

HORIZONS



Irish Antipodes

Wellington is the venue next month for an Irish conference usually held in Australia or Ireland. The 16th Australasian Irish Studies Conference will be at the Massey University's Wellington campus in the heart of the city. An international panel of keynote speakers include Prof Tom Bartlett (University of Aberdeen), Prof Peter Gray (Queen's University, Belfast), Prof Dermot Keogh (University College, Cork), Prof Peter Kuch (University of Otago), Dr Perry McIntyre (St John's College, University of Sydney), Dr Richard Reid (National Museum of Australia) and Sir Tipene O'Regan (University of Canterbury). O'Regan will deliver the opening address at the four-day conference which is titled Ireland and the Irish Antipodes at 6pm on Thursday, July 9, with registration available from 5pm, then each morning thereafter. Inquiries: victoria.ac.nz/stout-centre/research-units/issp/conferences/conf-irish.aspx
The Accor Hotel Group is offering reduced tariffs for participants who can make bookings until June 20 at Mercure Wellington and Mercure Willis St (see mercure.co.nz) about 10 and 15 minutes walking distance from the conference venue.
For other accommodation options in the vicinity of the conference, see wellingtonnz.com/accommodation

Angels and Demons

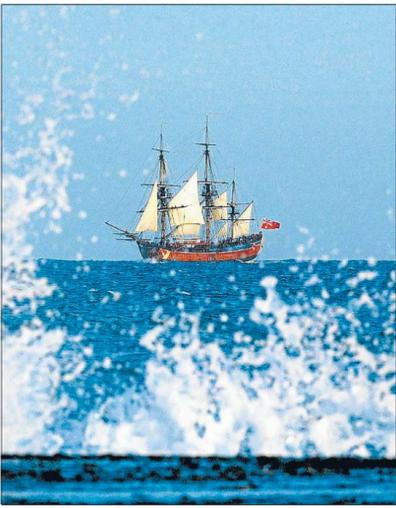
Trace the clues made famous in Dan Brown's novel and follow in the footsteps of the illuminati on an *Angels and Demons* experience in Italy. Flight Centre is offering a four-night experience in Rome, including accommodation and sightseeing tours to locations with hidden symbols featured in the book. Prices start from \$1099 a person, twin share, and include airport transfers, four nights at Kennedy Hotel in Rome, continental breakfast daily, a half-day Angels and Demons tour, dinner at That's Amore restaurant, an evening ghosts and mystery sightseeing tour, a panoramic open bus tour, rewind 3D Ancient Rome show, entrance tickets to Terrazza delle Quadrighe and wine tasting and appetisers at wine bar The Glass. Airfares to Rome are additional. Sales until June 22 for travel between July 1 and August 31 (also other periods available). Phone 0800 427 555 or visit flightcentre.co.nz

NRL Grand Final

Are you a rugby league addict? Harvey World Travel has packages available to the NRL Telstra Premiership Grand Final in Sydney. The deals start from \$1568 a person, twin share, including return Christchurch airfares to Sydney, transfers, three nights accommodation (October 2-5), and best available seating to the NRL Telstra Premiership Grand Final at ANZ Stadium on October 4. Phone 0800 80 84 80 or see harveyworld.co.nz. Valid for sales until July 31.

Bali getaway

Kuta is the ultimate Bali destination, home of most of the island's resorts, Hard Rock Cafe, surfing schools and shopping strip nearby. The best surf breaks are between April and September. Flight Centre has Bali holidays, including return Christchurch airfares and five nights accommodation in Bali with buffet breakfast daily and one night in Kuala Lumpur from \$1799 a person, twin share. Phone 0800 427 555 or visit flightcentre.co.nz. Sales until June 30 for travel June 7-30 and September 1-October 31.



Botany Bay: Among the first sightings of Australia for Irish immigrants, whether as voluntary settlers or as convict transportees to the penal colony. Photo: FAIRFAX

Parisian allure

Enjoy a Parisian experience staying in one of House of Travel's favourite Left Bank, three-star hotels on the edge of the vibrant Latin Quarter. The deal involves four nights accommodation for \$335, adult twin share, including breakfast. Sales until June 14 for travel between July 15 and August 24. Airfares are additional. Phone 0800 838 747 or visit houseoftravel.co.nz

Chicago in Melbourne

Experience the hypnotic glitter of the smash-hit *Chicago*, the musical coming to Melbourne from August 15. A House of Travel land-only package includes three nights staying at the Mantra on Russell and an A Reserve ticket to *Chicago* from \$599 a person, twin share. Sales until September 13 for travel August 15-September 24, September 27-29. Phone 0800 838 747 or visit houseoftravel.co.nz

Languages aid

A free language guide for travellers has been launched by Intrepid Travel in conjunction with World Nomads. Travellers can visit the Intrepid website to download the portable MP3 guides, which are available in 20 languages. The guides range from 10 to 16 minutes. The files can be stored on a portable MP3 device and take up less space than a full CD. See intrepidtravel.com/languageguides

Larnach Castle special

Turn back time at four-star Larnach Castle, Dunedin, by booking the Pinot Winter Reviver at \$250 a night for two people (usually \$310). The deal includes breakfast, a bottle of Central Otago Pinot Noir, late 1pm check-out, and a self-guided tour of the castle and gardens. Visit wotif.com or phone 0800-441-092

Guides winners

Winners of the Italy DK Eyewitness travel guidebooks are Lynne and Peter Williams, Annette Rosanowski, Mario Belanger, all of Christchurch; Marianne Palmer, of Nelson; Caroline Teichert, of Westport.



Majestic departure: The Barrett family farewells the Diamond Princess as she leaves Lyttelton Harbour.

Photo: PAT BARRETT

Date with a princess

Pat Barrett

Good things take time. That is an often repeated cliché that seems pretty meaningless until the day arrives when the thing you have often thought of takes place. For our family, it is a dinner date with a princess, although not your ordinary sort of princess.

Ours is 115,875 gross tons, has a length of 290 metres, carries 3900

passengers and crew, and is valued at US\$500 million. She is the Diamond Princess cruise ship. Fairly princess-ish figures you might agree, but not quite expected, and neither is our rendezvous point. It's in the tussock along one of the Lyttelton Harbour facing tracks at Godley Head, and it is a cold evening. We are sure of one thing, however. The passengers and crew will not be enduring cold easterlies and lumpy

seats amid the fine dining and sumptuous luxury aboard. Scampering along the dusty trail past the gun emplacements, the five of us head for a suitable location from where we can see the length of the harbour and escape the wind.

It is past dinner time for some of us, but never mind the chorus of wailing – there's a mission afoot and a date to make.

I have lost track of the number of times we had said, "We must do that", so for us this is a first, and it gives a little edge to an otherwise familiar ramble along the headland tracks. Princesses only pass this way on rare occasions.

Dinner although satisfying is a tad mundane. I do not think cold chicken qualifies as a regal treat and neither does half a can of beer. The rest is accidentally tipped into the tussock by small feet.

Never mind, the show must go on, or pass by as in this case. Gliding out from her berth, our princess begins her slow passage along the harbour to the heads with a

scattering of tiny escort boats bouncing in her wake.

Our view is splendid indeed and we bask in her magnificent size, stunning lines and graceful passage out into the South Pacific Ocean.

As she passes, there is a fleeting moment of being a small part of her entourage, more imagined than real, and then she is gone, out over the briny to a distant date with another set of admirers.

Our brief audience with royalty is over. Now comes dessert, a banana, the packing up and getting home before dark; there are chores to do and children to bed.

I wonder if the princess's charges consider such things.

Access: Godley Head carpark from Evans Pass on the Sumner to Lyttelton road.

Time: 20-25 minutes to a suitable viewpoint from Godley Head carpark.

Grade: Easy.

Map: Banks Peninsula.

DIAMOND PRINCESS DEALS

Diamond Princess is a luxury destination in itself. Wake each morning in anticipation of a new horizon, with the view from one of nearly 740 balcony staterooms. Indulge in a hot stone massage at the renowned Lotus Spa, enjoy fine dining in a formal or relaxed atmosphere and make it a cruise to remember. United Travel has 18-night cruise packages from \$3799 a person, twin share,

including return airfares departing Christchurch to Bangkok and returning from Sydney, arrival transfer to hotel, one night pre-cruise accommodation, departing November 22 on the Diamond Princess, all main meals, accommodation, activities and on-board entertainment, government fees and port charges. Phone 0800 46 86 48 or see unitedtravel.co.nz

EUROVILLAS & TOURS
Specialists in Italy & France
"Benefit from our experience"
Small Group Tours and Canal Cruises for 2009.
Also Villas, Apartments & Boutique Hotels
Call Toll-Free 0508 387 684
www.eurovillas.co.nz

Ancient Egypt
18 monumental days
ESCORTED BY IAN DUNWOODIE
INCL. A NILE CRUISE & REMOTE SIWA OASIS
Cairo • Pyramids • Sphinx • Luxury Nile cruise • Aswan
Abu Simbel • Alexandria • El Alamein • Siwa Oasis
DEPARTS 16 Nov 2009
FOR INFO PACK PHONE TOURS DIRECT 0800 868 748
\$12,300 per person (estimate)
www.toursdirect.co.nz

PANDANUS - MOOLOOLABA
SUNSHINE COAST
Huge 1, 2 and 3 bed apartments
Largest on the Coast Fully air cond
Heated pool and spa Full gymnasium
Security parking and lifts Free cable TV
Low season rates Ocean views
2 mins walk to beach and cafés
Reservations-0661 7545 78989
www.pandanusmooloolaba.com.au

Mt Hutt Lodge • Rakaia Gorge
MOUNTAINS & MARGARITAS
\$180 per night per couple includes
\$50 dinner voucher & 2 free cocktails
03 318 6898 • www.mounthuttlodge.co.nz
Great views • Great food • Great Service
More stars than you can believe at night!

BHUTAN in Autumn
19 magical days
ESCORTED BY MANDY PAGE
DISCOVER THE HIDDEN JEWEL OF THE HIMALAYAS!
Thimpu • Punakha • Trongsa • Bumthang Valleys
Probjika • Paro • Tiger's Nest Monastery
DEPARTS 9 October 2009
FOR INFO PACK PHONE TOURS DIRECT 0800 868 748
\$10,900 per person (estimate)
www.toursdirect.co.nz

Free Cruise Night
Travel Talk by Cruise Expert
Amazing Alaska, Sizzling South America, Magnificent Mediterranean
Wednesday 17 June, 6.00pm – 7.30pm
Tel. DDI: 379 6739 or email: kay.whiteford@unitedtravel.co.nz
United Travel
on Victoria Square
Corner Armagh and Colombo Street

The Best of Vietnam
11 day tour of Vietnam
9-20 Aug, 13-24 Sep, 15-27 Nov
from \$2898 pp including return airfares!
Tour Includes: Return economy class airfares ChCh to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to ChCh with Singapore Airlines • Arrival and departure airport transfers • 8 nights hotel accommodation, 1 overnight sleeper train and overnight boat in Halong Bay • Breakfast included in Vietnam.
Included Activities: Halong Bay boat trip • Imperial Citadel & tomb in Hue • Orientation tour in Hoi An • Cu Chi Tunnels, Cyclo tour, War Remnants museum, day tour to Mekong Delta, including boat tour and lunch.
Conditions: Price is twin-share for cash purchase, must be booked and paid by 26/06/09. Space is limited & subject to availability. Travel Insurance & Vietnam Visas are additional. Or if you have longer, upgrade to Vietnam Inside Out 20 days for an extra \$1105 pp
Ask about our Vietnam & Cambodia, Gourmet Vietnam, Family Fun & Cycle Vietnam tours.
Phone 364 3400 or Email advchc@hotmail.co.nz
Adventure Travel
Life, Time, Experience.

Shape-up at sea

From B5

Whole continents later we're back on Millennium sipping rehydrating cocktails to the accompaniment of the string quartet in the Cova Cafe.

"Titanic is the most popular movie on the ship," says Lara, the young Spanish violinist, who knows how to get our attention.

"The second most popular is *Poseidon Adventure*." The cellist gets the laugh as Lara leads the Ellan string quartet into the theme song from *Titanic*.

"I'm a *Titanic* fanatic," says a man next to me by way of introduction.

"Really?" I smile politely. "Dinner at the ship's Olympic Restaurant is the closest you can get to dining on the *Titanic*."

"How's that?" "The *Olympic* was a sister ship to *Titanic* – nearly identical. Launched in 1910 as a luxury liner she took troops to Gallipoli in 1915, even sank a German U-boat in 1918". (*Olympic's* propellers sliced through the U-boat's pressure hull – the only known sinking of an enemy warship by a merchant vessel in World War 1. *Titanic's* other sister ship *Britannic* sank after striking a mine in the Aegean Sea in 1916).

"Anyway, *Olympic* was scrapped in 1935 and the fittings from the first-class restaurant were sold to a private collection in England.

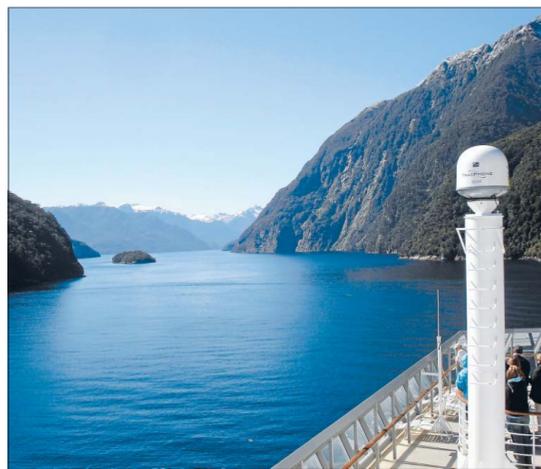
"When *Millennium* was built, the original walnut panelling and other bits and pieces were bought and installed in the *Olympic* Restaurant."

He pauses for breath. "And it's a \$300 meal for \$30."

Dine with the ghosts of early transatlantic cruisers – for only \$30. Who wouldn't?

On the last night of the cruise, the maitre'd – all white gloves and diamond studs – shows us to our table in the walnut-panelled room.

With the Sydney Opera House a glowing backdrop, we sit down to gleaming silver, crystal and candlelight.



Fiordland welcome: A sunny Doubtful Sound greets Celebrity's Millennium cruise ship. Photo: JANE JOHN

On the last night of the cruise, the maitre'd – all white gloves and diamond studs – shows us to our table in the walnut-panelled room. With the Sydney Opera House a glowing backdrop, we sit down to gleaming silver, crystal and candlelight.

No waiters here – rather "chefs du range" because many dishes are prepared tableside where each "chef du range" has two assistants. The fun comes when each man lifts the silver covers off the dishes in perfect unison – quite a sight. Each course is more delicious than the last – souffles, flambees, and a trip around France with the cheeses. Tonight I eat everything on my plate.

Wine is extra so we pass on the 1907 Heidsieck Monopole at \$7000 – ordering a very enjoyable red for \$28. A memorable meal at a ghost of a price.

More surprises than I thought possible on this cruise. Plus the "drop-a dress-size" bonus. Can you have too much fun on holiday? Having completed an inaugural season in New Zealand and the South Pacific, *Celebrity's Millennium* is sailing out of Vancouver to Alaska (seven and 10-night cruises) until September. It will be then based in the Caribbean until next year. *Celebrity* plans to return to New Zealand and the South Pacific for the 2010-11 season.

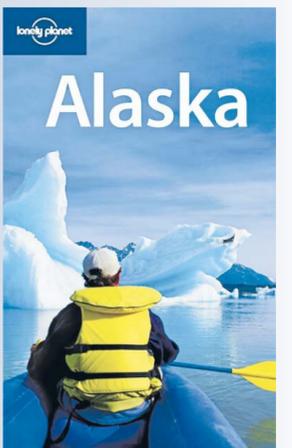
ALASKAN CRUISE

Experience five-star cruising at its best and discover Alaska's breathtaking sights and sounds on a cruise holiday aboard *Celebrity's* newly refurbished *Millennium*.

House of Travel has a 10-night package priced from \$4379 a person, twin share. The price includes return airfares from Christchurch to Vancouver with Air Canada, a 10-night round-trip Alaskan cruise aboard *Millennium* in an inside stateroom, all main meals and entertainment on board the cruise, all port taxes, and government fees. Sales until June 30 for departure on September 18. Gratuities are additional.

Why not extend your stay in Vancouver? Talk to your House of Travel consultant about the great range of hotels on offer. Phone 0800 838 747 or visit houseoftravel.co.nz

WIN NEW GUIDE



An Alaska cruising chapter helps you choose the right ship for your requirements in *Lonely Planet's* new Alaska travel guidebook.

Alaska serves it up big – volcanoes, glaciers, caribou, bald eagles and the tallest mountain in the United States. Get a taste of its grand scale as you kayak through a sea of icebergs and seals or hold your breath as a 40-tonne humpback whale erupts from the sea.

Press Escape has five copies to give away. To be in the draw, write your name, address and phone number on the back of an envelope and send to: Alaska Contest, PO Box 1005, *The Press*, Christchurch 8140, to arrive no later than noon, Thursday, June 11. Winners' names will be published on Monday, June 15. The edition has a retail price of \$55.