



Voyage of discovery

IT'S day four in Vietnam on IHG's high-end event planner famil, held in partnership with Vietnam Airlines and Destination Asia.



We have ticked off Ho Chi Minh City, or, as it is often called, Saigon, spending two nights in absolute comfort and pampering in the four year old InterContinental Asiana Saigon.

We've survived the remarkably organised madness of Saigon's two million motor bikes, on the back of vintage Vespe.

We visited the History Museum, the Presidential Palace, the City Museum and the new Cargo bar.

All these off-site venues have capacity for up to 800 people.

We've sipped cocktails in Saigon's hippest and highest nightclub, Chill; been entertained in colonial splendour at a former grand colonial mansion, now the Fine Arts Museum; had drinks at the French inspired, 100 year old Au Manoir De Khai villa; raced along the Saigon River by speedboat through a sea of river hyacinths; stopped off at the lush gardens of Binh Quoi village; and visited the underground tunnel complex within the Cu Chi battlefield, once the operational HQ of the Vietcong guerillas.

Right now we are in Nha Trang overlooking the beach and the South China Sea in one of IHG's newest hotels, the InterContinental Nha Trang, opened just six weeks ago.

We've cycled through the Vietnamese countryside, visited mat weavers, a school for kindergarten children and a local market before a surprise morning tea set up by the hotel along our rural cycle route at a place called The Ancient House.

We returned to the hotel via the picturesque Cai River, stopping off to visit the Po Nagar Cham Towers, which were founded sometime before 781 AD, to an alfresco BBQ lunch perched above the beach. Jill

Industry relief at budget

THE business events industry has met the Federal Government budget with relief, following the Commission of Audit recommendations (**BEN** 02 May).

The government said the budget had "strong support" for the tourism industry, identifying it as one of five national investment priorities; Tourism Australia's funding has not been cut and the government has committed \$43.1m over four years for a program funding infrastructure projects that encourage tourism.

Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) chairman Matt Hingerty said BECA was happy the government had listened to its and the industry's concerns.

The establishment of the Medical Research Future Fund in 01 Jan 2015, projected to reach \$20b by 2019-20, was exciting since the health industry was a significant generator of business meetings and conventions business, he said.

Making Australia an international hub of medical research would generate a lot of business from an events perspective and the general investment in infrastructure would generate business for the services industry economy including the business events sector, he said.

Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) executive director Andrew Hiebl said cuts to Tourism Australia

would have reduced the organisation's capacity to attract international business events.

President Lyn Lewis-Smith said the budget showed understanding of the benefits that the visitor economy generated, with international delegates attracted by convention bureaux being the country's highest yielding visitor based on daily expenditure.

The AACB also commended the research fund saying medical sciences were the most common subject matter of international association meetings, meaning the fund would position Australia as a global leader in this field.

Exhibition and Events Association of Australasia (EEAA) ceo Joyce DiMascio said with Tourism Australia's future safe from budget cuts, EEAA looked forward to getting greater traction with the agency, particularly with Business Events Australia, and under John O'Sullivan, it was hopeful the exhibition industry would be looked at with fresh eyes.

The appointment of Andrew Robb as Trade and Investment Minister had seen productive exchanges with the industry.

"With the budget now announced, we can escalate our negotiations and work towards repositioning the exhibition and events industry in the eyes of the Federal Government and its agencies."

Four pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus a full page from (**click**):

- AA Appointments

VA's lounging around

VIRGIN Australia has doubled the size of its Brisbane lounge and added the ability to enter straight from the kerbside, as in its Sydney lounge.

This expansion is due for completion midway through next year and follows the doubling in size of the Virgin Australia lounges in Sydney and Melbourne.

The company said it would also enable easy access to the departure area from its Melbourne lounge, launching in July.

A NEW RYDGES ON THE BLOCK



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business events news

14th May 2014

Sydney's \$9.4b build plan

THE City of Sydney has okayed a \$1.94b building and construction program over 10 years which will see a raft of new and upgraded infrastructure and facilities.

The council released its draft 2014-15 budget and 10 year corporate plan and it includes \$440m for Green Square to build a new town centre, including a library and plaza, aquatic centre and sports field; \$220m to transform George St and connect laneways as part of the light rail project; and \$240m to upgrade public areas such as granite paving for footpaths.

The City has also released its first cultural policy which includes ideas such as making 1.6 million sqm of empty space available to artists and free WiFi in public spaces.

Business Events Sydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said Reputation Institute modelling showed that a city that knew how to effectively manage its reputation could attract more tourists, greater investment or a bigger influx of talent, outcomes which were

closely linked to business events.

"We know that events help to drive trade, investment and talent, as well as being valuable drivers for visitor economies.

"People want more from a city than its commercial prowess – they also want to enjoy the city, the whole experience.

"So a vibrant city, one that's appealing as a destination to visit for business and leisure is most definitely good for business events."

Swissotel's special

SWISSOTEL Sydney and AVPartners are offering an end of the financial year promotion for all events booked before 31 Jul.

The promotion involves complimentary audio packages for Vision Packages and 50% off AV add-ons, including laptops, remote clickers and black drapes.

Boardroom bookings will receive 50% off plasma/LED television displays and complimentary teleconferencing units.

To book, email events.sydney@swissotel.com.



Assistant Manager/Manager, Oceania (Based in Sydney) Singapore Tourism Board

Singapore Tourism Board – the NTO promoting Singapore as a leisure and business destination – is seeking a motivated and dynamic individual to join our team!

Reporting to the Area Director (Oceania), you will drive visitorship to Singapore as a business/leisure destination through identifying/ converting Business Event leads; maintaining/building relationships with strategic partners (corporates, airlines, wholesale and retail) and travel trade on campaigns, educationals/product updates.

You should be an Australian resident with strong communication and negotiation skills and relevant tertiary qualifications with 3-5 years of relevant experience. A self-starter who's results-oriented, a good network of industry contacts and knowledge of Singapore would be useful.

A competitive remuneration package and training/personal development opportunities await, so submit your detailed resume and expected salary by 30 May 2014 to stb-infosingapore@stb.gov.sg



Sitting Pretty

Air France Business Class

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

*Air France is 80 years old and flies to 36 destinations in France and 168 destinations in 93 countries. It's a founding member of the SkyTeam global airline alliance. That French flair, it's also in the air, as **BEN** found out when we flew on AF188 from Paris to Hong Kong on a B777-300ER aircraft and tried the airline's Business Class.*

CHECK-IN

Even before boarding, airline ground staff were helpful and obliging at the exclusive welcome area at Charles de Gaulle Airport. It took no time to get a boarding pass and you're then whisked through security check-points via a special premium line to get to the Lounge faster where lovely French treats await.

THE SEAT

Thanks to the reserved boarding line we were quickly on the plane and escorted to aisle seat 7G and handed a most welcome glass of fine French champagne by one of the six crew in the cabin.

At the push of a button, the seat transformed into a spacious 2 metre long bed, which the airline boasts is the longest on the market; the shell seems to envelop you, ensuring privacy throughout the flight. The 67 Business seats, 2-3-2 across, have a generous 61cm pitch and 21.5cm width, with a hypoallergenic pillow and soft blanket.

Crew hand out an amenities kit with toiletries and each seat has a power outlet to plug in devices. There's also a reading lamp and a personal telephone to make calls via satellite.

IN-FLIGHT CUISINE

Departing on time at 11.35pm, it was after midnight when dinner was served but **BEN** wanted to try the menu created by Regis Marcon, holder of three Michelin stars.

It began with a gourmet foie gras terrine appetizer, sautéed shrimp with curry and veggies, while mains consisted of Chinese-style chicken, roasted fillet of cod, or fagottone pasta with Camembert cheese to follow, and a dessert of cocoa-kirsch genoise with fruit and coconut, as well as a Bourgogne blanc and a delicious Bordeaux red.

There's also an express light meal after take off if you don't want the full bit and during the 11 hour flight, crew set up two bar areas in the galley with buffets. As **BEN** took a photo, one jumped in front of the camera and said, "Take one of me too."

IN-FLIGHT CUISINE

There are individual screens with over 500 hours of on-demand programming including the latest movie releases from Hollywood and France and popular TV shows, with noise-cancelling headphones.

The toilets were kept clean throughout and as we arrived, 20 minutes early, the chief purser thanked each passenger individually.

THE VERDICT

C'est magnifique.





Association hub Dubai key

MAKING Dubai more appealing for global associations to set up a local chapter will have a positive spin-off on business events, Dubai convention & business tourism director Steen Jakobsen says.

Jakobsen said cities renowned for business events across the globe tended to feature high on the International Congress & Convention Association List, and shared common key attributes.

"They are easily accessible, have good infrastructure, possess a good understanding and knowledge about the industry, but they also have in common a high concentration of international associations located in the destination," he told media at Arabian Travel Market last week.

He identified associations such as the Heart Foundation or the Diabetes Association.

The Danish-native said Dubai was not close to competing with the likes of Brussels, Washington [DC], Singapore, Paris, Geneva or London for events due to each city's high number of international organisations and associations located there.

"When you have company headquarters in your city they automatically bring in a lot of business events to those destinations.

"That's one of the initiatives we've been focusing on for the past year after a decree came from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed allowing for international associations to establish themselves in Dubai."

The decree saw the launch of the Dubai Association Centre (DAC) (**BEN** 19 Mar) earlier this year which acted as a one-stop shop for international associations, making it easier to establish a local chapter in Dubai.

"We think that is one of the things we need to grow... as that will eventually lure business events to Dubai."

The decree is paying dividends, with DAC talking to between 25 and 30 international associations representing medical, technological and other fields of science who are keen to create a base in Dubai, with up to 10 in the process of obtaining permits and licences to move forward.

"There is a big potential for those areas to bring in large events to Dubai," Jakobsen said.

He said Dubai and the broader Middle East had been "quite an untapped market" for international associations and Dubai was strategically located as a gateway to other untapped markets in North Africa, India and CIS countries, enabling the emirate to act as a hub for the Middle East, "just like Brussels is for regional Europe, Washington is for the US and Singapore is for north and southeast Asia."

"Many are trying to grow, and part of the success to growth is having new members.

"This region provides opportunities for new members and partnerships with universities, research centres and companies [based in the region]."

Eating up Restaurant Australia

MORE than 700 businesses have shared their top eating and drinking tourism experiences in Tourism Australia's new campaign, 'Restaurant Australia'.

Businesses can share their experiences via the website, restaurant.australia.com, with 722 having shared experiences or information in categories including Wine Story, People and Experiences.

Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan said this year's Australian Tourism Exchange was the ideal platform to present it to 1,800 tourism operators and buyers.

"There's already so many great stories coming in bringing to life the people, the produce and the places that we believe will inspire more international travellers to visit Australia and sample for themselves our incredible food and wine and our exceptional culinary experiences."

CLICK HERE for the campaign video.

Corporate games



DUBBED as one of the greatest sporting rivalries in Australia, Game I of the Holden State of Origin series is two weeks away.

Southern Cross Sports Marketing is offering corporate hospitality packages at \$795 per person for the Sydney game that includes category one corporate match seating and a pre and post-match cocktail function.

Official hospitality for this game has moved to a new venue, the League Legends Bar located at Novotel Sydney Olympic Park.

Two games will be held in Queensland with the first played at Suncorp Stadium on 28 May and the second at Sydney's ANZ Stadium on 18 Jun, before the series returns to Brisbane for Game III on 9 Jul.

QRL hospitality will be held on-site for the Brisbane games.

Priced at \$1,190 per person, packages for Games I and III include category one corporate match seating.

Visit www.sxsm.com.au to book.



WHAT with all the interest in the Austrade tender for event management services for the Australian Export Awards (**BEN** 07 May), we thought we'd bring you some of the more out there tenders on offer on the government site.

These include the provision of a hot air balloon for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

However, zeppelins aren't making a military comeback - rather RAAF wants to use the balloon (of which it already operates two) for public relations activities, including free flights (!), to promote a positive image of the organisation.

Intriguingly, the RAAF wants a custom designed balloon built to a shape that would be "instantly recognisable" and associated with the Air Force brand - hmmm.

Also up for tender is the provision of 'Neckties/scarf/cummerbunds' for the Defence Materiel Organisation and a tactical electronic warfare simulator for the Navy, based at HMAS Watson and HMAS Stirling.

WIN A STAY AT THE HOLIDAY INN



This week **BEN** is offering one lucky reader the chance to win 1 Night's Accommodation in a Superior Room including breakfast for 2 at the Holiday Inn Darling Harbour, courtesy of Holiday Inn Darling Harbour and JC Travel Professionals.

The prize includes:
- 1 Night's accommodation for 2 in a Superior room
- Full buffet breakfast for 2 at Shipley's Restaurant

For your chance to win, email your answer to the question below by Fri 16th May to: comp@businessesnews.com.au.

To win tell us in 25 words or less why you deserve this package prize?

Click here for Terms and Conditions



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FANCY WITH NUMBERS

RETAIL GROUPS CONSULTANT

BRISBANE CBD – TOP PACKAGE ON OFFER

Love the challenge in creating group itineraries? Thrive in a fast paced environment – then check out this hot role. Based in the CBD this leading travel company requires an experienced consultant to come and join their groups division. From 10 to 400 no two days will be the same as you arrange special interest, sporting, wedding, incentive groups and more. On offer are superb \$\$ along with Mon – Fri hours, a supportive working environment and the chance to hone your skills with a range of training offered.

EVENT TRAVEL CONTRACTORS REQUIRED

GROUPS & EVENT TRAVEL

MELBOURNE (INNER) – SALARY/ HOURLY RATE NEG

We are calling for competent and highly qualified event travel consultants looking for ongoing contracting work. This amazing travel management company has a number of upcoming events and as such, requires all hands on deck to assist with the successful delivery. With group numbers up to 4000, you will have experience working on large domestic and international conferences, including the travel management side. This is an exciting opportunity with the possibility of permanent employment.

WALK THE RED CARPET

ENTERTAINMENT CONSULTANT

MELBOURNE (INNER) – SALARY \$60K - \$90K (OTE)

Join a Global Travel Company who are renowned worldwide for being at the top of their game, providing specialised travel services for the film/television, sport, performing arts, music, fashion, media and corporate entertainment industries. Working Monday to Friday hours, you will be servicing some of the most exciting clients in the industry. With the opportunity to earn one of the highest salaries in the business, do not pass this one up! Min. 3 years international consulting and ticketing experience req'd.

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MICE MARKET SALES

**DIRECTOR OF SALES - EVENTS
SYDNEY**

EXECUTIVE SALARY PACKAGE

Combine your high level sales skills with your strong Events background to take the next step into this Director role. Overseeing a team of operations and sales managers, your key strengths will include strong connections within the MICE space, the ability to win and nurture top clients as well lead and motivate a team to succeed. This is an amazing opportunity for an experienced Events Sales Manager to take the next step in their career. Top salary and bonuses on offer.

SALES & EVENTS!

**CONF AND EVENTS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
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SALARY TO \$80K PLUS BONUSES

Do you know how to hit the ground running and make your mark on securing new event business? This fantastic new role is a great opportunity to get ahead with a market leader. Your experience in event/corporate sales has given you the skill in developing leads, creating unique proposals building relationships and signing up valuable new business. A great opportunity with a company that offers career development, and ongoing training.

YOUR LIFE IN EVENTS ONLY GETS BETTER HERE

**SENIOR EVENTS MANAGER
SYDNEY**

EXECUTIVE SALARY PACKAGE

This organization is committed to delivering the best event management, group travel and incentive programs for clients of all sizes using their experience teamed with creativity and innovation. If you have experience managing corporate events from small corporate meetings thorough to large international incentive and conferences, then come and see what this fantastic, growing organization can offer you.

EVENT CO-ORDINATOR

**TRAVEL & EVENT MANAGEMENT COMPANY
SYDNEY - TEMP ROLE, TOP HOURLY RATE**

Create unique travel, incentive & event experiences both nationally & internationally for a wide variety of clientele. Working in this boutique travel & event management company, you will assist the friendly team with delegate registrations, event themes & activity co-ordination and all other office admin. Temp role to start ASAP for approx 1 month or more. The ideal candidate will have Eventspro experience. Send your CV to AA today to find out more about this & other fantastic roles.