

Inside Nigel Coventry Tourism

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Maintaining standards while hosting more visitors is major challenge

THE industry's challenge in 2005 is to maintain quality standards and being prepared for higher volumes of tourists with increased and better-trained staff, mainly in the accommodation sector, says TNZ CEO George Hickton. "Staffing up, training up and maintaining the quality of the experience will be the real challenge."

Problem

Part of the problem will surface in February and March when much accommodation in the main centres will be close to full.

"Just how well geared the industry is as far as staff and equipment to handle that, given there have been pressures in the past on people, will mean this will be an interesting year from that point of view to see if we can cope."

But, there's always room in the regions and there are opportunities to spread visitors around the country more, Mr Hickton says.

"It is really important that we keep our focus on quality because we are in a great spot in the international

marketplace. We are seen as the top destination by many markets...we are certainly a 'hot' destination...and we have to keep our standards up and get our yield right," he adds. "A lot of countries are looking at what we have done on the basis of the product we have, the way it's been marketed and the quality of the experience and we have to recognise that and keep working on it to make sure we don't lose that edge."

Auckland tops

AUCKLAND is the number one travel spot for New Zealanders, according to last-minute accommodation website Wotif.com. Next are Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown, Rotorua, Hamilton, Taupo and Dunedin. New to the list: Palmerston North and New Plymouth. Strongest growth is in the Bay of Islands, Lake Taupo, Rotorua and the Bay of Plenty.

QF to make history: blue skies ahead

QANTAS says it will make aviation history with its first Airbus A380 aircraft by operating the longest 500-passenger service in the world, flying between Melbourne and Los Angeles. CEO Geoff Dixon, says: "No aircraft in the history of commercial aviation has been able to carry as many passengers over such a distance on regular scheduled services. To put it simply, the A380 will enable Qantas to carry more people, further, than ever before." Qantas has ordered 12 501-seat A380 aircraft with options for 10 more, with the first to be delivered in October next year.

* IATA predicts the global airline industry could be profitable in 2005 if oil prices fall by US\$15, to an average of US\$35 a barrel. It is optimistic that the cooling of China's economy and the "fading impact" of US tax cuts could lower global oil prices.

Rising global passenger demand - of around five to six percent - will help airlines return "small profits" in 2005 after a US\$5,000 million combined loss predicted for this year and a cumulative net loss of US\$34,000 million in the last three years.

* The rebound in traffic volumes and profitability following SARS and the Iraq conflict should continue, albeit at a more subdued rate, in the next 12 months, believes the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation. "2004 for Asia Pacific airlines was an oasis in a desert of global bad news," says MD Peter Harbison.

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Pages Past...

TEN years ago in IT...

WELL-targeted promotional campaigns are what makes New Zealand the most successful destination in Asia-Pacific.

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO)'s latest survey shows 13 percent growth for us, compared to 12 percent for Australia and 7.6 percent for the whole region.

NZTB (now TNZ) public affairs manager Chris Ryan says the survey confirms that campaigns in major markets are very effective, targeting high-spending visitors and encouraging them to stay longer. Our annual income from tourism should reach \$4,000 million in the next six months.

FOREIGN investment has begun to flood in, mainly from Asia. Much of this is going on the current \$2,000 million accommodation and infrastructural development. Our perceived medium-term investment needs are therefore being reduced from \$6,000 million to \$3,500 million.

NZTB should increase the breadth of interest and experience on its board, reckons Associate Opposition Tourism spokesman Damien O'Connor. He says small operators and sectors such as conservation should be represented alongside the "big boys."

ABOUT 250 staff from 75 VIN offices last year gained accreditation certificates. Training co-ordinator David Hicks says the network is a world leader.

NZTIA (Now TIANZ) reckons DoC should: charge tolls and parking fees for access to certain road end sites; extend the range of visitor charges; increase visitor charges in general and/or at peak times; extend the range of facilities and services which are usually run by concessionaires. It does not believe DoC should be given more government money and neither does it support a "green" tax.

WILL Franz Josef Glacier begin to threaten SH6 in a decade? It's moved 1.6km down the valley in the past 10 years and is half way to the road. DoC says it's unlikely the river of ice will reach the road, although it is moving forward at a metre a day.

THE cabaret and variety show opened by Tourism Minister John Banks has the potential to earn Auckland \$77 million. The city has the potential to earn \$1,000 million a year by 2000, he says.

Dream to Extreme

HAAKA Le Sueur always dreamed of combining his passion and understanding of the ocean with his love of boats and adventure - and six years later his dream has become reality.

He is now co-owner of Extreme Adventures which provides hair-raising rides on a purpose-built speed boat off the Bay of Plenty.

The Whakaari (Maori for White Island) Express is a rigid inflatable with a 200-horsepower outboard motor. Mr Le Sueur says he feels a real buzz now his vision has turned into a reality.

"I grew up around the East Cape and we were brought up on the land and ocean. Legends have it that our tribe came to New Zealand on the backs of whales and the ocean is a part of my spirit. I can now share this with visitors who come on the boat in a fun, adrenalin-packed environment. No two days on the ocean are the same and you are always guaranteed to see something amazing - last week it was a pod of orca!" There are also trips as far as White Island. Contact: 0800-4-3987363 or www.whiteislandextreme.co.nz.

Come as you are...

COME...as your first car, your first date, your first job...come as whatever you want. But come! That's the message Pacific Blue is giving invited guests to its first birthday celebrations on January 29 at Warner's Hotel, Christchurch.

Opening "new" area to tourism

THE Whanganui River Road and Raetihi to Pipiriki road are to be sealed. Transfund has earmarked \$220,000 for the last 34km to be upgraded. It'll open the area to more tourists. At present those in rental vehicles are discouraged from exploring metal roads. The project will take up to five years to complete.

Seatrain trip

THE Railway Enthusiasts' Society plans a "Seatrain" tour from Auckland to Mount Maunganui on March 12, using a steam train to the Bay and catamaran for the return. Price ex-Auckland is \$125. The society has been running such trips for 47 years. Details: 09-6369361, secretary@railfan.org.nz or www.railfan.org.nz.

Fined "for not taking enough care"

A fine of \$8,000 and reparation of \$7,000 was imposed on Punga Cove MD Ralph Faulkner in Blenheim District Court.

Mr Faulkner was accused of failing to take all practical steps to ensure the safety of employees at work and failing to notify the Maritime Safety Authority or Labour Department of an accident on January 4 last year. Lee Conway suffered serious foot injuries in the accident at the Marlborough Sounds resort when a runaway dinghy with an outboard motor ran over his foot.

BIZtips

**By Christmas Gouwland Ltd
business advisor Leicester
Gouwland**

THE Inland Revenue Department recently issued an interpretation statement containing guidelines for determining whether travel between home and work is tax deductible and when it will be treated as work-related use for FBT purposes.

It outlines the circumstances in which travel between home and work will be treated as work-related rather than private use or enjoyment. This will have an impact for a huge number of tourism operators who run multiple businesses or use their home as a workplace.

Private

Generally, travel between work and home is treated as private travel and the expenditure or costs of this are not a deductible expense, as the travel is of a private or domestic nature.

But travel between work and home can be a deductible expense if: you can establish that the nature of the work is such that it needs to be performed partly at home; the travel is in the course of performing the work.

The travel can be classed as business or work-related under the following circumstances: if the taxpayer carries out an "itinerant occupation", i.e. does not work from a fixed workplace, such as a

Business owners stung by IRD

mini-bus tour guide who works "on the road" and not at a fixed location; if the taxpayer needs to be accessible at home for employment duties and must travel to respond to "emergency call-outs". It is not sufficient to simply be called out in response to a telephone call for this to apply. For example, a pilot who is on call does not begin work until he/she arrives at the airport. Therefore the travel when called out is classed as private use.

But if the pilot carries out some duties at home before going out to the call, the travel is then classed as work-related.

It can also be considered work related where the travel is between two workplaces, one of which is the taxpayer's home.

Transport

Similarly, where a vehicle is necessary for the transport of goods or equipment necessary to perform the job's duties at home and elsewhere, (for example a caterer who prepares food at home, but delivers the service at different venues).

Where an employer makes a motor vehicle available to an employee for private use or enjoyment - including travel to and from home - this is classed as a benefit, and the employer is usually liable to pay Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT). The FBT payable is based on the number of days that vehicle is available for private or enjoyment use.

Generally, for FBT purposes, travel between home and work will be private unless there is a need for

part of the work to be performed at home, and the travel is "on work", i.e. the travel must be in the course of performing the work, not just to commence work. It is not enough just to perform work at home. For the costs of travel to be deductible the journey between home and work must be undertaken to complete some aspect of employment already underway when the journey commences.

It is also important to note that even if travel between work and home is work-related and even if there is no actual private use of the motor vehicle, the employer must prove that the vehicle is not available for private use. In order to prove this the employer must establish that: the employee is prohibited from using the vehicle for private purposes; the prohibition is genuine; and the employer takes steps to ensure that the prohibition is observed.

Records

For travel to be business use it must be undertaken solely for that purpose. It is important to keep good records of what is work-related travel and what is private travel.

Unfortunately, these rules are not realistic, or reflect the practicalities of being in business, and will have the effect of denying business owners legitimate tax deductions, or mean paying more FBT than they should. Business owners should consider, where possible, the use of a "work-related vehicle" such as a utility vehicle instead of a sedan in order to obtain a more equitable result.

Big demand for Kiwi Link USA

THERE has been unprecedented demand by operators to take part in Kiwi Link USA, to be held from May 11-15 in LA. TNZ says it has received 50 percent more applications than there is space for!

TNZ CEO George Hickton says: "Kiwi Link USA is Tourism New Zealand's major North American training initiative. This is the fifth time we have run the event, and it is proving to be a very successful way of building knowledge in this valuable market."

This is the first year that operators are able to apply for the event online, with a booking system on www.tourismnewzealand.com. Applications close on February 4.

Draft Southland strategy to be unveiled
TOURISM Resource Consultants' Ross Corbett is to present the draft Southland Tourism Strategy at the Invercargill Working Men's Club on February 9.
Details: Kate Watkinson on 03-2111415.

Impressed with options

IT had been nearly 20 years since I last took in Rotorua's attractions. In the 1980s I was PRO for the Tourist and Publicity Department (now TNZ) and my job included escorting journalist colleagues from as far away as Fleet Street, New York and South East Asia. When we visited Rotorua entertainment was limited to Maureen and John Waaka's hangi and concert at the then THC Hotel, or a more laissez-faire show in a small hall down a side street. There was a soak at the Polynesian Spa - and that was it. Everyone was in bed by 10pm!

Today? There are more than a dozen educational and entertaining shows on offer each night with the more professional, such as those arranged by Tamaki Tours, including tasty meals with wine, a rousing sing-song and the opportunity to learn about Maoritanga.

1980s

In the 1980s there was the Agrodome with its sheep show, a 4WD drive or helicopter trip to the summit of Mount Tarawera, a visit to the Buried Village and to Rainbow and Fairy Springs as it was then known, and a walk through Whaka - and that was probably it. Today? You can spend several long weekends in Rotorua and not experience everything. Just ask Walter! There's a raft of options at what is now The Agrodome Park. There's the Skyline Skyrides gondola up Mount Ngongotaha. There are even visits to Mokoia Island using either jetboats or helicopters. There's fishing on the lake...Zorbing, 4WD driving, the imaginative and under-rated Realm of Tane to experience, tandem skydiving, rafting the Kaituna falls, horse rides and soaking away the aches and pains at Hell's Gate Wai Ora Spa.

First

The people of Rotorua were probably the first in New Zealand to appreciate the value of tourism. Now that settlement has become a city and still the appreciation is there.

Let's hope the council keeps its focus. Its street of restaurants and cafes is an excellent concept. If only it can persuade retailers to stay open beyond 5pm. For clearly more can be earned from international and domestic visitors.

The wide range of events now held in and around Rotorua is an excellent way of attracting more visitors, getting them to stay longer and spend more.

Anyone in the industry who hasn't stayed in Rotorua for a number of years - I urge you to go now. It's an eye-opener! - *Nigel Coventry*.

PS: It was in Rotorua that we were introduced to the Lone Star chain of family restaurants. There we ordered seven meals all of which came to table within 15 minutes. They were fresh and imaginative - and reasonably priced. Service was fast and friendly. Contact: 07-3494040 or oliviacruzshank@lonestar.co.nz.

Future's bright, says Maxwell

ROTORUA has a bright future in tourism because Rotorua District Council and local operators work together - and because people in general are in favour of the visitor industry, believes deputy mayor and cultural director Trevor Maxwell.

Mr Maxwell says he's been on the council 27 years and at each election he campaigns on tourism's importance - and each time he is re-elected.

"Others who do the same tend to be re-elected, too. So there is obviously tremendous support for tourism, although we also have forestry and farming. One in five of our people are employed in tourism, though."

He points out that people are concerned about crime against tourists, which isn't as bad as indicated in the media. "It's just a few people spoiling it for the rest of us..." A year ago a small team of petty criminals went on a spree in Fenton Street, stealing from cars and motel rooms. And porters in one hotel were part of a gang which robbed rooms of valuables. Visitors have even been attacked.

"But police have told us they are working hard to get stats down on burglaries, petty crime and family violence which they feel are linked...but what they need is an arrest that will stick."

Culture

Is there too much emphasis on Maori culture in Rotorua? "It's important to maintain our status as the heart of Maoridom. There are other places springing up offering cultural activities such as the far north, Queenstown and Christchurch. That's good as not everyone will come to Rotorua. But for those who do, they still want to experience what we have to offer," Mr Maxwell says.

Representatives of the industry have travelled to Queenstown to meet their counterparts and vice versa. "That made the doubters on both sides realise that there's a time to co-operate and a time to compete. When our people travel overseas they firstly push New Zealand, then Rotorua and finally their product."

So are there plans to develop itineraries to link the two centres with, perhaps, Sydney or Brisbane? "I believe that's part of ongoing discussions..."

Eyeing Australia, Auckland and C and I

AUSTRALIA, Auckland and conventions and incentives (C and I) are markets Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing will focus on this year, according to CEO Don Gunn. He says they will aim for business and leisure travellers in Australia - and TNZ's interactive traveller in general.

Other markets such as the UK and US are also strong but more work needs to be done in Japan. Auckland will also be in focus.

Mr Gunn is encouraged that US and UK travellers are now using the Rotorua-Christchurch-Queenstown feeder jet service.

On C and I, he says Rotorua will attend IMEX in Frankfurt from April 19-21, together with Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ). "We attended in 2004 and there's a definite need for a New Zealand presence there, as many other international destinations are represented." It will be the first time CINZ has been at IMEX.

Work on a \$21 million events centre starts this year and Mr Gunn says the RTO will need to be much more proactive in attracting more conferences and meetings to the city - as well as more major events like the World Mountainbike Championships in 2006.

Magical Mokoia now accessible

MOKOIA Island, - 10 minutes by boat from the lakefront - is an uncut diamond in the middle of Lake Rotorua, says Jonz Corporation Director John Marsh. "It is a magical place. But when I first saw it the island looked unpolished and unloved." So he took a lease on it and spent the equivalent of \$1.3 million cleaning up what was reportedly an earliest settlement area for Rotorua where at times up to 3,000 Maori and Pakeha lived side by side.

"Now we welcome people from all over the world. Many arriving from heavily populated places love Mokoia for its wonderful walks, abundance of wildlife including rare and endangered birds, its tranquillity - and the romantic stories associated with it."

Hot pools

As well as enhancing natural hot pools along the eastern shore, a total Maori immersion centre is under construction, and he plans "a cultural encounter" - which will include powhiri for visitors - and continuing encouragement of taiaha training for up to 200 exponents at a time. "The ground really shakes when they are in residence!"

Mokoia is popular with school groups and the island will become increasingly used as a venue for events such as *Some Enchanted Island - Opera on Mokoia - Music of the South Pacific* scheduled for January 30. Other significant events are "New Zealand Day" celebrations, weddings, corporate activities and family re-unions

Mr Marsh is a direct descendant of Hinemoa and Tutanekai. The story of Hinemoa swimming three kilometres from the mainland to be with her lover Tutanekai is told in song and dance throughout the country.

The ferocious chief Hongi Hika, famous for raising the tradition of revenge (utu) on fellow tribes throughout the country, once attacked the island - and holes left by musket balls can still be seen on rocks. Mr Marsh says many of his ancestral family were annihilated.

Mokoia Island GM Timoti Daymond also highlights a brighter side to the island: the scientific restoration programme for flora and fauna at risk; use of plants as rongoa or medicine, the natural beauty of the island which he has helped restore, and the mandatory quarantine inspections to keep the island rodent-free. While visitor numbers are restricted the island is open seven days a week with a range of booking and price options through Mokoia Island Cruises - HeliPro - Tourism Rotorua - Kawarau Jet - Hamills Adventures - Mokoia Jet and Mokoia Island Visitor Centre. Details: 07-3468332, 027-2760852 or mokoia.island@xtra.co.nz

Gibbons has big plans for former Lakeland Queen...

FORMER Tourism Rotorua international marketing manager Mike Gibbons has joined local businessman James Summers to buy the Lakeland Queen paddlewheeler, and Scatcat. They have spent over \$1.2 million on the purchases and obtaining a long term landing rights licence to Mokoia Island from principal licensor, Jonz Corporation. The two vessels have been combined into one brand under the name 'Mokoia Island Cruises' and now offer New Zealand's first cruise, dine and island cultural experience with daily guided trips to the island.

Mr Gibbons tells *IT* they have officially launched evening cultural performances on the island to compliment the daily breakfast, lunch and evening cruises as well as the daily guided tours to the island. Further plans are to spend \$1 million on the vessel in June when the paddlewheeler will be taken out of the water, cut in half and a 10m extension added to it, thus taking the vessel to 32m in length and capable of carrying 260 passengers to cater for conference bookings. It will be repositioned as a five star experience with an a-la-carte restaurant downstairs and conference facilities on the top deck. Internally the boat will be given a complete upgrade. The cruise, dine and island cultural experience will be promoted at TRENZ this year. Details: 07-3486634, fax 3471766, www.mokoiaisland.tv or bookings@mokoiaisland.tv

Continued investment required - Lobb

POLYNESIAN Spa MD Martin Lobb says it's vital that Rotorua's city fathers continue to vigorously support the promotion of the district. "There would not be a city in the world that doesn't support its tourism. It's a huge employer."

He adds: "If it wasn't for tourism Rotorua would be nice lakes but that's all. The city fathers need to be continually reminded promotional money is not expenditure - it is investment!"

Mr Lobb has been consistently raising the quality of his product as he is now aiming for more wealthy clients,

although it still only costs \$12 a time to use the pools. “We have concentrated on quality for some time because that’s what the international visitor is now expecting.” Spa therapies at \$130 an hour are becoming increasingly popular.

While he notes that some Rotorua hotels are offering rates so low there’s little left over for reinvestment, the city now boasts some excellent motels and backpackers.

Quality

“Whether we are attractions or accommodation providers we must strive for quality - and that’s what many are doing.”

He says Polynesian Spa would not have won a top Conde Nast Traveler accolade had it not been for quality. “It is not just quality of product, you must also have quality service and people, and training - and that’s an issue nationwide.”

He adds: “I can spend millions and then the customer gets let down by someone’s poor performance...someone who doesn’t care...and that effects the entire perception of Polynesian Spa.”

Mr Lobb would like to see Rotorua increase its share of Japanese arrivals, with 70 percent of the market overflowing the city. “We have to open the door in order to grow the pie to a 40 percent share. I am a passionate believer in promotion, promotion and more promotion. Yet some factions of council don’t see it as necessary at all.”

Rainbow Springs has the only kiwi hatchery open to public

SINCE becoming wholly owned by Ngai Tahu two years ago, Rotorua’s Rainbow Springs has undergone a major revitalisation and now have the only kiwi hatchery in the country open to the public.

Rainbow Springs’ Gillian McDonald says the attraction is more than 72 years old. Its strengths, it was decided during a period of navel-gazing, were in conservation of New Zealand native species and now its focus is on bringing into the nature park as many native species as possible.

“We were already working with DoC on a national kiwi conservation programme and so we decided to invest in Kiwi Encounter which is a new attraction - a working hatchery and nursery where we raise kiwis for release into the wild,” she adds.

“We collaborate with the department who bring the eggs from the wild.

“We raise them to 1,200 grams in body size which is the optimum weight for the chicks to be able to protect themselves in the wild.”

Ms McDonald says that 50 young adults were released in year one, 55 last year and this year it is hoped 70 will successfully be put back in their natural habitat.

There are regular tours at Kiwi Encounter which are appealing to New Zealanders as well as overseas visitors.

Since the buy-out to Shotover Jet Rainbow Springs has been rebranded and repositioned, with little extras added like an audio tour which are in several languages.

New avaries and paths have been put in to provide a comfortable, educational experience.

Skyline braces for expansion

SKYLINE Skyrides \$10 million investment in a new gondola system means that when it is finished in July up to 2,000 visitors an hour will be carried to the restaurant, luge and other attractions on Mount Ngongotaha. This is three times faster than the current system!

Marketing development manager Janelle Vala says waits of up to 45 minutes at the base terminal will be a thing of the past.

There may have to be further expansion to cater for the extra numbers attracted to the site.

“With increased volume comes more demand. So, in the future, we would love to see more luge facilities and other attractions.”

At present the restaurant can seat 450, the café 250 and a venue in the redwood forest 250. There are also about 600 luge carts.

The company will not compromise peoples’ experiences by having too many to cater for. While upgrading the facility, she says the company knows its business and will not allow tour groups to feel they are priced out of the venue.

Half of all visitors are from overseas, although the restaurant is sometimes seen as catering mainly to Asians. This is because they are the main diners at lunchtime, whereas breakfasts and dinners are more popular with Australians, Europeans and New Zealanders.

Skyline Skyrides will continue to target these markets, plus conference and incentives, she adds.

Agrodome now totally absorbing

THE only place in New Zealand where you can “zorb” – roll downhill inside a transparent giant beachball-like sphere - is at the Agrodome, Rotorua.

Zorb marketing and operations manager Keith Kolver tells *IT* that since Zorbs were developed nine years ago 16 franchises have opened around the world.

The Rotorua site is the only one in New Zealand and continues to attract an increasing number of adventure seekers.

There are five Zorbs with water inside and three with harnesses. Punters can either roll down the 150m hill strapped in – or slipping around in warm water!

Mr Kolver says 70 percent of Zorbonauts are from overseas. Zorbing is popular because it is affordable soft adventure costing from \$29 pp for three in a Zorb.

The Agrodome is also the only place where visitors can

take a 43m cantilever bungy jump, a 40m “swoop” in a hang glider harness. Or the ultimate: “body flying” in what is described as the only freefall skydive simulator in the southern hemisphere.

Freefall Xtreme is powered by a DC3 aircraft propeller which lifts clients up to three metres in the air on a 180kph column of wind.

There’s also a jetboat which can career around a water course, rising from 0-100kph in four seconds and cornering at 4-5 Gs.

Why adventure products based on a farming experience? Agrodome MD Warren Harford saw a need for the Agrodome to diversify in 1998.

“A lot more new products were opening in the adventure field and we felt that we really had to make changes to grow our market. So we went for adventure products with a difference,” he tells us.

The Agrodome also began to develop its agriculture base by growing organic feijoas, olives and kiwifruit on what is still a 130 hectare working farm.

So, organic farm tours were added to the product range which further enhanced the experience at the Agrodome. The tours experienced a significant increase in popularity since they began and Mr Harford mainly puts this down to the tours being interactive and educational. Today, the Agrodome is much more than a sheep show – there are still three a day – as the site also contains a chocolate factory, a working woollen mill and shearing shed – and Helipro which provides helicopter links with other attractions such as Skyline Skyrides and the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. Along with the Farm Show, Organic Farm Tour, the new Shearing Shed, and the adventure activities, you can now spend an hour or a day now at the Agrodome. The Agrodome was started in 1971 by world famous sheep shearer Godfrey Bowen and beef and dairy farmer George Harford. The venture became a reality following a show produced by Mr Bowen at the World Expo 1970 in Osaka, Japan. It started with staff of five – and now employs 54.

Million being spent on hotels

THE first stage of the \$2.8 million refurbishment of Kingsgate Hotel Rotorua has been completed with the installation of 50 bathrooms in the original courtyard and garden wings. These complement the rooms, all of which have balconies or patios.

Stage two has just started with work beginning on a remodelled reception foyer and public areas.

Completion is expected in late February.

The third stage will begin in April with an extra 60 rooms to be added over winter. The spa, sauna and swimming pool complex will be remodelled, too. The conference centre also receives air conditioning.

At the 227-room Millennium Hotel Rotorua the first phase of \$5 million redevelopment is due to be completed. The Millennium Club Lounge on the fifth

floor is to be refitted to provide a combination of open areas and lounge space.

Club guests will enjoy business facilities with multiple high speed internet access ports. Quality finishes include natural timbers, polished stone and rich upholstery throughout. As part of the refurbishment, all 29 guest rooms on the fifth floor have been fitted with a classic sophisticated look.

QF pleased with jet service

QANTAS New Zealand regional GM Allan Williams says the carrier’s launch of jet services into Rotorua last April exceeded expectations.

“We have been very happy with the results from the tourism industry and from locals who have taken the opportunity to use the service to get down to Christchurch.” So the service will continue this winter with daily flights except Tuesdays.

Choppers link main attractions

HELIPRO links The Agrodome, Skyline Skyrides and the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. The company has a five seat Squirrel, a three seat Hughes 500 and a Robinson R44 which can carry three. Options include Mount Tarawera, Mokoia Island and White Island. Rates for Tarawera are \$195 and \$299 for a 40 minute flight, the latter with an exclusive landing. Another exclusive trip takes in Tarawera and Mokoia Island which lasts 80 minutes and costs \$355. A three hour trip to White Island includes a landing and is \$665. White Island and a Tarawera landing is \$795 and lasts 3.5 hours. A 10 minute city flight is \$85 pp. Details: 07-3572512, 0274-774377, www.helipro.co.nz or tim@helipro.co.nz.

Popular MACI due to rebrand

THE Maori Arts And Crafts Institute (MACI) opened on Christmas Day for the first time in years and was thrilled with a steady stream of visitors.

CEO Andrew Te Whaiti says while the predicted bad weather was expected to decrease visitor numbers, the reverse happened, with summer visitor statistics already well ahead of predictions.

“The geothermal valley often presents a better experience on days when the weather isn’t so attractive. The steam levels increase and our geyser Pohutu is even more impressive.”

He adds: “Strong visitor numbers this summer stand us on good ground to launch our two year development plan, offering new products and services to interest both international and domestic visitors.”

MACI is launching a major rebranding project next month, including a new name, new look and major redevelopment plans.

What the wealthy are really looking for...

PEACE, pleasure and privacy are what the very wealthy look for most in luxury hotels, according to a new survey of travel agents across Europe. More than 300 industry professionals working in 10 countries were contacted by Small Luxury Hotels of the World.

The Luxury Hotels Monitor research is to be conducted quarterly in order to track changing perceptions within the industry.

Gastronomy and signature spas are understandably important to discerning clientele, while less emphasis is placed on the quality of the wine cellar or the opulence of the surroundings.

The least desirable essential element is the chance to mingle with guests who are equally well off.

Agents characterise and define the truly luxury hotel as having bedrooms and bathrooms "which are pure theatre", with staff "who can read your mind", and "not being asked for your credit card on arrival."

Prominent market trends currently amongst luxury travellers include adding a leisure break on their business trips and a desire to save on class of travel in order to boost their spending on accommodation.

For the rich there are increasingly no peak or trough periods for holidays, because they are now willing to travel at any time of the year.

Having "my own travel agent" is a fashionable new status symbol and talking point amongst high net worth individuals.

They expect agents to arrange for their special preferences, be a source of insider knowledge, ensure that they are treated like royalty, and to guarantee confidentiality.

Awards for those concerned over health and safety

ENTRIES for the inaugural New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards are now open and two of the nine categories focus on the commitment of individuals. Entries close on March 31. Details: www.safeguard.co.nz or Annette Vao on 09-3603712 or annette.vao@thomson.com.

Briefing on Invercargill airport plans

SOUTHLAND tourism operators will be given the low-down on Invercargill Airport's plans to become trans Tasman-ready at meetings on Stewart Island on January 31 and Invercargill on February 1. Details: Angela Halliday on 03-2111414 or angela.h@venturesouthland.co.nz.

* Venture Southland is also working to maximise tourism benefits should international flights start. Strategic marketing manager John Grant is working on joint venture opportunities with Australian wholesalers and Southland tourism operators - including the development of South Island itineraries. This poses an opportunity for Southland tourism operators to become involved in a major marketing initiative, *IT* is told.

Seven concessions for Eco Tours

ECOTOURS Marlborough Sounds Limited, a subsidiary of Seahorse World Aquarium, has been granted seven DoC concessions for guided tours. They are for: Blumine Island, Long Island and its marine reserve, Motuara Island, Ship's Cove, Tipi Bay and Karaka Point.

Outback Bungy launched

AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand's newest product, Skippers Outback Bungy, takes guests on a half day journey into the Skipper's Canyon, Queenstown. Guests base themselves at the refurbished Skippers Lodge from where they can enjoy a variety of activities including bungy, riding a flying fox and mountain biking and exploration. While the option is based around Pipeline Bungy, it is also targeted at the non-bungy jumper.

Skippers Outback Bungy will operate throughout the summer and autumn. The \$279 price includes lunch and wine while the \$179 rate is for all activities except the Pipeline Bungy. Details: Sally Vidulich on 03-4412940 or sally@ajhackett.co.nz.

Ski and Leisure roadshow

THE Destination Queenstown Australian Ski and Leisure Roadshow is to be launched in Sydney on March 14 and will move to Melbourne and Brisbane over the following two days. Details from Australia GSA Jane Reese on janer@queenstownnz.co.nz.

Kaikoura walkway open

THE Kaikoura Wilderness Walkway and purpose-built Shearwater Lodge have opened.

The two day walk has been developed after research showed a demand for a quality guided walk of short duration.

The lodge has six en-suites which have decks that overlook native forest and birdlife. The experience costs \$695. Sales and marketing manager is Robyn Cameron. Contact: 0800-945337 or www.kaikourawilderness.co.nz.

A.T.S. Pacific New Zealand Welcomes Kerryn Ralston.

Kerryn Ralston has been appointed Product Manager at A.T.S. Pacific. Kerryn most recently worked in outbound and product roles at Gullivers and Go International and will now be in a product buying role at A.T.S. Pacific New Zealand.

ADVERT

The cost of NOT training staff is high!

TRAINING is expensive and once you train staff they leave for the competition. Right? Wrong, says the Maori Economic Development Agency in Otaki, which facilitates the Kapiti-Horowhenua Maori Tourism Group "If you have this attitude then it's costing you more than you think!"

It says that training can be a positive, measurable benefit irrespective of size of business, or the industry you are in.

"Research has shown that staff that receive training are up to 230 percent more productive than untrained colleagues in the same role."

The agency says quality training reduces staff turnover, which can represent a major expense.

"The loss of one competent person can cost the equivalent of at least a year's pay and benefits."

It also notes that workers are beginning to demand excellent training and career development as a benefit of employment.

"Employees are citing career development opportunities, or the absence of, as a primary consideration when deciding to choose an employer, to stay or leave.

"Many New Zealand businesses are increasing the level of training for staff to improve employee and client satisfaction and are finding that staff turnover is decreasing as a result," the agency adds.

Aussies have bonza country

AUSTRALIA has been voted the best country in the world by readers of *Luxury Travel and Style* magazine and *American Express Gold Card* members. The awards cover categories including best hotel, resort, spa, island, airline, cruise ship, country, city and ski resort.

International visitors flock to capital

INTERNATIONAL visitors to Wellington increased 10 percent last September year to reach more than 660,000, according to the latest IVS. Visitor nights were also up from just over three million to more than four million. The average length of stay rose from 5.6 to 6.4 nights.

* Other research results show Wellington's VFR market increased from two percent to 41 percent in November.

Tenders called for airport study

ENVIRONMENT Bay of Plenty is calling tenders for stage two of its regional airport study. The three-part study will determine the benefits of a single regional airport for the region.

Hingerty heads ATEC

NEW MD of the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) is Matthew Hingerty. Mr Hingerty was previously the Chief of Staff to former Minister for Small Business and Tourism Joe Hockey.

Minimum wage rises

THE minimum wage is to increase from \$9 to \$9.50 an hour from March 21. The minimum hourly rate for workers aged between 16 and 17 will move from \$7.20 to \$7.60 an hour as will the minimum training wage. Details: 0800-800863 or www.ers.dol.govt.nz.

Prepare awards entry now - TIANZ

ENTRIES for this year's New Zealand Tourism Awards close on April 8. TIANZ suggest that those intending to enter should start preparing their entry now. "Even if it's just a two or three hours in the next couple of weeks, write down all the things about your business that make it special."

Attack on rights?

THE National Party wants to prevent councils making people apply for resource consent to rent out holiday homes as short-term accommodation (IT529), according to Nelson MP Nick Smith. "Requiring a family to get permission from the council to rent out their bach is an attack on basic property rights."

Maori publisher eyes tourism industry

HAMILTON-based Maori language publisher Kaitoro is to pitch its products at the visitor industry this year - after success in the education field. Director Cyrus Hingston says there's greater growth in tourism. "The tourism industry has untapped money-making potential."

HAPNZ moves

HAPNZ head office has moved behind Copperfield Seaside Motel, Paraparaumu Beach. All other details remain the same.

500 dolphins a time!

MONARCH Wildlife Cruises owner John Milburn says clients have been enjoying as many as 500 dusky dolphins at a time from his Dunedin-based tours which travel out to Taiaroa Head. They also see the northern royal albatross, fur seals and up to 20 species of ocean and sea birds.

ADVERT

Visiting Stewart Island?

There's plenty of accommodation at Beach House and Kereru House. Bookings: Brenda and Roger Hicks on phone/fax 03-2191348

Marineland celebrates its 40th anniversary

NAPIER'S Marineland celebrates its 40th anniversary on January 30 and staff are inviting visitors that day to inspect what is New Zealand's only marine zoo. The Marineland story began in the early 1960s when a fisherman caught a dolphin in a net. He rescued it by putting it in a pool to recover. The idea was to build a marine zoo where people could watch dolphins and observe their natural behaviour, and to blend information, entertainment and education.

In 1964 Napier City Council, with Mayor Peter Tait, approved the Marineland project. Auckland architects, McLachlan and Stempson, were commissioned and work on the first of the three-stage facility started that September. It opened four months later. The cost of project estimated at £200,000.

Since then Marineland has developed a worldwide reputation for its common dolphins. Other marine zoos have bottle nosed ones.

There will be a gold coin donation on January 30 with funds going to WWF's Save the Hectors Dolphins project.

Award winning lodges for sale

A complex of luxury tourist lodges set in award-winning gardens complete with a man-made lake and waterfall are for sale in the Hawke's Bay.

The three lodges, only 100 metres from the beach at Clive, have been open for less than six months and are already attracting good occupancy, says marketing agent Steve Shuker, of Bayleys Hawke's Bay.

Mr Shuker says the property has a four and a half star rating and the grounds have been designed to allow for large functions. Details: 06-8342288 or 0274-748537.

Third of restaurants closed in holidays

ALMOST a third of all restaurants closed during Christmas/ New Year due to higher costs associated with employing staff during the holidays, according to the Restaurant Association.

TIANZ suggests that companies should adjust their pricing all year round to allow for the new holiday legislation.

"The Act is causing immense confusion, compounded by the fact the statutory days fell on weekends."

Details: www.ers.dol.govt.nz.

ADVERT

DRIVER/GUIDE MANAGER - VACANCY

Tamaki Tours Ltd is excited to offer the position of **Driver/Guide Manager** to an energetic, confident team-leader who is experienced at working a team and managing by example.

This key position within the company will see the successful applicant lead the driver/guide department (10 -16 staff) that play such a crucial role in the Tamaki Maori Village experience. Responsible for the effective and efficient operation of the department, engaging both staff and visitors, we are confident the varied aspects in this role will challenge and encourage the best tourism professionals to apply.

No reira, is this you?

- * Are you interested in being part of New Zealand's Most Award Winning Maori cultural experience?
- * Are you able to manage and motivate a team to deliver excellent customer service?
- * Do you have a confident outward personality, a good sense of humour and genuine 'manaakitanga' when dealing with visitors and their requests?
- * Are you able to plan logistically, to arrange varying schedules and to communicate clearly with a team in order to achieve consistent results?
- * Do you have an eye for detail and an inherent ability to lead by example?
- * Are you someone that has a genuine passion for tourism, and confidence in sharing Maori culture with visitors from around the world?

Then you have what it takes to join us and be part of our Tamaki Tours team.

Any previous guiding and or coach driving experience (ie: large passenger vehicle class etc) would also be beneficial - but is not necessarily a pre-requisite.

If this sounds like you then don't hesitate to put an application in to us with a current copy of your CV to:

Kim Watson - Office Manager
PO Box 1492, ROTORUA or email directly to kim@maoriculture.co.nz

Closing date for applications Friday 11th February 2005

Papamoa challenges fellow HAPNZ members over raising money

PAPAMOA Top 10 Holiday Resort is challenging other HAPNZ members to follow it in raising funds for the tsunami appeal.

Explains owner Bruce Crosby: "We divided the park up into areas and allocated one camper to each area. The

idea was for that person to collect from each site \$5-\$10 at least, over a couple of days. We provided money bags, and a covering letter signed by myself and the letter stated that we were aiming for over \$2,000 dollars, and if we did that, we would donate \$1,000." More than \$2,500 was raised from campers, meaning \$3608.80 will now go to the appeal.

ADVERT

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER - MARKETING DESTINATION ROTORUA TOURISM MARKETING

We are seeking a highly motivated and skilled individual with a genuine passion for New Zealand tourism. You will need to have energy and enthusiasm, be positive and creative, as well as committed to delivering great outcomes for the district. We need someone who can facilitate opportunities into outcomes and draw the best results from those around them. You will need to be a confident communicator, team focused, flexible, assertive and able to represent Rotorua at the highest levels.

The successful applicant will have:

- * A comprehensive understanding of the New Zealand Tourism Industry and a good grasp of the function and role of a Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO).
- * Business management qualifications and experience that supports the role and a sound understanding of best management practices.
- * The ability to motivate and lead staff to achieve goals and shared objectives.
- * Exceptional communication skills with a proven ability to negotiate and facilitate direction amongst stakeholders across the wider political, economic, cultural and social environment.
- * Sound financial management and interpretation skills and a strategic management capability
- * An understanding of regional development and the flair to build on effective strategies that will enhance the economic prosperity of the Rotorua region.

This is a position for an experienced person with a proven high level of performance who enjoys multiple challenges in a role that has variety and diversity and who values the opportunity to live in a region with a unique lifestyle.

We offer an enjoyable, fast paced environment and this position is ideal for an enthusiastic, well presented individual who wishes to exceed in the hospitality industry. A competitive remuneration package commensurate with the responsibilities of the position will be negotiated with the successful candidate

All applicants are required to submit a completed application form and a current CV. Position details, including job description and application form are available online on www.rdc.govt or from Rotorua District council's HR team.

Applications close 4.00pm Friday 28th January 2005 and may be posted, delivered or emailed to:

Human Resources Manager, Rotorua District Council,
Council Headquarters, 1061 Haupapa Street, Private Bag 3029, Rotorua.
Email: hr@rdc.govt; Phone: 07 348 4199

A spirited team, a dynamic future ... be part of it!

Aussie boast - but we did it first!

TOURISM Australia boasts it has a Student Volunteer Programme whereby students studying an undergraduate degree in tourism, advertising or marketing are given the opportunity to undertake practical work experience in the NTO's Sydney office. They can stay between three and 12 months on a voluntary basis, working up to two days a week during semester. And the system is so popular there are no vacancies until 2006.

But TNZ says it already does it - and it pays! TNZ has run a graduate internship programme since 2002. One graduate is taken on each year to complete a 12 month paid internship, working in three month blocks

through four departments. Says a spokeswoman: "All three graduates taken on so far have gone on to find full time work within the organisation following the completion of their contract.

* An announcement on the 2005 Graduate Intern will be made shortly.

UK student looks for work here

POPPI Clarkson, a second year student at Northumbria University, is looking for work in New Zealand for a year.

She is studying a BA Honours degree in Travel and Tourism Management. Contact: PoppClarkson365@hotmail.com.

ADVERT

Communications Co-ordinator **DESTINATION ROTORUA TOURISM MARKETING**

If you are a talented and passionate communications professional with a genuine passion for the Tourism/Hospitality industry, we invite you to apply for the position of Communications Co-ordinator - Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing.

The successful candidate will work closely with the Communications Manager in assisting with the development and implementation of strategies and actions for the positive promotion of Destination Rotorua through distinctive public relations, publicity and communications.

We require a person with exceptional communication and administration skills and a solid emphasis on developing strong industry and client relationships. You will be self motivated, have the ability to plan and co-ordinate precisely and possess excellent interpersonal skills with a readiness to work within a high profile, enthusiastic team.

You must be a person who is willing to get the job done, who does not settle for second best and believes in delivering customer service at the highest level. The work you produce will be executed quickly and consistently to the highest standard. Demonstrated excellence in writing ability is a must, as are highly developed time management skills and meticulous attention to detail.

In addition to your first class communication and organisational skills, you will need to be passionate about service delivery, and pride yourself on working exceedingly hard to get the best from your creative side. Proven skills and proficiency with technology and a working knowledge of the Microsoft products along with previous writing/editorial experience are essential in this role. Independence, strong work ethic and a desire to make a valuable contribution is essential.

Additional qualities we are looking for include enthusiasm, the ability to remain calm under pressure, professional integrity and a good sense of humour!

All applicants are required to submit a completed application form and a current CV. Position details, including job description and application form are available online on www.rdc.govt or from Rotorua District council's HR team.

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A spirited team, a dynamic future ... be part of it!

Skotel in \$300,000 upgrade

SKOTEL Alpine Resort, Whakapapa, has achieved a three star Qualmark rating for the hotel and a three star plus for the hostel backpackers' wing.

But to achieve this they had to: repaint all roofing, all exteriors, put up new spouting, add balconies and outdoor furniture to all rooms in the internal courtyard with all hotel rooms now having own external viewing platform and seating.

There also had to be new carpets, table tops, lounge and bar seats, the replacement of a third of all beds while outside areas had to be improved.

New staff training facilities and practices were put in place, too.

But it was all worth it, says GM Wayne Sheard. The upgrade cost \$300,000 over 18 months.

Glowing review for Festival of Light

VISITORS are giving the TSB Bank Festival of Lights glowing reviews, according to the New Plymouth District Council.

Hundreds have strolled through Pukekura Park to see the spectacular light show and entertainment in the last month.

Three overseas climbers killed

THREE overseas climbers have been killed in Mount Aspiring National Park within 22 days.

Marc Freedman, a 22-year-old Australian, was killed when he fell 50m into a crevasse on the Bonar Glacier while he was descending The Ramp.

Last week a 28-year-old German climber fell 100m to his death in the same area. And two days later, an Irish man was killed and a woman he was tramping with injured after they slid about 200m from the Cascade Saddle.

Arthur's Point Tavern may go

QUEENSTOWN lawyer and Lakes District councillor Wayne McKeague, in partnership with fellow councillor Rick Pettit, have a conditional contract to buy the Arthur's Point Tavern.

Their plan is to knock down the pub and build a new family-community-style pub as well as 14 visitor accommodation units.

"It would also be good to have a proper lookout built over the Shotover River - I mean people are just perching at the top of a cliff at the moment," Mr McKeague says. It will also allow for the narrow, treacherous road to be realigned.

ADVERT



DESTINATION NORTHLAND Marketing Co-ordinator

An exciting opportunity has arisen to work for one of New Zealand's key regional tourism organisations.

This is a full time role, with responsibilities which include working with domestic and international media, and assisting in the development of a rapidly growing conference market.

The following experience would be of benefit:

- * previous experience in working for a Regional Tourism Organisation
- * public relations
- * conference marketing
- * other tourism industry experience

A full job description is available from:

Destination Northland
PO Box 365
Paihia
Phone: (09) 402 7683
Email: northland@xtra.co.nz

Applications close on Monday 31st January, and should be received in writing, accompanied by a CV.

PATA's new logo all part of image change



PATA has unveiled a new corporate identity as part of an on-going brand repositioning. This is only

the third change to the PATA logo in the association's 54-year history.

"We see this identity change as an important step in the evolution of PATA as a modern and dynamic membership organisation," says chairman (2004-2005) Ram Kohli.

For the first time, the logo incorporates PATA's full name to ensure there are no problems with comprehension.

The globe has been dropped and a "stylised curve" added in a bolder shade of the familiar blue.

"The new curve introduces a sense of movement and travel," said Mr Kohli.

"And for those familiar with the old logo, it could also suggest the top of the globe."

PATA President and CEO Peter de Jong says it is part of a bigger re-branding process which will result in all of PATA's internal and external communications having a consistent look and feel.

"We want to ensure that everything we produce for members and prospective members, and everything we say and do, reflects the modern values of PATA as a knowledge-based, advocacy-embracing organisation."

Mr de Jong says PATA had come a long way in the past decade, recognising the huge changes in the travel industry brought about by deregulation, technology and more affluent regional populations.

"We have tried to stay one step ahead of this change, so that we can position, promote and protect the interests of travel and tourism across Asia Pacific."

Five star apartments proposed

A \$5 million, five-star, 20-apartment development is proposed for George Street, Dunedin, to cater for short-to-medium stay travellers. It is hoped the accommodation will be available from the end of next year.

Tourism not to blame for Stewart Island house prices, says operator

TOURISM - whether eco or otherwise - has always been an important part of the Stewart Island economy.

But it is not the cause of steep property prices on the island, says Ruggedy Range Wilderness Co owner/operator Furhana Ahmad. She was commenting on fourth generation islander Brett Hamilton's remarks in *IT529*.

"Property prices have often been higher on Stewart Island than in Southland, with a significant number of properties owned by non-resident islanders as investment or holiday homes."

She adds: "Property prices on Stewart Island have increased significantly since the proposal and announcement of Rakiura National Park."

"Sub-dividing sections or general building of new properties to increase the supply of available land is an extremely costly exercise for landowners on Stewart Island compared to the mainland."

High property prices follow a trend in other desirable locations. "It is inevitable that some people will want to realise high values from their investment, given the buying power of coastal locations."

She adds: "The difficulty this causes for tourism operators like myself who need to house ourselves and our staff goes without saying..."

Copthorne to open at Omapere

THE Copthorne Hotel and Resort Hokianga at Omapere will open on April 1

Owners Harry Irwin, Erica Lloyd and Shane and Pip Lloyd offer five bedroom units, 32 studio units - including 12 new rooms - conference facilities for up to 80 delegates, as well as wedding packages, a licensed restaurant, bar, lounge and swimming pool.

* Accor has taken over the 85-room Kingsgate Hotel Wellington. It will be rebranded to the Mercure Hotel Willis Street Wellington, with a comprehensive refurbishment of the hotel's exterior, all guest rooms and public areas underway and due for completion in April.

The hotel has been bought by property investors, the CP Group, who also own the Mercure Hotel Windsor Auckland, All Seasons Ellerslie Motor Inn, Mercure Hotel Wellington, Mercure Hotel Dunedin and Mercure Resort Queenstown.

Voyce with Ruapehu

RACHEL Voyce, who has worked for TNZ in Australia and New Zealand, is working with Ruapehu District Council economic development manager Lisa Knight on a case-by-case basis. She has also worked with Tourism Coromandel on event development and management.

Free access to lakes retained under agreement

FREE and unrestricted access to all lakes in Rotorua for recreational users is guaranteed under the return of Rotorua lakes to Te Arawa agreement.

Te Arawa chief negotiator David Tapsell says: "The rights and obligations of Te Arawa in respect of the lakes and everyone else is clearly set out in the deed. People I know have been concerned about free and unrestricted access to the lakes."

"The deed guarantees all of that. None of it is in doubt at all. This isn't just a promise from Arawa. This is going to be law - part of the deal, effectively."

Ralph Lauren checks into new lodge - on first day!

A top international VIP checking in as your first guest is the dream of most luxury lodge owners.

Queenstown's Azur Lodge opened on December 19 with leading international designer Ralph Lauren from New York as the first guest.

Concierge Tim Ogle says Mr Lauren was there for a few days of rest and recreation. "We were just thrilled. What a nice man, unassuming, very casual - completely at ease." The property has nine villas.

Managing director Nejat Sarp - originally from Turkey - was GM of The Oriental Singapore. Lodge GM

Anthony Ross has held senior posts with the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Asia and Europe.

Museum sets record

THE Rotorua Museum had a record breaking month and its biggest day ever on December 30 when visitor numbers soared to four times higher than average.

Queenstown not hit by domestic downturn

THE decline in domestic tourism hasn't affected Queenstown, says DQ CEO David Kennedy. "We have a very strong international market here so it hasn't affected us too much."

The big drive in Queenstown for the third year running is to get people into the resort during autumn with the Do More In May campaign.

"In the US they call the autumn visitors 'leaf peepers'. It's a very popular season for visitors along the East coast."

And according residents in the resort autumn is the best time of the year, Mr Kennedy adds.

"It's when the weather is really settled, with fine clear

days, It's a shoulder season so we'll be working hard again to attract visitors here for with our operators setting up added value deals and packages."

Three lodges in top 500

QUEENSTOWN'S Millbrook Resort, Taupo's Huka Lodge and Wharekauhau Country Estate, Wairarapa, are the only New Zealand properties listed as being among the 500 top properties in the world.

The T&L 500 is an annual list which has just been published in the January issue of the New York-based Travel & Leisure magazine.

Wellington readies for extreme festive weekend...

WELLINGTON is gearing up for an Anniversary Weekend packed with extreme action, cricket, racing and music.

"We've got an incredibly strong events line up this weekend which will appeal to a whole range of people, both Wellingtonians and visitors to the city," says Positively Wellington Tourism CEO Tim Cossar. Vodafone X-Air will see Wellington's waterfront transformed into a giant playground for extreme sports. The event is free and runs from Friday through to Sunday.

The Global Challenge Race Village, on Queens Wharf, will still be buzzing.

On Monday, the Blackcaps will play FICA World XI at the Westpac Stadium. The National Bank Series One-Day Cricket event will be held in support of victims of the Boxing Day tsunami.

Other events include Wellington Cup Carnival in Trentham, the Garden Magic Concerts series at the Botanic Garden and the Meridian Energy Summer City Festival.

ADVERT

Tourism & Lifestyle Opportunities

GREAT BARRIER ISLAND - Auckland's best kept secret, splendid waterfront setting - studio units, cottages, lounge, garden bar and licensed restaurant. Gateway to Great Barrier tramping tracks and bush walks. Multiple revenue streams Tom Crawford 0272789199 Pat Regan 0274483348.

KAIKOURA - The Factory. Invest in this booming destination. Available pre-xmas for only \$980,000, with its waterfront location - it's an opportunity that shouldn't be missed. Call now for your DVD or Information Pack. Lloyd Budd 027 232 3439.

MANAGEMENT RIGHTS - Dreams do come true, 4.7 hectares, 1.75km's of lake edge. A tourism development on the edge of trout filled lake. Sharene Temple 027 224 6045.

PRIME POSITION - Real Estate with well know Souvenir/Curio shop, restaurant and shops attached. John Perrett 027 656 5464.

0800 BAYLEYS

www.bayleys.co.nz/tourism

