



Bring it on!

JUST one more sleep and it's..... SHOWTIME folks!

The **BEN** team will be there at



AIME on Stand #1322, so be sure to come and say hello and put a face to a name – Christie-Lee Lachance, Chantel Housler (nee Long) and *Travel Daily's* big Kahunas, Bruce and Jenny Piper. Apropos of the Sydney Hilton Showcase (see p4) – I wonder how long it is since you used or visited the fabulous Marble Bar.

I had forgotten just what a unique venue it is, especially for a cocktail function or for a launch.

It's also a terrific place to take interstate and overseas guests - there's nothing else quite like it in Sydney.

Built in 1893, the original Victorian-style decor and artwork made it a must-see venue at the former Adams Hotel on Pitt St.

The whole venue was painstakingly dismantled and transported, piece by precious piece, to its current home at Hilton Sydney.

Check it out and check out the **BEN** stand at AIME too.

See you on the floor. *Jill*

Free theming, wi-fi

MANTRA Lorne on Victoria's stunning Great Ocean Road is offering free wi-fi and dinner theming for your next event.

With capacity for up to 520 delegates, the property offers a choice of flexible meeting and breakout spaces as well as modern amenities.

Dinner theme options include Country & Western, 70s Rock 'n Roll and The Oscars - see the **last** page of today's **BEN**.

Govt backs Business Events Week

THE importance of the business events sector to the Australian economy was underlined this morning in Melbourne when Federal tourism minister Martin Ferguson officially kicked off the inaugural Business Events Week.

The newly renamed Melbourne Convention Bureau is "taking the lead" on Business Events Week in its first year, with MCB ceo Karen Bolinger saying "there is no doubt the business events industry is a quiet achiever, which not only generates economic wealth and export opportunities, but also assists with job creation and encourages research and innovation".



Bolinger said it was fitting that during Business Events Week, AIME would celebrate its 21st birthday, with the show this year featuring more than 750 exhibitors and 500 buyers from 31 countries.

Business Events Week will also feature the trade component of the Australian International Airshow and Aerospace & Defence Exposition, while the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre will open its doors to the public for the Open Space event (**BEN** Fri).

See Wed's issue of **Business Events News** for all the latest updates from AIME.

ACTE winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Allan Horne from Hilton Worldwide who is the lucky winner of a place at the upcoming Association of Corporate Travel Executives networking event in Melbourne.

Allan won his spot after being the first **Business Events News** reader to advise that the Melbourne ACTE event is taking place at the Novotel Melbourne on Collins this Wed 27 Feb from 5pm in the afternoon.

More information online at www.acte.org/australasia.htm

Today's issue of **BEN**

Business Events News today includes five pages packed with all the latest MICE industry news, plus a full page from: (**click**)

- Mantra Lorne

Sustainable seminars

SPECIALIST industry briefings on the new ISO 20121 Sustainable Event Management System will be held across Australia from Feb-Apr this year, in a national tour run by GreenShoot Pacific.

The seminars will cover the new standard and how to implement it across organisations and events, and will be followed by a two day Sustainable Event Management Training course.

For dates, costs and to register see www.greenshootpacific.com

MCB incentive push

THE Melbourne Convention Bureau has launched a new 'Melbourne Values You' scheme comprising special offers for incentive and corporate travel reward planners, aimed at making booking and planning an event in the Victorian capital "not only seamless, but cost effective".

More than 30 MCB members including hotels, venues, team building firms and attractions are part of the program offering a huge variety of complimentary add-ons or discounts for groups.

The offers are applicable to corporate meetings, incentive programs and conferences with a minimum of 100 delegates travelling at the same time.

Participants must have a minimum two nights' stay in Melbourne, with travel confirmed by 31 Dec 2013 and the event must take place by 31 Dec 2014.

MEANWHILE MCB ceo Karen Bolinger also today revealed new collateral showcasing Melbourne's "convention district" - a 4km-wide area along the Yarra river from the Docklands to the city's sporting precinct.

More info melbournecb.com.au.

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Ben Carnegie

MEA launches Australian Events Academy

MEETINGS & Events Australia launched its specialist Conference and Events training college, Australian Events Academy (AEA) late last week to a group of industry professionals in Sydney.

Five years in the making the Australian Events Academy (**BEN** 13 Feb) was created "to eliminate a skills shortage in the events industry," MEA ceo Linda Gaunt said at the launch.

"The Academy was created to train our industry to be professional in what they do" she said.

In this ever changing environment the industry becomes more uncertain but "knowledge and skills are derived from training" Simon Baggs, AFMEA chair of MEA board said.

Personal assistant and executive assistant roles have grown from 5,000 annually to 30,000 over the past couple of years as "a lot of professionals are multi-skilling their staff, especially pa's and ea's so they can plan their own events and conferences inhouse", AEA's manager John Whittingham explained.

The courses help event industry professionals work out how to get the best "tangible outcome" from an event and most importantly a return on their investment.

External research has shown that vocational training does work, said Whittingham.

One major company saw a 980% growth in sales

as well as an increase in behaviour and productivity after training, meaning the company made \$9.80 in sales for every \$1 spent on training.

AEA is offering eight courses which will be run around existing work hours, Olivia Wilson, business development manager, told **BEN**.

Short course topics include: Develop event concepts; Select event venues and sites; Plan and develop event proposals and bids, Coordinate marketing activities; Obtain and manage sponsorship and Provide on-site event management services.

Depending on the course, students will be expected to attend one or two sessions a week at The SMC Conference & Function Centre in Sydney.

The first short course is to begin on 18 March and the One Dayers are to start in April.

AEA is offering a special 10% discount on short courses when booked by 4 March.

Pictured above is John Whittingham & Linda Gaunt.



Rendezvous holes out

RENDEZVOUS Hotels is offering a range of 'Stay and Play' golfing experiences, with packages on offer at properties across Australia and New Zealand.

A Golf Escape Package at Rendezvous Grand Hotel Auckland starts at \$395 for two people including overnight accom, buffet breakfast, valet parking, 18 holes at Gulf Harbour Country Club including cart hire and late checkout.

Similar deals are available at Rendezvous hotels in Perth, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Port Douglas - info 1800 088 088.

New Opera chief

OPERA Australia has announced the appointment of Craig Hassall as its new ceo.

Hassall is well known to the organisation, having started his career with Opera Australia in the 1980s and also later working as Marketing Manager.

He moves from a London-based role with Raymond Gubby Ltd.

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business events news

25th February 2013

Macau with a bang

THIS year there are some great options for groups travelling to Macau, with a key drawcard being the 25th annual Macau International Fireworks Display Contest.

The firecracker industry was once one of the enclave's three major industries, so fireworks are a key part of Macau's cultural heritage - meaning they really do know how to make a flash.

Australia is one of more than 100 international teams to have taken part in the competition which this year is on in late Sep.

Another key Macau event in the Year of the Snake is the 60th anniversary of the Macau Grand Prix which takes place in Nov. More info 02 9264 1488.

Cycle on with QT

QT Port Douglas is offering a unique incentive for conference organisers, with anyone who even requests a proposal for an event held before 31 Aug set to receive a bicycle bell in the mail.

And if the event is confirmed the lucky organiser will receive a vintage bike delivered to their door, with the campaign reflecting QT's quirky style which can entertain up to 350 delegates - www.qtportdouglas.com.au

AIME for Antarctica!

IT may be hot in Melbourne during AIME, but you can cool your heels by visiting Antarctica Sightseeing Flights on Stand No. 3540.

On offer is a chance to explore and reward your team with an exclusive and private, one-day flight to the world's highest, driest, coldest and windiest continent and to say hello to Shaun Murphy.

It's a unique experience as **BEN** can attest, with the photo above



taken earlier this month on an Antarctic Sightseeing flight.

No trudging out onto icy landscapes - you just sit back, relax and watch the majesty of this extraordinary land and its varied scenery unfold beneath you.

The Star's virtual reality



AN exclusive showcase was held in Canberra on Wednesday at the National Gallery to spread the news about The Star's new Event Centre.

The occasion follows similar events hosted by The Star in Sydney and Melbourne.

Connecting event planners and event organisers, The Star's sales team talked of the new opportunities available at The Centre including how it also supports multiple languages to suit groups from abroad.

Guests were given a virtual fly through of the new Centre and invited to Sydney to visit the

WIN a tropical holiday

Visit the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef stand #2414 to enter.

BUSINESS EVENTS
CAIRNS & GREAT BARRIER REEF
The natural place to meet



READER'S Digest in Canada has compiled a list of unusual international customs you never knew existed.

Giving certain flowers in Russia could be fraught. Yellow blooms signify deceit or a relationship break-up. And skip red carnations, too. Traditionally, red carnations are placed on the graves of the dead, or are offered to surviving war veterans.

Clocks, handkerchiefs, straw sandals and flowers are all associated with death and funerals in China, so give them a miss if you don't want to damage a relationship.

In Egypt, using a saltshaker means that you find the meal's taste repulsive.

In Norway, table manners are extremely important. Most meals - including sandwiches - are eaten using utensils.

Don't clink glasses and swig beer in Hungary. It's a custom that dates back to the 1849 war with Austria. After defeating Hungarian forces and savagely killing thirteen of their military's leaders, Austrian generals were celebrating by smugly clinking glasses and drinking beer, so Hungarians pledged to refrain from clinking glasses for 150 yrs.

In Bolivia, it's very rude to discuss business during a social occasion such as a wedding or dinner party. At a lunch or dinner, wait until your host brings up the subject of work.

venue.

Alexander Gorman, The Star's director of sales, entertained the guests describing the event possibilities throughout the venue, including gala functions and press conferences in the new Event Centre and meetings in the suites of Astral Towers or The Darling Hotel and Spa.

Gretchen Irvine, project officer - conferences and events, Palliative Care Australia Incorporated commented "I was appreciative of The Star sales team coming down to introduce the Event Centre to us.

"It not only showcased The Star as a great event destination, but more widely showcased the event potential of Sydney."

Pictured above from left are: Alex Gorman, The Star and members of the Canberra meetings and events Industry.

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DMS 2013 workshops



DMS Destination Management Services will today showcase more than 25 destinations around the globe to a group including thirty AIME hosted buyers, in the Melbourne session of its annual workshops.

Representatives of the DMS global portfolio of destination management companies from around the world have flown in for the events, which kicked off in Sydney last Thu.

MD Leila Bishara said the environment for outbound groups was very strong, with Europe particularly popular due to the strong Australian dollar and airline competition.

However she said that companies seeking bids are ever more demanding, wanting quality and creativity while constantly pushing budget requirements.

Pictured above at last week's Sydney DMS event are, from left: Bryan Holliday, ICMS; Anesha Mohanan and Bill Bryant from China Southern Airlines; and Warren Bird, Malaysia Airlines.

Showcasing Hilton Sydney

A mixture of PCOS, corporate and event clients – past, present and prospective - were invited to re-engage with the Hilton Sydney during a Hilton Showcase last Wednesday.

“We wanted to show what we can do, with the focus being on our unique venues,” said a Hilton spokesperson.



Guests were taken on a roving tour of the hotel through the Marble Bar, Glass, Zeta Bar and Ballroom, all themed by in-house production company, Staging Connections.

In the Ballroom Fiona Pascoe, general manager sales and Matt Kirby head of production, Staging Connections, gave advice on what went into making a good show and how to connect and interact with an audience through big audio and resonant sound.

Hilton Sydney offers 4,000 square metres of flexible floor space and accommodation for up to 1200 delegates.

Pictured above enjoying Zeta Bar are Kimberly Bustamante, TIBCO Software; Peter Hind, TBRS; & Jill Dunlop, Hilton Sydney.



Silverwater is music to your ears

WHEN you book a conference in one of Silverwater Resort's light filled conference rooms with its spacious accommodation facilities between 01 Mar – 20 Sep, you can enjoy the sweet sounds of local artists playing music during your conference dinner, complimentary.

As the soloist or duo play delegates can enjoy the spectacular bay views of Phillip Island, the clear starry nights and the fresh country air.

The special offer is valid for new bookings only and for bookings of 30 room nights and above.

For details or to book email res@silverwaterresort.com.au.

Triple Marriott bonus

MARRIOTT Hotels & Resorts has launched a campaign under which meetings booked between 01 Apr and 30 Sep 2013 will attract a choice of three rewards.

The smorgasbord of reward options includes attrition of 5% above standard contract policy; complimentary rooms for one per 35 booked; a 2%+ rebate off master; a 5% discount for contracting within five business days of the proposal; or double Marriott Rewards Points, Miles or Meeting Credits.

The promotion also offers the ability to earn up to 100,000 points with any qualifying meeting, group or event - enough for four free nights at a Category 5 Hotel such as those offered in Hawaii or the Mediterranean.

For more details on the promo see www.marriottmeetings.com.au

WIN a two night stay at Spicers Balfour Hotel



This week **Business Events News** and **Spicers Retreats, Hotels & Lodges** is offering one reader the chance to win a two night weekend stay at Spicers Balfour Hotel including breakfast. Positioned in the fashionable Brisbane suburb of New Farm, the boutique, Spicers Balfour Hotel offers a sophisticated, chic inner-city accommodation experience, perfectly suited for small board meetings and exclusive use events.

To be the lucky winner of this prize:

Tell us what is included in the accommodation rate at Spicers Balfour Hotel, and how this will benefit your clients?

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business events news

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matters canvassed.

Dubai at AIME again!

COULD this be a record?

This year marks the 15th
consecutive year that the
Government of Dubai
Department of Tourism and
Commerce Marketing has
showcased the city's MICE
facilities at AIME in Melbourne.

The 2013 Dubai delegation
includes DTCM head of region
for Australia and NZ, Mohamed
Almuhairi, who will be joined by
almost 20 representatives from
hotels, ground operators and the
Dubai Convention and Events
Bureau.

MICE is a key sector for Dubai,
which has huge capacity to host
large events, with upcoming
conferences including SIBOS 2013
with 9000 delegates.

Dubai is also competing to win
the 2020 World Expo - for more
information see DTCM at AIME on
stand 3332.

CINZ's Sydney great race

CONVENTIONS and Incentives
New Zealand (CINZ) thanked its
Platinum members last Thursday
with an afternoon racing two
American Cup yachts across
Sydney Harbour.

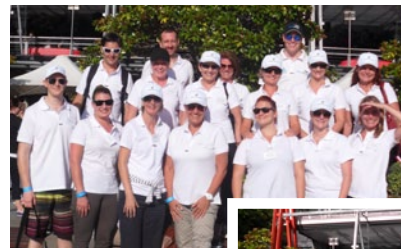
The 4th annual event turned
into a grudge match between
the black shirts versus the white
shirts, with **BEN** lucky enough to
be on the winning Black team.

Before heading out the ceo
of the official association of the
NZ conference industry, CINZ,
Alan Trotter thanked current and
potential companies for their
business, naming a number of



Platinum supporters including: Air
New Zealand, The Orange Group,
SkyCity, Millenium Hotels, Events
Rotorua, Langham Hotel, Heritage
Hotel, Intercontinental Group,
Auckland Convention Bureau,
the Accor Group and Sailing
Sydney.

Pictured above is the CINZ
team with Alan Trotter: Heidi
Heming bdm Australia &
Sharon Auld, manager Aust.



ABOVE is the white
team who put up a
good fight, while at
RIGHT is the winning
black shirt team with
the much coveted
gold medal.



Getting to Know: Hong Kong

by: Jill Varley

AS they say, the more things change, the more they stay the same and since Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997 when the British left, it's pretty much business as usual or in Ladies Market vernacular – "same, same but different."

True, there's no more Queen's birthday holiday or walls hung with HRH'S portrait, Royal has been dropped from Societies titles and the Union Jack is no longer hoisted. Nevertheless economically, Hong Kong is still a major international financial centre and conspicuous consumption is still a lifestyle sport. Consider, for example the HK\$2.38 million (A\$295,000) that was paid by a tycoon from Beijing for a Jeroboam of 1945 Chateau Mouton Rothschild at Harlan Goldstein's restaurant Gold in Central Hong Kong.

When it comes to exclusivity, luxury and the finer things in life, Hong Kong scores first class honours, whether in its private clubs, its Michelin starred restaurants or its five-star hotels.

Dining at the members only China Club is a privilege few get to experience, but a dinner or lunch can be organised for conference and incentive groups. This is where the elite of Hong Kong business and government dine and mingle. Located in the old Bank of China Building, it's a contradiction of contemporary Chinese art and old Shanghai of the 1930s.

Up on Victoria Peak with its spectacular views over Hong Kong are some great dining options for groups, while down on terra firma is the members only Crown Wine Cellars with three function rooms and available for private VIP events from 20 – 120. Once a secret underground military facility in WWII, it was the territory's last position to surrender to the Japanese. Above Hong Kong Island's new ferry terminal you'll find Pier 7 Café & Bar, a great place for a drink prior to dining at the Watermark Restaurant with sensational views across the harbour and an expansive viewing platform for the nightly laser show.

A night at the Happy Valley races makes for a thrilling experience, especially when there's an Aussie jockey riding in the race. Hosted by The Hong Kong Jockey Club for more than 150 years, two race venues, Happy Valley and Sha Tin, feature state-of-the-art facilities including luxurious private members' enclosures that can cater for up to 400 people.



Mantra makes it easier on 12 beachside acres.



Mantra Lorne is now offering FREE WiFi and dinner theming at your next conference.

Mantra Lorne, located on 12 beachfront acres in the iconic Great Ocean Road town of Lorne, is the largest residential conference supplier in regional Victoria. With the ability to cater for up to 520 delegates, Mantra Lorne complements modern amenities with heritage style in a choice of flexible meeting and breakout spaces.

Free WiFi and dinner theming packages start from \$75* per delegate and include various dinner theming options such as Country and Western, 70's Rock N Roll or the elegance of the Oscars.

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