



12.12.12

WELCOME to the never to be repeated 12.12.12 (Twelfth of the the Twelfth, Two



Thousand and Twelve), a day that will either herald the end of the world or a new beginning.

I for one am rooting for the latter.

Blame it on Mayan elders who say that the Ancients were informing the modern world to be ready for a giant transformation for the human race on this date.

Their ancient calendar speaks of 12-12-2012 as the end of times as we know it (some have interpreted this as 'the end of the world') and the beginning of a new cycle of evolution for planet earth, humanity and the cosmos.

Interestingly, traditions across the world including Buddhism, Tao, Hopi and Vedic, predict a 'Golden Age' or 'Satyug' in their calendars around the same period.

By the way, if you don't receive Friday's edition of **BEN**, remember, you have been warned!

On a lighter note Mercure Clear Mountain Lodge Spa & Vineyard has announced last week's **BEN** winner, Germany Tourism is giving our treasured readers the chance to win a German Christmas package and Toga Hotels is looking for more Christmas party photos so they can choose a favourite and send the winner on a two night stay - Jill.

DMS predicts the future

PREDICTING 2013

as a year for budget hardliners, Leila Fiedler, managing director of Destination Marketing Services (DMS) said that the business events market had become increasingly focused on price and value.

Speaking to **BEN** during preparations for the upcoming DMS Annual Workshops, which are scheduled to take place in Sydney and Melbourne between 21-25 February, she said:

"The market is really running at two speeds – many clients are seeking to hold their events in lower cost destinations yet demand for more costly destinations is also strong because of the strength of the Australian dollar.

"However the common theme linking the two is the same – an insistence by corporate end users that value be clearly demonstrated before they award the business.

"The conundrum facing event managers is whether the current value proposition lies in the quality of the creative and program inclusions or simply the bottom line price.

"Clearly the industry wants to deliver a combination of both but in doing so they are increasingly having to operate in an environment where cost cutting is the norm."



With the currency working in Australia's favour, Fiedler said there had been a return to coveted destinations in Europe and the USA that encourage clients to 'spend up' and where the yield is higher.

As a result Fiedler says DMC partners are approaching 2013 with strong emphasis on value "There is a plethora of new technologies starting to be utilised by event organisers – and we are starting to see a fundamental shift in the way in which events are staged; for example social media is being incorporated into business networking events, sophisticated data mining tools are now available to corporate clients and event staging and special effects have undergone a technological revolution".

A highly regarded fixture on the industry trade events calendar, the DMS Workshops coincide with AIME and give their Australian and New Zealand clients unique opportunities to access their international DMC partners.

DMS Workshops are by invitation only and being held in Sydney on Thursday 21 February and in Melbourne Monday 25 February.

To register your interest email bianca.disalvo@destinationmarketing.com.au.

Sofitel for Wellington

THE NZ capital is set to get its first new internationally branded hotel in over 20 years, with the 2014 opening of the new Sofitel Wellington Hotel.

It will be the third Sofitel in NZ and "will help attract significant increases in tourism, business travel and conferences to the city," according to Accor.

Mercure picks Ben

CONGRATULATIONS to Ben Ogden from The Conference Room who is the lucky winner of the Mercure Clear Mountain Lodge Spa & Vineyard competition as seen in **Business Events News** last week.

Ogden has won a two night stay in a spa privilege room, breakfast for two, one 3 course dinner at Mandy's on the Mountain, late check out and much more.

He won for his response to the question "What would getting out of the city and having an event at Clear Mountain Lodge Spa & Vineyard mean to your delegates?"

He answered: *An event here re-energises the soul and a "slow down" from a typical conference/incentive schedule. It would mean volumes to relax, work and discover the ease of such a great destination.*

For another chance to win a prize this week see the German Christmas pack comp below.



This week, **BEN** is giving readers the chance to win a German Christmas package valued at \$70, courtesy of the **German National Tourist Office**.

The package includes two bottles of German Riesling wine and other great surprises.

The German National Tourism Office has just published its brand new Christmas market app for iPhone and Android devices allowing people to discover Germany's Christmas markets.

Click here to access the app

For your chance to win download the app, choose your favourite Christmas market and email us why its your favourite in 25 words or less

Email: comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

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AEG Ogden named ICC operator

FURTHER to the announcement made by the NSW Government yesterday (**BEN** breaking news) that the Destination Sydney consortium, comprising of AEG Ogden, Lend Lease, Capella Capital and Spotless were the preferred developer of the integrated



convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct at Darling Harbour, AEG Ogden were also named as the new operator of the \$1.1 billion facility which will be known as the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC).

AEG Ogden's director of Convention Centres, Geoff Donaghy, will also assume the role as chief executive officer of the new venue's management company, and said that ICC Sydney would include:

- A convention facility capable of holding four fully separated concurrent events of over 12,000 delegates
 - Total exhibition capacity of 40,000 square metres
 - An external event deck of 5,000 square metres featuring spectacular city views
 - A premier red carpet theatre with a capacity of 8,000 suitable for international entertainment acts and being used for major convention plenary sessions
 - A Grand Ballroom to provide Sydney's premium banqueting space for more than 2,000
 - And a new ICC hotel complex with up to 900 rooms
- Welcoming the visionary nature of the project, Tourism Accommodation Australia NSW director Carol Giuseppi said "The new facilities will ensure that Sydney attracts more of the lucrative business events market. "Up to 10% of activity in Sydney hotels is generated from business events, therefore, a modern, state of the art competitive facility is vital.

"In particular we welcome the planning for additional 3.5 star hotel rooms on the site."
MEANWHILE, the EAAA (Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia) president Matthew Pearce said: "We congratulate Destination Sydney on being selected as the preferred tenderer to deliver this important renewal project for Sydney and Australia.

"It has been a tough contest between two outstanding consortia — and it is unfortunate there could only be one preferred team.

"We have already met with representatives of AEG Ogden and we look forward to working with them during the critical next phase in which detailed design work will be completed.

"While we have yet to fully review the winning design, over the coming weeks we will assess its implications for the growth of the exhibition industry."

EAAA general manager Joyce DiMascio said that Sydney's competition was not Melbourne, but the rest of the world and that it was important to create a precinct that would create a new beating heart for the city.

"The winning consortia, Destination Sydney, brings a wealth of experience to the table and we look forward to working with them on the project."

The ICC Sydney is due for completion in December 2016 with up to 1,600 jobs expected to be created during the construction period.

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A Capital initiative

A selection of Canberra charities, including the Canberra Hospital Foundation, MS Australia ACT and the Cancer Council ACT, are to benefit from Canberra based Capital Hotel Group's pledge to donate \$1pp, per day, from every conference held across its properties throughout 2013.

Coinciding with the Canberra's Centenary celebrations, the initiative will cover Capital's three ACT hotels – Clifton Suites on Northbourne, Aria Hotel Canberra and Pavilion on Northbourne.

A major upgrade to the Pavilion on Northbourne conference facilities is to start this month and will include new inbuilt sound systems and dividable walls in the main plenary room.

The renovations are scheduled for completion in February 2013.



ONE to put in the calendar.

In a plan smacking of George Orwell's, quasi-divine 1984 Party leader 'Big Brother,' North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is to turn the North Korean capital Pyongyang into a majestic, world-class city.

The plan is to open the world's biggest hotel next year, at 105 stories and with 3000 rooms.

The hotel's construction began 26 years ago and became known as the "hotel of doom" after Soviet Union funding dried up and work stopped in 1992.

Work restarted in 2008 when Egypt's Orascom Group took over as part of a \$610m deal to establish a mobile phone network.

The hotel is now coated in \$170 million worth of glass.

Send in your Christmas photos & win a weekend with Toga Hotels - Events with BENefits!



Business Events News is offering its first ever Christmas photo competition in partnership with Toga Hotels.

Our good friends at Toga Hotels are asking you to send in your office/event Christmas party photos over the



next three weeks for your chance to win two night's accommodation for two adults in a Toga Hotel of your choice across Australia and New Zealand.

Pictured above are the Great Expectation Speakers Bureau team who were given these Christmas hats by speaker Amanda Gore. Janelle Bell, Marg Booth (Director) and Marie Ortquist said they will wear the hats everyday leading up to Christmas.

To enter email us your favourite Christmas event/party photo (including names of the people pictured) to: xmas@businesseventsnews.com.au

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TOGA HOTELS



Into the Woods

IF you go down to The Woods today, you're sure of a big surprise...

If you go down to The Woods today, you'll never believe your eyes...for a new dining space has been moulded and fashioned and planned into an adventurous new dining experience at the Four Seasons Hotel Sydney.

It's a concept that throws open the doors to a new generation of hotel dining in Australia.

The restaurant's ethos is one that revolves around wood-fired cooking and the various types of wood used in its design.

You'll find The Woods on the Four Season's ground floor, headed by executive chef Hamish Ingham, famed for his Bar H restaurant in Surry Hills.

Using the scent of many different woods, Ingham gently coaxes exquisite flavours from his produce.

"We like to call the experience 'primitive luxury' – a chance to

get back to evocative memories of campfires and pure tastes that are not fussy or over complicated," Ingham explained.

The wow factors include a creative live vertical herb wall which forms the backdrop to



the chef's table, a hand-hewn butcher's block to display the home-made bread and butter, and a dramatic black and white feature cow hide wall

hanging that frames the open-plan cold kitchen.

Head deeper into The Woods and you enter a world of private dining where a semi-private dining room with a capacity of 60 seated or 100 standing cocktail-style conveys a homely lounge room feel, complete with stylish soft furnishings and decorative surrounds.

The space provides a cosy hide-away for larger functions and special gatherings that can be transformed to suit functions of all styles.

Hayman happenings

HAYMAN celebrated the Christmas season with its annual Chef's Table luncheon at Sydney's Aria restaurant on Monday.

Industry guests dined on a menu especially created by Matt Moran that included peking duck consommé with dumplings, and roasted fillet of lamb from Moran's own farm.

An update on the resort revealed world-acclaimed fashion designer, icon and philanthropist, Diane von Fürstenberg, had personally designed Hayman's two-bedroom DVF Penthouse, with sales chief Anna Guillan also highlighting the appointment of Hayman's new gm, Scott Murray.

Murray brings to Hayman an extensive international experience in hotel positions, with his most recent role being at One&Only Royal Mirage in Dubai.

CONTACT US:

Publisher
Bruce Piper
Editor
Jill Varley
Contributors
Chantel Housler

Advertising:
advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

P: 1300 799 220
F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW, 1710

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Sitting Pretty

Qatar Airways Business Class

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

Business Events News recently flew Business Class on Qatar Airways' inaugural flight to Belgrade, Serbia via its home base in Qatar. As we found, they don't call Qatar Air the "world's 5-star airline" for nothing, not to mention being named Best Airline in the World in 2009 & 2010 at the prestigious Skytrax Awards.

THE SEAT

IT was a midnight departure ex-Melbourne, **BEN** was tired, but with all those accolades, we didn't want to miss a thing. The cabin was spacious, with 22 Business Class seats on the B777-200LR in a 2-2-2 configuration and the crew warmly greeting you with French champagne before take off. Seated in 1A, once airborne, it got even better. Playing with the controls for the entertainment system, **BEN** hit a button and soon the seat vibrated giving a wonderful shoulder and back massage, very welcome on the long 14 hour hop.

The seat is a full flat horizontal bed with plush pillows, a beautiful blanket and crew hand out pajamas, as well as a black amenities kit containing Lip Balm, Hand Cream and Eau de Toilette from renowned Italian fashion icon, Salvatore Ferragamo. In the toilets, London's famous and expensive Molton Brown luxury skin treatments restore you during the journey.

From your seat you can make a phone call to the ground, or even call a friend on the plane with the airlines' Chat to Seat system. Qatar's "Multiplex-in-the-Sky" features an array of new movies and TV shows that can be watched on-demand by simply touching your wide screen.

THE SERVICE

Menu's are handed out in a burgundy leather case, and for starters, a classic Mezze plate of hummus, tabouleh and Arabic bread. For mains, a choice of black pepper & thyme-marinated chicken with couscous, cinnamon-spiced king salmon, or Thai green curry.

Next, a cheese plate, and as a 'sweet finale', a delicious chocolate ricotta cheesecake. Qatar's wine list features such a stunning selection of fine Champagnes, iconic Burgundy, Bordeaux and top Aussie vintages, it's hard to choose, but do finish off with the 1974 port from Portugal.

ON THE GROUND

There are no gates at the Doha International Airport, and on arrival First and Business Class passengers are bused to their very own US\$90 million Premium Terminal where you're warmly met by a Concierge who personally escorts you through Customs and to the Lounge. Inside, there's a luxurious dining area with a big buffet, wines, exotic cocktails, beers, a Business Centre with Aussie newspapers, conference and spa treatment rooms, even a doctor and nurse 24/7 free of charge, and with free medicine. You are also bused back to your plane, but if you're a rich tycoon or celebrity, you get to go in a chauffeured BMW!

