



Dressed for rest success

PYJAMAS - we all have our favourites, but an initiative launched today by Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts aims to uncover some new snuggly outfits which can be used by frequent travellers.



A step beyond the admittedly comfy but somewhat shapeless PJs provided by some airlines in business class, the hotel group has challenged students from the Whitehouse Institute of Design to "create a concept for stylish sleepwear that helps promote a good night's sleep".

The *Dressed to Rest* competition is being conducted together with the Bondi Sleep School, which is a clinic specialising in sleep disorders.

The students are being asked to submit a sketch of their designs along with details of what inspired them, and the winner will receive a \$2500 grant from Crowne Plaza as well as a week-long internship with fashion retailer Cue.

I've long wondered about what happens to all those airline pyjamas that business flyers get on their trips - and in fact one of my colleagues at *Travel Daily* has quite a collection which apparently languishes at the rear of his wardrobe.

Let's hope that this Crowne Plaza and Cue initiative comes up with something a little more stylish! *Jill*

Accor in Olympic Park



ACCOR hotels in Sydney Olympic Park are offering a range of options for conferences, by collaborating with surrounding venues such as the Park Authority, Waterview and ANZ Stadium.

Being able to access the speciality venues available in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct gave Accor hotels the opportunity to offer tailored business event solutions for every client, NSW & ACT operations vice president Scott Boyes said.

"From a small executive meeting for 12 people up to a large delegate conference of over 500 people, we are able to develop innovative conference and event experiences."

One such conference was for Microsoft, held at Novotel Sydney Olympic Park over four days, with the 300 delegates accommodated at both the Pullman and Novotel hotels.

The program included meetings in the main conference facilities

to an Olympic themed team building activity in the grounds and a main gala dinner at ANZ Stadium.

A standard day delegate conference package from \$72 per person including food and beverages, venue hire and WiFi up to 5GB is available with the Novotel Sydney Olympic Park.

Accommodation is also available from \$199 per room per night with breakfast included, valid for new bookings in 2014.

Home run for Qantas

TWO Major League Baseball teams, the Los Angeles Dodgers and Arizona Diamondbacks, are set to arrive on Qantas Boeing 747s tomorrow, decked out in special livery to support the MLB Opening Series.

Qantas ceo international Simon Hickey said the airline was sponsoring the Series, which would generate significant brand awareness in the US, and followed other such marketing.

Raffles Dubai new gm

RAFFLES Dubai has a new general manager in Ayman Gharib, who took up his role as of 01 Feb.

Gharib brings more than 15 years of luxury hospitality experience in the Middle East.

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Top marks for BestCities

THE annual client survey conducted by the BestCities alliance has seen international associations and meeting planners give the organisation and its ten partner bureaux some of their highest satisfaction scores.

BestCities has engaged LJ Research every year since 2009 to capture feedback on both the bidding and event delivery stages of meetings held at its members' facilities across the globe.

The independent poll surveyed 141 clients from the association market segment, with the overall experience of working with BestCities members in Berlin, Cape Town, Chicago, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Houston, Melbourne, Singapore and Vancouver rated at 9.26 out of 10 - the highest score since the survey began.

Clients were also likely to recommend the bureaux to their colleagues, with a rating of 9.45 out of ten, higher than in 2012

and also higher than the all-year average score.

Karen Bolinger, Melbourne Convention Bureau ceo and BestCities Board Chair, said "given today's strong competitive environment for convention bureaux, it is very pleasing to see our partners rated so highly in all the key areas of the survey.

"With five years of data on record, we can now quite clearly make assessments regarding ongoing levels of service and expertise provided by our partners, as well as monitoring the alliance's commitment to provide quality services and deliver the world's best convention bureau practices," Bolinger added.

The study also assessed the brand awareness of BestCities and found greater recognition, which Bolinger said would "help deliver greater ROI for our partners and more dynamic benefits for our clients".

Qantas targets SME loyalty

SMALL businesses will be able to earn Qantas Frequent Flyer points on a wide range of common transactions shortly, with the announcement today of the launch partners for the carrier's 'Aquire' program.

Qantas says that more than 25,000 businesses have already registered for the scheme which gives a central account for owners and employees to contribute to.

Aquire members can earn points on everyday transactions which then convert into Qantas points in the name of an individual Qantas Frequent Flyer member, at a rate of one-to-one.

Program partners announced today include Avis Car Rental, QBE and GIO Insurance, Secure Parking, Snap Printing, Macquarie Leasing and Staples.

River Cloud farewell

DISCOUNTS of up to 30% on *River Cloud II* voyages in Europe are on offer as part of a promotion in the lead-up to the ship's retirement this year.

The vessel, which has for some years been a popular option for Australian conferences and groups, has farewell promotion deals available on several voyages - info@micro-cruising.com.au.



IT'S Chanel, darling.

Visitors to Macau will soon be able to stay in a luxury hotel designed by Karl Lagerfeld - the designer behind the famous French fashion brand, Chanel.

The 270 room Karl Lagerfeld Hotel is planned to open in 2017 in a 20 storey building that is part of the fashion-forward Lisboa Palace complex which will also feature a Palazzo Versace-branded property.

As well as being chief designer for Chanel, Lagerfeld also works with the Fendi fashion house, but the new hotel will operate under his own brand.

"I am very happy and proud to work on such a great project. An entire hotel designed by me. It's the first time for me! I think the idea is great," the designer enthused.

The Lisboa Palace resort will feature a total of about 2,000 hotel rooms, a wedding pavilion, several Michelin-starred restaurants and of course, huge meeting and conference facilities.

Naturally it will also offer around 700 gaming tables and over 1200 poker machines.

Lagerfeld's latest fashion launch featured a pop-up supermarket replete with Chanel groceries.

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Valley Vines specials



NOVOTEL Vines Resort has special room rates from \$220 a night for Swan Valley's Valley & Vines Festival.

The Festival is being held from 11am on 05 Apr in Perth and targets wine lovers, as well as anyone who enjoys live music and local food - so, everyone!

It also aimed to show tourists what the region had to offer in a small amount of time, the Festival said.

Tickets are \$30 per person and participating venues include Carilley Estate, Jarrah Ridge Wines and Duckstein Brewery.

Downton cruises

EUROPEAN Waterways is adding a further two Downton Abbey cruises down the Thames.

Selected cruises aboard the luxury hotel barge *Magna Carta* will give passengers the chance to visit Highclere Castle, the setting for Downton Abbey.

The additional cruises will depart 10 and 17 Aug.

Rates for the six night departures start at \$5,800 per person and include meals, wine and daily escorted excursions.

Stamford appoints new MICE DOS

STAMFORD Hotels and Resorts today announced the appointment of Andrea Werner as its Group Director of Sales, MICE.



Werner (pictured) will be responsible for Stamford's eight-strong portfolio of properties in Australia and New Zealand, implementing MICE strategies across all sectors including PCOs and meetings and event planners.

She will also work with the communication team to develop advertising, promotion and public relations campaigns.

Werner has almost 30 years of industry experience, with her most recent role being as Australian-based BDM for Business Events Wellington.

Shangri-La London reservations open

SHANGRI-LA Hotels & Resorts has today opened reservations for the upmarket eateries at its much-anticipated new London property, which is located in The Shard skyscraper tower.

Bookings at Ting - the signature restaurant and lounge on level 35 - can be made for the day the hotel opens on 06 May and onwards - for details see www.ting-shangri-la.com.



Sitting Pretty

Qatar Airways Business Class

Welcome to Sitting Pretty, our regular review of experiences up the front of the plane.

In October, Qatar Airways became the latest member of the **oneworld** airline alliance. Rated by Skytrax as World Airline of the Year in 2011 and 2012, Qatar Airways prides itself on a Skytrax 5-star rated long-haul product. **Business Events News** recently flew with Qatar Airways from Melbourne to Doha aboard a Boeing 777-300ER, experiencing the Gulf carrier's Business Class product first-hand.

THE SEAT

Qatar Airways' spacious Business Class cabin is configured with all seats forward-facing in a 2-2-2 layout. The seat reclines to a full-flat bed, fitted with a mattress for added comfort when resting, made even more comfortable with a set of branded pyjamas (in three sizes). The outer-side armrest also drops, providing extra space for side-sleepers.

Numerous in-seat pockets means there's plenty of places to store personal items (including a shoe pigeon-hole), and there's a handy drink holder hidden in the arm rest. For corporate travellers wanting to work in the air, there's a power outlet and USB connection. A large fold out tray-table offers ample space for lap-tops, tablets and documents.

ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Oryx Inflight Entertainment delivers more than 1,000 on-demand movies, TV programs, audio and games to your seat, complete with noise cancelling headphones. The system is simple enough to use once you locate the neatly hidden controller in the flip-up armrest. On select aircraft types, Qatar Airways also offers its 'onair' inflight wi-fi product.

LOUNGE

In Melbourne, Business Class passengers are granted access to Air New Zealand's modern and funky Koru Lounge. Guests are provided complimentary access to the Oryx Lounge in its own private terminal at Doha International Airport, complete with plenty of comfy seating, conference room, business centre, showers, quiet zone and free wi-fi.

SERVICE

There's a selection of meals served aboard that have been designed by celebrity chefs, such as Michelin Starred Tom Aikens and Vineet Bhatia, as well as the highly acclaimed Nobu Matsuhisa. Being on a Gulf carrier, **BEN** can't go past the classic arabic mezze as entree, the cinnamon spiced king salmon with lime and sumac sauce as main - both are divine - followed by an Australian cheese plate.

Cabin crew service, attention to detail and eagerness to ensure passenger comfort was impeccable. **BEN** found Qatar Airways staff to be among the friendliest and more personable in the skies, with a personalised farewell message delivered to our own IFE screen prior to descending into Melbourne.

For a gallery of images from **BEN's** experience with Qatar Airways, [CLICK HERE](#) or go to www.businesseventsnews.com.au/photos.



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