



Bonjour!

IF it's Friday then **BEN** must be in Queenstown, and because we are staying at the Sofitel



Queenstown Hotel & Spa, where many of the staff in this tres bon hotel speak French, it's only fitting to follow suit.

Queenstown's ski season finished two weeks ago and while the air is brisk, spring is breaking through, covering the hillsides in bright yellow gorse and broom.

The *TSS Earnslaw*, Lake Wakatipu's last surviving steamship is turning 100 and the quaint mining village of Arrowtown turns 125, so celebrations here are in full throttle.

Flying across from Auckland the mountain ranges are capped in snow and down in the impossibly green valleys, the powder blue lakes and rivers and doll's-house farms that dot the landscape remind you why the area was chosen for much of the filming of the *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.

Today we explored Queenstown's best wineries – Valli with its award winning Pinot Noir's and Mount Edward for its Pinots and Riesling.

Both these wineries are off the beaten track and only open by appointment, such as Mount Edward where owner Duncan Forsyth curates his own smallgoods and where last week a group from Merrill Lynch in Australia enjoyed Forsyth's specialty Rieslings with their lunch - *Jill*.

Nat Speakers alert

THE date of Ovation's International's first National Speakers Showcase for next year has changed to Tuesday 19 February 2013.

The event is being held in the Ivy Ballroom in the Sydney CBD.

It will run from 7.30am-10am and highlight a range of speaker options for your next event - for more info or to register email info@ovations.com.au.

TM making a difference

TRAVELMANAGERS

2012 National Conference - "Working Together-Making a Difference" is being held in Fiji from 9 to 11 November at Denarau's Sofitel Fiji Resort and Spa, at which

the delegates will muck in and undertake some much needed painting and maintenance work at a local school.

"We were all saddened to hear of the damage and destruction the floods caused earlier this year, and so while we are in Fiji for our conference, the TravelManagers team will work together in a project to give the local Votualevu Primary School a face lift," said TravelManagers chief executive, Joe Araullo.

One of Nadi's pioneer schools, it was established in 1926 and now has a roll of 865 students with 24 teachers providing education for pre-school students through to grade seven.

A few years ago the main school block was damaged in a fire and the block was reconstructed by funds from the school itself.

This has placed significant



financial strain on the school, causing the management committee to defer other projects on its wish list," according to the TravelManagers ceo.

The conference delegates will paint the interior and exterior of classrooms as well as constructing seating underneath the trees in the school grounds.

Araullo says the benefits of doing something like this are immense.

"The satisfaction at the end of this small offering will be huge and importantly it will help to remind us that every little bit counts and if we all do our small bit, it can add up to something great."

Pictured are the children from the Votualevu Primary School gathering at the doorway in anticipation of the TravelManagers visit.

Argaman nominated in top award

TOGA Hotels ceo, Rachel Argaman has been nominated in The Australian Financial Review's 100 Women of Influence Awards, in the category of Board & Management last week.

From an initial pool of 350, the 100 finalists were selected by a panel of leading Australians including: Wendy McCarthy, former joint ceo of Goldman Sachs Australia; ceo, UN Women Australia, Julie McKay; Fairfax media director, Sandra McPhee; Reserve Bank board member, Heather Ridout and Red Cross board member, Sue Vardon.

This is the first year of the Women of Influence Awards, set to become an ongoing annual awards program, whose purpose is to recognise and legitimise the contribution of women across the community.

A visionary leader who believes in "encouraging the heart" Argaman has been ceo of Toga Hotels for six years.

"I am humbled and pleased to have been nominated in The Australian Financial Review's 100 Women of Influence Awards.

"My fellow nominees are leaders in their fields and I congratulate them for being shining examples of the ongoing achievements of Australian women.

"At Toga Hotels, we believe companies don't succeed, people do", a mantra that applies to all of Toga's team members, regardless of gender.

Movenpick moves in

MÖVENPICK Hotels & Resorts in Vietnam are targeting the meetings market, with the 5-star Mövenpick Hotel Saigon launching a 'Destination Airport' concept.

This sees the property offer a "collaborative approach to meetings and events experiences," joining with local hospitality and tourism partners to boost options for groups.

Nearby shopping malls, restaurants and tour operators offer personalised excursions for MICE organisers - meaning the property can offer significant add-ons to its conference and exhibition centre seating of up to 2,600 for large scale events.

The Ho Chi Minh City property is five minutes from the international airport and about 15 minutes from the city centre, offering 278 rooms and suites.

By contrast, the colonial-style Mövenpick Hotel Hanoi in the centre of Vietnam's capital is for a smaller group wanting a more culturally connected, residential feel.

Exclusive private meeting packages requiring up to 50 rooms are its specialty as a home-style "inn" in designer style.

Mövenpick is currently embarking on a significant three-year expansion journey throughout the region, boosting the brand's portfolio beyond 20 properties in Asia and over 100 hotels and resorts worldwide by 2015.

Out of the over 30 new Mövenpick properties due to open worldwide, 15 are scheduled in China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.

The brand also plans expansion into the Sri Lanka and Bali markets, along with nine new hotels in Africa and one in Europe.

Nine new properties are also planned for the Middle East where Mövenpick already has a significant market-leading presence.



- Cost Effective
- Targeted
- Easy

For details phone us today or email:
advertising@businessnews.com.au



Jordan targets Aussie groups

THE Jordan Tourism Board believes it has a lot to offer the Australian MICE market.

During its inaugural Down Under roadshow this week delegates met with Australian travel industry representatives to showcase the Middle East country and also gauge how excited Australians are about selling the destination to consumers and the meetings, incentive, events and conference market.

"Jordan offers a lot of opportunities to the MICE market," Sami Harfoushi, area marketing manager Jordan Tourism Board told **BEN**.

"The capabilities of the local handlers is an important thing to target the MICE market and the DMCs understand the meetings and incentive groups and they can come up with an event that will touch the heart of the delegate when they come to Jordan.

"In Jordan there are five star properties that can cater for the MICE market" he added.

The King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre (managed by Hilton) located at the lowest point on earth, the Dead Sea, offers state of the art facilities including 28 meeting rooms which can accommodate small private meetings and exhibitions through to international conventions with thousands of guests.

While the Tourism Board is currently assessing the Australian market, Dakkak Tours International has been seeing up to 40 groups per year visit Jordan from the Australian market.

Speaking to **BEN** Ziad Dakkak, md Dakkak Tours International (DMC) said "Australia is one of the good countries for us.

"We understand their demands", he added.

Group sizes are between 15 to 30 people.

A number of team building activities can be organised



including homestay dinners, and a visit to the 'Petra kitchens' where groups can learn how to cook Jordanian food and then enjoy what they have made.

Another popular option is a night in bedouin tents - Lawrence of Arabia style - in the Jordanian Desert Valley.

Jordan has a lot of upcoming projects, including in Aqaba where huge investments are taking place such as luxury hotels and spas and exclusive real estate.

The Jordan Tourism Board hopes to have an office in Australia in the near future but this roadshow was purely to "promote the product and suss out how the Australian market feels about selling Jordan", Harfoushi said.

Pictured above at the Brisbane event is Queensland Assistant Tourism Minister Gavin King with Abed Al Razzaq Arabiyat, Jordan Tourism Board managing director.

Mackay's new flights

A NEW non-stop route between Sydney and Mackay has been announced by Tiger Airways, allowing greater access to this region of ancient reefs and an impressive new state-of-the-art Convention Centre.

The move to operate up to five times per week from 17 December follows the recent announcement of new Tiger Melbourne-Mackay services, with about 20 jobs to be created in Mackay to facilitate the operations.

Launch fares are now on sale from \$99.95 between Sydney and Mackay, with the flights to depart Sydney in the morning each Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri and Sun.

Big Brother's watching

SMALL and medium sized corporate teams looking for a fun end of year event need look no further than Dreamworld's Corporate Christmas Party.

For \$125pp, guests enjoy exclusive access to Dreamworld's rides and attractions, a delicious Christmas buffet and a four-hour beverage package plus all guests go in the draw to win a lucky door prize.

To get the party started there will be live entertainment from Sonniq, and in addition there will be a battle in the laser combat arena, AVPX, experience The Claw or test your skills on the track at V8 Supercars Redline, ending the night with Illuminate.

The Dreamworld events team is also taking bookings for private events for 2013, including parties in the Big Brother House.

The Big Brother House can be hired from just \$3000 and comes with a live DJ, games and challenges just like the ones set for the Housemates.

Meals and a four hour beverage package starts at just \$99 per person, with the Big Brother House described as the "ultimate party venue".

For more info contact the team on 07 5588 1150.



RED alert!

In the something for everyone category, the Xinhau news agency reports that around six million yuan (\$924,000) is being spent in China to open an atomic bomb site for tourism in the autonomous Xinjiang region to the northwest of the country.

It seems visitors will be able to visit the laboratories and dormitories scientists used, while a 300-metre anti-air strike tunnel has also been earmarked for renovation and display.

According to a report on the *BBC*, officials say the base in Malan will be turned into a "red tourism site", which are chosen by the country's Communist Party to celebrate important events in its history.

China tested atomic bombs in the area in the 1960s, with the first recorded detonation taking place in the desert near Malan almost 50 years ago, in 1964.

Since then, more than forty nuclear tests are thought to have been carried out until the Chinese nuclear weapons program in the Xinjiang region was suspended in 1996.

Sebel becomes Pullman Cairns

THE Sebel Cairns is set to be rebadged as the Pullman Cairns International, as part of Accor's rapid expansion of the Pullman brand in Australia, following the acquisition of the Mirvac hotel portfolio.

The Sebel is the city's largest 5-star hotel and the move will result in the city being home to two Pullman hotels, Pullman Cairns International and Pullman Reef Hotel Casino.

The hotel will incorporate Pullman's Co-Meeting virtues of seamless events.

Specialising in conferences, trade shows, meetings, gala dinners and weddings, facilities include 11 flexible event rooms.

It's been a busy time for the hotel which recently scooped the

pool with two coveted accolades at the Tourism Tropical North Queensland Awards— one for Business Tourism and the other for Young Achievers.

The hotel's general manager, Craig Syphers said, "The timing of the win for Business Tourism could not have been more perfect, as the hotel which is renowned for its conference facilities is set to take on the Pullman name which is widely regarded as an international, premium business hotel brand.

The second TTNQ Award went to assistant manager Matthew Brown who was awarded the Intrust Super Young Achiever Award for his contribution to the development of a vibrant and professional tourism industry.



Pragmatism from Prague

'HOW do you choose a destination for your event?' was a key focus of a survey conducted in August by the Prague Convention Bureau.



PRAGUE
CONVENTION
BUREAU

The poll was addressed to travel agencies, corporations, organisers of meetings and incentive events and international PCOs in the UK, USA, Germany, Benelux and France.

A total of 261 respondents took part in the survey, the results of which resonate internationally, reflecting important factors in organiser venue choice.

The greatest response rate was from organisers of meetings and incentive events.

72% of the respondents had already been to Prague and 43% of them have already organised an event there.

The answers showed that the most important factors when planning an event is geographical location of the destination and its accessibility (74%), price (68%) and attractiveness (57%).

Relatively low are unique off-site venues (15%) & walkability (14%).

When asked what would convince them to organise a

meeting in Prague, 52% stated support from the local hosts or organisers, 48% creative and high-quality social program; 45% consider financial support from the City as crucial (for the US market this was in the first place), as well as a proactive approach of Prague Convention Bureau; the respondents also emphasised their personal experience with the destination, such as familiarisation trips.

Less significant was marketing and PR support from the city, rated as important by 31%.

Price was in the first place when it came to venue selection (83%), followed by flexibility of space and logistics (55%) and size and adequacy of space (54%).

50% of respondents, stated free wi-fi for delegates as very important - associations even stated this response in the first place (79%).

In-house AV and IT was cited as important only for 16%.

According to the survey's results, event organisers most often get information about the destination on specialised platforms, such as Cvent, I&MI, Starcite, Travel-42, Venuefinder, ConventionPlanit (48%), and internet search engines like Google or Yahoo (47%) – this response was in the first place at the UK market - and convention bureau's websites (43%).

US associations respondents said they obtained key information from the convention bureau's websites.

Specialised printed magazines serve as a source of information only to 39% of respondents.

When asked if they contact a convention bureau first, 54% said they do, and 92% said that they trust convention bureau recommendations in the selection of local suppliers.



Face to Face with...

Sue Hocking,

General Manager - Venue Sales & Marketing,
Royal International Convention
Centre - Brisbane



Business Events News recently caught up with Sue Hocking, general manager – venue sales & marketing for the Royal International Convention Centre, opening in March 2013, which is phase one of the regeneration of the RNA Showgrounds in Brisbane. Hocking started her career in the industry at the Adelaide Convention Centre in 1987, the

first convention centre in Australia. Her previous background in front office management of hotels, helped her move into roles such as, reservations manager, event planning manager and director of sales & marketing throughout the years. Her most recent role was with the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, working with the pre-opening team as director of sales and marketing.

What does your role entail?

As this is a new business model my role is to set up the sales and event planning teams, develop and drive the strategies to promote the Convention Centre, while at the same time, provide a vibrant destination solution with leading event and exhibition facilities in a unique setting.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Keeping current and up to date with the information which comes across my desk and into my inbox, while trying to retain what is most relevant.

How do you inspire your team?

I like to think I lead by example, and keep the team involved in planning sessions where decisions made will ultimately affect them.

Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

Definitely a bonus – however I know I will never get to the stage, of the up and coming generation, who have grown up with it. As a generation, we have experienced such a rapid change in the way we go about our work and social interactions.

What would you be doing if you weren't gm – venue sales & marketing at Royal International Convention Centre, Brisbane?

I am so inspired with what I am doing right now, it seems so natural, I can't imagine doing anything else.

Who has inspired you?

There have been many, as I have become older I realise the influence my father had and the traits I have inherited, he was very hard working, demanding and in later years a man of great patience.

How do you relax?

Most easily when spending time with my family and friends. I love to keep fit with daily gym visits, cooking I find very therapeutic, and of course I must not forget shopping – another passion.

What makes a great conference?

Definitely planning, planning and more planning. Having a good, well managed budget helps – which will ultimately assist in delivering the best experience to the delegates.

What is the most inspiring conference you have been involved in?

It wasn't really a conference in the true sense, but in Adelaide we staged the World Police & Fire Games in 1995 which had 82 sporting events and 5000 competitors.

It was the most amazing event, with so many countries competing and a fantastic team spirit amongst the competitors from all around the world.

I had an involvement on the committee from four years prior which was a very interesting experience.

CONTACT US:

Publisher
Bruce Piper
Editor
Jill Varley
Contributors
Chantel Housler

Advertising:
[advertising@
businessnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@businessnews.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 and Pharmacy Daily.

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken in the preparation of

Travel Daily no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. *BEN* takes no responsibility for the opinions of its contributors. Information is published in good faith to stimulate independent investigation of the matters canvassed.