



A tough job...

BEN is in Darwin this morning, heading off to Kununurra and then by floatplane to the luxurious Berkley River Lodge, in a remote coastal part of the Kimberley.

I am aware it is a hardship famil but rest assured dear reader that I am only doing this so I may report my experiences back to you.

Whilst on the subject of luxury and elegance to the max, 51 Buckingham Gate, Taj Suites and Residences and Luxor Champagne in London have created a 24 Carat Gold Afternoon Tea.

It's a tea that features a half bottle of Luxor Pure Gold 24K Brut Champagne, which includes flakes of 24-Carat Gold and is one of the world's most prestigious sparkling wines.

This unparalleled opulence has inspired Luxor executive chef Vikas Milhoutra, who has created decadent delights, such as a Gold Leaf Jelly, White Chocolate Delight with Gold Leaf and Strawberry Tart with Gold Flakes and is accompanied by a selection of scones and delicate finger sandwiches.

It's all yours for just £99! - Jill.



Glebe Island Expo disarray

THE NSW government has been forced to begin an "alternate delivery process" for Sydney's temporary exhibition facilities, which are urgently required to provide space during the pending redevelopment of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

According to Tim Parker from the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP), "despite lengthy negotiations, Infrastructure NSW has been unable to conclude satisfactory arrangements" with Sydney Harbour Expo@Glebe Island, the preferred bidder consortium for the provision and operation of the Glebe Island Expo temporary

facilities (**BEN** 20 Dec).

Instead, Infrastructure NSW has begun discussions with international events firm GL Events to provide the structure, while AEG Ogden is set to operate the temporary facilities.

"Infrastructure NSW anticipates these discussions will conclude within around two weeks," Parker said, with early site works due to start at Glebe Island next month.

Details of the breakdown in talks with the preferred bidder are not being made public at this stage due to being "commercial in confidence" and SICEEP is unable to comment further.

However Parker is confident the hiccup won't affect the final outcome, saying "I can assure the exhibition industry that the Government will ensure these temporary facilities are in place for the 2014 exhibition season".

He said planning approval had already been received, and thanked the exhibition industry for its patience.

"I know the industry is excited about the new state-of-the art facilities that will be delivered at the end of 2016, and we are keen to support the industry through the redevelopment period," Parker said.

"Infrastructure NSW and the industry have a common goal: ensuring the exhibition and events industry is well placed to take advantage of the new facilities and keeps growing".

BCEC truckin' along

THE Brisbane Truck Show, organised by the Commercial Vehicle Industry Association of Queensland (CVIAQ) delivered an unprecedented 8% increase in visitor numbers for this its second show.

Held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC), the four-day event also proved to be a winner for Moreton Hire who again delivered an award winning custom design stand for CAT Trucks; taking out the prize for the most Outstanding Truck Manufacture Display.

The Moreton Hire Custom Design Stand team also delivered 20 more customised stands for the likes of Paccar, Kenworth DAF, Bridgestone, Alcoa Wheels and York Transport.

The show, which is the largest automotive show to take place in Australia this year, is expected to provide a boost to Queensland's economy of around \$58 million.



Datai celebrates 20yrs

THE Datai Langkawi, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary, has appointed The Unique Tourism Collection as its Australian representative.

The luxury Malaysian resort with 54 well appointed deluxe rooms, 40 villas, 16 suites and 14 new beach villas, provides an ideal location for small meetings and events for up to 60 guests.

The hotel is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World.

Spring into Hilton North Island

HILTON Auckland and Hilton Lake Taupo are extending the opportunity to plan in advance a spring celebration with a stylish social dinner or cocktail reception at the Hilton Hotels & Resorts in the North Island.

Available to new business only, benefits of the package include a complimentary night's stay in the hotel and double Hilton HHonors Points.

Choose the Trinity Hill Package when hosting an event at the Hilton Auckland and you will also receive a case of Trinity Hill Sauvignon Blanc to use as a prize for your event auction or to take back to your office.

Subject to availability; Dinner or cocktail receptions must be valued at a minimum of NZ\$15,000 and it must be booked, contracted and held by 31 December.

One complimentary room per night per booked business.

Rae's on Wategos lives

IF you thought the celebrity-studded Rae's on Wategos resort at Byron Bay had been sold, think again.

According to a report in *The Weekend Australian*, hotelier Vincent Rae has withdrawn the property from the market after the buyer didn't complete.

With the subject now a matter for the courts, Rae who has decided to renovate the luxury retreat, will close the resort for four months next winter, spending \$3 million on a new beach club, sub-penthouse, underground car park and cocktail bar.



Victoria's Natural Conference Destination



Tallship team building

THIS week a group of corporate agents, event managers, company decision makers and **BEN** were lucky enough to experience a glimpse of the Sydney Harbour Tall Ships product on board the *Southern Swan*.



David Warne, owner and ceo, spoke of his dream to keep the tall ship company alive in Australia and also of his struggle to keep the business running in its first year.

Since its inception in 2007 Warne and his team have created a product that includes four ships, a \$10 million turnover and last month celebrated its 250,000th customer.

The Sydney Harbour Tall Ship company offers an excellent program for corporate groups seeking a challenging environment with powerful programs designed to increase productivity, drive innovation and creativity and boost profitability.

Team bonding sessions on the ships get participants "to believe in themselves and the company they work for and include the mast climb challenge with our company being the only one in the world where the public can climb the mast", Warne said.

"We decided to take our product to corporate groups to do more and be more than they thought possible."

The program includes both full day and half day sessions including one or two motivational presentations and a 60 or 90 minute workshop respectively with David Warne and Sam Cawthorn.

During the event Mark Higgins from Gillespie Advertising was lucky enough to have the winning

key that unlocked the treasure chest, winning a Whitsunday escape cruise valued at \$4018.

For more info on the product see www.sydneytallships.com.au.

Pictured above on the *Southern Swan* from left are: Adrian, Commsec; Irene, Westpac Securities; Tannaz, BT Financial; Nina, ComputerShare; Pietra, BT Financial and Ryan from UBS.

Torrington appointed to Ashburton

GEORGINA

Torrington takes on the role of sales & marketing manager with the New Zealand's Ashburton Licensing Trust from 10 June this year.



The Trust's numerous outlets including: Hotel Ashburton, Tinwald Hotel, Braided Rivers Restaurant, Speights Ale House and The Somerset Grocer.

The move sees Torrington and her husband relocate from Auckland to Ashburton.

"It's very much a lifestyle decision for us as well as a professional progression.

"Ashburton and Mid Canterbury as a region has a lot on offer for us including hunting, duck shooting, fishing, mountain biking and more," Torrington said.

Watermark's iPad control

THE Gold Coast's Watermark Hotel & Spa has installed new, iPad controlled AV across its entire conference floor.

The new AV features wireless technology, high-powered data projectors, motorised screens and wireless microphones and includes an instant messenger facility that allows organisers to contact hotel event staff at any time during the event.

General manager, Kym Carter said, "We have spent the last year listening to our conference clients and their needs and are confident this technology will be well suited to their requirements."

The conference rooms are a part of the hotel undergoing a multimillion-dollar room refurbishment; work has also been carried out on 232 of its entry level rooms.

Daintree Lodge open

REASSURING news from our North Queensland neighbours – Daintree Lodge & Spa, who despite having financial problems with the result that they were placed in receivership in early March, are continuing to run the lodge in collaboration with the appointed receivers KPMG and on-site management.

For all employees it is "business as usual," said a Daintree Lodge & Spa spokesperson.

"It is of great importance to us that every one of our friends and colleagues are aware that we are open for business.

"We are honouring all previous bookings and are looking forward to plenty of new ones during the winter season.

"We all feel a great passion and love for this very special and unique lodge.

"Our staff are staying very positive while the property is being prepared for sale and we are all looking forward to a buyer being found very soon."

MEA \$995 early bird

THE MEA 2014 Kuala Lumpur national conference has released 50 discounted Orangutan Early Bird registrations for only \$995.

To obtain the deal be the first to access accommodation and flights for the conference, and register online at the MEA site: www.measevents.com.au.

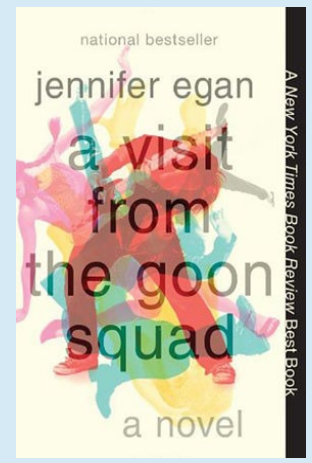


JUST when you thought books were going out of fashion and that Kindle and other E-book readers had the front run, comes the news that Qantas is developing a series of novels for passengers called, "Stories for Every Journey."

The books vary in length and are meant to be read as long as the duration of the particular flight, at an average reading speed, are written by Australian authors, reports US based *Ad Age*.

Qantas Loyalty cmo, Stephanie Tully, told *Ad Age* that this is "just one of many conversations we're developing with our members, from Bronze to Platinum One."

One such book is New York Times Best Book Review by Jennifer Egan titled 'A visit from the goon squad'.



RACV Royal Pines holds rates

WITH the intention of remaining a market leader in the highly competitive conferencing and events field, RACV Royal Pines Resort general manager John Morris has confirmed that the venue will hold its 2013 conference rates until April 2014.

Morris also revealed that the resort will soon announce new facilities, including a brand new glass walled ballroom that will increase the resort's appeal as a venue for conferences of all sizes, as well as a multi-million dollar One Spa being built adjoining the resort's conference area and due to open in November.

The new conference and events facilities are expected to open in the second quarter of 2014.



Get on yer bike, mate!

STRUAN



Robertson, ceo of SpiceRoads Cycle Tours addressed a group of wholesalers this week at the Sydney Rugby Club to talk about the worldwide resurgence in cycling and of the 110 different itineraries in 23 destinations, SpiceRoads offer.

Based in Bangkok, the company, which has been operating in Asia for 10 years, provides a wide range of cycling experiences from half day tours to their longest – 38 days.

The offering caters to all levels of fitness, from beginners, seniors through to independent adventurers, they offer a wide range of sightseeing, mountain and road cycling experiences.

“Often when thinking about cycling, people focus on the competitive side, the Tour de France and the Aussie Tour Downunder, and the athleticism of cyclists,” he said.

SpiceRoads tours however are very different.

“They have been purposely created to be as rigorous, relaxing or as non-competitive as you like and are fully supported with a back-up van and local English speaking guides, with one guide for every six people, so no one gets left behind,” he said.

At the SpiceRoads Cycle Tours evening from left are: Struan Robertson, ceo; Richard Cunningham, Active Travel; Pongsak Kanittanon, Tourist Authority of Thailand; Mike Smith, World Trade Travel and Annie Lyons, Travmedia.

Reason to enter Event Awards

MULLING over whether to enter the Australian Event Awards 2013, due to open 9 July and close 9 September?

Then check out these reasons why they think you should: To raise the profile of your business; enjoy the significant promotional opportunities as a finalist or winner; benchmark your work; receive judges' feedback from experts in your field and experience healthy competition against the top industry players and reward your team for their hard work.

What's more, no financials are requested as the Event Awards reward examples of best practice, innovation and quality outcomes within the context of the entry and its field.

See - www.eventawards.com.au.

Zurich tops best airport

ZURICH Airport has been recognised by Skytrax World Airport Awards as the world's best airport in the "20-30 million passengers" category.

The airport has also been awarded the world's best baggage claim service for the fourth consecutive year and for having the best airport staff in Europe.

Evelyn Lafone, director of Switzerland Tourism Australia and New Zealand, says these awards are a fitting testament to the high standards of service provided to passengers at Zurich Airport.

“Being the welcome point to many tourists coming into the country by air, it is imperative that the quality of the services and facilities offered at the airport give visitors a good impression,” says Lafone.

oneworld's one-stop for events

GLOBAL air alliance oneworld, currently undergoing one of its biggest expansion drives in its history, unveiled at IMEX, in Frankfurt a new, one-stop, easy-to-use service to meet the travel needs for conventions, conferences, exhibitions and special events.

It offers attractive discounts on flights across a network spanning 850 destinations globally served by some of the world's leading airlines.

Launching the product, oneworld director sales José María Alvarado said “Uniquely among global airline alliances, oneworld counts all four of the top country markets for big global gatherings as homes to member airlines – USA, Germany, Spain and UK.

“But virtually wherever you are holding an event or exhibition, oneworld member airlines will be able to get you there,” he said.

For instance, oneworld events provides a centralised process, with one set of terms and conditions covering travel on all oneworld member airlines that can be ready for acceptance just days after submitting the online request form.

Discounted flights for attendees are on offer, plus the chance for organisers to earn and redeem credits for travel on participating oneworld member airlines.

And there's simple online access for organisers to real-time management reports 24/7.

A ready-to-use oneworld promotional toolkit also helps to build attendee awareness.

The service targets a minimum of 500 international attendees travelling from at least two regions.

Requests are accepted as early as five years in advance and up to three months prior to the event.

Discounts from published fares are available for attendees and one travel companion each on oneworld member airlines, and a user-friendly booking tool displays the most convenient flights and multiple fare options from hundreds of departure points all over the world to the event or convention location.

And the oneworld events helpdesk provides round-the-clock support via email or phone, and all usual privileges and benefits to members of any oneworld member airline frequent flyer program.

Vivid corporate occasions

VIVID has migrated north to Milsons Point in what is a first for the event, lighting up the boardwalk area around Luna Park and the Harbour Bridge; and installing a world-first interactive touchscreen which allows the public to change the colour and scene of the west face of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Taking place from tonight until 10 June, between 6pm and midnight every night, in another first, Verve Creative Events has joined with Luna Park Sydney to offer corporates a night of champagne, canapés, entertainment and the most impressive views in Sydney.

“The all inclusive cocktail function package is remarkably affordable,” said Rob Frank from Verve Creative Events.

“We are always looking for new ways to offer our clients value for money and a fantastic experience in one of the most iconic venues the city has to offer.

“And what better time to take advantage of the location than during the VIVID Festival” - email elena@vervecreative.com.au.

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