



Event-full times

THE Australia Day long week proved to be a busy time for **BEN**, one that included an invitation to take part in the Ferrython on Sydney Harbour from China Southern Airlines, on their sponsored ferry.



Glorious weather, fine China Southern hospitality, a thrilling race between the competing ferries and a city filled with flag waving Aussies proved once more just how well Sydney stages world class events.

On the subject of world-class events, two days previous, **BEN** attended a World Première production of Verdi's A Masked Ball, playing at Sydney Opera House.

Staged by Spain's La Fura dels Baus, this Big Brother/Brave New World take on Giuseppe Verdi's 1857 production, saw masked singers reflect the themes of deception, disguise and fate in a world where the wealthy have all the power and control the populace.

Then on Monday, the bar was well and truly raised on Sydney's events when The Star showcased their Event Centre during the 2nd AACTA Awards that recognises film and television excellence in Australia.

More on this in Friday's edition of **BEN** - Jill.



Palm Cove's new direction



KEEN to reinvigorate their marketing and community activities, Tourism Palm Cove is to align its marketing activities with Tourism Tropical North Queensland to gain better leverage from the organisation's partnerships with Tourism Queensland & Tourism Australia.

Four sub-committees have been formed to oversee business events, destination/leisure marketing, digital and general Palm Cove activities.

Newly elected Tourism Palm Cove chair Wayne Laphorne said the membership-based organisation had been buoyed by Palm Cove's hugely successful year.

"The idea is that each sub-committee is made up of people with an interest in that area who will meet regularly and then report back to the main Tourism Palm Cove committee."

TTNQ director of sales &

marketing Brian Hennessy, Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef director Rosie Douglas and TTNQ digital manager, Rush Patak will share their expertise with the relevant sub-committees while Laphorne is a TTNQ Board member.

Business events group chair and general manager of Peppers Beach Club & Spa Palm Cove, Chris Northam said the collaborative approach started last year with Palm Cove business events operators when they worked successfully with Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef to host a familiarisation in April and Sell TNQ in November.

Hennessy said TTNQ was confident the new partnership, which was modelled on the business events structure, would deliver mutually beneficial goals as Tropical North Queensland strived towards its 2015 visitor expenditure target of \$3.2 billion.

Happiness to debut at AIME in Melbourne



EXPECT to see an upsurge in the happiness quotient at AIME in February when Disney make their debut.

Disney will be sharing the magical world of Disney meetings and conferences at six of their spectacular convention resorts with more than 55,742 square metres of function space, around the globe.

For instance, Walt Disney World, Orlando with six unique resorts has a comprehensive portfolio of convention services, including Disney Institute professional development programming, four world-famous theme parks and five championship golf courses.

Disneyland Resort Anaheim has more than 16,535sqm of flexible meeting and event space and three dedicated meeting hotels – Disney's Grand Californian Hotel and Spa, The Disneyland Hotel and Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel.

Together these three award-winning properties offer more than 2,200 rooms and suites.

You can find out more information on Disney's stand at AIME, No. 3514 or online at www.disney.com.au.



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ACTE's educating programs at AIME

A series of four education sessions, focused on the convergence of meetings & travel management are being presented at AIME this year, in partnership with the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE).

The education program on 26 Feb includes: *Where savings meet success*, with Steven Smith, senior director, Meetings & Events Asia Pacific, Carlson Wagonlit Travel.

Duty of Care – can you and your organisation afford to take chances? Speakers include Steve Bell senior associate, Herbert Smith Freehills Lawyers and Chris Cook, gm, International SOS.

Business Travel and Carbon Pricing with Freddy Sharpe, ceo, Climate Friendly.

Mobile 101 – current landscape and what makes it unique? Trevor Roaid, Mobile Event Technology, Evangelist, QuickMobile.

Sessions costs \$55 each or \$175 for an all access pass.

Big players & sharp pencils

A strong emphasis on value, adding new and valuable inclusions and showcasing interesting and unexpected new destinations are what guests can expect when some of the world's biggest destination management companies, converge at the DMS 2013 Workshops.

"It's a very interesting year for our workshops – no doubt about it", said md Leila Bishara (Fiedler).

"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.

"The currency is working in our favour and there has been a return to coveted destinations in Europe and the USA – presenting some great opportunities for the industry to really improve yield," said Bishara.

The workshops scheduled

to be held in Sydney and Melbourne between 21-25 February have attracted more than 25 destination management companies including: *Pacific World - Asia* who is looking at further expansion within Asia.

Dragonfly – Southern & Eastern Africa: In 2013 the company is strongly featuring its Kenyan programs.

Hosts Global Alliance - USA: Offering a wide range of new programs for top performing destinations such as Miami & Las Vegas as well as for less explored destinations such as Savannah.

Walpax - Brazil: Brazil is set to be a magnet for the global MICE industry in the next 4 years with a series of high profile events.

Lafayette - France & French Riviera: Lafayette's key points of difference are its extensive reach across France and its approach to delivering highly authentic experiences aimed at presenting the 'real' France.



IT'S no secret that girls in bikinis running along a beach tend to get public attention.

Even more so if a 'pop-up' beach has been created on the banks of London's Thames in the depths of winter.

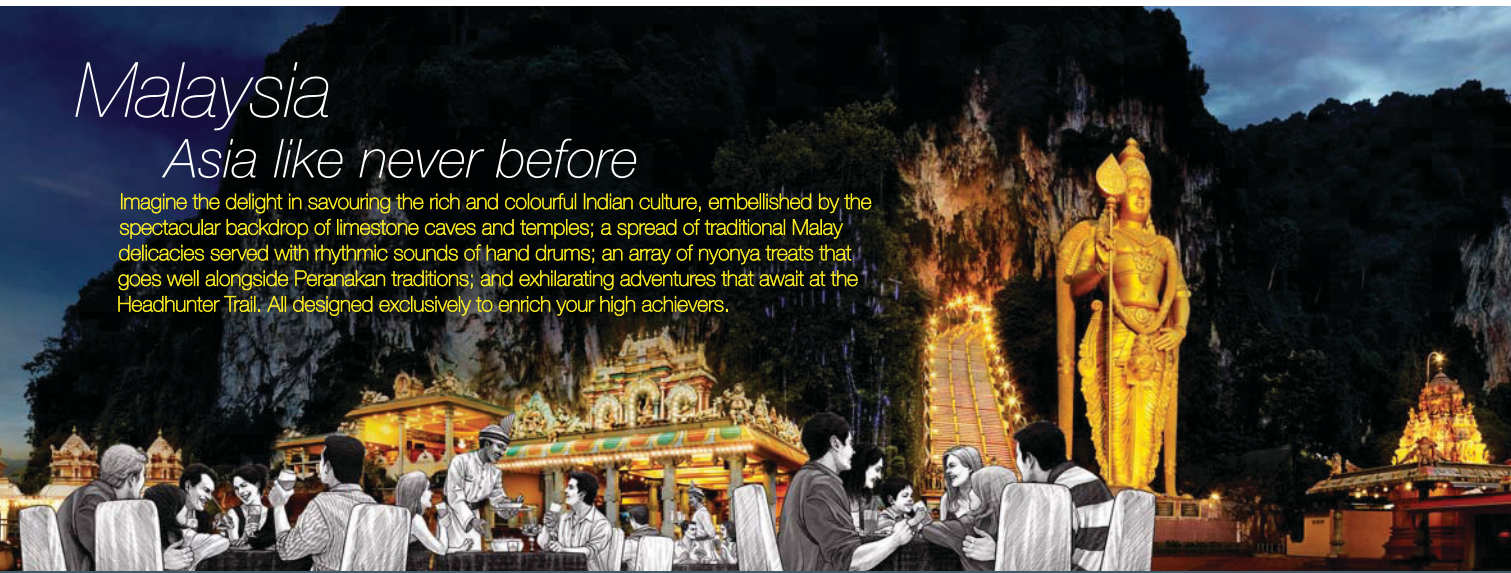
That's what the Hilton did when they hired seven models to publicise their recent sale.

The group, dressed in nothing but flattering navy blue swimsuits, were hired to prance about in the snow with the stunt launched on Blue Monday (the most depressing day of the year) with the intention to create a feel good factor among those who passed by the beach scene.

Onlookers were invited to participate in a 'mini vacation' and the beach was kitted out with Lumie lights - designed to fight the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder, which causes people to feel depressed in winter months.

Malaysia Asia like never before

Imagine the delight in savouring the rich and colourful Indian culture, embellished by the spectacular backdrop of limestone caves and temples; a spread of traditional Malay delicacies served with rhythmic sounds of hand drums; an array of nyonya treats that goes well alongside Peranakan traditions; and exhilarating adventures that await at the Headhunter Trail. All designed exclusively to enrich your high achievers.



Discover more ideas for theme events and experiences in our new Corporate & Incentive Guide. Visit www.myceb.com.my to request a complimentary copy today!

For enquiries, please contact:

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Malaysia - Asia's Business Events Hub



A Downton Abbey experience

IF you are heading across the sea to Ireland, Ballyfin, a Regency mansion, recently restored to a



luxury five-star hotel is offering groups the chance to immerse themselves in the world of Downton Abbey.

Located in County Laois in the Irish midlands, the hotel's collection of 40 individual period costumes previously worn by singers in the Lyric Opera of Chicago, are available for the dress-up.

With 15 gorgeously appointed bedrooms and exquisitely furnished state rooms, which include an enormous saloon at the heart of the house and a 24 metre library which runs the length of its south façade, the country house is filled with

antiques and original Irish art.

The state rooms make a glorious backdrop to a stay in the house and are perfect for corporate gatherings and with all of the public rooms opening into each other it is ideal for a larger cocktail party.

Up to 50 guests can be seated in the state dining room or for larger parties, in the ballroom.

"We have been somewhat surprised by the unbridled enthusiasm of guests when it comes to recapturing the joys of period dress...and indulging in a dose of escapism," commented Ballyfin's general manager, Aileesh Carew.

Hawaii's new MCI boss

THE Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) has announced the selection of Brian A. Lynx as its new



vice president of meetings, conventions and incentives.

Lynx joins the HTA team with more than 20 years experience in Hawaii's visitor industry and will officially start on 19 Feb.

Currently the director of sales and marketing at the Grand Wailea Resort on Maui, HTA established this new position to address the needs and increasing importance of the meetings, conventions and incentives (MCI) market to Hawaii's visitor economy.

Lynx will oversee the HTA's MCI efforts and its two contractors for this segment, the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) and SMG for the Hawaii Convention Center (HCC).

He will also work with the HTA's international marketing contractors in Japan, Korea, China, Australia, and New Zealand in the area of MCI.

Mike McCartney, president and ceo of the HTA, said Lynx will be responsible for Meet Hawaii, the HTA's new initiative that has restructured their MCI sales and marketing efforts to increase Hawaii's visibility as a global meetings destination."

The Shangri-La connection

AH, we love a free wi-fi story and Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts now has wi-fi access in all of the group's 78 hotels.

What's more, nearly all hotels, including those under the Kerry Hotels and Traders Hotels brands offer complimentary wi-fi for mobile devices from the hotels' chauffeured limousines.

"Extending free wi-fi service to the limousines was a natural step to take after offering it at all our hotels.

"Connectivity is a vital part of the Shangri-La experience, and complimentary internet access has become one of our signature standards," said Greg Dogan, president and chief executive officer of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts.

See - www.shangri-la.com/corporate/meetings-events/.

O'Reilly's appoints new BDM

O'REILLY'S Rainforest Retreat in the Gold Coast hinterland has appointed Ella Jones as their new business development manager.

Jones who joins the corporate sales team with more than eight years' experience in the tourism industry, will continue to develop the conference sector across the O'Reilly's brands, including Canungra Valley Vineyards, said Andrew James, O'Reilly's director of sales and marketing.

WIN a 3 night stay at Mazagan Morocco



To enter, email your answer to the question below for your chance to win:

How many square metres is the Mazagan's conference centre? Also tell us why YOU deserve to win this prize.

comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

Hint: uniquevenues.com.au
Click here for terms and conditions

This week **Business Events News** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win three nights in a prime ocean view room at Mazagan Beach & Golf Course in Morocco, including dinner for two at Marketplace restaurant courtesy of **DMS** and **Unique Venues**.

Mazagan is the sort of place you dream about staying in! The coastal destination resort is located one hour from Casablanca and covers 250 hectares alongside a beach and features views of the Atlantic Ocean.

The resort can cater for meetings, events and incentive groups.



Looking for a new challenge with an exciting new company?

Spencer Conferences & Events are looking for a dynamic, enthusiastic and well-connected sales person to join their team.

We want someone that has experience in the MICE industry, specifically sales and someone that can open doors to the right opportunities.

Don't delay, send your resume with a cover letter attention to Kahlia Ericson, Kahlia@SpencerCE.com.au.



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For those in peril on the sea

AS more and more corporates and associations choose a cruise to hold a conference or reward program, it's worth passing on the obligation that cruise ships have to assist those in distress while at sea.

Brett Jardine, general manager International Cruise Council Australia (ICCA) in his column in *BEN's* sister publication *Cruise Weekly* (24 Jan) had this to say about the rescue of the French yatchman by the *Orion*.

"With news headlines over the weekend showing one of our member lines performing heroics in the Southern Ocean (as it rescued a stricken French sailor), I thought we should all clearly understand what the 'law of the sea' involves when a ship is called upon in such times.

"The cruise industry takes very seriously its obligation to be a responsible member of the maritime community and assist others on the seas that are in distress.

"While it is unfortunate that sanctioned and safely executed diversions from itineraries to

assist other ships in distress may create an inconvenience for cruise ship passengers, such actions are an important and humane response.

"Additionally, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), to which ICCA member lines adhere, states that 'the master of a ship at sea which is in a position to be able to provide assistance, on receiving information from any source that persons are in distress at sea, is bound to proceed with all speed to their assistance, if possible informing them or the search and rescue service that the ship is doing so'.

"This obligation to provide assistance applies regardless of the nationality or status of such persons or circumstances in which they are found.

"In this case a happy ending and no doubt any readers of this column would join me in congratulating the Captain, crew and all the team at Orion Expedition Cruises on their efforts."

Competition entries

LAST Friday the competition email was not working due to a server error so we are giving readers the chance to re-submit all of their answers for the One&Only competition.

The questions were: *Name another One&Only resort in the Unique Venues Portfolio?; How many Kerzner properties are currently in operation and tell us which One&Only Palmilla venue you'd like to send groups to and why?*

Email your answers today to comp@businesseventsnews.com.au.

This week's competition is even easier to enter but the prize is no less spectacular, so send in your answer for your chance to win three nights at Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort in Morocco plus dinner for two people.

For further details on the competition see [page 3](#).

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Sitting Pretty

Thai Airways International Business Class

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

BEN recently flight tested Thai Airways International new A380 Business Class on the Hong Kong to Bangkok route, a short two-hour trip that was so good, we wished it could have been much longer.

ON THE GROUND

THAI's Royal Silk Business Class check-in at Hong Kong's Chep Lap Kok International Airport was much like the airline's motto – smooth as silk. In minutes, *BEN* was off with boarding pass in hand to the carrier's modern and inviting Lounge, equipped with computers, newspapers, TV's and a large selection of beers, wine and tea/coffee. There was also a mouth-watering buffet - tempting, but we opted to wait for lunch on board.

THE SEAT

The big 506-seat Airbus is impressive inside, with soft, orchid-coloured tones and friendly crew welcoming Business Class pax with French champers and explaining the features of the sleeper-seat, and how to work the in-flight entertainment system. The seat itself isn't what you'd call super soft, more firm really, but comfortable all the same. There's a storage bin for shoes, large overhead bins for hand-carry bags, and bins by the window seats for stowing stuff, plus a handy side pocket for reading glasses etc.

All 60 Business Class seats are on the Upper Deck with a pitch of 43-44 inches and are configured in a 1-2-1 layout. You don't have to climb over a fellow flier to reach the aisle. Press a button and you'll get a soothing back massage. Press another and the French-designed seat reclines to a full 180 degree lie-flat bed. Crew passed out duvets but alas, there was no time for sleeping, it was time to tuck in to THAI's renowned sky dining.

IN-FLIGHT CUISINE

Choices ranged from beef, seafood and pork dishes, but *BEN* went for the Thai Chicken Curry and it was delicious, so was the Raspberry Mousse Cake for desert. Wines? Two excellent French whites, and two fine Bordeaux reds. We liked how the tray table can be pushed to the side so you can get up to go to the bathroom without having to call the attendant.

IN-FLIGHT SYSTEM

With 100 on-demand movies, 150 documentaries, 500 CD albums & 60 games from which to choose, passengers really are spoiled for choice and you can watch the videos on a large 15 inch screen. The controls are dead easy to use and there's no fiddling to get the stereo headphones to work. The wi-fi wasn't operating on *BEN's* plane, staff said the airline was working on that, but there were connections for charging iPhones/iPads next to the wide screen.

THAI has no plans yet to fly their A380 to Australia. It'll have six in their fleet this year with the first three flying from Bangkok to Frankfurt, Narita and Paris. To top it all, on arrival at Bangkok Airport, THAI had a dedicated baggage carousel for First/Business passengers – pampering right to the very end of the flight experience.

