



Opera

Australia

IF there was ever an opportunity to introduce opera for the uninitiated,



then the current Opera Australia season's production of *Orpheus in the Underworld* has to be it.

This ribald offering of operetta and musical theatre may cause your maiden aunt to blush deeply but it will delight newbies with its ribald wit.

Headed in fine malevolent style by Todd McKenney as Orpheus, it's the comic stamp of Jonathan Biggins and Philip Scott, known for the party-political punditry of their annual, *The Wharf Revues* and the standout performances by the opera company that may well tip the balance in opera's favour.

Groups not only get up to a 20% discount on tickets but the opportunity to make the event a special occasion, don their finery and to drink champagne.

Now that has to be a bonus!



MEANWHILE Singapore Tourism Board was the official sponsor of the Travel Daily mini conference at Luna Park last week (**BEN** 8 March) and not Singapore Airlines, as stated - *Jill*.

TODAY'S BEN issue

BEN has four pages of editorial plus a full page. Click here for:

- New Caledonia Tourism

ABBE goes one-on-one

WITH more than 60-targeted VIP buyers coming from the association, government, event agencies and the corporate sectors across the Asia Pacific region to attend the co-located tradeshows of Australian Business Events, a two-day VIP buyer program has been introduced that will allow participants to have one-on-one meetings with some of Australia's and the Asia Pacific's most influential and prominent event buyers.

Recognising that guaranteeing the opportunity to secure face-to-face meetings with qualified buyers was a critical component to adding another level of ROI for exhibitors, event director Karen Krieger said, "we also want to ensure the visitor has a positive experience at the event and can take part in a number of activities arranged for them."

"That said, each VIP will be pre-qualified and meet the selection criteria; they must be

the decision maker or have direct influence over financial decisions, and have events needing suppliers," said Krieger.

To register for the VIP Buyer Program or be a sponsor email - kkrieger@etf.com.au.

MEA latest benefit

UNDER both State/Territory and Federal law, making events accessible for people with disabilities is a legal requirement, but with approximately four million people with disabilities in Australia who have significant spending power, providing access is also an important commercial decision.

Now, MEA in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission has developed - *ACCESSIBLE EVENTS: A Guide for Meeting and Event Organisers*.

Designed to help those responsible for organising events and to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities, whether they are presenters, sponsors or participants.

It is based on the experience of organisers who are responsible for creating accessible events.

By visiting the "Downloads of Interest" page on the MEA website you will find the guide.

So ends Business Events Week

AS Business Events Week came to an end last week, Melbourne Convention Bureau's ceo, Karen Bolinger pronounced the initiative a great success "one that brought together the business events industry and the wider community to celebrate and learn more about this invaluable sector."

"More than 50 events were held, the centrepiece of which was AIME - it was truly a spectacular show," Bolinger said, giving special acknowledgment to the Australian International Airshow and Aerospace & Defence Exposition and the other associated event partners and sponsors for taking part.

Next year Business Events Week will run from 17 - 21 February, with AIME maintaining its position as the pinnacle for the initiative on 18 and 19 February.

Accor's strong ambition

DURING the recent ITB Berlin trade fair, Accor announced plans to grow its network of upscale and luxury hotels to 400 by 2015 (from the current 300 hotels/6500 rooms) across the Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery and Grand Mercure brands.

Based on its French origins, the Group has adopted a different approach to luxury.

Yann Caillère, Accor president and coo explains, "Our ambition for our brands and their networks are immense and we are ready to expand rapidly in this market."

With strong leadership positions in Latin America, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific, Accor say they are well positioned to capture the new and rapidly growing demand from emerging-market clients, seeking a different experience of luxury and high-end hospitality.

Currently, 42% of the Group's luxury/upscale hotels are located in Asia Pacific and 35% are in key European cities.

Focus will be on emerging markets, including Latin America, Middle East and Asia Pacific (which alone counts for over 60% of the current pipeline in key countries including China, Vietnam and Indonesia).

The segment's gross revenue increased by 15% in 2012.

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crumbs!

A quick Google to answer the vexed question of how many aircraft are in the air, in the world at any one time, is not an exact science but cobbling together a few stats, one site estimated about 9000 Boeing commercial aircraft in service and 5100 from Airbus, so 14,100 airplanes.

Supposing that 75% of them are in the air at any given time and that each holds an average of 150 people it comes to something like 1,586,250 people are flying across the skies.

This doesn't include private jets, light aircraft, hot air balloons, helicopters, gliders, witches on broomsticks, large birds, celestial beings or high flying quidditch players!

Worldhotels – loyalty & change

WORLDHOTELS is launching its own guest loyalty program this year, one of a number of initiatives launched recently at their annual conference at the Hotel Rey Juan Carlos I in Barcelona.

“A loyalty program is the ultimate resource for hotels to stay in direct contact with their guests and keep them from going through third parties,” said Worldhotels’ executive vice president Asia Pacific, Roland Jegge.

“We are thrilled to offer our hotels a very thorough and comprehensive plan.

“We want to ensure that our hotels diversify their distribution so as to stay competitive,” he said.

Also under discussion at the gathering of almost 400 hoteliers, staff and partners was how to

remain competitive in the quickly changing hotel industry.

During his key note speech, Paulo Salvador, global vice president marketing and sales and executive vice president Europe, explained the growing threat of dependency on third parties and how to avoid it “It’s time for our hoteliers to reinforce the strength of belonging to a global group.

“Only hotel groups can provide the power of negotiation, the latest technology and expertise in customer relationships.”

Accor Brisbane offer

ACCOR is rewarding event planners that book conferences in its Brisbane properties with free accommodation vouchers.

For instance, all conferences booked and held until the end of April at Brisbane’s Novotel, Mercure and Ibis hotels will see event planners take home up to six vouchers, depending on the size and budget of the event.

All properties feature versatile meeting spaces and up to 11 conference rooms.

The offer only applies for new bookings.

For info on the properties visit www.novotelbrisbane.com.au & www.mercurebrisbane.com.au.

SilverNeedle customer needs insight

SILVERNEEDLE Hospitality report that the results from their survey, completed prior to and throughout AIME have provided them with some vital insights into customer needs, that are in line with their conference commitment and continuous review for improvement.

The results highlighted that research and product knowledge was the main reason for attending AIME 2013 along with networking with suppliers.

Facilities and venue layout, and the ability to contain your attendees in one place ranked as the number one reason for selecting a venue.

Direct communication with venues by email, phone and venue website are key and the preferred options for communication.

Poor response time, first impressions and professionalism, and the level of communication and not understanding client’s requirements were the top three deal breakers when deciding not to proceed with a venue.

Finally six months was the average lead-time from obtaining a quote to the event/meeting taking place.

Details on Silverneedle Hotel at silverneedlehotels.com.au.

Rent a Resort For Exclusive Events



Jewel of Langkawi

A multi-million dollar refurbishment to Meritus Pelangi Beach Resort on Malaysia’s Langkawi Island is coming to completion.

Repositioning itself as the ‘Jewel of Langkawi’ and major work enhancing the property’s traditional Malay village character, guest chalets, the lobby, reception areas and resort facilities, Randall Marketing’s Randall Lui who is the property’s Australian representative said that the popular 25-year old property has undergone changes, which will make it one of the most luxurious resorts in Langkawi.

The 15-hectare property is sited along a kilometre of typically Malaysian beach and within walking distance of local markets and restaurants.

Lui said, “Whilst the new rooms and facilities will provide guests with a heightened level of luxury, comfort and sophistication, Pelangi will retain its traditional Malay characteristics”.

Events Job Bonanza!

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business events news

11th March 2013

Events with Benefits

TOGA Hotel's Events with Benefits for 2013 is back once more after the initiative's resounding success.

The offer of bonus benefits for bookers and companies and a wider range of incentives are geared to entice event bookers and company representatives to secure their next event at participating Adina Apartment Hotels, Medina Serviced Apartments, Travelodge Hotels and Vibe Hotels.

Benefits for the company include such things as the 15th delegate free, free mini bar or AV, a \$500 rebate on a \$10,000 event spend, while a range of gift card bonuses are being offered to bookers.

David Hamblin, director of sales and marketing for Toga Hotels, said "The reaction to Events with Benefits is always positive.

"Once again this year we have expanded our offerings in response to our clients' feedback and we are sure we have provided a benefit to suit any conference budget and their requirements."

For more information contact - benefits@toga.com.au.

oneworld for LATAM

LATAM Airlines Group, has selected **oneworld** as the global alliance for both of its leading South American based airlines - LAN Airlines and TAM Airlines.

LAN has been a member of **oneworld** for the past 13 years, and TAM, which remained part of the Star Alliance, will join the **oneworld** alliance in the second quarter of 2014.

Following the addition of TAM to **oneworld**, passengers flying with LATAM will have access to **oneworld**'s 950 destinations across 160 countries.

As TAM Airline's transition from Star Alliance to **oneworld** is complete in 2014, passengers will be able to accumulate points when flying with any **oneworld** member airline.

Until then, they will continue to receive the benefits offered by Star Alliance.

Congrats Sonia

SONIA Wadher, Astra Zeneca is the lucky winner of last week's Spicers Balfour Hotel competition, as seen in **BEN**.

She has won a two night stay plus breakfast for two people.

Mercure fills void in Portsea



PORTSEA Golf Club currently undergoing a \$12 million redevelopment has entered into a partnership with one of the world's largest hotel groups, Accor.

The new state of the art club house, boasting modern facilities and panoramic views of Port Phillip Bay, will introduce twenty-four, 4 star accommodation rooms under its Mercure brand.

Setting themselves to become the premier golf course, accommodation, wedding and corporate function venue along the Mornington Peninsula, Accor has appointed Duncan Mars as general manager.

Bringing with him more than 15 years of hospitality experience, Mars was most recently executive assistant manager at the Mercure Hadleys and Grand Mercure Hobart hotels.

Filling a void in accommodation of its kind in the Portsea/Sorrento area, the new-build Mercure Portsea Golf Club & Resort is designed to attract not only an intrastate market but interstate and overseas.

"The Mercure will bring a new level of comfort and service to Portsea's infrastructure and provide new opportunities to

build the meetings and events market in the region," said Mars.

"We're thrilled to partner with the Portsea Golf Club to attract more international and domestic business to the Mornington Peninsula through the strength of Accor's premier mid-market international hotel brand."

Mercure Portsea Resort & Golf Course is expected to open in early June.

Malaysia hosts ISAAR 2013

THE 9th International Symposium on Antimicrobial Agents and Resistance (ISAAR 2013) will be held in Kuala Lumpur this year from the 13 - 15 March.

Supported by the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), ISAAR 2013 it will be hosted by the Malaysian Society for Infectious Diseases and Chemotherapy.

"One of Malaysia's main interests certainly lies in the medical and health industry," said Zulkelfli Hj Sharif, ceo of MyCEB.

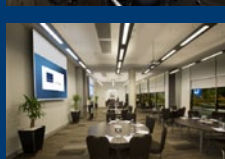
"MyCEB is constantly active in pursuing more medical meetings to be hosted in Malaysia."

WIN an Exclusive Meeting Package at Novotel Brisbane Airport

This week **BEN** is giving one reader the chance to win a Premium Conference Package courtesy of **Novotel Brisbane Airport**.

The prize includes full day use of the Executive Boardroom for up to 11 delegates, Premium Conference Package and audio visual equipment.

Brisbane's only airport hotel offers a dedicated conference centre, with unbeatable access and parking options. Six event rooms boast natural light, state of the art audio visual and a capacity of up to 120 delegates.



To enter email us a creative photo showing yourself looking at the Novotel Brisbane Airport website

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Castaway Island to reopen

The severity of Tropical Cyclone Evan in December 2012, which forced Castaway Island, Fiji to temporarily close as a result of damage, is to reopen on 31 March.

All staff were retained during the closure period, however their job descriptions were revised to assist the reinstatement works, said Castaway's Geoffrey Shaw, chairman & ceo.

"During the closure, all our staff have played a huge part and



taken ownership in the reinstatement of their much loved island resort," he said.

All bures have been refreshed and rethatched with many receiving new tapa lined ceilings and air conditioning units.

Hundreds of plants have been planted

to ensure the palm fronds are swaying and the gardens are flourishing with lush tropical blooms in time for the opening.



business events news

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GIBTM to break the mould



Dr Emma Wood

A dynamic education program, that breaks the mould with new age thinking is being promised during this year's Gulf Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (GIBTM).

GIBTM's exhibition manager Lois Hall said, "The high-quality content, presented by experienced industry leaders, will ensure our delegates understand future trends and innovations, allowing them to better plan and execute their meetings and business strategies, adapting them to the fast-paced world in which we live."

Looking as far ahead as 2030, session highlights include 'Flash Forward 2030 – The Value of Connection', an interactive seminar presented by Michelle Lanham, Lecturer, UK Centre for Events Management at Leeds Metropolitan University and Dr Emma Wood, Reader in Festivals and Events Marketing, UK Centre for Events Management at Leeds Metropolitan University, which will look at key trends identified by MPI research and the implications on business practices and required skill sets.

For more information visit - www.gibtm.com.

Crown Perth's special refurbishment offer

CROWN Perth, has undergone big changes to their entire events and theatre foyer area.

Changes to the space have seen the creation of a brand-new entry statement with a contemporary and luxurious look and feel.

Bathrooms have also been rejuvenated with a sleek and modern design.

Designer Blainey North, has opted for custom designed carpets, new fabric wallpapers, feature timber veneer wall frames and decorative lighting, along with custom designed lounges and coffee tables and original artwork pieces by Steve Back.

With the versatility to cater for a small group or many hundreds of guests, Crown Perth is running a promotion for event clients that offers the chance to win a trip for two to Melbourne flying Virgin Airlines including two night's accommodation at Crown Melbourne, simply secure your event or conference at Crown Perth before 31 May.

To take up the offer or for more details about how the property can benefit your delegates during an event email - events&conferences@crowperth.com.au.



Sitting Pretty

Air Canada Business Class

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

BUSINESS Events News recently undertook an extensive exploration of the Air Canada network, flying eight sectors between Sydney and Paris. Air Canada flies daily from Sydney to Vancouver with state-of-the-art B777-200LR aircraft and onto more than 175 destinations on five continents. AC has recently gathered a host of awards including 'Best International Airline in North America' from Skytrax.

THE SEAT

AC's recently upgraded interiors include 42 new lay-flat 'Executive First Suites' in the front end of the trans-Pacific B777s in a 1-2-1, all aisle access configuration. These capsules are made by Contour Premium Aircraft Seating and are of the same type used in Virgin Atlantic and Delta. Not all seat placements are ideal, but the best ones are in Rows 3 and 4. Avoid rows 6 and 7 if possible. Fully flat ensures the best possible rest and is welcome on the long trans-Pacific (14 hour) sector. Work and storage space is generous and flexible with laptop power, adjustable mood lighting and extensive entertainment through Sennheiser noise-free headphones.

THE SERVICE

Come a long way since my first (economy) experience with AC nearly 10 years ago. Meals were at least as good as any experienced on other comparable airlines and flawlessly served by experienced crew. Wine selection is by wine expert Ken Chase and consists of sparkling, reds, whites (old world and new) plus vintage port with the cheese and sweets. Amenities were not lavish but included little pleasures like ESCENTS aromatherapy lotion and balm along with usuals like eye mask, earplugs and toothbrush/paste in useful zippered pouch. Reading the superb enRoute hardcopy inflight magazine is still a pleasure, but for how much longer?

ON THE GROUND

In a first for this traveller, AC demonstrated their concierge service, a treat reserved for Air Canada Super Elite members and Executive First customers in 20 airports around the world. This premium service will help speed you through any confusing airport procedures (especially for first time airport visits) and smooth check-in and security controls. Especially useful for tight connections, your smiling concierge will be waiting with your name on a slate the instant you step off the plane. The Maple Leaf Lounges all offer extensive drink selections, Wi-Fi internet access (inc. HP terminals, printers and copiers) plus hot food and snacks, although Toronto and Vancouver offer conference facilities in addition to showers. Yes, big screen TVs to watch the ice hockey too, or if it's quiet you want, there are cell-free zones too.



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

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