

TRAVEL CONSUMER **DAILY**

Thursday, August 6, 2009



Punters 'will pay' for airline failures

■ Qantas boss Alan Joyce yesterday warned his competitors, domestic and international, that they, and not he, may have to vacate overserved routes if they continued to throw new seats into the market during the biggest downturn since the Great Depression.

He said Qantas's financial strength would see it through, but consumers would pay the price if there were more airline collapses.

While he didn't name them, Mr Joyce was having a swing at Tiger Airways, the low-cost carrier backed by Singapore Airlines, that set up domestic services in Australia nearly two years ago as it faced bureaucratic hurdles to growth from its Singapore base.

It is understood Tiger is yet to turn a profit in Australia.

Mr Joyce said 50 carriers worldwide had already collapsed and "a further 20 may collapse this year".

"Yet here in Australia, aviation capacity is going against all rational trends and expanding," he said. "Even as demand is shrinking in the Asia-Pacific by 14 per cent, local competitor capacity has grown by 11 per cent."

"Domestically, we have the Singapore Airlines subsidiary, Tiger. Internationally, we have V Australia plus Delta competing with United and Qantas on the trans-Pacific route. The Middle Eastern carriers Emirates, Etihad and Qatar are all expanding substantially. Pacific Blue and Air Asia X are growing."

"Perhaps my competitors know something I don't."

"But history tells us that whenever there is over-capacity
CONTINUED PAGE 2

Going gangbusters

50% BOOST FOR AIRASIA X FROM MEL

■ ASIAN low-cost long-haul carrier AirAsiaX will add more than 50% to its weekly capacity on one of its three Australian routes in time for the busy Christmas-New Year season.

AirAsia says it is responding to strong and growing demand with an additional four frequencies weekly between Kuala Lumpur and Melbourne, starting on December 1. The extra services will take its capacity on the route from seven to eleven flights weekly.

After beginning flights in December 2008, AirAsiaX says it has a 33% share of the Kuala Lumpur-Melbourne market, where it competes with Malaysian Airlines.

It says it plans to increase its market share by further tapping into first-time travellers from the huge leisure market in ASEAN countries.

AirAsia also plans to tap existing leisure, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and stu-



Azran Osman-Rani: growing when others are contracting.

dent markets by encouraging more frequent travel through its low-fare offerings.

To launch the additional frequencies, AirAsia is offering seats for sale from \$99, excluding only credit card charges, from Melbourne to KL. Bookings must be by August 9 for

travel between December 1 and April 30 next year.

AirAsia X Chief Executive Officer Azran Osman-Rani said that, even in a shrinking global aviation market, AirAsiaX continued to deliver growth on all of its routes.

"The Kuala Lumpur-Melbourne route has been particularly popular for us, with AirAsia carrying almost 100,000 passengers since we first touched down in Melbourne on November 12 last year," he said. "In fact, the route shows no sign of weakening with strong forward bookings."

"These new additional frequencies will also offer passengers better two-way connectivity by reducing transit times when connecting to further destinations to ASEAN and beyond including London and other routes serviced by AirAsia's growing route network."

Punters 'will pay' for airline failures

FROM PAGE 1

ity, sooner or later there will be a correction. In business, as in nature, only the fittest will survive.

"Now I can assure you that Qantas is not going anywhere. But of the new entrants to the marketplace, not all will make it. Some may exit, scarred."

He warned of the fallout for consumers.

"There are sometimes unintended consequences," Mr Joyce said.

"We should not forget the abrupt collapse of Ansett in 2001.

Or in more recent times, the sudden collapse of travel companies in northern Europe, stranding hundreds of thousands of holidaymakers.

"Sometimes a rebalancing of the market – or a distribution of the fruits of intense competition — does not happen in a cost-free way.

"That's when consumers can suffer collateral damage." ■

Virgins behind in loyalty race

FREQUENT FLYER

■ THE Virgin Blue companies appear to have become bogged down by IT problems and may need many more months to implement details of the loyalty programs they are relying on to underpin V Australia's debut in America.

The marriage of Virgin Blue's own loyalty program with those of competitors and allies alike has become one of the most complex undertaken by an Australian carrier.

Unlike the simple, but strong, Qantas frequent flyer program, which gets huge network reach from partners such as American Airlines and British Airways, the Virgin Blue program for America has up to five separate parts that need to be integrated by different computer systems.

Key executives, like Virgin Blue/V Australia's US manager of sales and distribution, Phil Squires, still don't have definite dates to work on.

The American rollout for the program was "coming", Mr Squires told *TCD* last night, and it was hoped that Virgin Blue and V Australia would have American partners by the end of the year.

Pilot dies in Thai crash

THAI regional carrier Bangkok Airways has suffered what is believed to be its first fatal accident with the death of the captain of an ATR 72 turboprop that crash-landed at the Thai resort destination of Koh Samui on Tuesday.

The plane skidded off the runway and hit an unused airport control tower, killing the flight's captain and requiring the hospitalisation of seven others including the



Virgin Blue decided its Velocity program couldn't compete in the US.

It's uncertain which of V Australia's planned tie-ups with Virgin America or Delta would come first.

"They have quite a different IT system at Virgin America, so we're doing a lot of IT work to connect them up," Mr Squires said.

"We're working with other partners over the next three to six months and we'll roll those out as and when they're ready. We may have some other partner airlines before we have Virgin America."

The tie-up with Virgin America had always been tipped because it has long been one of the brainchilds of Virgin founder Sir Richard Branson, who remains a minority shareholder.

Based in San Francisco, Virgin America flies from the V Australia hub at Los Angeles non-stop to Washington, Boston, New York, Seattle and San Francisco.

Virgin America's loyalty scheme is called Elevate.

However, V Australia is also anxious to team up with Delta, the world's biggest airline, which operates a loyalty program called Sky Miles.

One of the complications is that the airline that Delta took over a year ago, Northwest, still operates its own separate frequent flyer program, World Perks.

When it established V Australia, Virgin Blue decided that it wouldn't try to have its own Velocity program compete with the big American programs.

That meant integrating with Sky Miles, what's left of World Perks, Virgin America's Elevate and VirginBlue's pre-existing arrangement with the Virgin Atlantic Flying Club.

"I always believed it was better to partner with a major US carrier than try to build Velocity up over there from scratch," Velocity general manager Phil Gunter told *TCD* last night.

Delta's Sky Miles, he points out, has "something like 76 million" members, compared with six million that belong to Australia's biggest program, Qantas Frequent Flyer.

Even though a deal was still some months from completion, "it's not too far away and in the grand scheme of things I'd rather do a really good, robust and broad deal with Delta than a simple narrow deal with someone else." ■

'GREEN' WINE

JAPAN Airlines will today become the first carrier in Asia to serve wine in PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles in its economy class cabin. The service, which will be gradually introduced on all international routes, will commence with flight JL403 from Tokyo (Narita) to London (Heathrow).

The wine will be bottled in recyclable PET bottles that look identical to the original glass packaging except at 22 grams each, are one-seventh

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Pty Ltd
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Crystal Vision Consulting
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TCD BEST FARES

from MELBOURNE

Abu Dhabi QF 2053 rtn
Adelaide QF 85 DJ 69 JQ 59 TT 39
Alice Springs QF 229 TT 98
Albury QF 211 DJ 189 ZL 105
Amman QF 2082 rtn
Apia DJ 469
Auckland QF 199 DJ 189
Ayers Rock QF 280
Bahrain QF 2038 rtn
Ballina DJ 149 JQ 99
Bangkok QF 1277 rtn JQ 409
Beijing QF 1004 rtn
Beirut QF 2074 rtn
Brisbane QF 145 DJ 139 JQ 99
Broome QF 402 DJ 340
Buenos Aires QF 1738 rtn
Burnie ZL 124
Cairns QF 279 DJ 199 JQ 209
Canberra QF 89 DJ 85 TT 28
Chengdu QF 1184 rtn
Christchurch QF 387 DJ 189 JQ 169
Coffs Harbour QF 219 DJ 170
Darwin QF 333 DJ 169 JQ 159
Delhi QF 1137 rtn
Denpasar DJ 459 JQ 439
Devonport QF 130
Dunedin DJ 259
Frankfurt QF 1869 rtn
Fraser Coast DJ 179
Gold Coast DJ 99 JQ 99 TT 78
Hamilton (NZ) DJ 279
Hamilton Island DJ 179 JQ 159
Hobart QF 98 DJ 64 JQ 59 TT 28
Hong Kong QF 943 rtn
Honiara DJ 509
Honolulu QF 1246 rtn
Jakarta QF 803 rtn
Johannesburg QF 2184 rtn
Kalgoorlie QF 349
Karratha QF 398 DJ 340
King Island ZL 131
Kuala Lumpur D7 \$219
Launceston QF 132 DJ 59 JQ 55 TT 28
London QF 1941 rtn
Los Angeles QF 964 rtn UA 931
rtn NZ 866 rtn VA 945 rtn
Mackay QF 279 DJ 199 TT 88
Manila QF 976 rtn
Merimbula ZL 140
Mexico City QF 1774 rtn
Mildura QF 117 DJ 99 ZL 99
Moruya ZL 183
Mount Gambier ZL 109
Mount Isa QF 374
Mumbai QF 1157 rtn
Nadi QF 315 DJ 349
Newcastle DJ 69 JQ 69
Newman DJ 340
New York QF 1170 rtn UA 1470
rtn
Noumea 4411
Papeete QF 1368 rtn
Paris QF 1892 rtn
Perth QF 214 DJ 213 JQ 179 TT 108
Port Hedland QF 409 DJ 340
Port Macquarie DJ 179
Port Moresby DJ 399
Port Vila QF 440 DJ 339
Queenstown QF 355 DJ 399
Rarotonga DJ 439
Rockhampton QF 243 DJ 180 TT 88
Rome QF 1883 rtn
Santiago QF 1724 rtn

All fares are one-way unless designated 'rtn'.
Best fares exclude credit card charges, are sometimes bettered by sale fares and are sometimes unavailable. All care is taken, but these fares should be used as a guide only.
All figures Australian dollars. **LEGEND: QF (Qantas) JQ (Jetstar) DJ (Virgin Blue, Pacific Blue) TT (Tiger Airways) ZL (Rex) D7 (Air Asia X) UA (United Airlines) NZ (Air New Zealand).**

San Francisco QF 1053 rtn
Seoul QF 1633 rtn
Shanghai QF 965
Singapore QF 930 rtn JQ 349
Sunshine Coast DJ 109 JQ 119 TT 88
Sydney QF 89 DJ 89 JQ 49 TT 39
Tonga (Nuku Alofa) DJ 379
Tokyo QF 1103 rtn
Townsville QF 301 DJ 209 JQ 179
Vancouver QF 1538 rtn
Wagga Wagga ZL 109
Wellington QF 239 DJ 259
Whitsunday Coast (Proserpine) DJ 199
Xian QF 1184 rtn

from SYDNEY

Abu Dhabi QF 2070 rtn
Adelaide QF 165 DJ 129 JQ 89
Alice Springs QF \$255
Albury QF 99 DJ 82
Amman QF 2099 rtn
Armidale QF 122
Apia DJ 429
Auckland QF 199 DJ 189 JQ 179
Ayers Rock QF 271 DJ
Bahrain QF 2055 rtn
Ballina DJ 75 JQ 69 ZL 129
Bangkok QF 1282 rtn
Bathurst ZL 94
Beijing QF 982 rtn
Beirut QF 2091 rtn
Brisbane QF 95 DJ 89 JQ 69
Broken Hill ZL 198
Broome QD 426 DJ 350
Buenos Aires QF 1616
Cairns QF 239 DJ 159 JQ 169
Canberra QF 90 DJ 75
Chengdu QF 1201 rtn
Christchurch QF 199 DJ 189 JQ 169
Coffs Harbour QF 107 DJ 89
Darwin QF 299 DJ 235 JQ 169
Delhi QF 1154 rtn
Denpasar JQ 439 DJ 459
Devonport QF 207
Dubbo QF 117 ZL 116
Dunedin DJ 259
Frankfurt QF 1886 rtn
Fraser Coast QF 159 DJ 105 JQ 79
Gold Coast DJ 75 JQ 69
Grafton ZL 146
Griffith ZL 135
Hamilton (NZ) DJ 229
Hamilton Island DJ 165 JQ 159
Hobart QF 196 DJ 89 JQ 89
Ho Chi Minh JQ 389
Hong Kong QF 960 rtn
Honiara DJ 479
Honolulu QF 1124 rtn JQ 459
Jakarta QF 781 rtn
Johannesburg QF 2162 rtn

Kalgoorlie QF 353
Karratha QF 417 DJ 360
Kuala Lumpur
Launceston QF 193 DJ JQ 79
Lismore ZL 129
London QF 1958 rtn
Los Angeles QF 981 rtn UA 931
rtn
Mackay QF 238 DJ 149
Manila QF 964 rtn
Melbourne DJ 89 TT 39 JQ 49
Merimbula ZL 140
Mexico City QF 1691 rtn
Mildura QF 178 DJ 189
Moree QF 122
Moruya ZL 126
Mount Hotham QF 199
Mount Isa QF 344
Mumbai QF 1135 rtn
Nadi QF 285 DJ 289
Narrandera-Leeton ZL 119
Newman DJ 360
New York QF 1181 rtn
Norfolk Island QF 307
Noumea QF 363
Orange ZL 132
Osaka JQ 429
Papeete QF 1242 rtn
Paris QF 1909 rtn
Parkes ZL 109
Perth QF 244 DJ 209
Phuket JQ 409
Port Hedland QF 437 DJ 249
Port Macquarie QF 100 DJ 102
Port Moresby QF 837 rtn DJ 319
Port Vila QF 392 DJ 269
Queenstown QF 259 DJ 299
Rarotonga DJ 439
Rockhampton QF 207 DJ 125
Rome QF 1901 rtn
Santiago QF 1602 rtn
San Francisco QF 1031 rtn
Seoul QF 1611 rtn
Shanghai QF 982 rtn
Singapore QF 947 rtn
Sunshine Coast DJ 94 JQ 89
Tamworth QF 122
Taree ZL 126
Tonga (Nuku Alofa) DJ 339
Tokyo QF 909 rtn JQ 429
Townsville DJ 149 JQ 129
Vancouver QF 1455 rtn
Wagga Wagga QF 99
Wellington DJ 249
Whitsunday Coast (Proserpine) DJ 189
Xian QF 1201 rt

from BRISBANE

Abu Dhabi QF 2076 rtn
Adelaide QF 176 DJ 149 JQ 109
Alice Springs QF 259
Albury DJ 179

Amman QF 2103
Apia DJ 429
Auckland QF 240 DJ 259
Ayers Rock QF 254
Bahrain QF 2060 rtn
Bangkok QF 1278 rtn
Barcardine QF 139
Beijing QF 1005 rtn
Beirut QF 2097
Biloela QF 139
Blackall QF 139
Blackwater QF 139
Broome QF 449 DJ 390
Buenos Aires QF 1740 rtn
Bundaberg QF 75
Cairns QF 210 DJ 159 JQ 159
Canberra QF 143 DJ 119
Charleville QF 134
Chengdu QF 1223
Christchurch QF 387 DJ 189 JQ 179
Coffs Harbour DJ 139
Darwin QF 273 DJ 199 JQ 159
Delhi QF 1160 rtn
Denpasar DJ 419 JQ 396
Devonport QF 265
Dunedin DJ 219
Emerald QF 152
Fraser Coast QF 114
Gladstone QF 121
Hamilton (NZ) DJ 229
Hamilton Island DJ 99 JQ 89
Hayman Island DJ 254
Hobart QF 235 DJ 149
Hong Kong QF 991
Honiara DJ 359
Honolulu QF 1248 rtn
Jakarta QF 804
Johannesburg QF \$2185
Karratha QF 351 DJ 380
Kuala Lumpur
Launceston DJ 149 JQ 139
London QF 1964 rtn
Longreach QF 149
Los Angeles QF 987 rtn VA 945
rtn
Mackay QF 122 DJ 89 JQ 79
Manila QF 960 rtn
Melbourne QF 145 DJ 139 JQ 99
Mexico City QF 1797
Mildura DJ 219
Mount Isa QF 262
Mumbai QF 1158 rtn
Nadi QF 283 DJ 269
Newcastle QF 77 DJ 59 JQ 59
New York QF 1293 rtn
Norfolk Island QF 283
Noumea QF 351
Papeete QF 1369 rtn
Perth QF 275 DJ 269
Port Hedland QF 299 DJ 249
Port Macquarie DJ 179
Port Moresby QF 618 rtn DJ 239
Port Vila QF 343 DJ 249
Queenstown QF 346 DJ 399
Rarotonga DJ 439
Rockhampton QF 97 DJ 85 JQ 69
Roma QF 88
Santiago QF 1725 rtn
San Francisco QF 1055 rtn
Seoul QF 1635 rtn
Shanghai QF 1005 rtn
Singapore QF 953
Sunshine Coast
Sydney QF 95 DJ 89 JQ 69
Tonga (Nuku Alofa) DJ 379
Tokyo QF 904
Townsville QF 177 DJ 139 JQ 89
Wellington QF 323 DJ 259
Whitsunday Coast (Proserpine) DJ 89 JQ 79
Xian QF 1223 rtn

ted's WORLD calendar

of absolutely EVERYTHING

06-09th AUGUST

AUSTRALIA

Now - 08 Aug. Australasian Safari, via Kalgoorlie, Western Australia: covering 4000km in seven days, starting on the western shores of Perth, then across the western Australian outback to finish in Kalgoorlie, this gruelling off road rally event has more than 100 of the world's best off road four wheel drive, motorbike and quad bike drivers all racing to take out the prize in the competitions 22nd year. Four wheel drive and motorbike enthusiasts can follow the exhilarating event by joining the fully guided adventure tour, a fantastic way to see Western Australia.

09 Aug. Sun Herald City to Surf, Park Street, Sydney: take part in Australia's most prestigious road race as more than 60,000 people join in to create the world's largest fun run! Starting in Hyde Park, the 14km run takes the competitors through the eastern suburbs onto the finishing line at the glorious Bondi beach. Afterwards, soak up Sydney's vibrant atmosphere at a street café or pack a picnic lunch and lay in the sun.

06 Aug - 25 Oct. Printmaking in the age of Romanticism, Art Gallery rd, Sydney: Take the chance to view a rare exhibition featuring works by eminent romantic artists including William Blake, J M W Turner, Gericault, Delacroix and Corot. With a focus on printmaking in England and France in the decades before 1850 this is a wonderful opportunity to see first hand 150 rarely seen prints from the Gallery's permanent collection coupled with a number of private loans.

Now - 16 Aug. Sydney Design09, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney: A must on the annual festival calendar. This year Design09 showcases an innovative new program emphasising social and environmental responsibility in today's society, as well as the usual celebrations and creative discourse. Organisers bring you 16 days packed with exhibitions, seminars, tours, markets and film screenings. Go on — learn something!

NEW ZEALAND

Now - 23 Aug. Cirque De Soleil – Dralion, Grand Chapiteau, Auckland: Since premiering in Montreal in 1999, Cirque de Soleil has enchanted over 8 million people in over 3,500 shows, and this uniquely fascinating level of acrobatics has come to its New Zealand tour with guns blazing. Defining new heights of acrobatic creativity and of course with its signature crazy clowns, the audience will participate and not be disappointed!

Now - 15 Aug. The Metro Season of God of Carnage, Auckland Theatre Company, Auckland: The Auckland Theatre Company presents a new international sensation, starring Peter Elliot, Miranda Harcourt, Hera Dunleary. Is it a calm, rational debate between grown ups about the need to teach kids how to behave properly, or a hysterical night of name calling, tantrums and tears before bedtime? Live the hype and decide for yourself!

Now - 15 Aug. Apollo 13: Mission Control, NZI Theatre, Auckland: Three astronauts have encountered trouble 200,000 miles from earth — with limited oxygen, power and hope you might be the only one who can save them! Join your team, and flight director Gene Kranz as a member of Mission Control, and attempt to bring the heroes home in this fully immersive and uniquely interactive experience.

09 Aug. Warriors vs. Titans, Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland: Australia's Gold Coast Titans are travelling to New Zealand with an intention to make the finals for the first time in club history. The locals however have other plans. Watch the Vodafone Warriors go head to head for what is always certain to be a Rugby League blockbuster!

INDIA

Now - Aug 30. Teej, countrywide: A month long festival takes place all over India, to worship the slimmest of all animals — the snake. Celebrations include music and folk dances, but if you're there for a real treat, see the snake charmers work their magic.

09 Aug. Kranti Divas (Freedom Day), August Kranti Maidan,: On 9 August 1942, Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement, a final push to rid India of British rule, at a public meeting in Mumbai. The park where he made his call is now known as the August Kranti Maidan and a commemorative meeting is held here every year to mark the anniversary of the movement. A procession usually starts at Girgaum Chowpatty beach at 8am and winds its way to August Kranti Maidan. Here politicians and freedom fighters gather to acknowledge the importance of the Quit India Movement to India's achievement of Independence almost exactly five years later. A visit to the event is well worthwhile to see and listen to some of the few remaining living Indian freedom fighters.

Listings edited by Grace@TravelConsumerDaily.com

You will walk away a different person.

THAILAND

Now - Aug 30. The Amazing Thailand Grand Sale!, countrywide: Visitors and locals are in for a treat this month when the biggest sale of the year hits stores in Bangkok, and extends all the way throughout the shops in Thailand. Offering 10-70% off all stock, mega department stores and shopping malls join in the fun, as well as day spas, golf courses and travel agencies. Hop on and off the trains as you wish with a special shop saver ticket, but be prepared to come home laden with treats!

INDONESIA

Now - 05 Aug. Q! Film Festival, Jakarta: This film festival is definitely one of a kind in a Muslim country. With a gay, HIV and aids theme it showcases films to raise awareness about homosexual issues as well as produce alternative cinema. More than 75,000 spectators have shown up since its launch in 2002, and organisers expect these numbers to grow more and more as people become more accepting and curious.

Now - Aug 30. Mangga Besar Night Market, Chinatown, Western Jakarta: for those who like to stay up late, and love good food, this is for you. The Mangga Besar Night Market is set in Western Jakarta's Chinatown district. The market teems with activity, much of which circulates around the stalls serving street food. Spicy local dishes, seafood, and unusual Chinese meals are freshly cooked. The tempting smells draw both locals and visiting foodies keen to sample delightful, authentic Indonesian food.

SINGAPORE

Now - 16 Aug. Da Vinci – The Genius, Science Centre, Singapore: Walk away with the secrets of Mona Lisa, or stir the artist inside with a Da Vinci workshop during an exhibition that is among the largest and most comprehensive travelling exhibitions ever compiled on the artist/engineer/inventor Leonardo Da Vinci. Be inspired like never before!

HONG KONG

Now - 09 Aug. Louis Vuitton – A passion for creation, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong: A passion for creation: See another side to the designer we all know and love, in a special exhibition showcasing installations combining works of art and archive documents. Be blown away by the scale model of yet to be built 'LV Foundation for Creation' by architect Frank Gehry, and feed the designer within as you immerse yourself in the world of Vuitton.

Now - 28 Sept. The Golden Age of Couture, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong: They say a week is like a minute in fashion, so take the opportunity to stop the clock and go back in time to enjoy the haute couture of the 'Golden Age' of fashion. Renowned designers such as Dior and Balenciaga will grace over 100 mannequins, and around 300 exhibits ranging from clothing to accessories and period furniture will be on display. Don't forget to take plenty of photos for your girlfriends at home!

Now- 31 Aug. Hong Kong Disneyland Summer, Disneyland, Hong Kong: Hang with Stitch this summer, as you join the all new and lively Stitch's Summer Dance Bash, or soak up the Disneyland air and party away like only Disneyland allows!

Now - 09 Aug. International Arts Carnival 2009, Hong Kong: The annual arts festival offers all the regular perks and more, so prepare to immerse yourself in music, dance, drama, puppetry, mime, magic, acrobatics, theatrical arts and an International Children's Film Carnival. It has become the largest family festival in Asia, and is sure to impress, entertain and leave you laughing on the floor.

PHILIPPINES

Now - 07 Aug. Pangapong Festival, Island Garden City of Samal: Not an ordinary thanksgiving festival, the Panapong festival brings to you parades and cultural presentations to entertain even the most anti-festive of them all. Celebrate and appreciate the bountiful harvests and mix with locals to relax and enjoy good food and company.

Now - 08 Aug. World Food Expo (WOFEX), World Trade Centre, Phillipines: A must visit for anyone in the vicinity; the annual World Food Expo at Manila's World Trade Centre attracts more than 50,000 visitors every year. No surprise perhaps, as it offers baking and cooking demos, technical and business seminars, impressive displays and culinary competitions.

JAPAN

06 Aug. Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, The Peace Memorial Park, Hiroshima City: If visiting Japan at this time, this is a ceremony that you can't miss. Join locals and tourists

who have come to unite in prayer for peace, regardless of race or nationality. During this sombre yet hopeful event The Peace Declaration, appealing for the abolition of nuclear weapons and for the realization of eternal world peace is delivered by the Mayor of Hiroshima City, and watched worldwide. Later, be moved by a ritual in which small lanterns are lit and floated downstream in the Motoyasugawa River, to remember and pray for the lost souls of Hiroshima.

Now - 07 Aug. Hiroshima Peace Camp, Hiroshima City: designed for visitors to Hiroshima city who would like to learn, share and exchange opinions regarding world peace, this camp is an ideal environment to come together with like minded souls in a pleasant and productive environment.

EUROPE

06 Aug. Night of the Full Moon, The Acropolis, Athens, Greece: On the night of the full moon in August, Athens opens its monuments and archaeological sites to the public for free. Locals and tourists together skip sleep to take an enchanting midnight stroll through the ancient sites under the stars.

06 Aug. U2, Stadion Slaski, Poland: One of the world's biggest and best loved rock and roll bands brings its 360 (degrees) tour to Poland for what is sure to be a supersonic show. Audiences are sure to enjoy unobstructed views from every possible angle as they rock out to favourites from older albums, How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb and All That you Can't Leave Behind, as well as features from the band's latest No Line On The Horizon.

06 Aug. Cocktail making Master class, Vinopolis, London: Spend an evening learning to make your favourite cocktails as the expert mixologists from Vinopolis show you how to shake, stir and strain. Whether you like your poison fruity or dry, sweet or sour, you'll get to make the classics, create your own and best of all — drink them afterwards!

07 Aug. Firework Festival, Cannes, France: Cannes hosts six nights of spectacular fireworks over the summer at the Festival d'Art Pyrotechnique. Teams from around the world vie for the crowd's attention by launching their explosives above the bay, combining their displays with music for what is truly an event not to be missed!

08 Aug. Street Parade, Zurich, Switzerland: Modelled on the Berlin Love Parade, the Street Parade in Switzerland comes a very close second. The event has mushroomed from the original 2000 people dancing at a few sound systems to encompass over 30 "lovemobile" sound systems and half a million revellers. Pre- and post-party parties are organised in clubs and bars all over the city and special trains and coaches are laid on to allow would-be party people to join the colourful procession of dancers. House and techno music predominate. Leave the car at home — be prepared to party your way down the streets!

08 Aug. Pucés de Brest, Les Halles Saint-Louis, Brest, France: A vintage shoppers' dream come true as the residents of Brest turn out their attics for the Pucés de Brest flea market, held in the streets around the covered market of Les Halles Saint-Louis on the second Saturday of every month. Bargain hunters at the Pucés de Brest can rummage through everything from 1950s gramophones to old records, 18th-century plates, books, clothes, and unique vintage masterpieces!

07 - 08 Aug. Berlin Festival, Tempelhof Airport, Berlin, Germany: Rock legends and hip newcomers join forces for the Berlin Festival. The venue is the former Tempelhof Airport which promises an urban feel with camping facilities. Chart-topping indie, alternative, new rave and indietronic acts draw around 10,000 festival-goers each year. The festival comprises two stages: the main stage features more established acts while the Berlin stage focuses on newer, European talent. There is also a dance tent with top DJs spinning tunes. Pete Doherty headlines in 2009.

Now - 08 Aug. The Great British Beer Festival, Earls Court Exhibition Centre, UK: Need anymore be said? The festival boasts over 400 British real ales, up to 60 perries and ciders and a range of new bottle-conditioned beers. There are wheat beers, ginger ales, beers flavoured with herbs and spices, milds and stouts from all over the UK, not to mention 300 foreign brews, from Belgian and German to American. Live music, pub quizzes, games, food and shopping contribute to the lively atmosphere. Above all however, it is a festival made for the purpose of drinking BEER and having a blast.

USA

08 Aug. The Arlington Million, Arlington Park, Chicago: The Arlington Million takes place each year at Arlington Park in Chicago and is one of the richest and most famous horse races in the world. Inaugurated in 1981, this was the first race to offer a million-dollar prize. As an event, this is hard to match. The grandstand is among the best in the world and there are also plenty of activities away from the track, making it a great day out.

Now - 08 Aug. Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival, Martha's Vineyard. (USA): The annual MVAFF showcases 'the best of the best' African and African-American cinema. The festival works to garner exposure for filmmakers and screenwriters of colour. This year's event features more than 50 films.

06 - 08 Aug. Hope Watermelon Festival, Fair Park, Hope. (USA): Every year the Hope Watermelon Festival attracts around 50,000 visitors looking for a day with a twist! The Watermelon Olympics pits local teams against each other in bizarre events such as the melon-toss, seed-spitting and watermelon-eating. Visitors can admire the year's largest specimens and even bid in the Watermelon Auctions!

FEATURES:

Now - 16 Aug. Sydney Design09, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney: A must on the annual festival calendar. This year Design09 showcases an innovative new program emphasising social and environmental responsibility in today's society, as well as the usual celebrations and creative discourse. Organisers bring you 16 days packed with exhibitions, seminars, tours, markets and film screenings. Go on — learn something!

This year, the Sydney Design 09 Festival is breaking out of the mould, and into the future. With a heavy focus on environmental conscience, the festival is delivering outstanding alternatives, viewpoints and practical demonstrations for a more sustainable existence. One impressive example of this is the Eat Green Design restaurant, designed and purpose-built by award-winning architect Hannah Tribe of Tribe Studio, Surry Hills. The menu has been devised by renowned chef Jared Ingersoll of Danks Street Depot. Internally, Eat Green Design also showcases a selection of innovative, sustainable products from independent and emerging eco-designers around Australia as well as a seasonal and ethical produce menu, with dishes made to share. Tickets to see any of the speakers or join in a seminar start at \$66.

Amongst hundreds of workshops, exhibitions and seminars is the standout Fashioning Now: Changing the way we make and use clothes, which looks at the way clothing is produced, used and discarded. Through various mediums, Fashioning Now highlights the diversity of the sustainable options being experimented with by designers, researchers and manufacturers. Entry to this exhibition is free.

Last but not least, an amazing market takes place on the 15th of August, enabling visitors to meet and buy direct from some of the best talent design in the country. Young Blood features fashion, jewellery, furniture, lighting and more. Entry tickets are \$5.

Ticket prices vary, more information and an event calendar is available for download at the festivals website, sydneydesign.com.au.

Now - 28 Sept. The Golden Age of Couture, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong: They say a week is like a minute in fashion, so take the opportunity to stop the clock and go back in time to enjoy the haute couture of the 'Golden Age' of fashion. Renowned designers such as Dior and Balenciaga will grace over 100 mannequins, and around 300 exhibits ranging from clothing to accessories and period furniture will be on display. Don't forget to take plenty of photos for your girlfriends at home!

This exhibition focuses on post-war couture during a decade (1947-1957) that Christian Dior described as the "Golden Age" of fashion. Drawn mainly from the Victoria and Albert Museum's collections of French and British fashion and photography, it explores the creative, social and commercial aspects of this highly traditional and luxurious craft industry and analyses its legacy.

Starting in Paris under the German occupation and the impact of the "New Look" that emerged in 1947, the exhibition examines the world and history of couture: its designers, fashion houses, models and clients and its introduction into popular fashion. Highlighting the works of the masters and legends of fashion such as Christian Dior, Cristobal Balenciaga, Pierre Balmain and Hubert de Givenchy in Paris and their London counterparts Norman Hartnell and Hardy Amies, it traces one of the most glamorous and remarkable decades in fashion history. More than 100 dresses will be on display, including daywear, cocktail and evening dresses made for the high society

ted's WORLD calendar

and royalty, alongside photographs by renowned fashion photographers Cecil Beaton and Richard Avedon and documentary film, textiles and archive material.

"The Golden Age of Couture: Paris and London 1947-1957" offers an insight into fashion at its most artful, imaginative and powerful and into a decade when designers set the highest standards of quality and innovation.

10-16th AUGUST

AUSTRALIA

06 - 15 Aug. Ekka! - Royal Queensland Show, RNA Showgrounds: Every year the show attracts around 700,000 visitors, who eat around 173,000 dagwood dogs, 48,000 hotdogs and 96,000 sausages. There are more than 210,000 strawberries eaten, 1.3 million cups of tea and coffee drunk and 753,000 beers consumed. Needless to say, it's very Australian, and a whole lotta fun!

15- 16 Aug. Memories of Elvis, Parkes, NSW: 2009 will be the 32nd anniversary since Elvis' untimely death. The weekend will include a candlelight vigil at the Elvis Wall of Fame on Saturday evening and Sunday will see the Elvis Church service commencing at 9.00am at the Uniting Church Hall Elvis Lennox Private Collection of Elvis Memorabilia will be open all weekend at 16 Wentworth Street, Parkes.

13-30 Aug. Darwin Festival, McMinn st, Darwin, NT: The Darwin Festival program provides a feast of local, national and international performances to excite, inspire and entertain. There are few festivals around the world that can boast the weather that Darwin has and this is what makes it a perfect festival town. Held in August, the festival includes everything from free outdoor events to theatre, dance, music, cabaret, films, workshops and comedy, not to mention the sensational cuisine. Running for 18 nights, with over 70 productions, 112 events and performances and over 1,000 international, national and Territory artists and cultural groups, the Darwin Festival reflects the indigenous, Asian and Pacific cultures of the region.

NEW ZEALAND

Now -31 Aug. HotHouse - Flaming good ideas, The New Dowse, Lower Hutt, Wellington: A showcase of New Zealand's hottest entrepreneurial ideas, refueled every four months, HotHouse celebrates the places where new ideas ignite. From flax surfboards to biotech fabrics, sports tables and jetpacks - discover why New Zealanders are considered some of the most inventive and resourceful people in the world.

15 - 23 Aug. Good Vibes Boogie, Motueka, Nelson: Good Vibes '09 New Zealand's Largest Annual Skydiving Event. Where like minded sports skydivers gather for 9 days of adrenalin fuelled fun.

15 Aug. Waikato Draught Tough Guy and Gal Challenge, Lakes Ranch, Rotorua: So you're tough. But are you tough enough to take on the Waikato Draught Tough Guy & Gal Challenge? This unique off-road running event continues to grow in popularity and status. Get down and dirty while you tackle the course that includes water trails, a spider's web net climb, mud slide, crawl under barbed wire, beautiful native bush trails, swamp crossings and more mud. The course has been designed with an array of natural and man-made obstacles for you to conquer and have one of the most memorable experiences of your life.

INDIA

15 Aug. Independence Day, Delhi: This is a time as much for mourning as celebration, as the end of British rule involved the partition of the country which resulted in mass migration and horrific bloodshed. More than ten million people are thought to have migrated during partition, of which at least 250,000 were murdered by opposing religious factions. Masses of people were killed as they tried to cross the borders. The slaughter in Delhi itself was also particularly bad. The 15 August is therefore an incredibly important and sombre day for the whole of India.

THAILAND

13 -16 Aug. Bangkok International Fashion and Leather Fair, Impact Exhibition and Convention Centre: Buy the latest clothes, textiles and fashion accessories from Thailand, Hong Kong, China, India and elsewhere at the Bangkok International Fashion & Leather Fair. Held at the Impact Exhibition and Convention Center, the first two days are for trade only.

INDONESIA

SINGAPORE

12 Aug. Lady Gaga 'Live', Fort Canning Park: Get ready to party as dance floor diva Lady Gaga plays Fort Canning Park for one night only. Be prepared as this number one, ultra glam, Grammy nominated queen takes the stage!

Now - 31 Aug. The Boy Who Cried Wolf, DBS Arts Centre: The Boy Who Cried Wolf is a fun yet educational play at Singapore's DBS Arts Centre. Based on Aesop's well-known fable, the story follows shepherd boy Peter, who learns that telling white lies can lead to trouble.

HONG KONG

13 - 17 Aug. Hong Kong Food Expo, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre: Organised by the Trade Development Council, the Hong Kong Food Expo at the Convention and Exhibition Centre celebrates and promotes the island's food industry to both trade and consumers. The five-day event includes

entertainment, demonstrations, food sampling and kitchen tips.

13 -15 Aug. Hong Kong International Tea Fair, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre: Taste teas from the great tea-growing regions of the world and enjoy tea-making ceremonies, or learn about tea investment and more.

PHILIPPINES

Now - 31 Aug. Cinemania International Film Festival, Gateway Mall Complex 10: No small affair, the event draws renowned guests such as the 2007 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, Quentin Tarantino, and offers a range of educative seminars on the film industry. Held annually since 1989, Cinemania is an international juried film festival that celebrates and promotes Filipino and Southeast Asian Cinema. Screenings, seminars and workshops are held at Gateway Mall Complex 10 and on the Boracay Islands.

JAPAN

13- 15 Aug. O-Bon (The Festival of The Dead): The great Buddhist festival of O-Bon, celebrated all over Japan (either in July or August), is often referred to as The Feast of Lanterns. According to tradition, the souls of the dead visit their living relatives on this day. Special offerings of food are made at temples and house altars, and at sunset lanterns are lit and hung in front of houses to guide the spirits back home.

EUROPE

11 Aug. Madonna, Parken Stadium, Copenhagen, Denmark: The undisputed queen of pop and worldwide superstar Madonna continues her extensive Sticky & Sweet tour. This show is at Copenhagen's Parken Stadium. Expect to hear songs from her latest album, Hard Candy. Madonna's live shows are legendary: the peroxide crackle and fizz of Blonde Ambition, the sleazy abandon of The Girlie Show and the jaw-dropping theatrics of Drowned World have been cited as ground-breaking in their innovation and spectacle.

11 - 12 Aug. British Fireworks Championship Finals, Plymouth: The finals are eagerly anticipated by many thousands of people each year. Early evening entertainment is followed by displays from 9.30pm onwards. Six leading fireworks companies battle it out for the honour of being crowned British Champions, after which they represent Britain at an International Competition. Spectacular!

7 -12 Aug. Open Air Cinema, Nantes, France: Nantes welcomes the summer by screening free films every Wednesday in the city's most beautiful pockets of greenery. Visitors can pack up a picnic and watch comedies and thrillers, cartoons and classics. Screenings begin at dusk, with a musical performance to get people in the mood.

12 - 17 Aug. Sziget Festival, Shipyard, Obuidai Island, Hungary: You have two options here - either go, or be very, very jealous of everyone who is. Hundreds of thousands of festival goers will line up to see Lily Allen, Fatboy Slim, The Prodigy, Placebo and Faith No More, while the Burn Party Arena is set to rock to tunes from Pete Tong, Armin Van Buren, Grooverider, Eric Prydz and Paul Oakenfold. Folk music from around the globe comes from acts as diverse as Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club, Khaled and Amadou & Miriam. Don't miss out.

USA

15- 16 Aug. Chicago Air and Water Show, Lincoln Park: The Chicago Air and Water Show presents two fun-packed days of spectacular air and watercraft demonstrations on Lincoln Park's lakefront, with North Avenue Beach as focal point. Highlights include jets performing in a renowned delta formation. The show is the oldest and largest free air show in the United States attracting around two million spectators. Be sure to catch the US Navy Blue Angels and the US Army Parachute Team Golden Knights. The displays take place at the edge of the lake and the planes seem to narrowly miss some of the tall buildings on the waterfront as they zoom over the heads of the crowd.

16 Aug. New York City Half Marathon, Manhattan: If you don't fancy a full marathon, the New York City Half-Marathon offers an opportunity to get into shape and raise some money for charity. So get fit, get sponsored and take on this 13.1 mile (21km) run through Manhattan.

Now - Aug 31. San Francisco Giants, AT&T Park: AT&T Park is home to the San Francisco Giants Major League Baseball team and stages regular games from April to October. The Giants compete in the tough National League West, which includes the Los Angeles Dodgers, Arizona Diamondbacks, Colorado Rockies and the San Diego Padres

17-23rd AUGUST

AUSTRALIA

23 Aug. Fifties Fair, Rose Seidler House, Sydney: Let the good times roll at the 15th annual Fifties Fair! Enjoy live rockabilly, jump blues, lounge jazz and swing music, dancing demonstrations, vehicle displays and kids activities set against the backdrop of the iconic Rose Seidler House. Come dressed in your best 50s threads for a chance to win a prize in the famous Fifties Fair fashion awards. Specialist collectors and dealers will sell fabulous 50s pieces including household gadgets, toys, jewellery, knick-knacks, books, clothing and furniture.

17 - 22 Aug. Rosemount Sydney Fashion Festival, Sydney CBD: The Rosemount

Sydney Fashion Festival brings Australia's biggest fashion names to the public in August 2009. Featuring five days of free and ticketed public events, the festival profiles the contemporary Spring Summer Collections of local and international fashion brands as these new season's looks ve into stores throughout the city. A specially built, state-of-the-art marquee at Martin Place welcomes international models to the catwalk and celebrities to the front row. Brought to you by the same professional team of experts responsible for the world-renowned fashion industry event, Rosemount Australian Fashion Week, be prepared to be inspired.

19- 23 Aug. Stiches and Craft Show, Rosehill Racecourse: The Stitches and Craft Show is a unique event which has gained a reputation as the largest art, craft and design event in Australia. Featuring emerging independent crafters and designers, as well as over 200 retailers and suppliers, the show provides plenty of inspiration as well as the latest craft products. Expect to find fabrics, zines, knitting, project sheets, and more. Indie crafters and designers will also be there selling their handmade products, patterns and supplies. Workshops covering a variety of crafty pursuits from sewing to "do it yourself" printing are conducted throughout the show.

16-31 Aug. North Haven Beaches, Port Macquarie, NSW: The Australian Surf Titles have been held since 1964 - the longest running surf event in Australia. In 2008, it becomes the 'Australian Surf Festival' - combining the National Shortboard and Longboard Titles for the first time and expanding into a unique celebration of the Australian surf lifestyle. It will include the 'Wine and the Waves' Festival, surf art and photography exhibitions, skateboarding displays and much more over two full weeks!

NEW ZEALAND

20 - 30 Aug. Oh Baby Baby!; OOH BABY BABY! draws from the styles of French circus cabaret, grand scale slapstick theatre, dance and the madness of life! It tells the story of love, relationships, parenthood and all the other BIG issues that are commonplace on the set of the classic medical TV drama. A blend of comedy, aerial work, acrobatic theatre and original design, OOH BABY BABY! is an hilarious theatrical excursion based around the doctors who run a fertility clinic. Encounters with patients who are pathologically afraid to give birth, are struck by womb envy, been sprung by their biological clock or are obsessed with the world's falling sperm count, make for a funny, poignant, sexy saga of new life.

21 Aug. Scenic Cellars - Bleasdale Wine Tasting: Join Michael Potts, Chief Winemaker for Bleasdale Winery, Langhorne Creek, South Australia, as he presents his range of wines in a structured tasting. The tasting will include Bleasdale's signature red wines and a few surprises. Bleasdale Vineyards is Australia's second oldest family owned winery, established in 1850 by English migrant Frank Potts. Today the winery is owned and operated by fifth generation members of the Potts family.

22 - 30 Aug. Winter Games NZ: The largest winter sports event outside of the Winter Olympics, Winter Games NZ is a unique winter sports competition that provides the world's elite winter sports athletes with the ultimate testing ground where they can experiment and explore performance limits against world class competition. Every four years, the Games will act as a direct lead-up to the Winter Olympics providing athletes with an invaluable training opportunity. The first Winter Games NZ will take place at Coronet Peak, The Remarkables, Cardrona Alpine Resort, Snow Farm, Naseby and Dunedin from August 22 to 30, 2009 and will feature disciplines of alpine skiing, free skiing, x-country skiing, snowboarding, curling, ice skating and adaptive snow sports.

INDIA

23 Aug. Ganesh Festival, Pune: Ganesh Festival is the birthday of Lord Ganesha, the Hindu God of wisdom and auspiciousness. The elephant-faced Hindu god Ganesh is one of the most popular deities in Hinduism and is today worshipped around the world. During the festival, families and friends come together to eatmodak, the famous sweet loved by the god, and enjoy organised theatre, art and music performances. It is a wonderful way to observe the traditions of such a rich culture.

Now - 31 Aug: Vipassana Meditation Course, Dehradun Vipassana Centre: Dehradun has its very own Vipassana Centre, which holds traditional ten-day silent retreats throughout the year - just as the Buddha suggested. The course offers a non-denominational alternative to the other main means of learning the technique of meditation: staying at a Buddhist monastery. Be prepared for a challenge however- the silent retreats are based around the idea that participants should not talk or even exchange eye contact with anyone.

THAILAND

Now - 30 Aug. Bridge over the river Kwai, Katchanaburi, Thailand: Definitely worth a visit is the Bridge over the River Kwae in Kanchanaburi which has become a symbol for the barbarity and suffering of war. Visit the restored bridge and over 800 tombs of the Allied POWs who built it. The prisoners became the human material used for the construction of the River Kwae railway line, working under extreme conditions of poor hygiene, lack of food, malaria, cholera and other tropical diseases. Many died. However harrowing the experience may be, it is a must for anyone visting Thailand.

INDONESIA

Now - 31 Aug. Jaksa Street Festival, Jakarta: Jalan Jaksa is the main backpacker and tourist street in Jakarta, and is lined with cheap accommodation, budget restaurants and friendly bars. Each year, it celebrates its diverse identity with the annual Jaksa Street Festival which includes live music, local Batawi art exhibitions, craft stalls and sporting contests. The sole goal of the day is to have fun and entertainment usually carries on late in to the night.

SINGAPORE

19 - 30 Aug. Singapore Art Show, Singapore: Singapore Art Show is a biannual national visual arts platform dedicated to celebrating and presenting local arts and artists. It provides a platform for different voices in the wider community - artists, art groups, institutions, and private collections. For those who love art, this is definitely one to mark in your diary.

HONG KONG

21 - 23 Aug. Cinderella, Hong Kong Cultural Centre: Cinderella has been enchanting children for over a century, and even the adults will be in awe of the splendid sets, glittering costumes, magical choreography all set to a wonderful score by Sergei Prokofiev. Watch and be delighted as Cinderella comes alive.

21 - 24 Aug. Hong Kong Computer and Communications Festival: Nerd Alert! Nerd Alert! This festival showcases all things digital to the public and season professionals alike, geeks and technologically illiterate. See state of the art technologies, prototypes, and all the latest industry trends. Open the curtains and venture outside for this one!

PHILIPPINES

Now - 31 Aug. Kasutang Filipino Exhibit and Fashion Show, Museo ng Makati, Makati City: A yearly exhibit mounted at the city's museum featuring the evolution of Filipino costumes per region in celebration of the month of Filipino Costumes. See this traditional dress and more as you take in the culture of the Philippines.

JAPAN

Now - 30 Aug. Disneyland Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan: Tokyo Disneyland goes out of its way to rival its bigger American cousins with wild rides, divided into seven themed zones, and all-singing all-dancing parades featuring familiar costumed characters. Kids (and adults) won't be disappointed. Visitors enter the park through World Bazaar, a replica of a small town in turn-of-the-century America complete with a Penny Arcade and a cinema showing vintage Disney cartoons. There are plenty of rides that will please lovers of Disney's classic movies. Take a crazy ride on Roger Rabbit's Car-Toon Spin in Toontown, or fly with Peter Pan over London and on to Never Land in Fantasyland.

EUROPE

Now - Aug 31. Summer Workshops at the Parc de la Villette, Paris, France: Make like the locals in Paris this summer and get down to the Parc de la Villette for a selection of sunny workshops (ateliers). Take your pick from gardening, cooking, star gazing, painting and much more. French is not a pre-requisite, but you're bound to pick up a few words while you're out enjoying yourself in the sunshine.

19 Aug. Red Bull Air Race, Budapest, Germany: The Red Bull Air race series stages spectacular stunt-flying competitions across the world. Fearless pilots race at speeds of up to 400 km/h through low-level inflatable "air gates". This leg of the competition takes place above the hills of Budapest.

Saturdays and Sundays 1-31 Aug. Neapolitan Antique Fair: The Neapolitan Antique Fair is a huge event featuring antique and modern furniture, arts & crafts and collectors' items. It is generally held on the third and fourth weekend of most months in Naples' beautiful Villa Comunale gardens.

USA

Now - 23 Aug. Chicago Summerdance, Spirit of Music Garden, Chicago: The annual Chicago Summerdance provides an hour's worth of dance lessons to taped music, followed by free live music and dancing. The festival is held from Thursday to Saturday throughout the summer at Grant Park's Spirit of Music Garden. Summerdance brings in a multitude of musicians for visitors' dancing pleasure. Among the styles you might be introduced to are Celtic, Afro-Cuban, Balkan, West African hi-life, Brazilian forro, Hungarian, merengue, punta rock, Middle Eastern, Puerto Rican plena and klezmer.

Now - 21 Aug. Hudson Riverflicks, Pier 54, Manhattan, NYC: Free films are shown down by the riverside and out beneath the stars in Manhattan during the Hudson Riverflicks festival. Wednesday nights at Pier 54 is for adults while Fridays at Pier 46 for kids. In a romantic setting, Hudson Riverflicks entertains with cult classics and free popcorn. Films begin generally between 8pm and 8.30pm. **Now - 27 Aug. Santa Monica Pier Twilight Dance Series, Santa Monica Pier, Los Angeles:** The Santa Monica Pier Twilight Dance Series takes advantage of the beautiful Californian summer evenings in the stunning location of Santa Monica Pier. The event attracts performers playing everything from Latin jazz and pop to hip-hop and blues. Audiences for these free concerts each Thursday evening are increasing every year - last year approaching the 10,000 mark - so arrive early to get a good spot.