

# A cute arrival checks in

Innovations and events galore are on offer, writes **Shandelle Battersby**



## Real cutie comes to town

QT, one of our favourite boutique hotel brands across the Tasman, is expanding into New Zealand, bringing its quirky, hip accommodation first to Wellington, then Queenstown.

Its Australian hotels, including the Sydney QT in Market St, are acclaimed for their unique stylings and cool staff.

The hotel group bought the Museum Art Hotel in Wellington last June, and is spending \$8 million on refurbishing and rebranding it as QT Museum Wellington. The new-look hotel is due to open in August or September.

Next on the company's list is QT Queenstown, scheduled to open at the end of the year. It will go on the two rear blocks on the Rydges Lakeland Resort site. The blocks will be knocked down and replaced with 69 boutique suites and a dedicated QT reception entry off Brunswick St.

The hotel will also feature the hotel chain's excellent Bazaar interactive marketplace eatery and cocktail bar.

It's been a big few months for QT, with its Bondi hotel opening in Sydney, QT Melbourne now under construction (due for completion in August), and plans afoot for a premises in Perth.

## Pod fellows

In other Queenstown accommodation news, Jucy has announced plans for a five-storey 256-bed hotel for the tourist town's CBD, due to open next October. The rooms, a mix of pods and private rooms with en suites, will start from \$45. The clever company, best known for its car rental operations, is opening a Jucy Snooze pod hotel at Christchurch Airport later this year.

## Kiss and Aerotel

I know where I'm headed next time I'm in transit at Changi Airport — the new Aerotel Singapore hotel. Said to be the world's only transit hotel with an outdoor swimming pool, Jacuzzi and poolside bar, the Aerotel has three room types

(some with views over the runway) and offers free wi-fi, gym and library facilities. You'll find it at Terminal One on Level 3, and you can book stays from a minimum of six hours. There are also plans to open Aerotels at Heathrow and Abu Dhabi. [myaerotel.com](http://myaerotel.com)

## Huka-d on Opera

A couple of our most luxurious hotels have released their event line-ups for this year.

Taupo's Huka Lodge kicks things off with a

performance of French arias by the New Zealand Opera School, paired with a five-course menu and fine wines from the Burgundy region on April 16. On May 21 guests can sit in on an informal Q&A session with fashion designer Karen Walker. Go to [hukalodge.co.nz](http://hukalodge.co.nz) for details and news of more events.

The first event on the agenda at The Farm at Cape Kidnappers in Hawkes Bay is the Moet & Chandon Ladies Golf Classic, from April 29 to May 1; followed by Grow, Gather and Cook with chef James Viles (Biota, Bowral, NSW), matched with wines from Canterbury's Pyramid Valley. See [capekidnappers.com](http://capekidnappers.com) for more info.

## Beds ahead

A fan of truffle-hunting and want to find somewhere to stay in France? Booking.com has launched a new search option to help match travellers' passions and interests to their

destination, finding accommodation that best suits their needs.

The search tool matches more than 200 categories, including "Tranquillity", "Friendly People" and "Great for Wine", with more than 1000 destinations, and not only suggests accommodation options, but also city recommendations and insider guides.

[booking.com/destinationfinder](http://booking.com/destinationfinder)

## The winners are . . .

It's time for our hotel industry to recognise its own, with voting open for the New Zealand Hotel Industry Awards. This year's awards include five new categories, bringing the total number to eight, and range from Environmental Initiative of the Year through to Senior Hotel Executive. Entries for the awards close May 3 and the