

The Sydney Morning Herald

November 10-11, 2012

Traveller

Drive
INSIDE

"For every mountain there is a miracle." Robert H. Schuller

A mountain to climb

Unfinished business on the uplands of Ecuador. Page 16



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NSW

Wollombi Valley

It's the 10th year of Wollombi Valley's Sculpture in the Vineyards program, a month-long melding of cellar doors and sculpture along the Wollombi Valley Wine Trail. Five wineries host more than 100 sculptures. Until December 3, free entry. See sculptureinthevineyards.com.au.



NATIONAL

Queensland

Woodford Folk Festival on the Sunshine Coast features more than 2000 performers and 580 events over six days. This year's headliners include Ben Sollee, Electric Empire, pictured, and Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings. Adults \$470 online, \$536 at gate. On December 27-January 1. See www.woodfordfolkfestival.com.



INTERNATIONAL

Malta

Malta's Easter Sunday street parades are spectacular demonstrations of faith and tradition and occur throughout the islands. Easter Sunday falls on March 31 next year, the beginning of the temperate months. On March 29-31. See visitmalta.com.
Julietta Jameson

SMART TRAVELLER
JANE REDDYNeon boneyard/Silence in the sky/Starry night/
Snow festival/Fruitful alliance/Adventure expo

Lights come out in Vegas

While the sign "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada" might be Sin City's most recognised, a museum dedicated to the preservation of other former beauties is now open.

Outdoor museum the Neon Museum on 770 Las Vegas Boulevard North includes a collection of more than 150 neon signs dating from the 1930s. It includes the Moulin Rouge sign from the casino of the same name opened in West Las Vegas in 1955 and designed by Betty Willis, who created the "welcome" sign.

According to the book *Spectacular: A History of Las Vegas Neon*, advertisements in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* claimed the Rouge to be "the nation's first major inter-racial hotel" where black entertainers and guests could stay and where Harry Belafonte, Nat King Cole and Sammy Davis jr all performed.

The museum's new visitors' centre is within the rehabilitated La Concha Motel lobby, the seashell-shaped structure built in 1961 and moved from Las Vegas Boulevard South to its present site in 2006. With only three signs in the museum's Neon Boneyard electrified, the unrestored are the main attraction, organisers say.

"The Boneyard's unique appeal resides in the authentic, aged appearance of its signs, which are still dazzling despite the ravages of time and weather," a museum spokeswoman says.

Also in the museum is the Stardust behemoth that - at 65 metres with 11,000 flashing bulbs and more than two kilometres of neon tubing - was attached to the casino and hotel in 1958.

Tours of the Neon Boneyard are 45 minutes and operate Monday to Saturday. Tickets cost \$US15 (\$14.50) for adults; \$US12 students and seniors; children under 6 free.

See neonmuseum.org.

Inflight phones a turn-off

Most Australians and New Zealanders prefer the status quo of silence when it comes to the question of using mobile phones during flights, according to the website Skyscanner.

Its survey of more than 10,000 people across the Asia-Pacific region found 27 per cent of the 2015 Australians and 24 per cent of the 699 New Zealanders said they would use their mobile phone inflight. Fifty-four per cent of Australians and New Zealanders said they would be "annoyed" by other passengers talking on their phone.

Conversely, Indian (63 per cent of 1845) and Indonesian (59 per cent of 5712) participants said they would use their mobile phones inflight.

Heads-up for stargazers

All beds were booked at Thala Lodge in Port Douglas two years before the total solar eclipse on



Switched on ... (from top) neon signs in Las Vegas; the ski fields of Utah.

November 14, but stargazing remains a popular activity at its forest headland site, which is free from light pollution.

At the on-site observatory, resident guide Rose Wyatt takes guests on a viewing journey through constellations, star clusters and double stars using a powerful telescope.

Wyatt, who is at the resort year round, says this month's viewings include globular cluster Tucanae 47, the second largest such cluster to be seen from Earth; M45 Pleiades Open Cluster, Seven Sisters; and Jupiter. Rooms cost from \$279 a night. See thalabeach.com.au.

Party time on US ski fields

It will be official gay pride in the ski fields of Utah next February for the week-long Elevation festival.

In its third year, more than 1000 people are expected to attend the Park City event that encompasses the resorts of Canyons, Park City Mountain and Deer Valley, about 40 kilometres east of Salt Lake City.

"Fresh off the slopes, Margarita in hand, flushed and tanned from a sunny day of snowboarding are among our favourite moments," event organiser Tom Whitman says. As well as skiing and snowboarding instruction, there's a downhill costume party and off-slope dance parties.

On February 21-24.

See utahgayski.com.

Malaysia loyalty repaid

Come February 1, cardholders for the loyalty program of Malaysia Airlines, Enrich, will be welcomed to the fold of the Oneworld alliance.

In the Oneworld program, which includes Qantas and Cathay Pacific, Enrich platinum cardholders will have emerald status, Enrich gold will be equivalent to sapphire and Enrich silver will equal to ruby.

Platinum and gold members will be able to use any of the 550 airport lounges worldwide when flying with the alliance's carriers.

Malaysia Airlines' first- and business-class passengers will also be able to use Oneworld partner airline lounges.

See malaysiaairlines.com.

Gateway to the world

Exhibitors from Tonga to Taiwan will hang out their shingles at the Adventure Travel Expo this weekend at Sydney Town Hall. There will be ideas aplenty from a working holiday to travelling Europe on a budget among the exhibitors.

Entry is free for the expo at Sydney Town Hall on November 10-11. The Melbourne expo will be on February 23-24.

See myadventureexpo.com.

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