

Inside Nigel Coventry Tourism

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Concern over fuel prices and

reserves

THE prospect of fuel price increases and uncertainty over reserve stocks held in New Zealand is worrying - as the tourism sector has a high dependency on both avgas and diesel, says TIANZ.

"Although it seems that the country has coped without having 'real' reserves of fuel for some time, the current irrational behaviour with prices that are not directly related to demand but rather the perception of risk that might arise should be a lesson to us," the association tells *IT*.

"As we approach the summer season (the northern hemisphere winter period), TIANZ has two concerns: profitability and reputation."

Fuel averages around 10 percent of total operating costs for surface transport and about 30 percent for aviation operations.

"So in simple terms, a 10 percent increase in fuel price should raise overall prices by one to three percent respectively otherwise profitability reduces by even greater proportions."

TIANZ adds that the prospect of fuel starvation and the inability to deliver visitors with the holiday they have substantially paid for when they arrive would be hugely detrimental to our reputation. TIANZ urges the oil companies through the leadership of government to establish real rather than virtual reserves of oil and to do so immediately.

"We would not expect to hear that implementing such a policy adds to the costs of fuel - simply because there was supposed to have been 90 days of 'real' reserves in place, anyway."

Only 60 days supply

Energy Minister Pete Hodgson revealed last month there is only 60 days of oil in reserve, one month short of the 90-day standard set by the International Energy Agency as a buffer against disruptions to global oil supplies.

In fact, oil supplies are on a perpetual knife edge, relying on "daily miracles" just to get by, former New Zealand Refinery Company commercial manager Robin Gunston is quoted as saying. In the past the situation had become so bad it had caused jet fuel

shortages and areas to run dry of diesel and petrol.

"We've never had a reserve. We're always operating in a crisis," he is quoted as saying. "We have barely enough to meet the daily operational needs of the country. We're just shuffling it around."

The problem has plagued us for decades, including a jet fuel crisis at Auckland airport in the 1980s, and again the 1990s.

Kyoto: one step closer...

ABOUT \$52 per international visitor is how much it could cost the industry under the Kyoto Protocol set up to cut greenhouse gas emissions around the globe.

But for the code to come into force it must be ratified by 55 countries which were party to a 1992 UN Convention on Climate Change. We signed the protocol in 1997. Whilst Australia and the US have said they are not signing, a new report for *Business New Zealand* says that whether the protocol comes into force depends on Russia. And Russia has already sent the protocol to Parliament for final approval...

Landcare Research says in a 2001 report for TIANZ that industry and government recognise the importance of the 'state of the New Zealand environment' and the need for us to genuinely sustain our image of 100%Pure.

"It is implicitly linked to maintaining credibility (over)

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Pages Past...

TEN years ago in IT...

JAMES Cook Centra, The Parkroyal, West Plaza and Trekkers were winners in the inaugural Telecom Wellington Tourism Awards. Operator of the Year was Southern World Vacations.

NZR is launching a new image for its eight passenger long distance services. See What You Have Been Missing is the theme to get people to change out-dated perceptions of train travel.

WEATHER, earthquakes, post-baby boomers and the stockmarket have helped to make Wellington the vibrant, cosmopolitan city it is, according to Mayor and former Tourism Minister Fran Wilde. She says the Absolutely, Positively Wellington brand has become a state of mind. She'd like to see Wellington develop into a European capital in a Pacific setting, as well as an international tele centre.

I TOC, NZTIA (now TIANZ) and NZTB (now TNZ) met this week to discuss concerns about operators who do not meet industry standards. It has been agreed to draw up a Code of Conduct. I TOC CEO Peter Lowry says they are concerned about people entering tourism without adhering to any standards. "We believe everyone coming to New Zealand deserves a quality product. But some markets have people in business who don't meet standards or our criteria at all."

SOME 217 entries have been received for this year's New Zealand Tourism Awards, up nine from 1993. The largest number of entries came from Marlborough/Kaikoura with 37 followed by Auckland with 35.

IT'S been confirmed there's overseas interest in Wellington's James Cook Centra which has come on the market for the first time since being built in 1972. The 260 room, 12-storey complex has a GV of \$21 million.

LAKE Taupo District Council is spending \$120,000 in Japan in the hope it'll bring in \$5 million. Marketing manager James Little has spent five days in Japan and says the money is going on joint promotion, which will mean the district will be targeted by JTB. He says the key to Taupo's success is quality and delivery. But there will only be one chance. Taupo is the preferred destination for a \$1.5 million AirNZ campaign in Australia. Rotorua is steaming. It's been left off.

GLEN Wallace of Windsor Park Stud has been elected president of Tourism Waikato. VP is TVNZ regional manager Sharon Cawood. Immediate past president is the Waipa Delta's Lauri Pilling.

Kyoto: one step closer...

(from pg 1) and growth in a highly competitive market. With the exception of Australian visitors, New Zealand's quality environment scores highly with the longhaul - UK, German, Japanese and US - travellers. "It would seem to confirm that this aspect of New Zealand's 'image' is important. It is also important to recognise that government's policy and associated publicity about the impact of longhaul travel on greenhouse gas emissions could prove a significant barrier in the future," it adds.

The report shows that tourism's direct energy consumption in 1997/8 was 1,438,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions, or 5.1 percent of total. Domestic tourism was responsible for 74 percent of the industry's direct energy use. The direct and indirect cost is at least \$ 114 million. Emissions are expected to rise with the increase in visitor numbers. But the price of emissions (PE) is expected to reduce through improvements in technology.

Transport

Transport is responsible for 70 percent of all energy consumed by the industry. Activities consume more energy per tourist than attractions and produce proportionally more CO2 due to their dependence on motor vehicles.

The report says the cost to transport and some adventure tourism businesses could be the equivalent of two percent of turnover.

It also notes that while international air travel is not included in the protocol we could be severely affected if and when that happens.

The average tourist travel distance is 12,900 km one way. Our competitiveness could therefore be put at risk because we would become less competitive in that airfares become more expensive compared with countries closer to the main market of origin. And we may face difficulties when marketing the destination through moral concerns by environmentally aware tourists.

Options

Options include increasing the length of stay, promoting domestic tourism and increasing promotional efforts in close markets. "The option of offsetting carbon emissions from international travel needs to be explored," it adds. "It is not simply a question of whether this is an effective way of paying for CO2 emissions but it is a question of whether this is an effective means of altering the perceptions of environmentally-aware visitors and persuading them that travel to New Zealand is environmentally responsible."

The effects on the industry of the protocol involve not only direct costs of PE and its effects on profitability - but also the effect of public sensitivity to greenhouse gas generation on the demand for international tourism in New Zealand.

"This demand depends not only on price but also on visitor perception. If a visit to New Zealand is seen as 'environmentally unfriendly' because of the greenhouse



Legally speaking - with Brookfields Lawyers

MANY local communities are adopting strategies to deal with alcohol-related problems. These usually include information on allowable hours or levels of operation and effectively operate as liquor licensing policies. Operators in the hospitality industry wanting to change on-licence conditions such as hours of operation will need to present a convincing argument as to why the Liquor Licensing Authority (LLA) should disregard such a strategy.

Extending hours of trade

The LLA's decision in the Consolidated Hotels and Taverns Ltd case related to an application for the grant of an on-licence for The Tangent, an entertainment/nightclub venue within Manukau City. The applicant had purchased the previous business on the site, which had been authorised to operate until 3am under its on-licence. The applicant was permitted to continue operating until 3am under a temporary authority until its own on-licence was granted. In its application, it sought to increase the hours of trading to 5am.

The Manukau District Licensing Agency Inspector and the Police opposed the application. Both argued that it would be in contravention of Manukau City's "Strategy for Reducing Alcohol-Related Problems in Manukau City" to allow the venue to open until 5am. The Inspector introduced evidence to show that measures such as limiting the hours of operation have become established tools in addressing the social and economic costs of alcohol. The Police argued that there would be a domino effect if the application were allowed.

A conservative approach

The LLA was not convinced by the applicant's attempt to distinguish itself from other similar premises on the basis that the venue was used more for entertainment purposes, rather than as a tavern (where the primary purpose is the serving of alcohol). The LLA stated that granting the application would effectively open the gates for other similar businesses to extend their hours. This would be both in contravention of the strategy and might ultimately result in more alcohol related problems and nuisances.

The LLA also cited the purposes behind the Sale of Liquor Act 1989, policing concerns and migratory

drinkers as reasons for declining the application to extend the opening hours. It said that "...it is our experience, that the longer the hours, the greater the potential exists for liquor abuse, or breaches of the Act."

This recent conservative approach of the LLA means that operators will need to show that their operation is 'sufficiently unique' to depart from the allowable hours and/or levels as provided in a community's strategy. A good track record will not play a part in the ultimate decision.

Want to change your on-licence terms?

Find out if there is a community strategy in place and if so, what the terms of that strategy are. There is little point applying to the District Licensing Agency for something that the community does not approve of. If you are determined to continue with your application, then be prepared to fight the big fight. The authorities will require strong evidence that your particular desired result will not be detrimental to the community in any way, and not create a flurry of similar applications from other operators. Contact: Andrew Green green@brookfields.co.nz or Katia Fraser fraser@brookfields.co.nz

gas effects, then this could have implications for the NZ tourism industry which are much more serious than the effects of the C02PE itself."

The report says that much of the extra costs could be passed on to the consumer. This may mean a rise in the price of all products.

"On the other hand, producers of high C02 products - air tours - may also be competing with producers of low C02 products - such as glacier walks - and the high C02 generators have to consider the competitive pressure when deciding how much to increase their prices." It says each business has to work out its own pricing.

The PE for a typical one-way flight from Auckland to Christchurch would be \$3.51 while for a typical 600km domestic car trip it would be \$1.03. Coach travel for a typical international tourist would be \$1.95. Domestic air travel of about 1,039km for a typical international tourist would be \$4.96 whereas a one-way trip on a Cook Strait ferry would be 34 cents.

New offering for Auckland harbour bridge climb

AJ Hackett Bungy launched its newest adventure tourism attraction, Harbour Bridge Experience, in Auckland on Friday.

It offers an interactive adventure under, around, up and over the iconic bridge.

Co-founder and executive chairman Henry van Asch says: "Since taking over Auckland Bridge Climb last year, we have worked towards improving the product, to make it more flexible and interactive, with shorter trip times and a better price, especially for our biggest market, local Aucklanders."

He says highlights include exploring under the road deck, watching the movement of the outer "Nippon clippon" lanes, taking in the views from the summit and discovering the history, geology and Maori legends of the Auckland region.

Are media misrepresenting accidents in the wild?

ACCORDING to media stories accidents in the wild may be on the increase as tourism marketing capitalises on *Lord of the Rings* to promote this country as a mountainous adventure playground. They claim that reports of such accidents could tarnish our image as a safe adventure tourism destination.

But Victoria University lecturer Lee Davidson, who has been studying the media and its reporting of such incidents says: "I would argue, based on my analysis, that the complexities of mountaineering accidents - particularly their causes - are open to misrepresentation in the media, which tends to emphasise certain aspects and oversimplify the debate."

She adds: "I think a sophisticated understanding of these issues needs to be developed independently of the media.

"Most specifically I think it is important to know more about how adventure tourists perceive the risks involved in the activities they undertake. In particular I think there are issues around the acceptance of risk and

responsibility in the client-mountain guide relationship."

Ms Davidson adds that such issues need to be considered in the way in which we promote and market adventure tourism.

"For example, to consider whether it is perhaps unwise - if not irresponsible - to suggest that there can be such a thing as a completely safe adventure tourism destination, if this means that tourists are thereby unprepared for the possibility that not all risks in adventure - as in life - can be calculated and mitigated, even by the most experienced and cautious among us."

Ms Davidson first became interested in the way media portrays accidents in mountains after hearing criticism by mountaineers that the media misrepresents them, primarily by misreporting accidents, and focusing on deaths and accidents.

"As a result, many mountaineers feel that they and their activity are misunderstood by the general public."

So she studied reports after an avalanche killed three guides and

one of their clients on Mount Tasman last New Year's Eve. She also read reports on four Latvians who died a few weeks earlier on Mount Cook. They were reasonably experienced yet the cause of their accident was put down to a lack of familiarity with New Zealand conditions.

"A few days before the accident on Mount Tasman, nine Indonesians were rescued from the lower reaches of Mount Cook. These people were very inexperienced and were labelled 'foolhardy idiots'. In the Mount Tasman accident, the cause of the accident could not be put down to either lack of experience or familiarity with conditions - because they were such experienced guides who died."

So, she added, the story was told that you can be very experienced and well-prepared - and still die in the mountains as a result of acts of fate. "I feel these issues need to be considered in the way in which we promote and market adventure tourism." **Contact: 04-4635929, fax 4635091 or Lee.Davidson@vuw.ac.nz.**

Knock back for Phillips' latest proposal

QUEENSTOWN businessman Philip Phillips at the helm of the monorail proposal between the resort and Te Anau has had his latest business plan thwarted.

Mr Phillips' first stage of plans for a large plant house on a controversial site next to the Queenstown Gardens was blocked by the Queenstown Lakes District Council Reserves Committee this week.

The \$2 million building would be a home to native and tropical flora and fauna and a 'passive' tourist attraction.

Controversy has surrounded the site since an Environment Court ruling upheld a consent for an aquatic centre to be built there but which was later quashed by council following public opposition. Before Mr Phillip's proposal can be considered again the committee said he must have letters of support from DoC, the Guardians of the Garden group, as well as profile poles on the site to indicate the size of the plant house, anticipated visitor numbers and traffic movements, and a chronological history of the site. Mr Phillips said the plant house was a another longtime

dream he'd had. "It's something different for tourists from the jumping, flying, skidding sort of attractions that were pretty hopeless for elderly tourists."

Scenic Circle completes its famils

SCENIC Circle Hotels last week completed its third and final wholesale famil tour for the year, teaming up with Northland activities Dune-Rider 4x4 Tours and the Paihia Duck to host a group of eight inbound wholesalers for a long weekend of activities in the Northland region.

Wholesale sales manager John Gregory says the tour exposed the group to a more extensive product range than they had seen before and allowed them to sample new activities. Scenic Circle Hotels and the operators are eager to encourage travellers to spend an extra day in Northland.

The tour completed the company's series of wholesale famils this year, which have covered all the group's properties.

Scenic Circle Hotels hosted wholesale agents on a seven-day tour around the South Island in May, and took another group to Rotorua and Hawke's Bay in July.

Bay of Plenty positive about future

THE future looks bright for the visitor industry in the Bay of Plenty with a predicted \$233 million increase in spending by tourists over the next five-and-a-half years.

These figures are from the regional tourism forecasts released by the Tourism Research Council.

It predicts overnight visits by international and domestic tourists will increase from 3.6 million in 2003 to 4.2 million by 2010. This is a 15.8 percent rise. Tourism expenditure will also increase from \$436 million in 2003 to \$669 million by 2010. This means visitor nights will increase by a rate of 666,000 per year approaching 2010 - which is an extra 12,800 guests staying in beds every week!

Spend

The average international and domestic visitor spend during an overnight stay is expected to increase from \$323 in 2003 to \$444 by 2010. Spend by day visitors will also increase from the current \$57 to \$73.

Tourism Bay of Plenty CEO Jim Little says the figures are "extremely positive", and will have a profound effect on the regional economy.

"Apart from the benefits to accommodation and activity operators and bars and restaurants, tourism expenditure filters right down to all local residents and the flow-on affect is immense."

But, he adds, the figures are only predictions. "We will have to pull together to turn this into a reality by making ourselves, our products and our services export ready."

He says the region needs to focus on recruitment and reward. "Operators must ensure that tourism is seen as a viable career option, not a 'fill-in' or temporary job. Front line people are the ones we are counting on to make a good impression, to be knowledgeable and competent, to go above and beyond in meeting customers' needs and deliver on the promise of a high quality visitor experience."

Mr Little says wages and benefits offered to employees need to be realistic and relative to the expectations employers have of them.

Drug testing for hospitality staff?

UP to 40 percent of the 20,000 workers employed by the Restaurant Association's 1,600 business members have reportedly tried illegal drugs in the past year. And association CEO Neville Waldren says bar, restaurant and café workers may have to be drug tested to combat the abuse.

"It impacts on our ability to service the public. Our people are working in a difficult environment as it is and drug problems compound the difficulties."

But the Service and Food Workers' Union has condemned the move.

Spokesman Alistair Duncan says that if the industry had the welfare of its customers and workers at heart it would put money into training, improving wages "and, for the tiny proportion of staff who had drug dependency, providing an employee assistance programme."

Prime site for sale

A prime lakefront property with redevelopment potential in central Queenstown is up for sale. The 1803 square metre site on Lake Esplanade houses the Lakeside Motel, a three level 15-unit complex built in the 1970s. There are also two houses with 39 beds currently used for backpacker accommodation.

The motel is leased to Waimatua Investments No. 11 Ltd, on a 10 year term that expires in October 2008. Tenders close on October 15.

Contact: 03-4412220 or 027-433 5941.

Eastland's new brochure due

TOURISM Eastland is printing 45,000 copies of its new regional visitor guide, due out soon.

We're top destination with UK moviegoers

A survey in the UK has voted New Zealand the top 'cinema sightseeing' country.

Of those who took part in the Thomson Holidays survey, 40 percent said we were the top movie holiday hot spot after seeing it in the *Lord Of The Rings*.

The survey also showed as many as 80 percent of Britons plan their holidays after seeing a location on the big screen and 20 percent of people have made a pilgrimage to the location of their favourite movie.

Impact

The UK is the second-largest source of visitors to New Zealand, with over 280,000 arrivals a year.

"The impact of the *Lord of the Rings* for New Zealand as a

destination was very much one of profile-raising," says TNZ CEO

George Hickton. "Our research

shows that to date only seven

percent of those who were aware

the *Lord of the Rings* had been

filmed in New Zealand, were

specifically motivated to come here because of it.

But the impact of the films on raising awareness of New Zealand

as a destination cannot be

underestimated, " he adds. "I am

sure we will see this come through

in our visitors over the next few

years."

Thomson marketing director Miles

Morgan says: "High-profile films

such as the *Lord of the Rings*, *Cold*

Mountain and *Troy* all show off

locations in a favourable light,

making them an incredibly powerful

force for marketing a destination.

"Our national obsession with

celebrities means that watching our

favourite stars perform in beautiful

locations is no longer enough - now

we want to go along and experience

the same places first-hand."

The Cove gets make-over

THE Cove - Taupo's lake front hotel - has just completed a substantial expansion, refit and refurbishment of its main meeting venue, the Sunrise Room.

DQ to look inwards this year

A focus this year for Destination Queenstown is to take stock and review the direction of the organisation and its goals, says chairman Adrian Januszkiewicz in his annual report.

“A strategic review is now underway to ensure resources are focused on goals that are still valid for the town and its tourism industry.

“The review will analyse every part of the organisation’s operation and ensure it is correctly and efficiently focused.”

Mr Januszkiewicz says this is an involved analytical process which could take six months.

He adds: “The prognosis for the next year is healthy. Tourism numbers are set to continue their growth curve, infrastructure is improving and air access increasing. Under these circumstances DQ’s focus will be to continue the good work and check the accuracy of our direction.”

Strategy targets

TO increase guest nights in the shoulder seasons. To increase visitor length of stay - at all times of year. And to increase visitor yield by targeting high yield sectors. These are main objectives of Destination Queenstown’s latest 10 year strategic plan.

CEO David Kennedy adds that the strategy targets one trans Tasman flight per day by 2014.

HANZ delighted with government spend on training

GOVERNMENT has set aside “a significant spend” for staff training. And HANZ CEO Bruce Robertson is delighted!

He says that with shortages of skilled, trained staff becoming a problem, the initiative should help immensely.

“It is helpful to have government support, given the demand for skilled staff greatly outstripping what’s available. As demand for skilled staff grows it will soon become an imperative for hospitality to be regarded in the same manner as is other tertiary qualifications and funded accordingly.”

HANZ supports on-the-job training. Government help is critical. But employers also need to take responsibility.

Mr Robertson says there is still a need for a more realistic view on the employment legislation. “HANZ would welcome the opportunity to work alongside government to ensure that the nation’s growing needs for hospitality services are met.”

Shantytown wants success

SHANTYTOWN aims to become one of New Zealand’s most successful authentic travel destinations.

West Coast Historical and Mechanical Society president Peter Reedy says that 12 months of innovation and initiatives have allowed it to remain the region’s top tourist attraction.

Council may buy albatross centre

DUNEDIN City Council is considering buying the Royal Albatross Centre from the Otago Peninsula Trust as a step to solving the Taiaroa Head land tenure issue. The land, under Crown and council ownership, is to be handed to Ngai Tahu’s Otakou runanga and descendants of Korako Karetai. But various issues have delayed this. Discussions between interested parties, including DoC, have come up with several options aimed at solving the issues.

Peninsula Trust chairman Gary Williams says the centre is important to Dunedin and the trust is committed to ensuring management remains in safe hands.

TIANZ roadshows planned

TIANZ’S latest roadshows are to be held in Wellington, Rotorua and Auckland on November 23, 24 and 25 respectively and Queenstown, Christchurch and Nelson on December 7, 8 and 9.

Increasing the options

PALMERSTON North City Council has swapped part of the Gordon Kear Forest for the Woodpecker Block to develop a recreational park. Mayor Mark Bell-Booth says: “It’s a jewel in the crown. The Kahuterawa recreational reserve is going to be such an exciting option for the city.”

There will be opportunities for walking, picnicking, mountain biking, orienteering and running. It will link in with the Great New Zealand Walk.

Changes in the UK

COLIN Whaley, current head of marketing at UK tour operator Ebookers - which includes brands Bridge the World and Travelbag - has announced his departure from the group.

Mr Whaley’s departure follows a long list of senior executives to have left the group, including former Travelbag MD Peter Liney, Bridge the World MD Jerry Bridge, Bridge the World operations director Bruce Rose, Travelbag sales director Nikki Clarke and Ebookers senior product manager Veronica Brown.

Hoteliers worried over LCAs

ASIAN hoteliers are beginning to worry that low-cost airlines (LCAs) are having a detrimental effect on their business.

One airline executive has warned that neither carriers nor hotels will win if the proliferation of holiday packages based on low-cost fares continues to gather momentum.

Tourism Australia director-marketing Richard Beere adds that while low-cost airlines may bring in budget travellers, there was no evidence to indicate they don’t bring in higher-yielding passengers as well.

“My feeling is that someone with \$2,000 to spend on a holiday who is now paying only a quarter of what the airfare used to be, will still spend \$2,000, perhaps on a hotel upgrade or restaurant meals.”

Now there's bargaining fees!

JUST when you thought the Employment Relations Law Reform Bill couldn't get any worse - along came bargaining fees, says *Business Update*.

"Slipped in during Parliamentary recess this week was an amendment to make non-union members pay fees to unions in workplaces where there is a collective employment agreement. Individuals would be allowed to opt out but workplace influences are likely to see many employees pressured into either the collective or the fee."

Employers won't be allowed to object: the amendment says disagreeing with a bargaining fee isn't a 'genuine reason' not to have it. The newsletter adds: "The addition of bargaining fees brings yet another layer of compulsion to this government's employment law."

Carter visits Pouto

CONSERVATION Minister Chris Carter has visited Pouto, 70km south east of Dargaville, to learn at first hand about conservation issues there. Kaipara Mayor Graeme Ramsey says a goal is to assist the economic and social development of the area "by way of developing Pouto as a destination."

Mercure planned for historic Christchurch building

ONE of Christchurch's most attractive heritage buildings, the Old Public Trust Building on Oxford Terrace, is to be developed into a Mercure Grand Hotel following the signing of a management agreement between hotel operators, Accor, and Christchurch business interests.

The four-storey building will be redeveloped into hotel facilities that will comprise a grand lobby, restaurant and bar, function rooms and bedrooms. An accommodation tower will be built behind the existing building to provide a total of 120 rooms as well as extra meeting facilities. Work will probably start in early 2006.

Accor has been looking for a suitable opportunity to establish its Mercure brand in Christchurch, and with the increase in international and domestic flights to the city, and the region's increasing popularity as a convention destination, there has been great demand for new quality accommodation.

Accor GM New Zealand Neil Scanlan says New Zealand had benefited from the increase in airlines flying here and that dramatic increases in inbound from countries such as Australia, the UK, North America and Japan are likely to be sustained "because of the powerful tourism image we have developed in key feeder markets."

He adds: "While it may not be easy to maintain the historically low international airfares to New Zealand, the increase in inbound travel - from Australia in particular - reflects the 'new image' of New Zealand abroad, and cities such as Christchurch are set to increase leisure and conference business as a result of this positive image."

Top musicians for jazz festival

A lineup of top jazz artists will headline a night of sheer entertainment at Queenstown's Millbrook Resort during the Queenstown International Jazz Festival in October. An International Cabaret evening on October 20 will feature top shelf entertainment with a lineup of international artists including Roseanna Vitro from New York, Bill Trujillo from Los Angeles, Sydney's George Washingmachine, Joe Elefante from New York and the Doug Caldwell Trio.

Choice expo for Auckland

CHOICE Hotels Australasia plans an expo style cocktail party for the industry in Auckland on October 27. Details: auckland@choicehotels.com.au.

Contiki founder now speaker, author

ONE of the latest industry personalities to join Celebrity Speakers is John Anderson who left New Zealand on his OE in 1962 - with 25 pounds in his pocket.

He found a way to tour Europe and start his own business.

Yet by the time he sold Contiki Holidays in 1989 it was an international brand employing 700 staff, carried 50,000 passengers a year and earned turnover of \$150 million.

Today he lives in Marlborough, is a driving force behind the Eilerslie Flower Show and is writing a book about the Contiki story.

Ocean, Spirit, Earth Unveiled

THE Bartercard Bay of Plenty Tourism Awards are to be held in Tauranga on October 29. The theme is: Ocean, Spirit, Earth Unveiled.

Condo president here

RESORT Condominiums International president and CEO Kenneth May has been in Taupo and Turangi to meet local timeshare leaders and visit resorts. He has also been visiting the South Island. His company brings about 6,000 overseas visitors to New Zealand each year.

Who gives what...

FOR those of you still wondering, of Tourism Auckland's \$2,180,000 budget some \$1,645,000 comes from Auckland City, \$300,000 from Manukau City, \$100,000 from North Shore, \$20,000 from Franklin District, \$10,000 from Rodney District and \$5,000 from Papakura District. Waitakere doesn't give a cent.

Berlins being remodelled

BERLINS Hotel, Buller Gorge, is being remodelled into the Berlins Bar and Café at a cost of \$474,000.

Owners Steve Reynolds and Donna Craddock plan to remodel the building and upgrade the accommodation. They run Xtreme Adventures, reputedly New Zealand's only river-based jet-ski adventure company, which is being based at Berlins.

Internet booking business reports 112% growth

WOTIF.COM - the last-minute accommodation website - has announced a record growth of 112 percent in accommodation bookings year-on-year in New Zealand.

This contributes to the company's overall expansion on an international level with booking volume increasing to more than 100,000 a month. Attributing 50 percent of this year-on-year growth to purely domestic tourism, Wotif.com has recorded an 85 percent increase in room nights over the winter quarter alone. Leisure destinations Queenstown (95 percent), Rotorua (71 percent), Taupo (378 percent) and Hamilton (78 percent) experienced high growth with Auckland (44 percent), Christchurch (129 percent) and Wellington (97 percent) taking the lead as business travel destinations.

Wotif.com says last-minute travel is no longer hype - but reality. Users are now booking on average between four and five days before their trip, be it for leisure or business.

Quick uptake

CEO and founder Graeme Wood says: "The quick uptake of booking travel over the internet has been the main reason for our growth in New Zealand. The internet simplifies the booking travel process and lets customers compare prices and access competitive rates. Wotif.com fits in perfectly with this demand by offering a simple and convenient service that saves people time, and money, when booking accommodation.

"Another catalyst in our growth has been the low cost carriers increasing flights across the Tasman. Travel has become more affordable and Wotif.com is the next click away for many internet-savvy travellers who have booked their flights."

Volume

The New Zealand market represents over 10 percent of Wotif.com's booking volume, being the most important segment after Australia.

Following the recent launch of the Asian office in July, Wotif.com expects to see significant growth for New Zealand inbound bookings from South East Asia.

With industry trends predicting continued growth in online hotel bookings, and New Zealand having one of the highest rates of internet access, Wotif.com is expanding its product inventory in regional areas, and will work closely with RTOs in further promoting domestic tourism and maximising joint opportunities.

Manager New Zealand Tania Witheford says: "We have over 570 properties in New Zealand supporting us in the niche market of last-minute accommodation. Our properties have experienced the increase in bookings and the phenomenal uptake of internet usage in New Zealand to book travel. We will also focus on leveraging inbound business from Australia and other countries to New Zealand." Details: tania.witheford@wotif.com.

Court hears appeals against Cape Kidnappers lodge

THE Environment Court in Hastings on Monday began hearing evidence over appeals lodged against the construction of a multimillion-dollar resort at Cape Kidnappers by American Julian Robertson.

Objecting are Gannet Beach Adventures owner Rod Heaps, landowner Charles Gordon and a Peter Nee Harland.

Mr Robertson wants to build a lodge and 24 guest chalets on his 2,000-hectare land, four kilometres from a golf course he has built 20m above a gannet colony.

Lawyer Derek Nolan argued that the lodge has been endorsed by the Environmental Defence Society. It will become one of the top five "hideaway" resorts in the world.

In its first 12 years it is expected to contribute \$87 million to the region's economy.

The project had the backing of Hastings District Council and local Maori.

Forest and Bird uncovers "non-existent" fast-track list

ROADS, prisons, coal mines and hydro dams could all be fast-tracked under proposed Resource Management Act reforms according to a draft Cabinet Paper the government has denied existed. Forest and Bird this week released a list of 39 "Possible candidates for Non Local Decision Making" under the government's proposed fast track process for major projects. The list was part of a June 24 draft Cabinet Paper on the RMA reform prepared by the Ministry for the Environment.

It includes such projects as: Trustpower's controversial proposed hydroelectric scheme for the Wairau River in Marlborough; coal field development totalling 100 million tonnes; proposed Fonterra 250 megawatt coal-fired power plant; a 650 bed prison in the Eastern Bay of Plenty; Auckland's Eastern Corridor; wood processing plants.

Conservation manager Kevin Hackwell says: "I was around at the time of Muldoon's Think Big and its like we are going through it all again. At the time we not only had to campaign against ill-advised changes to planning law and over-blown and expensive projects, but we had to campaign for open government as well."

Spring Loaded is working

AN umbrella marketing campaign designed to support an extensive calendar of spring events in Queenstown is increasing domestic awareness and building visitor numbers and yield in the spring shoulder season. The Spring Loaded campaign is half way through and has included press and web advertising and a promotional events page on the Destinations Queenstown website.

Destination Queenstown CEO David Kennedy says that building and promoting springtime events is an important part of the organisation's 10 year strategy.

More development proposed for Tutukaka

NORTH Coast Properties Ltd of Auckland have applied to the Whangarei District Council for resource consent for a motel, conference and holiday apartment complex called Seabreeze Northland.

A four level building will incorporate Dive! Tutukaka, Schnappa Rock Restaurant, motel, conference centre, pool and small gymnasium. Behind will be one five level building with 36 holiday apartments and another six level building with another 36 apartments.

In its application the developer says more intensive commercial, tourism and recreation services and facilities are sought by the local community. "The need for such development is recognised by the WDC in the Structure Plan for Tutukaka."

The developer says the proposal is consistent with the Tutukaka Basin becoming a maritime recreation and tourist hub for the Tutukaka Coast. Submissions have to be in by October 15.

Online fares often incorrect, claims study

A study of 16 international websites has found that online fares are often incorrect or unavailable, according to findings from the Consumer WebWatch project of the US Consumers' Union.

The study shows that airline websites are often more expensive than aggregator sites, and their tax and fee information is often unclear.

It also reveals that the "lowest fare" quoted by the US airline-backed Orbitz.com was inaccurate 26 percent of the time while one in five of the site's fares could not be booked.

Expedia.com and Travelocity.com displayed incorrect results seven percent and two percent of the time, respectively.

But these websites now issue warnings to users when fares suddenly increase or decrease mid-booking.

Eastland's executive line-up

TOURISM Eastland's new executive: Richard Coates, Coates Associates; Harvey Johanson, Gisborne Milk; Gary Robinson, Seaview b and b; Penny Shaw, Tairāwhiti Polytechnic; Jenny Meban, Te Hau Station Farmstay; Tina Cornwell, Opotiki i-site; Brian Wilson, Gisborne District Council; Sandy Clapham, Wairoa i-site; Brett Papworth, AirNZ.

KiwiLink now covers the world

KIWILINKS, TNZ's trade-training workshops are now spreading across the world, with events now in Asia, America, Europe and Japan.

CEO George Hickton says: "KiwiLinks are some of the most effective ways we have of influencing how New Zealand is perceived offshore.

"The feedback we get is that they are very effective in getting attention for New Zealand, for educating those who are at the frontline selling New Zealand, in what our country has to offer."

Format

The events aim to train the travel trade in our key markets. The format differs slightly in each, but generally involves group training sessions, workshops and the opportunity for New Zealand operators to meet on a one-to-one basis with overseas buyers. The events sometimes link up with other trade events.

Dates so far confirmed: KiwiLink India - Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai from March 4-10; KiwiLink Germany and Switzerland (German-speaking trainers are a requirement to participate in this event) from April 13-20; KiwiLink USA - Los Angeles (It also includes Kiwi Specialist day for retail agents) from May 11 to 15.

KiwiLink Japan is expected to be held during September/October. Details: www.tourisminfo.govt.nz/news.

VUW students examine distribution channels overseas

MEI Taniguchi and Shalini Sharda, two Masters of Tourism Management students at Victoria University, have been examining tourism

distribution channels between New Zealand and their home countries Japan and India respectively.

Both are part way through their theses, having just returned from interviewing intermediaries in the markets. Earlier they spoke with New Zealand suppliers and inbound operators.

Ms Taniguchi on Wednesday reported to an industry briefing that changes are occurring in the structure of Japanese distribution channels by reducing the number of intermediaries. As the Japanese tourism industry is becoming more price competitive, this has put pressures on suppliers and inbound operators.

Ms Sharda said the Indian market is price sensitive and a competitive market, but one that promises exponential growth with an increase in outbound traffic due to a significant growth in the Indian middle class. She said Indians now prefer free and easy travel rather than groups and are looking for newer destinations, New Zealand being one. At this stage the market is heavily reliant on travel agents for making their arrangements.

Details:

shardashal@student.vuw.ac.nz.

Consider alternatives, HANZ tells members

HOSPITALITY operators need to consider many initiatives to counter an expected downturn in business when new non-smoking legislation takes effect in December.

HANZ CEO Bruce Robertson urged delegates at the association's annual conference on Tuesday to work with their smoking patrons to find the most appropriate way to meet their needs while complying with the law. This would include providing practicable, appropriate outdoor areas for smokers.

“Bar operators need to ensure that their smoking patrons still feel welcome even if they have to pop outside for a cigarette”, he said.

“The government might be anti-smokers and be trying to marginalise them but the hospitality industry welcomes them and still wants their patronage.”

He added: “Bar operators should also be inviting all those anti-smoking zealots who said they would go to bars if they were non-smoking, to make good on those promises come December.”

Million people log on to WellingtonNZ.com

MORE than a million people from around the world have visited Wellington’s official tourism website since it was upgraded in October last year - an increase of nearly 70 percent on the year before.

WellingtonNZ.com, considered the capital’s most important visitor marketing tool, has consistently rated among New Zealand’s top seven travel websites in the Neilson//NetRatings, which monitors the popularity of websites.

Positively Wellington Tourism’s CEO Tim Cossar says: “These results are really important because the internet is one of the best ways to market and distribute information on Wellington internationally.

“The instant online accommodation booking system which came with the upgrade means it’s increasingly being used as a direct booking tool for holidays in Wellington, rather than just as a source of information.”

On any given day, around 3,000 people visit the site, compared with 1,700 before it was upgraded.

Mr Cossar says the growth in website traffic is due to a number of factors, including smart marketing through international search engines.

“But probably the biggest reason is that Wellington has much more of a presence on the world stage, thanks to its role in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. People from all over the world have now heard of this city and so are going online to find out more.”

Whenuapai is unrealistic and bad economics, claims AIAL

THE proposal for a second international airport at Whenuapai is unrealistic and bad economics, Auckland International Airport (AIAL) chairman Wayne Boyd says in his annual report.

“AIAL knows what it takes to make an airport work.

The company is successful and is certainly not afraid of competition. But turning the Defence Force air base..into a commercial airport does not make sense in planning, economic and environmental terms.” He says Auckland airport can meet the region’s needs for the foreseeable future.

The company already has planning approval for a second runway and terminal expansions. “So as demand increases AIAL can move from the current 10 million passengers per year to at least 30 million.” This will put the company on a par with current traffic at Hong Kong, Tokyo and San Francisco airports which serve cities of vastly greater populations.

Mr Boyd describes the Waitakere City Council/Infratil proposal as opportunistic. “It assumes the use of a Crown asset without paying full value - in a sense using the land free of charge.”

He adds: “This is not in the public interest as a commercial airport is not likely to be viable at Whenuapai if it is paying full value for the asset.”

He says it would be a serious lack of vision for there not to be a full in-depth investigation into all alternative uses for Whenuapai.

ADVERT

Tourism & Lifestyle Opportunities

MARTINBOROUGH - Aylstone boutique hotel - Wine country retreat. Six rooms. Restaurant, an extensive wine cellar, conference facilities and owner's accommodation. Selling FHGC. Tenders close Wednesday, 20 October 2004. John Welch 025 434 800 or Hugo Sandall 021 646 450

CAMBRIDGE FHGC Built 1875 renovated 1990's well established boutique hotel with 8 luxurious suites. Award winning restaurant, Royal Doulton dinnerware, chandeliers and fine prints on walls add to the charming atmosphere. Carolynn Crawford 0272478716 Tom Crawford 0272789199 or (09)3096020

NELSON/TASMAN DISTRICT - Investors looking for a profitable business, and a leisurely lifestyle, should not go past this 5 star opportunity. Beautiful surroundings and immaculate presentation will not disappoint. Enquiries over \$3 million. John Greenwood 027 497 0077.

ROTORUA HOLIDAY PARK - 2.747 hectares of parkland. 36 bed lodge for group bookings. Self contained units, tourist flats /cabins, tent sites, playground, swimming pool and more. Visit www.bayleys.co.nz ID#25764 Mark Slade 0274 988 911 or 07 349 3210.

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