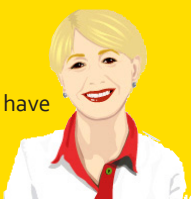




Get the message

WELL, things have finally come full circle.



We've gone from sending smoke signals and chipping messages in rock to faxes, emails and text messaging, to the intriguing, but oddly-shaped package that landed on my desk.

Upon opening it revealed a rather snazzy, bejewelled bottle and attached to the cork there hung a rolled-up note, barely touching the sand below.

This delightful invitation in a bottle, metaphorically washed up on Barrier Reef beach from Townsville Enterprise and Tourism and Events Queensland, would suffer no deleting or putting in a folder to be actioned later.

Not only had it captured my attention but that of everyone in the office, so well done Townsville and TAQ— mission accomplished and a nice bit of marketing. *Jill*



Fiji Airways lifts MEL

FIJI Airways has announced that it will increase its Melbourne services to a daily operation, with the addition of two extra weekly flights effective immediately.

The change has been facilitated by the arrival of a new ATR72 for the airline's Fiji Link domestic offshoot, which ceo Stefan Pichler said had freed up FJ's 737s for additional flying.

The carrier is also adding two weekly Auckland-Nadi flights.

One&Only celebrates with Qantas

HAYMAN Island is back on the map for the international and domestic MICE market, with the property reopening under the luxury One&Only brand after an \$80m makeover (**BEN** Mon).

And the resort - as well as other upmarket properties in Queensland's Whitsundays - is significantly more appealing for the sector with the return of Qantas flights to Hamilton Island.

The first Qantas flight to HTI in almost ten years - QF866 - left Sydney this morning, and **BEN** was on board for a sneak peek at One&Only Hayman Island.

Qantas head of domestic, Lyell Strambi, told **BEN** he was thrilled that the carrier was returning to Hamilton Island.

He said the move significantly improves connectivity for customers, while providing a consistent experience particularly for arrivals from overseas.

The return of a full service Qantas business class product will also be welcomed by the meetings market, with customers previously restricted to Jetstar.

Despite positive feedback about Jetstar's services, it's understood that the closure of the Sydney T2 Qantas lounge has also been an issue for some premium Hamilton Island passengers.

Strambi said resuming Qantas mainline flights to Hamilton was a response to passenger feedback.

"Our customers told us that they wanted direct access to the Whitsundays on a premium leisure service from Sydney.

"Today we respond to that demand and complement Jetstar's existing flights as part of our two-brand strategy," he said.

Strambi said Qantas would be the only domestic airline operating out of the Great Barrier Reef Airport to include the convenience of an inflight meal



and checked in baggage for all passengers no matter what time they are flying or which class they are travelling in.

Pictured above just before takeoff at Sydney are, from left: Anna Guillan, One&Only Hayman Island; Linda Gaunt, Meetings & Events Australia; Lyell Strambi, Qantas head of domestic; and Bill Wright, ID Australia.

See our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Business Events News](#) on Fri for a full reveal of the new One&Only Hayman Island.

Register to win

ALL new Inspire EX show registrations received up until 30 July will automatically be entered to win two nights accommodation at PARKROYAL Parramatta.

The offer comes courtesy of the show's partners from Pan Pacific Hotels Group, with the prize also including a delicious breakfast and parking.

What's more, Inspire EX attendees who run their next meeting or event at the hotel will also receive a bonus of their choice, with options including room upgrades, WiFi, audio visual equipment, lunch menu upgrades or free parking.

Inspire EX, "The business of events" is a new industry-only show evolved from the former ABBE/Sydney Events Showcase, taking place 18-19 August 2014 at the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island.

To register to attend see the link at www.inspireex.com.au.

A Tropical Recipe for Event Success!

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef invites you to attend our annual showcase and discover the tropical recipe for event success.

BRISBANE
 Tuesday 22 July 2014, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
 Customs House, 399 Queen Street

SYDNEY
 Wednesday 23 July 2014, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
 Star Room, above IMAX, Darling Harbour

MELBOURNE
 Friday 25 July 2014, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
 Eureka 89, 7 Riverside Quay, Southbank

A cocktail lunch will be served. **PLUS** one lucky guest at each event will **WIN** a trip for two to Cairns & Great Barrier Reef.

BUSINESS EVENTS CAIRNS & GREAT BARRIER REEF.
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Click here to attend!



business events news

2nd July 2014

Raising the Sunshine Coast curtain



ARMED with the knowledge that business events visitors spend up to five times that of a leisure traveller, Business Events Sunshine Coast (BESC) hosted a 'Sunshine Safari' last month that saw ten top professional conference organisers and corporate event managers on a four day familiarisation specifically developed to showcase the destination's business events capabilities.

With participants from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand, it included representatives of organisations such as Ergon Energy, Siemens, Sane Event Group, Zoom Events, and Corporate Incentive Solutions said BESC business events manager, Laurant Hofman.

"The conference organisers and corporates attending the Sunshine Safari have a strong influence on where an event will be held for their companies and have the capacity to bring a lot of

business to our region."

The group stayed at Novotel Twin Waters Resort, Oaks Oasis Resort and Outrigger Little Hastings Street Resort & Spa and also inspected Spicers Clovelly Estate, Spicers Tamarind Retreat, Noosa Springs Resort, Sheraton Noosa and RACV Noosa Resort.

They also experienced a visit to Maleny Botanic Gardens, The Events Centre, Australia Zoo, Flame Hill Vineyard, Noosa National Park and enjoyed stand up paddle boarding on the Noosa River, a cooking demonstration at Wasabi Restaurant and a dinner at Spirit House Restaurant.

Hofman thanked the many local operators who provided "tremendous support to help us host this program and showcase our best assets."

Participants are **pictured** above enjoying a private dinner at The Events Centre, along with stunning entertainment by Underground Opera.

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Discount MEA 2015

MEETINGS and Events Australia (MEA) has a few Ultra Early Bird registrations left for the 2015 MEA National Conference.

The special deal is available for \$995, a saving of 33% for the event taking place 24-27 May 2015 on Hamilton Island in Queensland's Whitsundays.

CLICK HERE for more info.

Coordinating EIBTM

EIBTM, being held in Barcelona 18-20 November has confirmed 90 new Hosted Buyer Group Coordinators who will bring some of the world's most senior buyers to this year's event.

That's a 20% increase on the previous year, with Joanna Warr, Reed Travel Exhibitions Hosted Buyer manager saying, "Fundamental to the success for our exhibitors is the quality of buyers attending and we have a year round job to seek out new faces and new Group Coordinators to help with the process.

"As part of the business development for the event, the team now has more than 400 Group Coordinators worldwide.

"We have seen a huge increase in new groups coming on board from Europe, with 57 signed up to date...our team has also recruited an additional 33 long haul groups for the show this year," she said.

IHG doubles up

FROM 1 July to 31 October members of the InterContinental Hotels Group's IHG Rewards Club who stay at InterContinental properties in Asia, Middle East and Africa will earn double points for every US\$1 spent on dining, drinks and in-room services during their stay.

The promotion follows last week's launch of the IHG Rewards Club's new earning structure, where members now earn ten points per every US dollar spent on qualifying revenue during stays at InterContinental Hotels & Resorts.



THERE'S a most unlikely ski shop in the desert setting of Agadez in the African country of Niger, reports *BBC News Magazine*.

It's run by Abdelkader Baba, who started his ski and snowboard rental shop back in the eighties, inspired by the camels he saw sliding down the dunes of the Sahara desert.

The trouble is, he hasn't had a single customer since 2007.

On being questioned why he chose the least obvious location for a ski shop, he said, "If the Alps can do it, why not Niger?"

Once upon a time he would take tourists to try sandboarding or skiing in the 45-degree heat, but since a rise in kidnappings and armed attacks in the region, customers have been somewhat deterred from visiting Baba's shop with its retro stock, and he hasn't strapped on his own skis since then, either.

"They blame it on al-Qaeda and other jihadi militant groups, but it's a shame," he said.

"Death will find you wherever you are, people die in Europe too!" Baba added.

"You should be allowed to do whatever you want to do."

Still, despite the lack of patronage he sees no reason to take down the 'ski shop' sign from the wooden façade, in the dusty marketplace of Agadez (below) - after all, the sign is what makes this shop famous.





business events news

2nd July 2014

Clinton & Geldof give aid

FORMER US president Bill Clinton, and singer/songwriter and activist Bob Geldof will be among the high-level speakers in the line-up of the 2014

International AIDS Conference taking place in Melbourne next month.

With over 25,000 international delegates and 2,500 journalists expected to attend, it is the single most widely covered health event in the world.

According to the Melbourne Convention & Visitors Bureau, it's also the largest medical conference ever to be held in Australia and is a testament to the country's deserved reputation as a leader in HIV/AIDS research.

Hosting AIDS 2014 in Melbourne, they say will not only have a positive health and social impact on the state of Victoria, but it is also expected to generate approximately US\$84 million for the Victorian state economy.

Melbourne's win of the event was aided by participants from the biotechnology sector arguing of Melbourne's capability in this sector.

This was coupled with Australia's strong commitment to ending the HIV epidemic, both nationally and in the wider Asia Pacific region, while the strength of Melbourne's political, scientific and civil society groups were listed as some of the reasons for the International AIDS Society choosing Melbourne as host.

This partnership is a demonstration of the City of Melbourne's commitment to continue working in a collaborative and strategic approach to promote the city's credentials in science and medical research, the MCVB added.

Cotai Strip package

THE Cotai Strip Macao with a range of 9,000 guestrooms and five international hotel brands – The Venetian, Conrad, Holiday Inn, Sheraton and Four Seasons, has a 'Meetings More Rewarded Package.'

From now until 31 August, book a minimum of 25 rooms with a meeting package for one night to get free WiFi, 5% off the master bill and a choice of two bonuses such a one way Cotai Water Jet ticket, dedicated coach transfer on arrival or departure, welcome entertainment performance or one complimentary room for every 25 rooms booked.

London's latest

A 1923 Grade II-listed former cinema – The Pavilion – has been transformed into the Dorsett Shepherds Bush, London.

Part of Dorsett Hotels International, the hotel opened last week bringing the brand to the British capital.

With 317 "Chinese-inspired" bedrooms, including 24 suites, a £123 a night opening offer includes breakfast with free WiFi available throughout the hotel.

See dorsetthotels.com.

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Mantra adds two

TWO new properties are to be added to the Mantra Group's Brisbane network, bringing the total to six hotels in the Qld capital – five under the Mantra brand and one under BreakFree.

The lease of Observatory Tower, a Brisbane landmark building on the corner of Wickham Terrace and Edward Street, will see the 24 level residential building converted to a full serviced apartment hotel.

The refurbishment of 50 apartments will be completed by September, with the remaining 114 apartments completed by March 2015.

Also from 1 July, Mantra has officially rebranded the former Diamant Hotel Brisbane as Mantra Terrace Hotel Brisbane.

IABCA Awards

THE inaugural India Australia Business & Community Awards is being held on Friday 31 October at the Sydney Town Hall.

The event, sponsored by Kaden Boriss, aims to engage, connect and recognise the role played by Indian Australians.

IABCA is supporting the worldwide charity, White Ribbon, a campaign to end men's violence against women, with chairman and Ambassador, Andrew O'Keefe to speak at the Awards which will be emceed by SBS World News presenter, Janice Petersen.

If you know of anyone from the Indian diaspora you think deserves recognition, you can nominate them for an award.

To purchase corporate tables and tickets go to iabca.com.au.

En Garde! in Thailand



ABOVE: Sabrage, the technique of opening a champagne bottle with a special sabre or sword and used for special and ceremonial occasions, has made its debut at the 137 Pillars House in Chiang Mai, the first "Caveau de Sabrage" in the region.

137 Pillars House, part of the SilverNeedle Collection, will offer the Sabrage service to corporate MICE and incentive clients, as well as to groups of champagne and/or food lovers.

"As we are always looking to enhance our guests' stay, we feel that Sabrage is the perfect

and unique service that will help make our guests' experience here a memorable one," said general manager Manfred Ilg, a licensed Maître Sabreur, and qualified to teach this traditional art.

Pictured at an event to formally launch the new offering are Eric Brandt, Deputy Ambassador of the Confrerie de Sabre d'Or in Thailand; Henry Widler, Governor of the Confrerie de Sabre d'Or for Asia Pacific; Manfred Ilg, general manager 137 Pillars House Chiang Mai; and Eric Hallin, Ambassador of the Confrerie de Sabre d'Or in Thailand.