



## No sooner read than said...

WITH the mention that Star Clippers is to build a fourth clipper ship and how they once sailed out of Thailand (**BEN Mon**), comes the news that the *Star Clipper* is to sail to Phuket after its Mediterranean summer season.



Back in 2010 the tall ship was relocated to the Caribbean due to the rise of piracy in the Strait of Malacca, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean - ending a decade of Far East deployments during the northern winter.

Onboard my Greece/Malaga voyage we heard of one of the last repositioning voyages *Star Clipper* took to Phuket - under the escort of 'Delta Mike' which cruised alongside the ship 24/7, complete with the three machine guns set up on deck. As one of the passengers said "For six days of the voyage we were on high alert in the pirate area, which was quite an experience.

Reassuring precautions taken by the crew included electrified wire, plywood panels around the aft sun deck, complete blackout at night, portholes blocked 24 hours a day and emergency drills.

It's a story, he said, "you could dine out on for ages!"

Now not as dangerous, except if executing a mast climb up a challenging wire ladder, the ships' return to South-East Asian waters will give small incentive groups the opportunity to experience luxury sailing under the crack and snap of square rigged canvas. *Jill*

## MEA's new "Event Show"

**MEETINGS & Events** Australia has revealed the much anticipated details of its upcoming Event Show (**BEN 01 Apr**), which will take place at Sydney's Randwick Racecourse on the 1st and 2nd of September.

Announcing the show earlier this week to delegates at the MEA National Conference on Hamilton Island, MEA ceo Linda Gaunt said it would be "Sydney's only events trade show specialising in showcasing local venues and suppliers, with a focus on up and coming technology and service providers".

The MEA show will fill some of the void left by the demise of Inspire EX which was set to be held 17-18 August at the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island.

Exhibitions and Trade Fairs pulled the pin on Inspire EX just after AIME (**BEN 27 Feb**), with the move part of a restructure which it said would see it focus on markets demonstrating the greatest potential for growth.

The MEA Event Show will also occur just before Luxperience, which added an "Events by Luxperience" division to its show

which takes place 6-9 September at the Australian Technology Park.

Despite the close timing with Luxperience, Gaunt said MEA had already received an overwhelming amount of support for the show, and now that the venue has been announced this will further encourage industry members to get involved.

Saxton Speakers Bureau has been announced as the major sponsor of the MEA Event Show, and delegates at the MEA conference were offered an "exclusive chance to be the first to get involved with the event".

**MEANWHILE** Melbourne has been announced as the location for MEA's 2016 National Conference - the first time MEA has held a national conference in Victoria since 2010.

2016 will see the conference moved earlier to April, with "ultra early-bird tickets" available from 8th June for \$995 to the first fifty people to register.

## Travel Industry Expo coming up

**REGISTRATIONS** are now being accepted for the upcoming Travel Industry Exhibition, taking place at Luna Park in Sydney on 16-17 July - for details see **page four** of today's issue of **BEN**.

## Today's issue of BEN

**Business Events News** today has three pages of news plus a full page from (**click**)

- Travel Industry Expo

## Scoot gets groupies

**SCOOT** Airlines, the low-cost long-haul offshoot of Singapore Airlines, has launched a new "stress free" online group booking system.

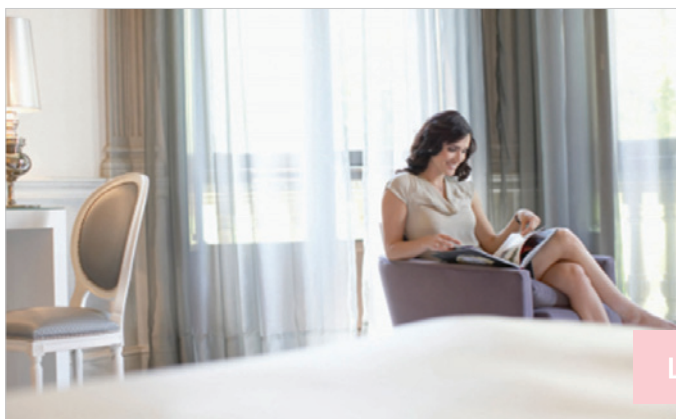
Targeting travel agents, conference organisers, clubs and sporting groups, the new site allows bookers to self-manage group reservations right from the quote and deposit through to final payment.

It's available for people who have a minimum group of ten people travelling in economy class on the same flight.

Benefits include a larger 20kg checked baggage allowance for each passenger, no booking fee, no need for full payment at time of booking and name changes up to a week before departure.

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# business events news

27th May 2015

## Perfect Puka Park

**THE** Grand Mercure Hotel in Puka Park, NZ has launched a range of innovative conference packages in partnership with Coromandel Adventures, allowing delegates to explore the unique character and coastline of the Coromandel region.

The recently renovated resort, about two hours from Auckland and located in a private bush setting, has facilities for up to 100 delegates making it perfect for small to medium meetings.

More details on +64 7 864 8088.

## Snowy cross-triathlon

**LAKE** Crackenback Resort & Spa in the NSW Snowy Mountains will host the International Triathlon Union's Cross-Triathlon World Championships in Nov 2016.

It's the first time a world championship event of its type has been held in Australia, with previous locations including Spain, the USA, Holland and Germany.

## KLCC expansion

**AN** expansion project for the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is now under way, with the project expected to be completed in 2018.

The work involves the development of the adjacent "Lot 91" which will comprise an office tower, convention centre and retail precinct and when operational will add an additional 10,000 square metres of space.

That will boost the KLCC's total inventory to more than 32,000 square metres, allowing to "comfortably accommodate larger international association meetings and concurrent events," said gm Alan Pryor.

He said that for many current clients this would allow them to grow their events significantly.

The KLCC just celebrated its tenth anniversary, and Pryor said 2014 had been a huge year, with a total of 1,759 events hosted, up 11% on 2013.

Total delegates last year rose to more than 1.97 million, he added.

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## Vivid delivers!

**STARRY**, starry nights and a spot of rain during the opening of Sydney's Vivid Festival last weekend didn't deter visitors from experiencing Vivid's brilliant light show, with Accor's Sydney CBD hotels recording impressive weekend occupancy rates of 87.9%, up 2.2% on the prior year.

"The Harbour Rocks Hotel was at 100% capacity on opening night, and sat at 98% occupancy for the remainder of the weekend," said the hotel's general manager Dylan Cole, with a 14% increase in revenue across

F&B compared to last year's opening weekend.

The Pullman Quay Grand Sydney Harbour averaged 96% occupancy with their ECQ Bar and Q Dining popular to watch the spectacle.

Accor vp operations NSW & ACT, Scott Boyes, said, "Having a strong events calendar is so important for our hotels and gives a major boost to the broader economy".

He congratulated the NSW govt, Destination NSW and the SHFA for making Vivid Sydney "bigger and better than ever".

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# business events news

27th May 2015



## THE need for speed!

Thrill seekers and groups holding an event in Singapore will want to head to Universal Studios on Sentosa Island, to the world's tallest duelling roller coasters - Battlestar Galactica: HUMAN vs. CYLON, themed after the hit TV series.

Returning today with all-new two-seater ride vehicles, they promise to give a more intimate and personal ride experience, enhancing the feeling of speed and thrills.

## IMEX wrap-up

LAST week's IMEX show in Frankfurt saw almost 9,000 visitors and hosted buyers in attendance, according to chairman Ray Bloom as the event closed at Messe Frankfurt.

Bloom said there were 62,000 individual appointments made with exhibitors, with more than 50% of them including a request for proposal.

There were 55 new stands, with 20% of returning exhibitors increasing their space this year.

Australia was highlighted as one of 70 "major stands" which had invested substantially in "completely new stand designs".

Others in this group included Dubai and Portugal.

"This had a great impact in the hall and is clear testimony to their strong commitment and investment in the industry and in IMEX," Bloom said.

The next edition of the show, to be held 19-21 Apr 2016, will see the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) launch its new Business School, Bloom added.

## NZICC design unveiled



NEW Zealand's SkyCity has revealed a new design for the NZ International Convention Centre, which is set to be developed in Auckland, with the NZ government approving the project which will not require any external funding.

SkyCity will invest at least NZ\$430 million in the project, which is slightly smaller than originally planned.

However it will still be the biggest building in New Zealand, with the proposed centre's largest room six times the size of anything currently on offer within the SkyCity complex.

Conventions & Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) said the state of the art facility would lift the bar for NZ's conference offerings.

CINZ ceo Sue Sullivan said the design was inviting and accessible giving delegates "a real sense they are part of Auckland life."

"This announcement gives us the confidence to go out and talk on a new level about New Zealand as an exciting conference destination," she said.

Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development also hailed the project, saying NZ needs an "internationally competitive national convention centre of this scale to attract top level large scale business events."



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## CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE CONFERENCE-GOER

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in *BEN*.

## LET'S DO IT WITH THE LIGHTS ON!

GIVEN that my column is all about 'confessions' - here's my revealing confession this month.

I'm a big fan of doing it with the lights on.

I like seeing who I'm doing it with. And I like them to be able to see each other.

I'm referring to the lights in conference room of course. (who knows, dear readers, where your evil minds went to?).

Many conferences these days still set the conference room up so that the delegates sit in the dark, watching the brightly lit onstage action. But in an age where we are striving hard for engagement and interaction, setting the room up this way discourages audience involvement, creating an "us" and "them" atmosphere. We, the delegates will sit here quietly (often subtly texting on our mobiles or checking out social media) while you, the presenters "perform" for us. Not unlike a night at the theatre or a concert. To quote Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* anthem "Here we are now, entertain us!"

But a conference presentation should not be a performance. Delegates should at the very least feel like they are actively involved, even if the presenter does the bulk of the talking. I always recommend to my clients to blur the line between delegates and presenters to encourage a conversational atmosphere. Doing it with the lights on is a way of doing so.

The delegates feel close to the presenter, on equal footing with equal responsibility, while from the presenter's point of view, they can actually see their audience making it easier for them to converse, read the audience and gauge their responses.

Sure, from an AV perspective it looks better when the lights are out in the conference room. Yes the video will look better and the slides sharper. So perhaps dim the lights for a video or where the slides are paramount. But I'd argue that we shouldn't be relying that much on the slides in the first place, certainly not to the extent that the PowerPoint slides dictate the light levels in the room and decrease delegate engagement.

Let's strive for engagement, two way communication, involving the audience. A conference is not a piece of theatre.

One other suggestion for "conference room-readying": get your conference committee or head office team to play security guards and gently encourage / coerce / force delegates to sit up the front and in one area. We are all naughty school-kids at heart who gravitate towards the back and tend to sit in clumps, making it harder for the presenter to see, let alone interact with their audience.

Groups of people sitting close together adds to the atmosphere, facilitates networking, creates harmony and humour in the room (audiences are far more likely to laugh when in a clump than when seated on their own).

Someone Please turn on the light



If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email [andrew@lunch.com.au](mailto:andrew@lunch.com.au) or visit his website at [www.andrewklein.com.au](http://www.andrewklein.com.au).



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