



Sleep makers

WHO hasn't seen the stern visage of the man in the De Rucci billboards, referred to in Andrew Klein's 'Confessions of a Compulsive Conference-Goer' column today? (Check it out on page three).



Andrew reminds us how essential it is to smile and look pleasant if you want to engage with an audience, and to look delighted if you say you're delighted!

Mr De Rucci has a long way to go in that department.

But with so many of his costly looking billboards scattered around inner city areas, it had me wondering if his countenance, unyielding as it is, is a bit of clever reverse advertising psychology.

There's no denying the recall factor and especially the name, and if I were buying a bed, I for one would certainly be interested in checking them out.

It only goes to show that one person's smile and engaging manner may keep audiences wide awake while another's grim scowl might get you a good night's rest!

MEANWHILE a hotel source tells me that a certain gm at a Sydney waterfront hotel is about to jump ship and join IHG.

But I'll never tell!

Jill

AIME dinner @ Central Pier

THE first AIME gala dinner will be held at Central Pier in Melbourne's Docklands on 25 Feb.

Melbourne Convention Bureau ceo Karen Bolinger confirmed the location today in the lead up to the trade show, which will see more than 700 exhibitors, a new brand (**BEN** 11 Feb) and the release of the Business Events



Council of Australia's "landmark" study 'The Value of Business Events to Australia'.

Collaborating local businesses include Atlantic Group and Peter Jones Special Events, the former of which had a reputation for challenging industry norms through innovation, Bolinger said.

Guests are advised to prepare for something "a little different" and to 'dress to impress'.

The dinner is to be held at the end of AIME for the first time, when in previous years a welcome event was held at the beginning, a change which Bolinger said gave buyers and sellers the opportunity to continue conversations and relationships from the show.

Pictured centre is AIME exhibition director Jacqui Timmins at the 2014 Welcome event.

Events with Benefits

TFE Hotels will launch a reworked Events with Benefits rewards program at AIME.

The revamped program would offer various rewards in five tiers, based on the total event spend, the company said.

An event spend above \$2,500, or tier one, would allow organisers either \$100 credit or hotel catering, accommodation or services, \$200 rebate on the next conference's total bill or a \$100 Visa gift voucher.

Tier five requires a spend of more than \$50,000 and rewards of \$4,000 in credit for the booked event and \$1,000 for the next, or a \$2,000 Visa gift voucher.

Sunshine Coast incentive launch

BUSINESS Events Sunshine Coast (BESC) will launch the Original Eumundi Market as a bespoke incentive experience for corporate functions and teambuilding activities at AIME.

BESC manager Pippa McCreery said the location now allowed groups to create their own wet-weather-proof night market, complete with a seated banquet dinner or standing cocktail function, with capacity for up to 1,000 people.

Tourism: tidal wave of opportunity

MINISTER for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb has said tourism and hospitality is a tidal wave of opportunity.

Speaking to the Tourism and Transport Forum in Melbourne yesterday, Robb said tourism and hospitality was one of the five sectors in Australia set for "supercharged growth" in coming decades.

"The opportunities are immense – but they won't just fall into our laps."

Robb said to reach the Tourism 2020 target, a further 20,000 five or six star hotel rooms were needed, as well as another three million airline seats annually.

CLICK HERE to read more.

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20th February 2015

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Hotel Highlight Sofitel So Singapore

BE ADVISED, don't check into the Sofitel So Singapore expecting to find a ballroom big enough for your gala dinner or even space for a medium-sized meeting, but if it's a hotel brimming with energy and funky glamour you seek, then this is it.

So captivating, it will have delegates happily decamping off-site of the main event.

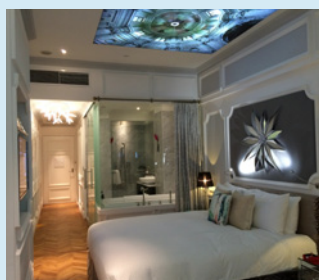
Described as 'French elegance meets Singapore flair', surprise elements designed by the legendary Karl Lagerfeld are everywhere, including the distinctively structured Lagerfeld uniforms worn by the hotel's ambassadors and chairs that variously recline, curve and even sprout horns!

All this is injected into a 1927 heritage building on Robinson Road in the heart of Singapore's CBD.

The 134 rooms and nine suites located within a So Hip wing and a So Heritage wing are inspired by 19th century French decadence, with high ceilings and bespoke light boxes featuring images of palatial glass domes.

The themed rooms come equipped with Illy coffee machines, a complimentary in-room Private Bar with a selection of local snacks and drinks, complimentary WiFi, Signature Urban Forest eau de parfum, daily breakfast - the list goes on.

To top it off, there's a glam, gold tiled swimming pool on the roof deck, just the ticket to impress and entertain clients and colleagues.



An evening of possibilities

MARINA Bay Sands, Singapore reportedly posted 99% occupancy last year.

This is according to vice president sales Michael B Lee, speaking at an 'Evening of Possibilities' function co-hosted by the Singapore Tourism Board on the luxury charter yacht *Quantum* last Tuesday evening.

"We started coming to Australia five years ago.

"Then we were talking about all the things we hoped to do and the projects we were planning and now we've done them.

"Much of our success goes to Singapore and to the size and scope of what we have.

"We are at the right place, at the right time."



"Currently, Marina Bay Sands has six celebrity chef restaurants, six months from now we will have nine.

"We own all these restaurants and we operate them, so unlike other venues you deal with, here you deal with just one person no matter which restaurant you choose or if you want to do a buy out."

Singapore Tourism Board Oceania director Sharon Lam, remarking how Australia was Singapore's top western tourism market, said, "2014 was a very eventful one for Singapore and one in which we continue to have more than one million leisure and business travellers."

Pictured above right is Lee surrounded by his guests on board the *Quantum*.

Cricket on the menu



AIR India has launched its new onboard Business Class menu on flights between India and Australia during the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup.

The event, held on Wednesday at Mascot's Gate Gourmet, has menu dishes named in honour of famous cricketers such as 'Dhoni's Swashbuckling Super Six' and 'Raina's Cheesy Pull Shot'.

Business Class passengers will also be presented with menu cards signed by cricketers as a souvenir and be given special sleepwear with a bat wielding the Maharajah mascot on the front.

Australian manager Madhu Mathen (**pictured** left with Atul S Kale) said Air India was open to inflight ideas and promotions from conference and incentive groups.



crumbs!

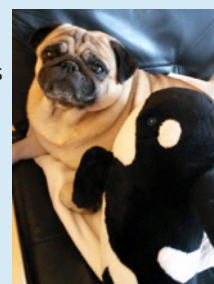


FOR an incentive or famil with a difference, have you tried encouraging your delegates to take whalefies, or a selfie with a real or toy whale or dolphin?

That's what Australian whale swim operator Majestic Whale Encounters is doing, as a way to support WhaleFest, a festival running from 14 to 15 Mar and based in Brighton.

This year, the festival is asking supporters to post a whalefie online to encourage learning more about marine mammals and watching them in the wild, rather than captivity, and Majestic Whale Encounters is getting onboard.

You can check out some whalefies already posted on the company's Facebook page **HERE** - NB: it's not just for humans.



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Are you a Senior Events/Conferencing Sales Manager looking for your next challenge and keen to use your skills to launch a conference business in Asia Pacific?

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To apply, send your Cover letter and Resume to Jonica Paramor at jonica@paramorproductions.com.au before Monday 23 February 2015 telling us why this role is for you.
Only Experienced Candidates please apply.



business events news

20th February 2015

WLG on show

WELLINGTON has been wooing Australian event organisers recently.

helloworld's retail network support and events manager Sandy Osborne and conference and events coordinator Melissa Cue arrived on 03 Feb to make final arrangements for helloworld's Owners Manager Conference, with the pair saying they left with a feel for the way the city worked and how Wellington operators collaborated.

Also in the city were the organisers of the 47th Royal Australian and NZ College of Ophthalmologists Scientific Congress, with both conferences set to see more than 1,200 delegates attend, Positively Wellington Venues said.

New ICCA members

THE International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) has added nine new members and re-instated two this month.

New members include the Bruges Convention Bureau, the Banff Centre in Canada, Gangwon Convention and Visitors Bureau in Korea and the Oulu Convention Bureau in Finland.

CWT: 33k meetings

CARLSON Wagonlit Travel (CWT) Meetings and Events said it organised more than 33,000 meetings and events for more than 1.3m delegates in 2014.

This saw revenue increase by 4.2% globally, the company said as part of its annual report.

Overall, CWT saw sales volume increase by 1.6% to US\$27.3b, while new business sales clocked in at US\$1.6b.

Expo Guide letters in Oz

AN ONLINE directory scheme previously highlighted by Western Australia ScamNet has contacted businesses in Australia taking part in trade shows with fine print that will cost companies about \$5,559.

Business Events News and sister publication **Travel Daily** received letters from Expo-Guide offering an update of company information listed, without consent, on expo-guide.com.

At the bottom of a page offering correction of the free listing is a paragraph stating the customer has agreed to order advertising with the company for three years at €1,271 per year, an order which is automatically and annually renewed unless cancellation is given in writing three months' prior to expiry.

WA ScamNet has previously alerted businesses to the organisation, also known as FairGuide and Construct Data Verlag, saying several trade show organisers had warned exhibitors to be careful about solicitations from the outfit.

The Stop Expo Guide group on LinkedIn shared a US Federal Trade Commission judgement against Construct Data Publishers for US\$9m, after charging them with "tricking small businesses and non-profits into paying millions of dollars to be listed in an online directory...for which they did not realise they would be charged".

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission said it could not comment on specific cases; the SCAMWatch website warns that advertising or online directory scams cause "many headaches".

CLICK HERE to read more.



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CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE CONFERENCE-GOER

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in **BEN**.

Presenting at Face-Value

Getting out of my taxi at Sydney airport earlier this week, I looked up at the giant advertising billboard to see the stern, un-smiling face of the slightly creepy bloke in the De Rucci Sleepwear ad. You know the face I'm referring to? The intense middle-aged bearded guy in a buttoned up white shirt, who I imagine is Mr De Rucci himself. It's a rare type of ad whereby the subject's face is not smiling and it certainly stands out amongst the myriad of smiling "are your Macleans showing" style of faces, depicted in most ads.



The next day, while sitting in the audience of the conference that I had flown to attend, the stern image of the man's face popped back into my head as I observed the presenter on stage. While not as scary-looking as Mr De Rucci, the speaker never smiled. He spoke clearly and quite confidently, yet not once did his face show a sign of pleasure or happiness and as a result, he did not engage effectively with his audience. Same with the next speaker. And most of the others on the agenda that day. It was all business, serious and technical, delivering information with rarely a glimpse of any speakers actually enjoying the process.

One speaker even began her presentation by saying "I'm delighted to be here today..." yet she forgot to tell her face. She appeared as delighted to have been asked to speak as Mr De Rucci appears to be promoting his mattresses.

As a presentation skills trainer, I always tell my clients at the very least to try and look happy to be there, even if you are not. Sure, like many speakers you may be nervous and the stakes of your presentation might be high. But if you want to engage with the delegates, and you want them to give you their attention for 45 minutes, you must appear to be pleased to be speaking. Yet sadly, so many people present like they are posing for their drivers license or passport photo.

I'm not suggesting you smile throughout your presentation, nor do I suggest a fake smile. We are not trying to emulate The Joker from 'Batman'. I'm simply suggesting a look on your face and body that indicates you like your job, you believe in the subject of your presentation and feel that the content will help those who are listening. It makes the audience feel better, and it makes you easier to listen to. To remind yourself to smile, I even suggest to conference presenters to imagine you are talking to a baby (try doing that while not smiling, it's impossible) or to draw little smiley faces at the top of each page of their presentation notes as a reminder.

So conference presenters - either look a bit happier and more animated on stage or if not, might I suggest a career selling Italian mattresses?

If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



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