



PETER MCBREARTY

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In recent months there have been a number of major events on the Concierge calendar.

At the 56th U.I.C.H. Les Clefs d'Or Congress in Hangzhou China, our Australian Past President Colin Toomey of the Shangri-La Sydney was elected as 3rd Vice President.

More good news followed, with Gustavo Concha of the Hilton Auckland becoming UICH Zone Director Oceania.

As President of Les Clefs d'Or New Zealand Gustavo has presided over a continual period of growth and development, while also encouraging the fostering of talented new members and strengthening the ties across the Tasman with his associates in Les Clefs d'Or Australia.

With Colin and Gustavo taking up their new roles we can only anticipate Australia and New Zealand further enhancing their relationship with the Concierge community worldwide, to the ultimate benefit of not only our members but equally importantly our guests.

On the local scene, the Les Clefs d'Or Golf Day was again a success, with experts and amateurs alike working their way around the excellent Sandhurst course in Melbourne. Despite the weather being quite cool, it was generally agreed that Sandhurst was one of the best courses yet to host the Golf Day, and their organisation was only matched by the exceptional quality of the post golfing lunch in the well appointed club house, (which also proved quite popular during the day as it featured an open fire and comfortable couches). The Golf Day was a testament to the organisational skills of Ben Davies from the Sofitel Melbourne, and was only made possible with the greatly appreciated assistance of industry sponsors including Where Magazine, Windsor Chauffeur Drive, Lightning Ridge Opals, APT Day Tours, The Meat & Wine Company, Gray Line Day Tours, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Avis, AAT Kings Day Tours, The National Opal Collection, Eureka Skydeck 88, Shortlist Marketing, Capricorn Limousines and Travel, and Hidden Secrets Tours.

Thank you to all our sponsors and also to everyone who took part and made the day such a success (despite the now traditional grumbling over the accuracy of the various winners' handicaps).

Finally, the annual Les Clefs d'Or AGM is swiftly approaching, and members will gather in Melbourne early in July to conduct a Concierge workshop to discuss developments in guest service and related matters both nationally and internationally, and also to welcome our new members into the association in conjunction with our honorary members and industry associates.

Again the event will be held with the valued assistance of many of our industry partners including The Langham, Melbourne, APT Day Tours, Where Magazine, The Deck Restaurant Southgate, Gray Line Day Tours, Eureka 89, Chateau Yering, and the Melbourne Cricket Club and National Sports Museum.

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HM checkIN

RESTAURANTS SYDNEY

Firefly wins over concierges

It may be one of Sydney's smallest restaurants, but Firefly it has a number of leading hotel concierges raving about it, thanks to good food, wine, great service and stunning views.

Located on the water at Walsh Bay, Firefly is across the road from the Sydney Theatre Company and since opening in 2004, has been popular for pre- and post-theatre meals. However, thanks to consistent high quality meals and service, it's become increasingly popular outside those times, in part thanks to those in the know.

"We have had some great support from some local hotels since we have been down at Walsh Bay and it has been great to see an increase in referral from hotel concierges," Firefly owner Warren Ford told *HM* magazine. "In fact, we just held a concierge dinner to showcase what we have to offer and also a thank you them for their continued support.

Firefly, which also has a Neutral Bay outpost on the city's lower north shore, specialises in tapas, wine and cocktails.

"Sure we are operating in uncertain times, so we are keeping our menu fresh and exciting and sourcing great wines, that don't leave



Firefly at Walsh Bay

Firefly

a dent in the wallet," Ford said.

"We have a solid grounding, great food, wine and fantastic service and all of those elements have helped people coming back to us."

Some of the top dishes at present include: duck and shallot pancakes; chilli herb prawns; lamb, pork and garlic meatballs; baby beetroot, feta and walnut salad with balsamic reduction dressing; and seared scallops with caramelised fennel and Spanish sherry.

Firefly Tapas & Wine Bar, 17 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay, NSW, tel: +61 (0)2 9241 2031. Also at 24 Young St, Neutral Bay. www.fireflybar.com.au

Vroom rent luxury cars, including the Audi A6

CAR RENTAL SYDNEY

Vroom continues strong market push

For years, travellers had to look up various car rental sites to find out the best bargains in the market. However, that all changed with the arrival of VroomVroomVroom.com.au in recent years and company continues to evolve as more travellers find out about the service.

"We were the first in Australia to build a stand-alone car rental comparison service,"

VroomVroomVroom Australian Manager David Eastes told *HM* magazine. "Which means the entire rental transaction can be completed on the site and while we are an online business, we do provide amazing customer service and assistance.

"We create a risk free environment for people to rent a car and even now, our competition can't offer the complete package like we can," he said.

Eastes said the referral business is strong at present, particularly from leading hotels across Australia, no doubt thanks to the commission system in place.

"We are professional and offer a service to ensure their guests receive a stress free and enjoyable experience," he said.

"We can offer commissions to staff and concierges who make bookings for the hotel stayers. It's all about keeping the customers happy and we can provide this to any hotels around Australia," he said.

Eastes said in the current economic conditions, travellers are more much price savvy and that works in favour of price comparison sites.

"Our service is setup so anybody can easily find the cheapest and best quality car rental around," he said.

He also said the car rental industry at present "is very strong and the demand is growing more so than other years" in yet another positive sign for tourism in Australia.

For bookings, call 1300 722 920 or visit www.vroomvroomvroom.com.au