



Everyone's a winner!

WHEN BEN gets

industry news from Melbourne, it's primarily from the industry stakeholders with just a dribble from other service providers.

BEN is not, nor do we wish to be, just Sydney centric.

We like our news from all over the world, including Melbourne.

So let's hear what is happening in your hotel and in your regional area, in your event and catering company, in your winery and in other MICE support companies.

Cough it up, so we can pass on your newsy bits, your offers, your comments and your ideas to feed BEN's voracious readers.

The same could be said of SA, the NT, Qld, Tasmania & WA; we welcome your industry related goings on, your family news and photos as well as your insights.

Speaking of Melbourne, good luck with the gee gees tomorrow at the running of the Emirates Melbourne Cup.

My money is on Dunaden, for no particular reason other than the name trips off the tongue easily and the form guide says, "It is impossible to leave out!"

BEN will be enjoying Royal Randwick's hospitality, in one of their new corporate suites, while we'll also have a report later in the week from the flash Dubai-themed Emirates Marquee at Flemington Racecourse.

Giddy up! Jill



More China effort needed

VENUES and destinations outside China must work harder to improve their communication with the Chinese market, according to the findings of a survey into China MICE buyers' behaviour.

The results, delivered at CIBTM in Beijing by Rob Davidson, senior lecturer in events management, University of Greenwich, London (pictured) detailed the priorities and experiences of meeting planners based in China, in terms of the process of choosing destinations and venues for their events.

Key to the findings of the research was the revelation that 35% of Chinese meeting planners experienced difficulty in getting information about destinations outside China; while 47% experienced difficulty in finding out about venues.

Other key findings included:

- preferred sources for receiving information about potential destinations were, educational trips; destination marketing organisations' websites; other meeting planners; and meetings industry exhibitions.
- 50% of the planners reported experiencing lead times



getting shorter – a possible consequence of the slowing of the economy that China was experiencing earlier this year.

- Factors that influenced destination attractiveness included: a pleasant climate, financial issues such as economic stability and the destinations being able to offer financial or in-kind support to meeting planners, and visa requirements of host countries.
- Factors affecting venue attractiveness included: proximity to airport and public transportation and the provision of 'fast internet'.

The findings also revealed the preferences of Chinese meeting planners in terms of the types of destinations and venues that they choose for their events, but also how they wish to interact with the sales and marketing professionals that are competing for their business.

Davidson will deliver further insights into the China market at the China Meetings Summit which is taking place during EIBTM in Barcelona later this month.

PCO Conference venue

THE PCO Annual Conference & Exhibition, 28-30 November, will be held at The Pullman Melbourne, Albert Park and not as previously stated (BEN 1 Nov) at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Tasty tours!

A GREAT idea for a partner program, conference team bonding or for a special way of discovering parts of Sydney you never knew existed, can be experienced on Taste Food Tours.

This small social enterprise, developed to generate income for local business and create training and employment opportunities, offers cultural food tours in Western Sydney.

Tours for groups of eight or more are available any day of the week, with options such as Shanghai via Saigon tours in Bankstown; dining at snack stalls and bbq eateries in Little Korea in Strathfield; a Cyprus via Seoul tour in Belmore; or a coffee break with a difference on a café tour of Parramatta.

See www.Tastetours.org.au.

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 for further information.



business events news

4th November 2013

HKTb pco Master Class



50 key professional conference organisers were recently treated by Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) to an exclusive food and wine pairing Master Class at Sydney's stylish Establishment, with the event helping to celebrate another successful year for "Hong Kong – The World's Meeting Place".

The class, which showcased Hong Kong as Asia's culinary capital, also provided guests with an update on Hong Kong's impressive new Kai Tak Cruise Terminal as well as new venues and experiences available for MICE groups.

Guests learnt the art of matching food and wine as they sampled fine wines and Asian-inspired canapés expertly paired by wine writer and host Mike

Bennie.

Andrew Clark, Hong Kong Tourism Board regional director said Hong Kong's world class infrastructure, abundance of unique venues, excellent dining and nightlife and colourful East-meets-West culture meant that "it's the perfect MICE destination."

Pictured at the event from left are: Andrew Clark, HKTb; Joyce Weir, Qantas Airways; Jane Scribner, HKTb; and Mike Bennie, wine writer and host.

Win a trip to Maui

WE love our Maui Jim sunglasses with their patented PolarizedPlus2 technology, designed to enhance the view in every sunlight condition and lenses that wipe out 99.9% of glare and block 100% of UV rays.

A familiar brand for top-notch service and superlative product and as a partner and supporter of the conference and events businesses, they are offering the chance at winning a trip to Maui - the home of Maui Jim.

All you need to do between now and 30 June 2014 is simply confirm and complete a Maui Jim event and you will be entered in the draw to win a five night stay for two at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa, along with return Hawaiian Airlines flights.

All you need to do is obtain a quote by contacting your local sales manager, Nick Maynard, at nmaynard@mauijim.com.

Eat for good!

TASTE

Spice up your Christmas party with a tailored Taste food tour or progressive dinner.

Call **02 9707 0802** or visit **www.tastetours.org.au**

Taste is a social enterprise, our profits are invested into community initiatives.

Go Team!

BECHALLENGED has developed an alternative to an Amazing Race style of challenge, Go Team.

This take on an Amazing Race style of program is interactive, flexible and can be tailored for companies or sponsors.

Installed on tablets/iPads, the Go Team app helps guide teams to their checkpoints where GPS-triggered challenges are issued in the form of questions, clues, and pictures that teams work together to complete.

Updates, feedback and scores are kept in real-time as teams progress through the event.

Back at home base, each team is monitored and can receive bonus missions during their adventure.

The Go Team app can accommodate any number of teams, and also keeps members away from possible danger zones.

See bechallenged.com.au.

Hello to Wet'n'Wild Sydney events

OPENING on 12 December, Wet'n'Wild Sydney is creating a buzz of anticipation with talk of adrenalin pumping action on some of the tallest and fastest water rides in the world.

Described as the biggest and best water theme park ever built, it is home to more than 40 slides and attractions, including the world's tallest double Sky Coaster.

Clearly, much more than just a water park, Wet'n'Wild offers a range of packages for major corporate events and family fun days, to sporting teams and community celebrations.

In addition they are offering great value discounts for groups of 20 or more with tailor made packages and catering for events that range from breakfast overlooking the wave pool to elegant lantern-lit cocktail parties, lavish three-course dinners, to casual beach parties, lunches or private BBQ options.

For bookings and more information on Wet'n'Wild Sydney call 133 FUN (133 386).



crumbs!



GOLD Coast fast facts...

Crown Plaza Surfers Paradise has the only revolving restaurant in Queensland.

Watermark Hotel and Spa Gold Coast do a spa high tea package at \$129.

QT Gold Coast, the former Gold Coast International, refurb cost \$25 million and instead of conference mints, delegates enjoy retro lollies like Fantaes and Redskins.

At the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa, delegates can arrive at the hotel in style riding on jet skis.

Duffy Down Under, who do boat transfers and tours, have four battery-operated boats.

The Sheraton Mirage Gold Coast, newly refurbished after a \$20 million makeover, has also rejuvenated its 3.4 hectares of lagoons and tropical gardens.

Wildfire motorcycle tour operators, with in excess of 250 riders can take the whole team for a burn on their Harley Davidson Motorcycles, given enough notice.

With an ocean view

TO make the most of the Gold Coast sunshine, AVPartners who have enjoyed a five-year partnership with the Sofitel Gold Coast, say they've fitted out the hotel's ocean view conference rooms with in-built AV, including full HD resolution technology, allowing delegates a state of the art conference experience.

Boardrooms too are equipped with the latest audiovisual gadgetry that allows presentations to take place without the need to eliminate all of the natural light.

Each room has installed 60" full HD Sony Bravia monitors.

Located on the 22nd floor, the light-filled rooms, with full-length windows overlooking Broadbeach are the first conference rooms in the hotel with an ocean view.



business events news

4th November 2013

All clear in the Southern Highlands...

WITH tourism the forgotten casualty of natural disasters like bushfires, and the Hall Road bushfire now classified as 'Under Control' by the Rural Fire Service, Destination Southern Highlands is reminding visitors that the region is again well and truly open for business.

"Tourism operators are in full operational mode and we're happy to report that all of the region's visitor attractions are again running in full swing," said Steve Rosa, Council's acting group manager of Tourism, Economic Development and Events.

"This includes popular bushwalks, nature reserves and National Parks which were untouched by the recent bushfire.

"The Hume Highway and Southern Rail Line are also open and it's perfectly safe for travellers to make their way down to the Southern Highlands from Sydney and further afield.

"So we're encouraging visitors to reacquaint themselves with the Southern Highlands," Rosa said.

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How suite is this?

MADINAT Jumeirah in Dubai is offering a complimentary stay at the majestic Burj Al Arab, the 'World's Most Luxurious Hotel,' when a minimum of five nights are booked in a Jumeirah 'Suite Finale' package.

The ultimate in luxury, guests can choose from more than eighty suites in Mina A'Salam, Al Qasr, Dar Al Masyaf and the Malakiya Villas.

It's a package that also includes a luxurious limousine transfer to and from the airport, Rolls Royce transfer to Burj Al Arab, daily complimentary breakfast, exclusive private beach access, complimentary access to the kids club, unlimited access to Wild Wadi Water Park, club lounge access and complimentary internet access.

The offer for a limited time only is for a minimum stay of five nights with prices starting from AED 2800++ per night.

ACTE quickly

NEWS is there's only about 100 places left to experience the ACTE Australasia Corporate Travel Education Conference, being held 5-6 December at Sheraton On the Park Sydney.

The quality 1.5-day Education & Networking program is shaping up to be as popular and memorable as ever.

By the close of 2013 more than 1000 participants from their corporate travel community will have attended various ACTE education and networking events; with at least four sell outs.

Take advantage of the super-sharp Early-Bird Registration pricing which only has a few days left to run - **CLICK HERE**.

'tis the season

GETTING your corporate Christmas gifting sorted is easy for Sydneysiders now that The Special Delivery Company has opened a 'pop up' shop on the 6th floor of the MLC Centre - see thespecialdeliverycompany.com.au



WHEN DMS - Destination Marketing Services, who have supported IMEX America since its inception three years ago, posed the question to a group of nine conference and incentive planners, "what do Cow Town, The Mighty Mississippi and Sin City have in common?" it took them not only to IMEX America but also on a valuable educational tour of the USA.

The itinerary, carefully planned by DMS & Hosts Global Alliance (their DMC in the US) gave the pcos from Australia and New Zealand 'a little bit of country' in Texas, 'a taste of Creole and Cajun' in New Orleans and a 'thorough Strip search' throughout Vegas.

They were also exposed to invigorating culture and diverse influences, with Hosts Global Alliance offices in Las Vegas and New Orleans and Ultimate Ventures in Dallas.

JCME promises a swinging event

AFTER securing a two-year contract with the NSW Maritime Department, Local entrepreneur, Freddy Mikhael of JCME Marketing and Events, will announce the launch of his newest venture with a party of swing, jazz and a heart-pumping performance by the String Angels.

To be held this Thursday 7 November at Castle Hill Heritage Park, the three-month-old JCME is part of the JC Group.

At the event JCME will welcome Federal member Alex Hawke, State members David Elliott and Ray Williams, Mayor Dr Michelle Byrne, local councillors, ResMed, PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia, 3M, Commscope, Commonwealth Bank and local businesses.

Highlights included a visit to Stockyards in Forth Worth, parading mardi gras style in the French Quarter of New Orleans and getting their gangsta on at The Mob Museum in Vegas.

The group were also wined and dined at exclusive events by some of DMS' DMCs who were exhibiting at IMEX, including Dragonfly Africa, Pacific World Asia and Hosts Global Alliance.

Pictured above behind the masks are, from left (we assume) Alex Goodsell, 212F; Marissa Fernandez, DMS; Natalie Milson, The Conference Room; Laura Groot, Destination Event Management; Caroline Gair, CiEvents; Robin Mould, Egencia; and Victoria Wales, HOT Events.

The Point's free Wi-Fi

STRENGTHENING its appeal to business travellers, The Point Brisbane is offering complimentary, high speed Wi-Fi access with unlimited downloads to all guests.

"Customer research identified an emerging need for simple to use, fast Wi-Fi that keeps guests connected so we've just invested \$100,000 on an extensive IT upgrade that has enhanced performance and online security," said The Point's operator David Catterall.

Located at Kangaroo Point and managed by Best Management Group, the recently re-designed hotel now boasts 201 accommodation rooms and suites, meeting and event facilities with Brisbane skyline views and its own dedicated restaurant, Lamberts.

"The expansion embraced technology, dining and lounge facilities and focused on functionality and comfort," Catterall said.