



## Penni's a real pearl

IT was so nice to catch up with Penni Tastula while I was in Darwin last week, one of the NT travel industry's former movers and shakers.



She took me in hand when I first arrived in the Top End on a work assignment. When things didn't go to plan, I rang her for advice.

This one-woman powerhouse got on the phone and reorganised my itinerary and over the years gave me an insider's appreciation of Darwin and the Top End.

Now retired, Penni headed up many businesses in Darwin, including starting the multi-award winning Northern Gateway group.

She acquired Convention Catalysts, held the GSA for Royal Brunei Airlines, owned and operated Timika Charters (NT Exporter of the Year) and Acacia Luxury Transport, and together with family company Seawash Pty Ltd built Darwin's multi award winning PeeWee's at the Point restaurant.

Then just to prove her credentials, she won the NT Telstra Business Woman of the Year award, among others.

Today she has a penchant for cruising, which she seems to do on a regular basis and when time permits, she's a tourism consultant and public speaker.

Jill



Jill and Penni, clad in the finest of pearls, enjoy a glass of Moët in Paspaley's Darwin showroom.

## Return of the native



**MARKING** the brand's return to the city since the Sheraton Towers became the Langham, the Sheraton Melbourne Hotel, will open its doors to guests in late March.

In celebration of its début the hotel is offering a special opening rate.

The special rate starts from \$260 per night for guest rooms and from \$750 per night for suites, covering stays between 01 Apr and 30 Sep and subject to availability.

The introductory rate includes overnight accommodation, breakfast, complimentary high-speed internet access throughout the hotel, and double Starpoints for Starwood Preferred Guest (SPG) members.

Sean Hunt, Starwood Pacific Hotels and Resorts regional vice president said of their new Melbourne hotel,

"Given Sheraton's strong presence in Sydney, Queensland and Fiji, a Sheraton in the heart of Melbourne is a great addition and will complement our existing hotels."

Located at the fashionable 'Paris end' of Collins Street and housed in the 31-storey 'wavelinear' building, topped by 142 residential apartments, it sits on the site of the former Naval and Military Club.

The Sheraton Melbourne features 174 stylish guest rooms, including 11 Terrace Suites and 669 sqm of versatile function space, able to be illuminated by

natural daylight.

The ballroom can accommodate up to 180 delegates for either a classroom-style meeting or a sit-down dinner overlooking Little Collins Street.

An additional four meeting rooms are designed for board meetings and intimate gatherings.

Additional hotel amenities include two restaurants, a heated indoor lap pool and a fully equipped fitness facility.

## Arthur for the ACTE

**TODD** Arthur, vice president of sales & account management, Asia Pacific for BCD Travel, has been elected by members of the Association of Corporate Travel Executives' (ACTE) Asia region, to serve on the ACTE Board of Directors as the Asia Region Board Representative.

Bringing more than 20 years of travel industry experience to the ACTE Board, including nine years of regional Asia experience, the appointment is effective from 01 Jan 2014 through 2016.

"Since becoming a member of ACTE in 2010, Todd Arthur has been a very active volunteer – serving on an Asia Regional Conference planning committee and speaking at multiple ACTE events in the region" said ACTE President Kurt Knackstedt.

"His experience working collaboratively across the region and the industry will bring valuable perspectives to both the Board and the ACTE membership."

## Tuamoto heads SIVB

**MANY** in the travel and meetings industry will be pleased to learn that the former regional director Australia and Tourism Fiji ceo, Josefa Tuamoto, has been appointed to the role of Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau (SIVB) ceo.

The move represented a boost for the Solomon Islands national tourist office and local tourism industry, the SIVB said.

Announced in Honiara by SIVB board chairman, Moses Tepai, he said, "This appointment represents a major achievement for this country's tourism aspirations and is intended to play a key role in the Solomon



Islands increasing its annual international visitor intake."

"Jo is held in very high regard on the international tourism stage, his reputation and the huge success he achieved for Fiji's tourism precedes him.

"This is especially the case in those visitor source markets we see as being critical to the future growth of our tourism industry and in particular Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

"Our desire is to see Solomon Islands tourism becoming the prime source of our country's foreign exchange earnings within the next 10 years.

"We are confident Jo's leadership and expertise will play a critical role in achieving that goal and managing the strategies intended to take the future of our tourism industry to a whole new level.



## Opera in the Domain



**WITH** the Sydney Festival in full and glorious swing, it's time to mark your diaries for the annual Mazda Opera in the Domain performance, at which local and international artists gather under the stars on Saturday 1 February at 8.00pm.

The free outdoor concert will feature popular arias from works by opera's greatest composers and a dazzling line up of Opera

Australia's favourite artists - including sopranos Lorina Gore and Daria Masiero, mezzo-soprano Jacqueline Dark and tenor Bradley Daley.

They will be accompanied by the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra under the direction of conductor Brian Castles-Onion. ABC Classic FM's Christopher Lawrence is the Master of Ceremonies.

## Stamford changes



**STAMFORD** Plaza Auckland has been hard at work over the Christmas and New Year break making changes that will be revealed over the coming months.

One such is the appointment of a new director of MICE, Janine Daniel, and new executive chef, Nathan Hartley, who together are creating new menus and banqueting options.

Daniel's is a familiar face in the hospitality industry with more than two decades experience, including working overseas for Starwood Hotels & Resorts in Central London.

Most recently she worked at The Langham, Auckland where she held the position of director of events.

## MICE-able Sea Pearl

**SEA** Pearl Villas, a privately owned resort in Phuket, with its eye on the lucrative Australian market, has appointed hotel marketing experts Randall Marketing (RM) as its Asia Pacific marketing representative covering Australia, New Zealand, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

RM executive director Randall Lui said that the unique property differs from the regular Phuket properties available to Australian businesses and offers the MICE market a sophisticated and more personalised alternative.

With 188-rooms and suites, the five star resort, which is set on the hillside away from busy Patong Beach, has a number of private rooms for functions and meetings.

A multipurpose hall can accommodate up to 200 guests depending on the choice of setting, while three additional meeting rooms are also available.

The resort also provides limousine service, 24-hour CCTV security, private yacht and helicopter tours, with its own on-site helipad.

## DRA's royal move

**DESTINATION** representation brand, DRA, has announced the signing of Royal Arabian as the first Destination Management Company in their destination representation portfolio.

Specialists in all aspects of inbound tourism business including (FIT's and groups), meetings, conferences and exhibitions, Royal Arabian is a prominent DMC in U.A.E and Oman.

## Fairmont KL

**LUXURY** brand Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is to open its first property in Malaysia. Building on the brand's growing presence in Southeast Asia, Fairmont Kuala Lumpur is set to debut in 2017.

The 62-story hotel will offer 750 well-appointed guestrooms along with an executive lounge and Fairmont Gold, the luxury brand's 'hotel within a hotel' offering.

Fairmont Kuala Lumpur will also feature six dining outlets, as well as 2,787 sqm of meeting and banquet space.

Recreational facilities include a swimming pool, health club and spa.

## Tropical day package

**BOOK** a conference at the Darwin Convention Centre by 30 Mar and hold it between 01 Mar and 31 May in this lively tropical harbour city and you can take advantage of their great value day package of \$78 per person.

Available for new bookings only, some of the inclusions on offer are room hire, morning and afternoon teas, working lunch with soft drink package, lectern and microphone, whiteboard and flip chart, conference stationery and mints and complimentary Wi-Fi.

To find out more, email [sales@darwinconvention.com.au](mailto:sales@darwinconvention.com.au).



**PASSENGERS** can forget the need to nick airline memorabilia, at least on a Qantas flight, now that the airline sells its Marc Newson-designed tableware.



The bright white, modern bone china pieces, which have premium class written all over them (metaphorically speaking), would make a nice addition to any table setting.

The dinnerware is characterised by Newson's contemporary fluid forms and produced in premium-quality fine bone china by Noritake.

It comes in a stylish sky-blue gift box bearing Marc Newson's signature

However, the first class prices might make the 'collectors' return to their light-fingered ways.

For instance, the Marc Newson 20 piece dinner set comes in at \$349.

Or for \$95 you can purchase a pair of the new espresso cups and saucers.

No sign of them selling their highly coveted Marc Newson cutlery yet, which since the introduction of their upgraded cutlery has cost the airline around \$50,000 to replace just the pinched teaspoons.

If the hankering for some dinnerware strikes you, head to [www.qantasshop.com.au](http://www.qantasshop.com.au).

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