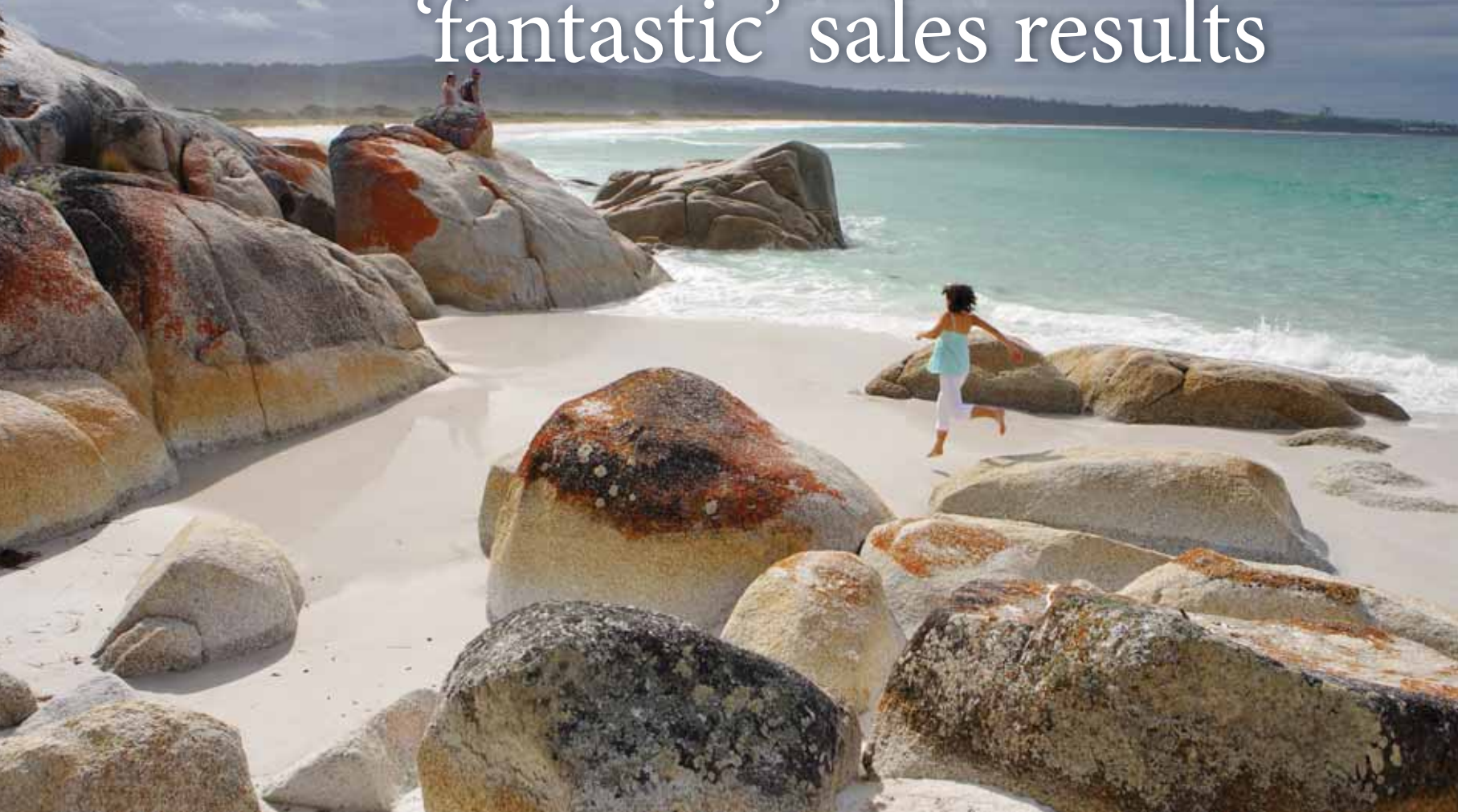


New Tassie campaign to maintain 'fantastic' sales results



Seaton Cove, Binalong Bay (Credit: Tourism Tasmania & Sean Fennessy)

Tourism Tasmania is continuing to work closely with wholesalers and agents as it launches a new marketing campaign designed to continue the momentum of last year's visitor growth.

By Lee Mylne

TASMANIA has defied the national trend of a declining domestic travel environment, with visitor numbers in 2009 topping the one million mark for the first time.

Buoyed by its success, Tourism Tasmania is this month launching a major marketing campaign designed to keep the number up and give visitors year-round reasons to cross Bass Strait for their holidays.

"We are encouraging consumers to look at Tasmania in a new light and showing them that we are close and easy to visit now," says Tourism Tasmania's director marketing and commercial operations, Jan Ross.

Ross says last year's new branding and marketing campaign – "Tasmania. A world apart, not a world away" – was a great success at a time when the closure of the tourism body's wholesaling arm, Tasmania's Temptations Holidays, saw the organisation in a period of "transition and change".

Independent wholesalers filled the

vacuum, achieving "fantastic" sales results, in some cases doubling and even quadrupling their Tasmanian sales from the previous year, she said.

"The sale of Tasmania's Temptations Holidays has opened up a whole new range of distribution partnerships for Tasmania and we are delighted to see more Tasmanian product being sold through our existing and new partnerships.

"Transitioning out of Tasmania's Temptations and working in a new way is starting to show effect," she says. "We are not in the business of selling, but of supporting those who do. We are in quite a different place to what we were six months ago."

She says wholesalers around the country have benefited from the change and all wanted to see themselves as Tasmanian specialists.

"The other thing we introduced last year was online bookings; but while digitalisation is important, we don't forget or neglect traditional forms of selling.

"Direct or online bookings are increasing but we still see the need to work with traditional forms of selling

and recognise the value of retail and wholesalers, and the personal service agents are providing."

Tasmania's appeal as a holiday destination continues to grow, with holiday visitors accounting for 48 per

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By contrast, the September 2009 results of the National Visitor Survey conducted by Tourism Research Australia reported an overall decline in the nation's domestic interstate overnight travel of seven per cent. Visitor nights were also down by seven per cent.

"While these results are fantastic

for Tasmania's tourism industry, we are continuing to look at new ways to support and grow our industry's capacity to deliver the products and experiences our visitors demand," says Ross.

She says the focus this year will be on low and shoulder periods, to give visitors reasons to travel to Tasmania during autumn and winter.

To that end, the island state will host a Winter of Festivals from May to August, with more than 30 festivals on its calendar – some familiar, some new and some that have moved to winter to capitalise on the marketing campaign being launched this month.

"The key message is that winter in Tasmania is vibrant and active, open and welcoming," says Ross.

"By showcasing events in the traditionally quiet period, we are creating real drivers for visitation to our island during winter. There will be something happening every day during the festival period."

A 20-page hard-copy calendar guide, listing all event details and package deals, will be produced and a dedicated website will be launched.

*selling*Tasmania

'I've always had a passion for Tasmania'

TASMANIA'S diversity is its key selling point, according to Sydney travel agent Robyn Simmonds.

Although she has visited the island state only once, Robyn has an enthusiasm for Tasmania that is obvious to all her clients at Global Village Travel in West Gosford.

"I've been in the industry for 16 years and I've always had a passion for Tasmania and for selling it," she says.

"You can do a quick trip and still fall in love with it, or you can go for 14 days and still not be able to get enough of it!

"Every part of it is so different. You can go to the south and you've got Port Arthur and the history, the Huon Valley, the Tahune Airwalk; or you can go to the north and you've got lavender farms, cheese-makers, platypuses and Tasmanian Devils and all the nature. You can choose between going to a city, or going to a beach and being 'nowhere'," she says.

In terms of accommodation, Robyn loves the choice between "classic" hotels similar to those anywhere in the world, and quaint bed-and-breakfasts or historic homes.

She says her recommendations to clients

depend on the time they have available and – in the case of her clients who are repeat visitors to Tasmania – what they have seen and done before, and what they are interested in.

"One thing people have to remember is that the distances might seem short, but the roads can be winding and you will want to stop along the way at places you discover. It's not a point-to-point drive, like driving from Sydney to Melbourne."

Robyn says selling Tasmania has been made somewhat harder since the demise last year of Tourism Tasmania wholesale arm Tasmania's Temptations Holidays.

"Other wholesalers are selling the product but they don't have the dedicated team that Tas Temptations had and there is not the same service that there was. You don't have that confidence that you are speaking to a local who knows exactly what is happening without having to go away and look it up," she says.

"Personal recommendations, and knowing, for example, what's on in Hobart or Launceston that weekend made a lot of difference."

Daniel Alps at Strathlynn (credit: Tourism Tasmania & Nigel Honey)



QUAMBY ESTATE, the heritage homestead once referred to as the Government House of the north, just 20 minutes from Launceston, is offering a special "indulgence package".

The two-night package includes accommodation in one of Quamby's superior or deluxe rooms, dinner and breakfast daily, sparkling wine on arrival, a one-hour massage and 18 holes of golf on Quamby's private course.

The cost is from \$530 per person (twin share) in a superior room (commissionable) and valid from May 1 to November 30.

QANTAS HOLIDAYS has almost doubled the size of its Tasmania brochure for 2010/11, with a marked increase in its product range.

The 44-page brochure includes a full page map for easy reference of the island, as well as an increase in product range across hotels, car hire, accommodation passes and sightseeing options.

As well as some new hotels in mainstream Tasmanian destinations it also incorporates more regional properties and touring as well as boutique accommodation for those looking for a different holiday experience.



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April opening for \$32m luxury Saffire resort



FEDERAL Hotels and Resorts' new \$32 million resort Saffire, near Coles Bay on the Freycinet Peninsula, will open in mid April. The luxury property is already taking bookings for its 20 suites, each with views of Great Oyster Bay and the Hazards Mountains and private decks with complete privacy from the neighbouring suites.

General manager Matt Casey believes his team's creative level of service will make the difference. Casey has been in hospitality for 20 years, joining Saffire from Hobart's Henry Jones Art Hotel.

He says the Saffire experience will start the moment a guest first makes contact with the hotel.

"We will engage with them to find out the sorts of things they like to do.

When they arrive we will deliver."

Suites are in three configurations: six deluxe suites (80m²), 10 luxury suites (96m²) and four premium suites (140m²).

Rates start from \$1250 per suite per night for deluxe suites and \$1400 per night for luxury suites. Premium suites (with private plunge pool) cost \$2250 per night, including dinner for two with drinks. Guests in deluxe and luxury suites can pay an extra \$150 per person per night to include dinner with drinks. All rates include a spa treatment, beverages throughout the day, some activities, breakfast and lunch.

Saffire has a range of experiences available. Among them is the exclusive Schouten Island Experience.

Experience Bruny Island, with 25% commission

HOBART Cruises' new "Bruny Wildlife Adventure" is a full-day tour that allows visitors to get a taste of one of Tasmania's best-loved holiday spots.

Bruny Island, off the south-east coast of Tasmania, is home to unique and fascinating wildlife including a large colony of Australian fur seals.

The "Bruny Wildlife Adventure" starts in Hobart, with a trip down the Derwent River aboard the luxury cruiser *Peppermint Bay II* to the northern end of Bruny Island. Along the way, passengers hear tales of early Aboriginal Tasmanians who inhabited the coastline, and European history.

On arrival at Bruny Island, a bus transfer takes you to Adventure Bay to board an expedition boat for the wildlife-spotting component of the day. The purpose-built vessel features spray guards and under-floor heating, and passengers are kitted out with specially designed wet-weather gear – venturing into the Southern Ocean is part of the thrills in store, and getting wet is highly likely.



The boat travels to the last point of land expeditioners see on their journey to Antarctica, a wild and remote region that is home to seals and sea birds and is in the migratory path of dolphins and whales.

A remote-controlled underwater camera is used to show what is happening below the surface – seals at play and schools of fish. This is believed to be an Australian first for tourism, as the technology is usually

reserved for military and exploration use. Returning to Bruny Island, lunch in private gardens with ocean views including local produce such as Pacific oysters, Bruny Island cheeses and locally made chocolate fudge.

The adventure departs Hobart at 8am and returns at 4.45pm. Introductory prices are \$165 adults and \$110 children four to 14 years, commissionable at up to 25 per cent for agents.

Moorilla Estate expands ahead of art museum opening

FOUR new pavilions have been added to the accommodation at Moorilla Estate, in anticipation of the opening of the estate's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in early 2011.

The MONA pavilions join four existing pavilions in a vineyard setting, 15 minutes north of Hobart on the banks of the Derwent River. The estate also includes a boutique brewery, restaurant and cellar door.

Guests can choose from one or two-bedroom pavilions, each completely private.

Owner David Walsh has chosen works from his private art collection for each pavilion and guests will also have access to a choice of online imagery streamed from the MONA collection once the museum opens.

The original four pavilions, featuring works by major Australian artists Brett Whiteley, Charles Blackman, Sidney Nolan and Arthur Boyd, have been refurbished to reflect the new MONA look and feel.

The \$100 million MONA collection includes works by Australian modernists and contemporary European works. Admission to the museum will be free.

Room rates at the pavilions ranges from \$490 to \$950 per night, including breakfast (either in-room or at The Source Restaurant).

Bay of Fires Lodge to open year-round

THE award-winning Bay of Fires Lodge in north-eastern Tasmania will open year round again in 2010.

Until 2009, the lodge was the exclusive domain of guests taking the four-day Bay of Fires Walk – and even then only during walking season from October until May.

Recognising that travellers were also interested in coming to this pristine wilderness during the winter season, new owners Anthology decided to offer the Lodge for the first time last year as a year-round overnight accommodation experience.

With a maximum of 20 people accom-

modated in 10 rooms at any one time, the Bay of Fires Lodge is ideal for getaways, friends' weekends or corporate retreats. The lodge is also available for sole use with itineraries individually tailored for each group.

Located at the edge of the Mt. William National Park, the Bay of Fires Lodge is the only building situated in this near-uninhabited 20 kilometre stretch of wilderness. Set on a hilltop, 40-metres above the sea and surrounded by National Park, the lodge has been designed and built to be both ecologically friendly and in keeping with the natural surroundings.

From May 7 to September 12, Bay of Fires

Lodge is offering a daily rate of \$450 per person, including all meals, a selection of Tasmanian wines at dinner and daily activities including kayaking and guided walks.

Guests can self-drive to the lodge with parking available nearby at Ansons Bay. Alternatively, Anthology can provide pre-purchased transfers from Launceston by 4WD or bus depending on the group size. The trip takes around 2.5 hours.

For spectacular views of the coastline en route, helicopter transfers are available from Launceston and Hobart. Prices for all transfers are available on request when booking.

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