



Testing, testing

I KNOW I'm not alone in this, but it has been a pretty full on week with the silly season in full swing.



It started on Sunday at the Mercure Sydney Hotel, continued on a balmy Monday evening aboard a luxury 40 metre sailing yacht *Southern Cloud*, hosted in great style by TravMedia.

Surely there is no finer way to cruise on Sydney Harbour or anywhere for that matter, although Lachlan Murdoch's new cruiser may trump it for some.

The gleaming super yacht can sleep as many as 12 people with a crew of seven, and if you really want to impress clients, *Southern Cloud* is available for hire.

Tuesday there was Justin North's Accor do at the Pullman Sydney Hyde Park and yesterday, in an exciting first, industry media were given a hard-hat tour of Sydney's new interim conference facilities at Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island (SEC@GI).

Led by general manager Malu Barrios and Infrastructure NSW, it now has a substantial visual presence on the harbour foreshore.

We toured the expanse of the four permanent halls, suitably clad in glasses, gloves and hats and walking in close formation, as directed.

Two cruise ships were in port opposite at the time which gave the building a nice backdrop while over on the other side of Glebe Island is a view of Sydney from a different angle, looking across to Jackson's Landing and the Anzac Bridge.

Next time we plan to test out the ferry route to SEC@GI.

Yesterday also saw the Association of Corporate Travel Executives conference at the Sydney Sheraton on the Park welcome **BEN** as media partner, with over 200 key buyers out in force for networking and updates on the latest industry information. *Jill*

ACTE's "knock-out" event

THE Association of Corporate Travel Executives yesterday welcomed 250 members of the corporate travel community at its conference in Sydney.

Keynote presentations yesterday included updates from leading authorities such as Craig James, Commsec chief economist, along with Scott Gillespie from the USA, who publishes *Gillespie's Guide to Travel & Procurement*.

Today delegates will be addressed by strategic meetings expert Kevin Iwamoto and Aussie surfing legend Layne Beachley.

ACTE regional director, Andrew Kelly, said the organisation is going from strength to strength.

"Along with important direction from our Leadership Council, we are listening to our community and delivering what the region has been missing for



so long: genuine investment in professional development and strengthening of important networks".

Pictured above are ACTE global President-Elect, Kurt Knackstedt of Rio Tinto, with Julie O'Leary of Carlson Wagonlit Travel, ACTE regional director Andrew Kelly, and Philip Hand from the Commonwealth Bank.

100% behind AIME

IN a bid to secure more business events for the country, Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) is joining forces with Tourism New Zealand on the 100% Pure New Zealand stand at AIME 2014 in Melbourne.

Key suppliers also on the stand will include Air New Zealand, along with convention bureaux from across the country.

For many years CINZ has been at the forefront of attracting business events to NZ now the government has set aside \$34 million over four years so that Tourism New Zealand can help grow the business events sector.

As part of their new marketing push TNZ has appointed a business events manager based in Sydney, Helen Bambry, who will work closely alongside CINZ's own Sydney-based manager Sharon Auld and executive, Heidi Heming to help Australian event organisers bring business to NZ.

"The Australian market holds enormous potential so it is great we can work together to help bring new business New Zealand's way," says Auld.

Marriott's Southeast Asia milestone

THE opening of the JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi, the third JW Marriott brand to open in Asia within the past two months (others in Bengaluru and New Delhi), marks a milestone in its expansion into Southeast Asia.

The 450-room property is a 'reverse skyscraper' designed by acclaimed architecture practice Carlos Zapata Studio.

Located in Hanoi's new central business district and adjacent to the National Convention Center, JW Marriott Hanoi gm Bob Fabiano said, "Vietnam is a hugely appealing market, and we see great growth potential here."

For corporate and association events the hotel offers more than 3,600 sqm of space and has a total of 17 meeting rooms including two large ballrooms.

Two China ETF wins

EXHIBITIONS and Trade Fairs has announced it will manage two new exhibitions in China - the 19th International Conference and Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG19) to be held in Beijing in 2019, along with the inaugural China LNG Exhibition which will take place in Shanghai in 2015.

ETF International Portfolio Director, Rodney Cox, said the announcements followed the delivery of the record-breaking LNG17 in Houston, Texas this year, with LNG18 set to take place in Perth in 2016.

ETF will also manage the 26th World Gas Conference in Paris in 2015, with the company's experience in the field to "ensure a solid performance in Beijing in 2019".



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business events news

6th December 2013

'Bender's Bash'

"PLEASE post this in **BEN** today," said Gary Bender of World Corporate Travel in Sydney.

The unofficial industry Christmas lunch known as "Bender's bash," an event of unbridled myth, fantasy and no small amount of rumour, is already 'sold out.'

Those who've made the cut will be heading to King Street Wharf to The Malaya on 11 December at 12.30pm.

As there are currently five people on the waiting list, let GB know if you can't make it and a refund will be made - email him garyb@worldcorptravel.com.au.

GIBTM hosted buyers

INTERNATIONAL hosted buyer applications are now open for the Gulf Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (GIBTM) show taking place 24-26 Mar at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre.

As well as pre-scheduled appointments, hosted buyers will receive access to the new GIBTM Knowledge Program, networking events plus return flights, transfers and accom.

The allocation has been lifted to over 300 Hosted Buyers for 2014 - see www.gibt.com/hbapply.

Congrex MBO settles

FURTHER to the report of the Congrex collapse (**BEN** 21 Oct, 22 Nov), on 3 December a Congrex Switzerland management buy-out was successfully completed.

The company, which has been in the meetings industry for over 30 years, has "found its way back into independency," according to md Alain Pittet.

Free Rendezvous wifi

RENDEZVOUS Hotels has announced that it's offering free 256kB/s internet to all guests at its properties,

It's part of a new "Value Promise Program" which sees Rendezvous also include free local telephone calls, low-cost mini-bar drinks and food, low-cost laundry pricing, cheap long-distance calls, no credit card surcharges and no weekend or public holiday surcharges.

Rendezvous has also launched a "Business Benefits" package from \$27.50 per person daily, which includes unrestricted high speed internet, full breakfast, a daily newspaper and the choice of either a laundered or pressed shirt or a complimentary drink at the hotel bar.

See rendezvous-hotels.com.

South America immersion



WHEN DMS Destination Marketing Services escorted a group of conference and incentive planners to two of South America's most dynamic and exotic cities, Buenos Aires and Brazil, it was considered to be the ultimate adventure.

Sponsored by LATAM Airlines, City Service Travel Agency and Walpax Brazil Travel Partners, the group travelled from Sydney to Buenos Aires, where they were immersed in the culture and passion of this city known as the "Paris of South America."

Staying at the iconic Palacio Duhaupark Hyatt in Buenos Aires, they experienced an Argentinean wine and cheese tasting along with the legendary Café Tortoni, the oldest literati café in Argentina.

They took part in a tango class, went to a dinner and tango show at the magical Rojo Tango and visited a famous ranch, Estancia La Republica.

From here wine was exchanged for caipirinhas, as they travelled to Brazil to experience the rhythm and colour of Rio de Janeiro, where they stayed at South America's most famous hotel, Copacabana Palace, steps away from Copacabana beach.

An open-air jeep took them to Corcovado Mountain in the Tijuca Atlantic Forest, and they saw the celebrated Christ the Redeemer.

Following this was a surprise visit to a Samba School where energetic samba rhythms and dancers in Samba costumes, led them into a colourful Samba party.



AT \$24,000 a night, the Burj Al Arab's Royal Suite in the spectacular Dubai hotel shaped like a spinnaker, is one of the world's most expensive.



Perched on the 25th floor, the very colourful suite is a massive 780 sq mtrs and takes up two floors- the top level has two sections - one to suit a man's taste, and the other a woman's, decorated in bright pink, yellow and orange colours.

Each floor is serviced by a fleet of butlers.

All this is reached by a private elevator beyond which the door opens onto an impressive gold and marble stairway.

Huge pillars are covered in 22-carat gold, there's a private library and the bed in the master bedroom rotates, while the second bedroom features a giant mirror positioned directly above the bed.

There are three lavish bathrooms with marble and gold features, Hermes fragrances and body products and what every good suite can't do without - a private cinema.



Account Manager - Business Events

Gold Coast Business Events (GCBE) is a GCT business unit. This role is pivotal to the success of the team in securing new corporate, conference and incentive business for the Gold Coast from countries within Asia and India.

Previous experience in the international business events sector and previous experience managing a small sales team is an essential requirement.

This is a full time position located at Gold Coast Tourism's Office in Broadbeach QLD.

For confidential enquiries or a copy of the full position description contact recruitment@gctourism.com quoting reference #5053.

Applications close 9am Monday 23 December, 2013.

Lane joins Pan Pacific

CHRIS Lane has been appointed as director of sales for Victoria by the Pan Pacific Hotels Group.

Based at PARKROYAL Melbourne Airport and formerly state sales manager for Constellation Hotel Group, he will manage the business-to-business sales, lead a team to develop new business as well as maintain and grow current accounts, providing support on the group's portfolio in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.



Pullman's Northern exposure

ON Tuesday evening, when Simon McGrath Accor's chief operating officer officially presented star chef Justin North as Pullman Hotel and Resorts Culinary Ambassador, he did so at a function on the rooftop, swimming pool deck of the Pullman Sydney Hyde Park.



The space, a hidden function gem with intriguing outlooks over Hyde Park and Sydney Harbour, is one worth checking out for an intimate event.

McGrath, who talked of the hard work that went into creating and establishing the Pullman brand and of North's already 12 month tenure, explained: "Now that Pullman has an established physical brand, it needed some touch points for consumers that are different from other brands.

AVPartners event app

AVPARTNERS says its new smartphone application is "set to revolutionise the Australian conferencing landscape."

The new AVPartners app offers up-to-date user friendly event information with social media tools, surveys, live polls and gamification to "ensure events are accessible and relevant for the modern event delegate".

Using the App delegates can post updates, tag their location, like and comment on posts and send private messages.

It also integrates with Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, and the event "hashtag" is automatically added to outbound tweets.

Delegates can even leave reviews on sessions, speakers, venues and exhibitors making it easy for conference organisers to collect feedback, while the app supports branded content and advertising from sponsors.

AVPartners founding partner, Gary Hackett, said the app "combines what we do best - the smart use of technology, responsive customer service and ingenuity".

The AVPartners app works with all smartphones and is accessible on iOS and Android platforms.

"In doing this we went looking for great partners and good people who are going to be with you for a long time, so, we are delighted to have Justin join us.

"He has spent the past year looking at the many attributes needed to ensure the taste and flavours of the food and beverage are very local and representative of the Pullman brand."

In response, Justin North, whose passion for food and food producers spans some 25 years said, "Historically in hotels, there has been a lot of focus on room rates and conferencing, so much so that the quality of food in restaurants has been sometimes overlooked.

"So we are putting the focus back on this as well as on the young chefs, the young producers and good quality food.

"My passion is to get the chefs out to the abattoirs and the farms, to understand the living and the growing and the hard stories and the fun stories - even the gory side of seeing things slaughtered to respect and understand the process - it's a real beautiful awakening for the chefs - to keep it simple," he said.

Justin North is pictured above with Pullman Sydney Hyde Park gm Lorraine Mercuri.

GENERating Change

Director of Conference Focus, Max Turpin is sharing his insights on a range of topics with a regular column in *BEN*.

Topics will include new generation events and making events effective and valuable.



Content Creation & Delivery

The content design and delivery in most events today is the same it was 100 years ago, even though pretty much everything else in the world has changed. The average meeting or conference is planned by an appointed committee or a few senior executives who choose topics and subject matter that is important to them and create information they want to broadcast to attendees. By doing so, events become a forum for a central authority to disseminate content to an audience they expect to sit passively, hanging off every word of the speakers....most of whom speak non-stop for around 40-minutes and with a few minutes left ask, "Any questions?"

This traditional way of choosing, designing and delivering content at live events must change.

Firstly and most importantly, a change of mindset has to occur within event planning committees and at senior level. In many cases this requires a 180 degree turnaround in their thinking: the event is not about them and the information they want people to hear and see. It's about the attendees, the value of the content to them and how they can use and apply it. At live events, providing information that can't be found on the internet, information that's practical, relevant and contextual is gold. THAT should be the focus of event planners and the value it provides to attendees. Other than networking and making

new connections, it's the most valuable currency of live events. Whilst important now, this will be imperative for younger generations who have grown up with the internet, Google and a multitude of information on everything being available online.

Who are the experts in the room? Is it only committee members, senior management and the highly paid speakers? Certainly not. Everyone in the room has had real-life experiences. They have stories to tell, knowledge to share and potentially some wonderful new insights and new ways of thinking. Perhaps some of the best ideas are in the minds of those sitting passively listening to your chosen presentations. But you'll never know if you don't involve them and make your events more interactive. This is the future of events - harnessing the 'power of the crowd' by involving them, making your events more interactive and giving your attendees opportunity to contribute to content & learning.

If you'd like to know and learn more about hybrid events and the benefits they can bring to you and your



organisation, please contact Max Turpin at Conference Focus on 02 9700 7740 or visit the website at conferencefocus.com.au.

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Farewell to the SCEC

AS the iconic Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre closes its doors chief executive Ton van Amerongen has paid tribute to its employees, saying "a huge part of the Centre's success over the past 25 years stems from the skills and dedication of our talented staff."

"I can proudly say there's none better in Australia," he said, adding that many members of the team have been at the Centre for years.

"They have their operations down to a fine art and there's simply no better source of experience, skills and international knowledge."

van Amerongen (pictured right) said the last 12 months have seen the SCEC undertake the "unprecedented task of not only managing peak levels of business, but also preparing for the closure of a successful business."

"Every member of our team has worked hard to ensure we conclude our service to Sydney and Australia on a high note," he said, with 2013 one of the best years in the Centre's 25 year history.

These pictures pay tribute to some of the people who have contributed to the SCEC's success.

RIGHT: Security manager Johnny Naofal, who runs a team of over 60.

BELOW: Annabel Norris and Helen Mantellato have more than 45 years at the venue between them.

Norris (left) is Director of Sales - International and joined in Feb 1993, while Director of Sales - Exhibitions Mantellato joined in Dec 1987 - five months before the centre's official opening.



BELOW: Convention Services Manager Sue Joseph, who's worked at the Centre since 1988.



ABOVE: SCEC Director of Sales & Marketing Amanda Anker heads a team of 20 and joined in 2004.

LEFT: Director of Operations Simon Lomas and Executive Chef Uwe Habermehl have presided over countless gala dinners and culinary adventures at the SCEC.



RIGHT: Rohit Maini, who played an active role in developing the SCEC's environmental initiatives as Operations Support Manager before moving to the Sydney Entertainment Centre in 2009.

LEFT: Steve Romer, former SCEC Director of Operations and now gm of the Sydney Entertainment Centre.



RIGHT: Catering Support Manager William Wilson, one of Australia's first Certified Sommeliers.

LEFT: Ross Horlyck, SCEC Infrastructure Manager who has overseen IT and communication systems including its state-of-the-art electronic signage.

