



## Delightful conversations

WHAT a delight it was to talk with

Masterchef 2011

contestant

Kumar

Pereira at

'Singapore

Takeout' on Monday night.

While he said life as a celeb is not all beer and skittles, at 63 this graphic designer admitted that Masterchef had given him a new lease of life.

Firmly on the VIP foodie invite list, opening events, cooking and travelling, he has completed a book and now about to become a Seniors Ambassador.

Kumar's cheery disposition and winning smile is proof that age is just a number - *Jill*.



## Convention travel fuels occupancies

**DESPITE** a year burdened with global economic woes, political instability and devastating natural disasters, the latest Hotels.com Hotel Price Index says global hotel prices increased by 4% in 2011, predominantly due to continued strength in the corporate travel market.

David Roche, president of Hotels.com, said "The hotel sector is a good barometer for the global economy as a whole – if business travellers are on the move, then confidence must surely follow."

Hotel prices in Australia increased 9% to average \$166 per night, ranking Australia equal third with Denmark on the list of countries with the biggest hotel price rises.

New Zealand was first with an 11% increase to \$122 per night and Sweden was second after its hotel prices rose 10% to \$201 per night.

The Gold Coast experienced the biggest increase of Australian destinations, up 19% year-on-year to \$161.

Brisbane registered an increase of 18% to \$174 per night while hotel prices in resource-driven Perth rose 17% to \$184.

Average prices in business and tourism hubs Sydney and Melbourne were up 8% and 9% to \$181 and \$158 respectively.

Of the 23 domestic destinations surveyed, 17 experienced price increases.

The Australian destinations to see decreases in room rates were Launceston, down 16% to \$131; the Blue Mountains, down 8% to \$174; Alice Springs, down 7% to \$129; and Canberra, down 2% to \$184.

Commenting on the figures, Simon McGrath, coo, Accor Australia said, "The figures reflect the strong business travel and conference demand experienced in the major cities last year.

"However, the rate increases need to be seen in the context of rate declines during the two years of the GFC so prices are really only just getting back to fair-market levels," he said.

The industry should anticipate rates continuing to rise in cities such as Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, because there is so little new hotel supply in the pipeline.

Based on the demand-supply situation, McGrath said Accor was very optimistic that 2011's strong results will continue for at least the rest of 2012.

## Berjaya chosers Randall

**BERJAYA** Hotels & Resorts has expanded its relationship with Australian based Randall Marketing, appointing the office for the brand's representation services in North Asia.

## Melb. wins Conference

**ANOTHER** significant scientific event, The International Conference on Systems Biology has been won for Melbourne in 2014.

Vic Tourism Minister, Louise Asher said 750 of the world's leading experts in the field are expected to attend the five day event, anticipated to generate \$3.6m for the Victorian economy.

"Systems biology is an emerging area in Australia...hosting this conference will give Victorian researchers international exposure and offer opportunities for engagement and collaboration with research leaders and centres of excellence overseas," she said.

## Look Polished @ Vibe Hotels



This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win a Look Polished @ Vibe package with an overnight escape for two adults courtesy of Vibe Hotels.

This fantastic prize includes one night accommodation at any Vibe Hotel across Australia, buffet breakfast for two, late check out and four mini nail polishes.

For your chance to win, simply send in your



answer to the following question to -

[comp@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:comp@businesseventsnews.com.au)

In 25 words or less, tell us why you deserve the chance to be pampered and Look Polished @ Vibe this winter?

The most creative answer will win!



## Cradle Mountain gets Peppered

### MOSS

Capital has become the new owner of Tasmania's best known wilderness retreat – Cradle Mountain Lodge



which now joins Peppers Retreats & Resorts, as Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge.

The lodge in an enviable location at the entrance to the spectacular World Heritage listed Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, in the northern Tasmanian highlands, was first

opened in 1972.

Over the years it has been transformed into a world-class boutique wilderness retreat with 86 guest cabins.

Bob East, ceo of Mantra Group which manages the Peppers portfolio says the signing of such a renowned property as Cradle Mountain Lodge recognises the brand's reputation as one of quality.

"We are very strategic with our acquisitions to the Peppers brand and ensure that all properties are of the highest standard which Cradle Mountain Lodge more than satisfies," he said.





CAN you tell the difference between authentic and fake wine?
Master of Wine, Jeannie Cho Lee said she can, proving her amazing talent during a recent Hong Kong dinner.
The instant she tasted the wine she said she knew it was a fake.
'Just from the colour and the nose, was confirmation that it wasn't genuine wine,' she said.
Unfortunately not everyone possesses Lee's acumen.
Ian Ford of Summergate Fine Wines in Shanghai commented that counterfeiters are taking advantage of inexperienced Chinese consumers.

Crowne Plaza upgrades their AV

CROWNE Plaza Coogee Beach, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley and Crowne Plaza Terrigal have completed an extensive upgrade to their audio visual (AV) technology.

The hotel's enhanced AV systems include motorised wide format projection screens, ceiling mounted data projectors and cutting edge ceiling sound systems, which will be available in every conferencing room and controlled from a user-friendly touchpad or touchscreen.

Following the overhaul of the wiring and matrix control system, the AV product has been 'future proofed' allowing true digital



signals to run to the projection and audio systems - without using numerous cables or plug-ins to ensure sharp, clear results.

All conference and meeting rooms will also have audio inputs to provide clients the best in audio quality for music and presentations.

Pictured above is the set up for a recent conference at the Crowne Plaza Terrigal.

Best Western woos

BEST Western is enticing corporate travellers with special business packages in key locations.

These include: Best Western Plus Hovell Tree Inn (Albury, NSW); Best Western Geelong Motor Inn & Serviced Apartments (Geelong, VIC) and Best Western Plus Ambassador on Ruthven Motor Inn (Toowoomba, QLD).

Kimi Anderson, gm of sales and marketing said, 'Corporate travellers are some of our most frequent and loyal guests.'

'We know that it can be tough being on the road, and we hope the friendly and warm service offered by all Best Western properties, and the free extras of breakfast and internet can make it just a little bit easier'.

A selection of Best Western corporate specials can be found at bestwestern.com.au/promotions.

'Singapore Takeout' pops up in Sydney

TAKING one mobile kitchen and 10 chefs to nine cities with 14 food brands, on a 365-day gastronomic journey, the 'Singapore Takeout' gravy, or more appropriately 'laksa' train reached its final destination in Sydney this week.

Set up in Campbell's Cove, the pop-up kitchen, aimed at showcasing Singapore's diverse culinary offerings in cities across the globe, was much admired by Tetsuya Wakuda who used its facilities to serve up a delicious steamed tian of Queensland spanner crab with Singapore chilli and pepper sauce.

The famed Aussie chef who also has a celebrity restaurant in Singapore's Marina Bay Sands complex - Wakuda Ghin, said: 'I wouldn't mind owning one myself.'



Head chef Akmal Anur & Ignatius Chan of Iggy's Singapore, serving up Laksa prawns.

He was joined by Ignatius Chan; founder of Iggy's, (pictured above) arguably the most feted dining establishment in Singapore, with his head chef Akmal Anur.

Between them they created their own take on sushi.

Their seasoned fish on top of a soy meringue was a flavour filled bomb-a-laksa!

Then there was an exquisite Wagyu Beef Cheek, slow-cooked for 40 hours in Phillip Jones Bass Phillip's Pinot Noir.

All of this is part of Singapore Tourism Board's wider, strategic campaign - 'Get Lost and Find the Real Singapore', a promotion to change the misconception present in Australia that Singapore is merely a transit or stopover destination.



Tetsuya Wakuda, of Tetsuya's Sydney and Waku Gjin, Singapore

WIN A 2-NIGHT ULURU ENCOUNTER



To celebrate the \$10million redevelopment of Ayers Rock Resort's Uluru Meeting Place conference centre Voyages is offering a great prize to Business Events News readers.

The Uluru Meeting Place will feature striking contemporary interiors that reflect the Indigenous heritage of the location. Facilities include a new ballroom that can comfortably seat 420 people as well as a second ballroom that seats over 300. These two rooms combined can create a large area that is ideal for events and trade shows.

The prize includes two return economy airfares to Ayers Rock Resort from the winners nearest Australian capital city, return airport transfers, two nights accommodation in a newly refurbished room at the Sails in the Desert Hotel, dinner at the intimate Tali Wiru fine dining experience and a Desert Awakenings Small Group Sunrise tour.

All you need to do to be in the running to win this great prize, is to email your answer to the below question by COB on Friday 30th March to: voyagescomp@businesseventsnews.com.au

The most creative answer will win this fantastic prize.

In 25 words or less tell us what Uluru means to you



business events news

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## AsiaWorld-Expo goes Gaga

FOR the third consecutive year AsiaWorld-Expo, Hong Kong has been named 'Best Exhibition and Convention Centre' in the 12th CAPITAL Outstanding Enterprise Awards.

Organised by CAPITAL, South China Media, the awards are designed to recognise Hong Kong's most vibrant and forward-looking businesses.

AsiaWorld-Expo was also nominated for the 'Outstanding Brand Management Award' in this year's Asia Knowledge Management Awards.

"We are pleased that our branding exercises and efforts are being recognised in the professional arena," said Allen Ha, ceo of AsiaWorld-Expo



Management Limited.

"We will soon launch a series of new brand positioning activities to help people learn even more about AsiaWorld-Expo."

In May this year, AsiaWorld-Arena will play host to 50,000 fans during Lady Gaga's four sell-out shows.

To accommodate the mammoth event, the arena will feature a standing zone where fans can sing and dance along with their idol.

## Sofitel's Grand reno

A major renovation to the Sofitel Melbourne On Collins has been completed on its Grand Ballroom (pictured below) offering a new standard in flexible functionality and a 'magnifique' experience for both large or smaller sized events.

The Grand Ballroom is one of the city's most versatile & respected event venues, playing host to major business forums and world leaders.



## Anantara to open in Abu Dhabi

ANANTARA Hotels, Resorts & Spas, is set to launch its first city hotel in the Middle East, the five-star, Eastern Mangroves Hotel & Spa by Anantara, in Abu Dhabi.

Due to open June, it will occupy a prime position along a 1.2 km stretch of Abu Dhabi's protected Eastern Mangroves District and forms part of an integrated hotel, marina, retail and residential destination, providing a luxury haven away from the bustle of city life in central Abu Dhabi.

## Deirdre's style...

Deirdre Brennan is an Australian designer and stylist who lives between the Southern Highlands and Sydney with regular trips to London. Her design portfolio includes some of Australia's most unique boutique 5 star hotels and upmarket apartments.

Deirdre writes a design and lifestyle blog [www.mydesignfile.com.au](http://www.mydesignfile.com.au)



## Milton Park Country House Hotel

Deirdre Brennan casts a critical and expert eye over this remarkable NSW country house hotel that discreetly caters to groups.

If there is one criticism I would make about Milton Park Country House Hotel, it is that you eventually have to leave.

Not only is this beautiful Country House Hotel, just east of Bowral in the Southern Highlands hard to fault, design-wise with its luxurious accommodation and sweeping, formal gardens, for the conference market and for product launches, it provides a private intrusion free world, set apart from the main house.

For the five to 200 delegates the conference rooms hold, there is no need for guests to tire of the many places the House offers to dine or drink, whether it is in the Conservatory, a la carte restaurant, Polo Bar, guest lounges or on the spacious, rambling verandah's.

The elegant mansion's French provincial and antique furnished rooms with their floor to ceiling glass windows have a glorious

outlook over rolling pastures, avenues of elms and historic gardens.

Offering 40 deluxe rooms and seven suites, Milton Park is in close proximity to five nearby golf courses; however the addition of its own course somewhere within the 202 hectares would be the icing on the cake.

What Milton Park captures so eloquently is the warmth and elegance of an English country house, together with all the elements of good design, luxury and first class hospitality.

Truly, a property quite unique to Sydney and indeed to Australia.



## ABEE convenes advisory committee

AN Advisory Committee, established just before the 2011 Australian Business Events Expo (ABEE) has been convened amongst business events leaders, to support and impact the inaugural committee.

Initiated in support of the 2012 Expo, by Exhibitions and Trade Fairs (ETF), the owners of the show, the group will meet regularly to provide top industry guidance and insights to ensure relevance and continuous improvement for the tradeshow.

"The Advisory Committee brought a fresh perspective, experience and first-hand knowledge of the industry which we sought to make the experience of the Expo more valuable for both exhibitors and visitors alike.

"Our first meeting of the season had an infectious energy which raised interesting opportunities and ideas we are developing for the 2012 Expo," said Jodie Richmond, ceo and general manager, Exhibition & Trade Fairs.

Australian Business Events Expo will be held at Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre: 15 - 16 August, 2012, co-located with Sydney's Event Showcase, 2012.

To register visit [abeexpo.com.au](http://abeexpo.com.au).

## It's Accor's shout

RESIDENTIAL conferences booked at 45 participating Australia or NZ Accor hotels, by 31 May will be entitled to a free breakfast, plus double AClub points for every dollar spent and the chance to win a trip to Uluru.

### CONTACT US:

#### Publisher

Bruce Piper

#### Editor

Jill Varley

#### Contributors

Bruce Piper, Chantel Long

Advertising: [advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au)

P: 1300 799 220 F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW, 1710

Business Events News is part of the Travel Daily group of publications which also include: Travel Daily, Cruise Weekly & Pharmacy Daily.