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Starry eyed

NEWS that tall ship sailing specialist Star Clippers has announced the building of a fourth ship to add to its fleet of graceful square-riggers brought back indelible memories of three voyages undertaken on Star Clipper ships - twice out of Phuket when they sailed there, and more recently out of Piraeus in Greece.



On this latter voyage to Malaga in Spain, I dined with Mikael Krafft, founder and owner of Star Clippers. He spoke then of his vision for this new ship.

The vessel, yet to be named, is the first new-build since the launch of *Royal Clipper* in July 2000. The biggest and most ambitious to date, it is to be launched in the second half of 2017. Able to carry 300 passengers and weighing 8,770 tons, it will be powered by more than 6,350 square metres of sails.

Krafft said that many incentives had been held on their ships, including most of the big car companies. "Very often the whole of ship is taken," he said. Renault chartered both the shipping line's two smaller vessels (170 pax) - the *Star Flyer* and *Star Clipper* in the Mediterranean where they raced against each other during the day and at the end of the voyage a chartered Air France 747 was waiting to take them to other destinations.

"The reason we are so successful is because our sailing vessels are very conducive to team building," he said.

"We can do BBQs on deck - the dining room can be used as a conference room and we've even had the ceo address their group from high on the mast platform," he said - truly unique! *Jill*



Jupiters set for makeover

JUPITERS Hotel & Casino on the Gold Coast will undergo a \$75 million room upgrade, with owners Echo Entertainment saying its "one of the most comprehensive and highest value hotel refurbishments ever undertaken in Australia".

The iconic property, located adjacent to the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, will continue to operate during the project which is scheduled for completion by the end of 2016.

All of Jupiters' 592 rooms will be "completely revitalised to offer both business and leisure travellers a world-class experience," said Echo md Qld, Geoff Hogg.

iPad connectivity, smart TVs and other technology will complement the best in luxury finishes, while new digital signage will also be installed throughout

the property, particularly to guide hotel guests who are visiting for a conference or event.

The property has its own convention and exhibition space, with capacity for up to 2,300.

Jupiters is also set for growth, with the company in the final stages of selecting a contractor for the construction of a new 17-storey "luxury six-star suite tower" at the front of the hotel.

BEN Christmas guide

BUSINESS Events News is currently taking bookings for our popular Christmas Events Guide, which will highlight options for clients wanting to organise venues and entertainment for the 2015 Festive Season.

To book in now or for more info email us on advertising@businessesnews.com.au.

OCEC drones on at IMEX



The latest 3D structures and aerial drone images of the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) were revealed at IMEX Frankfurt 2015 last week, in the lead up to the Centre's opening which is scheduled for next year.

The latest statistics from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) were also revealed at the media conference, placing Oman in 9th position out of 141 countries worldwide under the security and safety criteria.

"The most recent WTTC report on Oman, and indeed the many

international accolades the Sultanate has received in the last year, is a positive affirmation of Oman's tourism strategy," said OCEC general manager, Trevor McCartney.

"Striving to become a pioneer in business events in the Arabian Gulf, the OCEC is enormously proud to be a major force in the momentum of the industry," McCartney added.

The OCEC and its surrounding precinct is expected to contribute more than US\$400 million to the country's GDP when it opens.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today includes full pages from: (*click*)

- JITO win an Apple Watch
- Pullman Hotels & Resorts

ICC industry update

INTERNATIONAL Convention Centre Sydney will be showcased at an upcoming event taking place at the Art Gallery of NSW.

ICC ceo Geoff Donaghy will give an update on the project, with other team members also on hand to meet with industry representatives on Thu 25 Jun.

Event organisers and suppliers are invited to RSVP for either a 7.30am breakfast event or cocktail party from 4pm - for more information or to register email lbyrne@iccsydney.com.



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business events news

25th May 2015



THE latest team building phenomenon has arrived in Australia - and people are certain to try to get out of it.

That's because the whole idea of the Escape Hunt Experience is to figure out how to get out of a locked room.

The concept is now open in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and the Gold Coast, with another "escape room" also set to debut shortly in Adelaide.

The Escape Hunt involves teams of two to five people being 'locked' inside a mystery room.

They use their combined skills to find clues, solve puzzles and crack codes, with a 60 minute time limit to escape the room.

The teams escape from a themed room with the help of a 'game master' who watches from outside via CCTV, and provides assistance as required.

Some imagination is required, with players transported into a different era by the rooms, with the Sydney venue including The Rocks in the early 1900s as well as Melbourne's first tram service.

"This is a unique entertainment offering to the market that promotes mind stimulation, education, learning and most importantly good fun," said founder Paul Bart.

There are now 137 Escape Hunt rooms worldwide, and as well as popular for corporate team building events, they have also been used as part of the interview process for potential job candidates.

"The one of a kind activity promotes cohesion, communication skills, teamwork, problem solving and creative thinking in a fun and motivational environment," Bart said.

High tech Hong Kong

THE Langham Place Hotel in Mongkok, Hong Kong, has announced a significant technology upgrade including a super-sized 6.7x3.4m LED screen in its ballroom.

Offering "cinematic viewing in both size and scale," the massive screen leaves traditional projectors behind, with high quality playback, live feeds and high speed remote uploading and replay functions available.

And that's not all - the Langham's tech enhancements include a 2.4x2.8m LED screen welcoming delegates outside the ballroom, along with eleven brand new Lumens projectors and two portable touch screens available in its function spaces.

LED screen packages start at HK\$9,800 net per event per day.

Details on +852 3552 3366.

Three designs for new LA centre

THE Los Angeles Department of Convention and Tourism Development has released details of the three finalists in an architectural competition to come up with a design for the proposed renovation and extension of the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Launched in late 2014, entrants in the competition were asked to address goals and criteria including a commitment to the environment, a point of view on the "futurisation" of conference centres, as well as overall creativity and budget.

The finalist are AC Martin/LMN Architects; Gensler and Lehrer; and HMC Architects & Populous, with the designs now on display until 04 Jun at the Center.

A final selection is expected to be made by the end of the year.

Vic regional showcase



BUSINESS Events Victoria last week hosted its inaugural Regional Showcase in Melbourne, with about 200 business event industry staffers, organisers and operators in attendance.

Participants were shown some of the unique and diverse opportunities available to them in regional Victoria, with attendees coming from all over the state.

25 exhibitors displayed their wares, coming from Geelong and the Surf Coast, Mildura, Albury, the Mornington Peninsula, Macedon Ranges, Phillip Island, Wangaratta, the Grampians and Gippsland, Ballarat and the Yarra Valley.

Business Events Victoria ceo Chris Porter said the gathering

was a huge success, with many genuine enquiries and connections being made.

"One of the key aims of the showcase was to raise the profile of individual business event venues and destinations in regional Victoria and provide them with an opportunity to be in the spotlight," he said.

Such was the success of the event that Business Events Victoria now plans to take the show on the road, with a similar event planned for Sydney in Aug.

BEV is also hosting an industry fam to Geelong and the Great Ocean Road next month, and will launch a new Planner's Guide in Jul - for more information see www.businesseventsvictoria.com.

Essendon Fields debut

A STATE-OF THE-ART conference and exhibition centre will form part of a major new development adjacent to Melbourne's Essendon Airport.

The Essendon Fields project will also include a 165-room hotel with adjoining restaurant, with an official sod-turning ceremony to take place later this week.

WTTC win for Dallas

DALLAS, Texas has been chosen to host the next World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit, taking place in Apr 2016.

Bangkok meetings

THE Metropolitan by COMO in Bangkok has released residential meetings packages which are claimed to elevate the usual options by including some of the best food experiences the Thai capital has to offer - including meals at the Metropolitan's acclaimed *nahm*, voted Asia's best restaurant in 2014, plus cocktails at the Met Bar.

Packages include early check-in and late check-out, daily breakfast, catered breaks, function rooms, AV & more - email events.met.bkk@comohotels.com.

Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) **F:** 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Jill Varley info@businesseventsnews.com.au

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Magda Herdzik advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@businesseventsnews.com.au

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