the financial well-being of our stakeholders, to plan effective strategies that develop an ongoing international presence for arinex.

What's the first thing you do when you get in the office?

As I travel so much the start to my day is always different. When I am in the office I greet my colleagues, confer with my PA on what needs doing, after which I am in the hands of my staff.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Travel, as it's hard to handle the demands of the workload and takes me away from my family. This year I have missed three weddings, one baptism, one 21st and a number of birthdays – moments one cannot recover. However, travel means our clients reap the benefits from our international network and the exposure to different countries and cultures.

How do you inspire your team?

They inspire me. As I look back on the conference outcomes this year we've had a stellar run. Delivering delight is one of our catch phrases. This year has been the cause for constant celebration.

Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

Definitely bonus. We have a technology team that is very passionate about delivering better outcomes for our clients. It's super exciting to be among them and it gives arinex an edge in Australia and across the globe.

What would you be doing if you were not ceo of arinex?

I always said I would be contributing

to community organisations from the P&C to Rotary and to the golf club. However, I decided early in my career that I would focus on business.

Who has inspired you?

The arinex team, both now and in the past have and are made up of great talent. All I have to do is listen and observe these bright and capable people.

How do you relax?

I switch off easily. Play golf, bake a minimum 12 chocolate soufflés each year, read books, watch DVDs, meet up with friends, dip into my husband's superb red wine collection and most of all enjoy the company of my family and friends

What makes a great conference?

When a strong and positive team comes together you have a winner. Success has so many ways of being monitored but my favourite is the enjoyment of coming to work every day.

What the most inspiring conference you have been involved in?

When we won our last MEA award for Conference of the Year, it was for a conference we did for the NSW Education Department. It is the passion we match to our clients that enables outstanding successes.

How many conferences have you attended in the last 12 months?

Lots, but my experience as an accompanying person at a conference at which my husband was a delegate, was unique. My International Navy Review clients were very understanding when I told them I had a personal commitment that I felt obliged to attend. I gave up a special experience to have a special experience and for a different kind of love and passion.