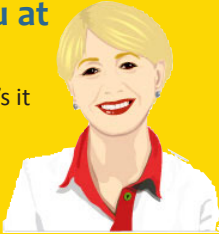




See you at AIME!

Well that's it for now, until our AIME editions next week.



Managing editor Bruce Piper and the rest of the BEN team look forward to catching up with many of you during the expo.

I'm heading out on a pre-AIME famil of the newly launched business events destination – Yarra Valley & The Dandenongs.

It promises to be a beauty so keep your eyes open for my report. *Jill*

Emirates adds US west coast lounge

EMIRATES has opened its first airport lounge on the US West Coast, at San Francisco International airport.

The expansion means that Emirates now operates 30 of its own dedicated lounges around the globe.

The carrier also today unveiled a major seven year sponsorship deal for the US Open Tennis Series.



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Elegant Fiedler takes the cake

DOLTONE House on Jones Bay Wharf was the venue yesterday for the 2012 Destination Marketing Services (DMS) annual Workshop, which included celebrations for the company's 20th anniversary.

Popular industry figure and DMS founder Leila Fiedler hosted partners from around the globe and local industry guests, who took part in table top discussions prior to a lunch and cake cutting.

Consensus of opinion from both the Asian and European DMCs at the event was that Australia is an important, emerging market.

Rajat Gera, Global Head of sales for Cox & Kings India commented on the importance of the market here, saying Australia is one of the company's four top emerging countries in business incentives and special interest groups.

"In addition to corporate incentives we also host a lot of garden, art and history groups."

Zaki Badawi, Gulf Dunes gm, who described Oman as a very Arabic experience, unlike the very cosmopolitan Dubai, reiterated the importance of the market here, adding that their focus was primarily on Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman.

Gianni Veneri a director of Fourth Dimension Italy, said he



was here to assure corporate and groups organisers that Italy is not expensive, saying "We have some amazing deals for groups during January, March, November and December."

As an example, in Venice you can stay at the 5-star Europa & Regina Hotel, right on the canal front, from €775.00pp.

This includes extras such as deluxe boat transfers, breakfast, internet access, a welcome cocktail party and a four course dinner with wine.

It's valid for a minimum of guests in a double occupancy room.

"Normally it would be €350.00pp per night which is a tremendous saving," he said.

Similarly, special deals are available in Sorrento on the Amalfi Coast, at the Hilton Sorrento Palace and in Rome at the Exedra Boscolo hotel - Gianni@fditaly.com.

Vale Margaret Yorkston

MARGARET Yorkston, one of the founding identities of the MICE industry, sadly passed away on Saturday morning 11 February.

Marg as she was known spent more than 20 years in the industry.

She was a true professional, living her life to the fullest and giving a lot to others in need.

Marg will be sadly missed by her family, friends and colleagues.

Her funeral yesterday at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium was attended by many industry colleagues.

SingaporeXpress

DON'T forget to visit the Singapore Tourism Board's AIME SingaporeXpress hawker market, which will take residency at the Globe 2 restaurant from 4.30pm on Tuesday 21st February.

Offering a range of tasty delights, there will also be some amazing prizes including fully hosted spaces on the Real Singapore famil, an iPad 2 as well as accommodation packages at the Fullerton, Mandarin Oriental and Marina Bay Sands hotels.

That's in addition to lots of tasty local delights and signature Singapore drinks, to allow delegates to discover more of the 'real' Singapore.

RSVPs are being accepted up until the event via email to mathew_webb@stb.gov.sg.

New Macau Sheraton

MACAU will bolster its meetings offerings later this year, with the highly anticipated opening of the enclave's biggest hotel - the 3863 room Sheraton Macao.



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2012 AIME Update

Amari expands

M.L. Suravut Thongtham, senior vp of sales, ONYX Hospitality Group in Thailand will be at AIME to market the group's cornerstone brand, Amari.

Attending with Thongtham are Warakorn Jarusirikul, gm Amari Coral Beach Phuket, and Pierre-Andre Pelletier, gm, Amari Watergate Bangkok.

Amari has a number of properties across Thailand, catering to MICE groups and business travellers.

From groups of 1,500 to small business meetings, Amari can provide tailored meeting options for Australian business travellers.

"Furthermore Amari's properties are also a great option for groups looking to extend their stay in Thailand, with properties in key locations such as Koh Samui, Koh Chang, and Phuket," Thongtham stated.

Positioning the ONYX Hospitality Group more firmly as a growing MICE & leisure brand throughout Thailand and the greater Asia-Pacific is a new property in Hua Hin set to open this year with plans to open properties in India and China - amari.com.

Christchurch re-emerges for MICE

THE rebuild of Christchurch and how the city is recovering from the quakes and other new developments in the city will be a topic of great interest when representatives from the Christchurch & Canterbury Convention Bureau (CCCB) and venue management company Vbase talk to conference organisers at AIME next week.

"Exciting times lie ahead for Christchurch as the city begins rebuilding its city centre, transforming it into a modern, vibrant, eco-friendly space that will wow visitors for decades to come," the CCCB said.

With new attractions, like its ultra-modern container mall, popping up constantly, Christchurch is a city in transition and a destination to keep an eye on," says CCCB manager Caroline Blanchfield.

"It is very important that we keep people fully informed about the progress the city is making and what is planned in terms of new facilities and attractions so that Christchurch remains in their

thinking when they plan for future conferences and events."

Among new developments in the pipeline is the extension of the conferencing facilities at the Air Force Museum at Wigram.

An extra 1500sqm will be added to the venue this year, giving it the capacity to cater for conferences of up to 900 people from early 2013.

"What many people don't realise is that although we've lost our Convention Centre and our Town Hall there is still some great conference and meeting venues in Christchurch - places like the Air Force Museum, CBS Canterbury Arena, and the Addington Events Centre - so we are still a viable business tourism destination," Blanchfield said.

That's reflected in the fact New Zealand Merino has chosen Christchurch as the destination for its annual conference in April," she added.

Carlson Rezidor debuts

The Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group - with a global footprint spanning 80 countries and territories - will have an AIME presence for the first time this year.

Their portfolio of more than 1,300 hotels in the most sought-after destinations includes pipeline hotels and global hotel brands - Radisson®, Country Inns & Suites By CarlsonSM, Park Inn by Radisson, Hotel Missoni and Park Plaza®.

Visit them on stand 4026 for a chance to win a seven-night stay at a hotel of choice within the Group's portfolio

Yarra group forms

In a bid to boost the local conference and event landscape, tourism leaders in the Yarra Valley & Dandenongs are combining efforts to launch Business Events Yarra Valley & the Dandenongs at AIME on Tuesday.

In addition, two new event booking websites will also be launched.

Both websites will provide a 'one-stop shop' conference and event booking facilities - including transport, accommodation and activities - from a range of operators in the region.

"These two new websites will make it easy for event planners to plan and book conferences and meetings in the Yarra Valley and Dandenongs - with a few clicks they can book their entire event with all transport, accommodation and activities included," said Faye Hendricksen, Business Events Yarra Valley & the Dandenongs representative from Rochford Wines.

Activities offered on the websites include spa treatments at Balgownie Estate, Rochford Wines Segway Tours, flying foxes and dune buggies at Lake Mountain Alpine Resort, balloon rides over the Valley with Global Ballooning, a steam train journey aboard Puffing Billy, or great food historic charm and five star accommodation at the fabulous Chateau Yering.

To book your next event visit - businessventsyarravalley.com.au or businesseventsdandenongs.com.au.

See next week's issues of BEN for details of our pre-AIME family of this emerging business events market next week.

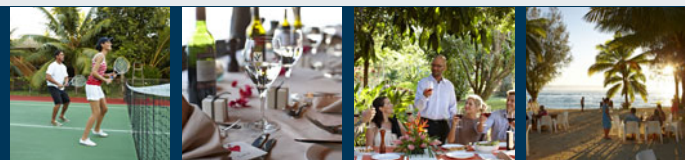
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business events news

17th February 2012



ENGLISH as she is writ in foreign hotels...

Tokyo: Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing is please not to read notice.

Romania (Bucharest): The list is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

Germany (Leipzig): Elevator: Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.

Yugoslavia (Belgrade): elevator - To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving then going alphabetically by national order.

Paris: elevator - Please leave your values at the front desk.

Greece (Athens): Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. daily.

Yugoslavia: The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.

Japan: You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

Moscow: You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists and writers are buried daily except Thursday.

New for Condor

SOUTH American DMC Condor Travel has added a number of new products to its range, including a selection of gourmand and ranch experiences in and around Buenos Aires.

At AIME next week Condor will also detail *Infinity by Condor*, said to offer guests an opportunity to enjoy Latin America's 'fantasy destinations' while experiencing the finest luxury hotels, spas and restaurants.

Condor has a dedicated DMC division and sales offices in Peru, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Ecuador and Bolivia.

The company is represented in Australia and NZ by Nemonic Concepts - 02 9526 8519.

Gloving up in Bowral

CRICKET aficionados will enjoy a visit to Bowral's International Cricket Hall of Fame in the NSW Southern Highlands, which is now home to a pair of gloves worn by Michael Clarke during his recent epic 329 not out innings.

The gloves were donated by Clarke himself, who said he was keen to see them be on public display as a memento of the record-breaking innings.

Groups visiting the museum can also see a range of other cricketing treasures, with the venue adjacent to historic Bradman Oval - for more info see internationalcrickethall.com.

TechTalk with Tony Wragg

Tony Wragg, a self-professed gadget fan with a serious passion for technology, writes a regular blog, TechTalk. He sources his material from newspapers & technology websites around the world and shares stories he feels may interest other small business operators like himself. Tony also assists other small business people in this space through his PlanetSOHO consultancy planetsoho.com.au. Today, Tony shares one of his tech stories with BEN.



Two screens better than one

THERE is no doubt that two monitors are better than one.

I have been working in a two screen environment for as long as I can remember. Apart from giving you a much larger working area, it will improve your productivity and allow you to multi-task like never before.

Over 180 million monitors were sold worldwide last year, but only 130 million desktop computers. This confirms that people are buying more than one screen for their desk.

They are also scaling up. Five years ago the average monitor size was 18 inches - today it is 21.

NEC Display, a major supplier of monitors, said 30 to 40 percent of the employees of its corporate customers now use more than one monitor, up from just one percent four years ago.

There are many reasons for the spike in sales: monitors are much cheaper; they are slimmer - so you can fit more than one on your desk - and there are more communication tools (eg Twitter, Facebook) that workers feel they need to keep their eyes on.

My set up (pictured) features a 21.5 inch iMac coupled with a 27 inch DELL widescreen monitor. It works brilliantly.



I keep my calendar and/or emails permanently displayed on the smaller screen and conduct all my main work on the larger screen.

If I need to keep a file open, but out of the way (eg. a reference document I want to refer to while I am working on another document), I simply 'drop' it onto the other screen.

Monitors are so cheap these days. I picked up the top-of-the-range DELL 27 inch for \$630, but you can also get good quality units for as little as \$180.

If you haven't done so already, grab yourself a second monitor. You will become the ultimate multi-tasker and find yourself much more productive as a result!

To check out the latest tech news for small business visit Tony Wragg's TechTalk at: tonystechtalk.com.au

Kimberley upgrade

THE Kimberley Coastal Camp in the far north region of Western Australia has recently undergone a range of refurbishments, following its sale in late 2010.

Over \$1m has been spent on the luxury wilderness retreat, including a new solar power system (returning guests will notice the absent hum of the former diesel generator), while new furniture has been handmade in the south-west of the state by local craftsmen.

Manager Kevin Dean said a lot of thought had gone into the upgrades, but the venue's "reputation for unparalleled hospitality remains unchanged" - kimberleycoastalcamp.com.au.

CONTACT US:

Publisher
Bruce Piper
Editor

Jill Varley

Contributors

Bruce Piper, Chantel Long

Advertising:

advertising@businessesnews.com.au

P: 1300 799 220

F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010
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