

Your January 2013 Tourism & Hospitality Newsflash!

INBOUND travel...International Visitor Arrivals.....Total visitor arrivals are down 2.6% compared to the same four week period last year (until 16th December 2012)

Increase in visitor arrivals/departures: China 21%, Japan 22%, Korea 8%, Germany 7%.

Decrease in visitor arrivals/departures: Singapore -2%, USA -15%, UK -10%, Malaysia -26%, Australia -5%, Canada -7%.

OUTBOUND travel.....NZ Resident Departures (short-term overseas trips)

Total NZ trips abroad are down 2.7% compared to the same four week period last year.

Increase in visitor arrivals/departures: Thailand 45%, USA 12%, Cook Islands 16%, UK 2%, Samoa 3%, Malaysia 3%

Decrease in visitor arrivals/departures: Australia -6%, China -4%, Fiji -11%, India -2%

Source: Stats NZ

International and Domestic

In October 2012, guest nights comprised 63.5 % domestic guests (1,605 million guest nights) and 36.5 % international guests (923 million guest nights). Compared with October 2011, domestic guest nights increased 145,000 (9.9 %) while international guest nights decreased 63,000 (6.4 %).

Occupancy

The overall occupancy rate of accommodation establishments in October 2012 was 34.5 %, up 0.5 % when compared with 34% in October 2011. Hotels had the largest increase in occupancy (up 2.3 points to 56.5 %), followed by motels (up 1.2 points to 50.5 %), and holiday parks (up 0.3 points to 12.0 %). Backpackers had the only decrease in occupancy (down 3.8 points to 34.7 %).

RTOs

In October 2012, Queenstown recorded the largest increase in guest nights (up 26,000 or 17.6 %) from October 2011. This was followed by Canterbury (up 25,000 or 10.8 %), Auckland (up 17,000 or 3.0 %), Rotorua (up 13,000 or 9.5 %) and Mackenzie (up 9,000 or 38.5 %). Bay of Plenty recorded the largest decrease (down 8,000 or 9.9 %), followed by Manawatu (down 8,000 or 16.6 %), Nelson-Tasman (down 7,000 or 8.6 %), Waikato (down 6,000 or 6.1 %), and Wairarapa (down 5,000 or 27.0 %).

Source: CAM commentary

Tips for Increasing Your TripAdvisor Scores.....

First, some data to impress upon you the importance of focusing on online reviews..... A hotel that increases its review scores by 1 point on a 5-point scale, can increase its price by 11.2% and still maintain the same occupancy or market share.

A 1% increase in reputation improvement leads up to a 1.42% increase in revenue per available room. TripAdvisor is by far the dominant source for online reviews in the hospitality space, with more than 75 million reviews generated by some 32 million users. TripAdvisor declares there are 60 new user contributions per minute.

Tactics now: Respond to comments in a timely fashion. In this new world, a speedy response is expected and appreciated. You are showing you care about the guest's

experience, whether they gave you a positive or negative review. Highlight updates and improvements in your responses. Remember, you have 32 million of your closest friends watching your hotel's every move. Don't post the same responses. It screams "I am doing this because I am obligated" versus "I care about your experience." In fact, consider having more than one person post responses. Different personalities show through and that one staff member who has to respond to every comment does not get burnt out.

Source: Amy Bair

Split-Personality Hotels Please Different Clienteles, it's a two-for-one deal at many hotel properties across the country. And it's not about getting a free night's stay. Major hotel chains are now building two hotels on one property, some in the same building, that target two very different clienteles. The so called dual-branded hotels are the latest way hotel developers are saving money during tenuous economic times. It allows the owner to not only save on construction and operational costs from combining services such as the pool or housekeeping department, but it also gives them an opportunity to appeal to a wider array of potential clientele. It's not unusual for two different hotels to share the same land. But sharing a building or communal areas is a new strategy.

Source: Nancy Trejos

Gold Coast Top 10 Strangest Hotel Requests in 2012:

1. Asked to purchase alpacas for a Middle Eastern royal family.
2. An overseas visitor asked if he could organise a day trip taking in Sydney, Melbourne, Alice Springs and the Great Barrier Reef.
3. Organise a private jet for the Argentine Polo team to fly from Gold Coast to Malaysia with 6-hours' notice.
4. Book rooms on different floors for a guest's wife and girlfriend.
5. An elderly couple looking to renew their wedding vows at the hotel chapel asked two staff members to be bridesmaid and best man.
6. Organised dinner for two on "Table Mountain" in the Gold Coast Hinterland. Guests arrived by helicopter where a personal chef, waiter and Spanish guitarist were waiting.
7. A guest left his luxury sports vehicle to be sold by a hotel staffer as he had to unexpectedly leave the country.
8. A unique wedding proposal, with a gentleman proposing to his girlfriend as staff from the resort all wearing t-shirts that spelt out MARRY ME.
9. Exclusive use of the gym for various celebrities.
10. Exclusive use of the Executive Lounge for a wedding proposal.

Source: Natalie Bochenski

2013: The Year Of The Vacation Rental.....

Looking back, every calendar year in the hospitality industry brings with it a decisive trend. But unlike the lucrative opportunities surrounding tablet use or review sites or smart phone integration, **2013 is poised to throw one big curveball to the industry and that is the explosion of vacation rentals.** Since the mid-eighties, cultural tourism has been on the rise: travellers wanting to learn more about the human and historical patrimony of their destinations. Accordingly, their accommodations preferences have echoed this trend with more and more opting for smaller, more experience-based boutiques, inns, and B&Bs. One featured characteristic of this movement is the desire to immerse oneself culturally often referred to as "living like a

local.” **The key dimensions setting alternative accommodations** like vacation rentals apart from traditional big box counterparts are unique character, personalised touches, homely feel, high quality standards, and value added nature of the knowledge and friendliness of hosts. So why are hoteliers so concerned? Some recent AirBnB research in San Francisco, vacation rental guests not only stay longer than and outspend their hotel counterparts, but they also distribute more wealth throughout a destination.

Source: Matt Landau

Australia and New Zealand Cruises Make a Splash.....As the fast-growing cruise industry expands into new areas, major lines are rapidly growing their presence in Australia and New Zealand, which appear well on their way to becoming cruising hot spots. Cruising has grown so fast in Australia and New Zealand that some ports are having trouble keeping up. Cruise ships sailing around New Zealand often stop at Dunedin. One noticeable difference with cruises out of Australia is the demographics of the passengers. In contrast to Royal Caribbean's American-heavy, family-dominated Caribbean sailings, this voyage skews older and has a far more international mix of passengers, dominated by Australians. About 300 passengers are from the United States, with a significant number of Canadians, Germans, New Zealanders and Chinese among more than 40 nationalities on-board. Another difference is the age of the ships. While the Caribbean and Europe draw the industry's newest, hottest vessels, cruisers in Australia generally must settle for slightly older models. Still, few passengers are complaining. **"Sailing into Milford Sound alone was worth the price of the ticket,"** says Beth Boesch, 62, of Columbus, Neb. "The scenery, the majesty of it ... we don't get that in Nebraska."

Source: Gene Sloan

Business Hotel Introduces World's First Smart Hotel Key.....Introducing the hotel key of the future. This is one hotel key you don't want to lose. A new business hotel in Seoul has started using smartphones for hotel keys that also allow guests to surf the Internet and control room lights, television and temperature. Hotel Skypark Central in Seoul's financial district launched the smart-key service on December 26, changing the locks and room controls in 16 of its rooms. Guests pick up the smartphone when they check in at the front desk.

Source: Frances Cha

Jump Start Your Group Business for 2013. As 2012 has come to an end, it is an opportune time to evaluate what worked and what didn't work, and incorporate those initiatives and practices to ensure the foundation for financial success. A smart and honest assessment and evaluation coupled with timely implementation, will place owners and managers in a stronger position to withstand economic uncertainties or situations that occur over which they have no control. Properties that relied on group business were at a particular disadvantage in 2012 due to worldwide economic conditions. The strategies that will efficiently and cost effectively impact group business even in an uncertain environment

1. Establish a Strategic Plan
2. Stay True to Your Target Market(s)
3. Prospect Efficiently
4. Take Stock of your Property and your Competitors
5. Develop a Staff with Excellent Sales Skills

Source: Brenda Fields

Google Is Improving Its Travel Search Tools.....Following its acquisition of travel software provider ITA, Google's flight and hotel search products have offered isolated useful features but have largely failed to live up to Google's promise of innovation. Consumers have mostly failed to notice Google's travel innovations so far. There are now indications that Google's travel sites and content are becoming more integrated into something more interesting and useful for travellers. **Among the things that Google has improved or upgraded over the past year are the following: Introduction of an "experimental" service called Flight Explorer, which allows people to see when it might be less expensive to fly to a specific destination; the ability to gain a more complete understanding of flight costs and other features, such as WiFi, in its Flight Search tool, as well as more control over planning complex itineraries; the addition of international flight information and costs; inclusion of Zagat ratings and pricing information in the Hotel Finder product.**

Source: Source: Greg Sterling

Top Ten Boutique Hotels Worldwide.....

1. Maison 140, Beverly Hills, California, USA.
2. The Augustine, Prague, Czech Republic
- 3. Royce Hotel, Melbourne, Australia**
4. Hotel Franklin Roosevelt, Paris, France
5. Amandari, Bali, Indonesia
6. Relais Santa Croce, Florence, Italy
7. Villa Orsula, Dubrovnik, Croatia
8. The Upper House, Hong Kong, China
9. Berns Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden
10. The Soho Hotel, London, England

Source: Fox News