



Skyline

Views



Brand new!

Do not adjust your newsletter – this is still Skyline Views, it just looks heaps better thanks to the all-new company branding!

After 15 years Skyline has restyled the entire look of every part of the company with the addition of a superb new logo, tag-line and colour scheme.

"It's fresh, it's engaging, it's contemporary, it's innovative and it's welcoming. Everything Skyline stands for is right there in the new brand!" says delighted CEO Jeff Staniland.

The vibrant new colour scheme in the main company logo reflects the crisp, clean atmosphere of Skyline's elevated sites, complemented by three bright, stylised gondola icons.

And the luge hasn't been left out either with another great colour choice and

design that captures the movement and excitement of the ride.

"Nobody's going to be in any doubt about what they're going to enjoy at Skyline and on the luge," says Jeff.

"The fun and thrills, the views, the service are all part of what makes this brand work so well. Now we can really say Skyline does what it says on the packet, because the packet says it so well!"

And if the artwork wasn't enough, the new company tag really gets the message home – 'Higher views, wider smiles.'

"If ever a brief phrase told a story as well as this I'd like to hear it! It's right up there with our luge line – 'once is never enough' which has served us well for more than a decade now," says Jeff.

As you read this the new designs, produced by leading New Zealand branding generators Fluid Communications, is already being phased in company-wide, from Sentosa in the east to Mont Tremblant in the west, and across the New Zealand properties.

All-new marketing and information collateral is being reproduced to match and signage, livery and uniforms are in production.

"It's an exhilarating time for the company as a whole with great support from our teams around the world. Nothing else has changed at our properties, the winning formula's well and truly in place and it's business as usual. But there's a new spring in our step and that's a great feeling for everybody at Skyline," says Jeff.



TV discovers the Dragon

Keep an eye out on the Passport to Asia programme on Discovery Channel in June or July where local legend Gurmit Singh joins host Samantha Brown to take on the Dragon Trail.

Samantha loved the ride and quipped as the cameras rolled; "This is the most fun you can have in Singapore without getting a fine!"

Millions of milestones

It wouldn't be the end of the financial year at Sentosa Luge and Skyride without a series of records being broken and 09/10 is no exception.

More than 1.1 million rides were clocked up, a figure equivalent to a quarter of Singapore's population.

But that's not all as December alone recorded a jaw-dropping turnover with the attraction's first million-dollar month.

Not to be outdone, February saw the daily ride figure smashed over Chinese New Year with 6,794 lugers hurtling themselves into the record books leaving management with only one thought in their minds – breaking the new 7,000 target!

The figures are impressive enough as they stand but when you factor in cable car closures that limited access to the island to bus, car and monorail; competition from the newly opened six-billion-dollar Universal Studios Resorts World, and construction delays on the new track the achievement is nothing short of astounding.

Suffice to say the 2009 strategies to nurture this growth and secure Luge and Skyrides' standing as one of Singapore's premier must-do attractions will remain firmly in place.



A real lady in Wei Ting

Guest service star Chen Wei Ting has put Sentosa Luge in the service spotlight once more by winning one of Singapore's highest tourism honours.

Wei Ting is the 'Best Tourism Host' from this year's Singapore Tourism Awards, the second time a luge employee has been recognised.

"The whole team is delighted to see her receive this well-deserved accolade and we're all very proud she's put us in the top honours again," says Lyndon.

"Wei Ting is really representative of a great team who work extremely hard in all manner of challenging conditions. We know they'll all keep up the good work and we look forward to an exciting 2010 together," he adds.



New trail lights the way forward

Sentosa's all-new Dragon Trail track was opened in March and became an instant hit with old and new Luge addicts.

Winding 688 meters from Imbiah Lookout to Siloso beach it boasts tighter corners and faster speeds than the original track.

But it's as darkness falls that the Dragon Trail comes into its own.

An exciting lighting theme that puts smiles on the face of every Luge rider puts the whole experience into a new dimension and offers a great new business opportunity too, as general manager Lyndon Thomas explains.

"We expect our night business to increase in 2010 with Universal Studios closing its doors at 7.00pm, so it was important we introduced a great ride experience at night to lure the spillover crowd to the luge."

All-star performance

Qualmark inspectors clearly enjoy their visits to Mercure Leisure Lodge as the hotel has once more ticked all the boxes to maintain its four-star grade in the prestigious rating.

"This is a credit to the staff in all departments, who pull out all the stops to ensure we're always delivering the four-star service, not just at inspection time," says manager Jan McDougall?



McGavin's is a qualified success

Chef David Tong (pictured with Paul McArthur) is keeping Leisure Lodge's reputation for fine cuisine alive and well as he takes his skills a grade higher.

His National Certificate in Hospitality (Professional Cookery) (Level 4) from Otago Polytechnic takes pride of place among the kitchen staff's wide array of qualifications and enhances the property's standing as a first choice for dining even further.

So it's no surprise to see McGavin's Restaurant has once more become the recipient of the 2010 Beef and Lamb Hallmark of Excellence award too. Another great achievement by head chef Paul McArthur and his team.



Lodgers line up for winter

As the seasons change so do some of the faces at Mercure Leisure Lodge and winter 2010 sees some great new talent throughout the team.

Colin Swift (far left) is the hotel's new restaurant and bar manager and he brings a wealth of knowledge to the job with many years in the hospitality industry.

The front office boasts a new line-up too with receptionists Tania Mitchell and Krystle Aberthey (near left) taking their seats, and new night porter Geoff Palenksi keeping an eye on things through the wee small hours.

Welsh coming to say bye-bye 'Brook

The Leisure Lodge gardens have long been admired by visitors from all over the world, but it'll be the green green grass of home for some very special visitors making history this June.

The world-famous Welsh rugby team will be basing themselves at the hotel before the All-Blacks fixture at Carrisbrook, the very last international match ever to be staged at the spiritual home of New Zealand rugby.

"It'll be an emotional time for rugby fans across the country and nobody can add to that sort of occasion like the Welsh. We expect to hear some great singing and experiencing the sort of camaraderie that has made them famous across the world and we're absolutely thrilled to have them staying with us." Says Jan McDougall.

"There's every chance that even if we don't learn a few words of Welsh to welcome them, we expect we will after the game, whatever the result!" he adds.

Seeing the end of international rugby at Carrisbrook will be a bittersweet moment for Leisure Lodge though.

While there's been a long-standing tradition of international rugby stars staying at the hotel, the new ground, set to be ready in time for the 2011 Rugby World Cup has obviously been positioned with care according to Jan McDougall.

"We're the closest hotel to the new stadium, they must have been thinking of us all along!" he jokes.

Nobody in the dark over Earth Hour



Staff at Skyline Queenstown came up with a novel way of combining eco-awareness with business as usual, dinner by candlelight!

To support the global Earth Hour, guests were treated to the intimate dining experience so the complex could join the world in turning out the lights for an hour.

Apart from being a great awareness initiative all guests loved the alternative lighting for a beautiful Wakatipu sunset.

TV prize guys can't believe their eyes

TV3 Sports Tonight competition winners John Bray of Christchurch and Candace Hooson of Whangarei enjoyed a visit to Skyline as part of their prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to Queenstown.

The North and South Island winners were treated to flights and accommodation along with thrilling luge rides.

"Skyline was the highlight of the trip to beautiful Queenstown and I'll definitely be coming back again soon," says Candace, while John was amazed by the views from Skyline.

"It was love at first sight with Queenstown!" he says.



Refresh for success

The Japanese tourism community has made its way to Skyline once more to re-fresh veteran guides and help new agents familiarise themselves with the attraction.

It was a hugely successful day with 47 of the who's who of the Japanese travel industry, from internet travel writers to the front line staff who market and sell Skyline. After lots of fun and food everyone left ready to spread the word about Skyline with even more enthusiasm!



Annual \$50k for wilding pine war-chest

Skyline Queenstown is pleased to announce that the board of directors has agreed to commit up to \$50,000 per annum to bolster the current funding being applied to the control of wilding pines in the Wakatipu Basin.

Skyline has agreed to adopt the Ben Lomond and Bowen Peak area, home to the iconic gondola, restaurant and luge.

"The spread of Wilding Pines is threatening the ecological, visual

and recreational amenity of vast areas of the Wakatipu Basin," says Skyline Enterprises CEO Jeff Staniland.

"Once our board had considered the issues involved they decided it was imperative for the future of the area to make a substantial commitment to protecting the natural beauty," he adds.

Over the past six months Skyline has also hosted more than 100 volunteers on Bob's Peak for pulling wild pines.

Lots more feet under the tables

Conference and incentive organisers and casual diners have all been putting the food and beverage staff through their paces over the first part of the year with large scale events and growing numbers at Skyline Queenstown.

March was extremely busy with staff working long hours to ensure both the restaurant and functions were running smoothly.

A highlight for the month was securing the custom of the Johnson and Johnson Asia Pacific incentive group which brought some 530 people to the town.

The restaurant has been well patronised too with an increase of 7,000 people enjoying the view with their meals.

Webcam in the top 10

Skyline's eye in the sky has made it to the highest echelon of internet viewing points.

The Bob's Peak webcam is now officially one of the Top 10 webcams in the world, as chosen by a panel of experts.

The EarthCam producers select the best out of hundreds of popular webcam submissions, judging on image quality, uniqueness of the content and overall technical achievement in webcam technology.

A live view of Queenstown's most spectacular views, the Skyline Webcam has 13 preset points to showcase the stunning panorama from its Bob's Peak location. Go to www.skyline.co.nz to see how Queenstown is looking today.



Blue Peaks – fit for a dame

Blue Peaks hit a new cultural high note when the late summer guest list included one of New Zealand's opera doyennes.

Dame Malvina Major (left at Blue Peaks), has been touring the country with a show illustrating her own personal journey through music over the years and elected Blue Peaks as her base during the Queenstown stop.

'My Life in Song' struck a chord with audiences in the resort and the dame's company certainly gave managers Anne and Michael McMillan some great memories.

"We were very lucky to share some of Dame Malvina's quiet times around her performance as she took in the views. She clearly enjoys her visits to Queenstown and it was a real pleasure to have her as our guest," says Michael.

The McMillans were also lucky enough to meet with the rest of the touring party including Karl Perigo, mezzo-soprano Rachelle Pike, singer and pianist Vicky Lee and accompanist Kirsten Simpson.

Crusading for charity earns a cool \$6,600



Ti'i Paulo in the Bonus Round holding the cash bundle over the cash pitch

The twelfth annual New Zealand Poker Championships kicked off in style with Canterbury Crusader Ti'i Paulo winning \$6,600 for Diabetes New Zealand Christchurch.

More than 50 media and celebrities battled it out at the Casino's media charity event with the challenge to win a share of \$13,000 for 10 Canterbury charities.

Brave moves at the final table saw seven other media competitors knocked out in style leaving TV personality Brooke Howard-Smith, Radio New Zealand's Monique Devereux and Ti'i

Paulo as the final three - representing Ronald McDonald House South Island, Cholmondeley and Diabetes New Zealand Christchurch respectively.

Paulo's skills shifted code as he ousted Devereux to secure first place.

The winning didn't stop there as the top three winners and their charity representatives racked up more cash in the bonus round by tossing a \$100,000 cash bundle the length of the specially made cash pitch as many times as they could in 20 seconds.

Along with Paulo and Tim Exton's \$6,600, Brooke Howard-Smith and Sharon Amataiti together took home a total of \$3,300 for Ronald McDonald House, and Monique Devereux and Sarah Barrer took home \$3,900 for Cholmondeley.

Christchurch Casino Chief Executive Officer Brett Anderson says the event, now in its third year, is one of his favourites.

"This is a great opportunity for media and charities to come together and have fun. For us, it's another chance to support our local community and we really enjoy it. This event stands out as one of the highlights in our calendar for the brilliant atmosphere it brings."

Crusader Paulo says, "I'm pretty stoked with my poker skills actually. I made a few bold moves but my poker face came through for me. I'm honoured to be part of raising money for a great cause and I don't think Tim or I have ever made that much money in such a short space of time."

Stacked with \$600,000, the cash pitch, combined with the \$100,000 cash bundle represented the \$700,000 prize pool for the New Zealand Poker Championships which officially began just a few days later with the first tournament, Canterbury Championships.

Brewer Eriksen makes it a double

Soren Eriksen has won the New Zealand Poker Championship for the second year running, scooping \$60,000 in the process.

He outshone nine other finalists including runner-up Cole Swannack and Michael Spilken, to take the title consecutively for the first time in the championship's 12-year history.

"It's amazing! I was quietly confident coming into the first day, but never thought I'd actually come away with the trophy again," says Soren (pictured).

"My wife and I have just launched our own boutique ale in Blenheim, our home town, so the winnings will go a long way in helping us lift that off the ground", continued Eriksen.



"One thing's for sure, I'll be back next year to defend my title and have a solid shot at taking it home three years in a row. This is a fantastic tournament that is well run. It certainly is the home of New Zealand poker."

Christchurch Casino CEO Brett Anderson is equally delighted.

"I'm really happy for Soren, he's an outstanding poker player. One of the great things about him winning is that the title stays here in New Zealand."

The tournament was an outstanding success with near sell-out events throughout. The first ever women's championship was one of the highlights and has cemented its place for the future.

Hi ho silver away for 25th anniversary

It hardly seems like a quarter of a century since Skyrides carried its first paying customer up Mount Ngongotaha, only to send them whizzing halfway down again, but that milestone's being celebrated in style this year.

Skyrides sales and marketing manager David Blackmore takes up the story.

It was March 10, 1985 when Skyline Skyrides opened its doors to the public and the first luge cart was launched down the side of Mt Ngongotaha on what was then known as the 'big dipper' luge track.

The luge has proven one of New Zealand tourism's greatest success stories with its popularity continuing to grow each year.

The luge system conceived and developed at Skyrides now operates in Queenstown, on Sentosa Island, Singapore, and at North Sky Luge in Canada.

A lot has changed in the past 25 years at Skyline Skyrides itself though - there are now three luge tracks with six different

entry points, and two chairlifts to service returning riders.

The gondola itself has undergone a massive redevelopment and with that its capacity has risen to the point where 2,000 people an hour can be taken up the side of Mt Ngongotaha.

The restaurant has undergone several refurbishments and is now known as one of Rotorua's premier locations for functions, weddings and buffet dining.

Nobody's been closer to the growth and development of the complex than General Manager Neville Nicholson, a role he's held for all 25 years of operation in Rotorua.

"It's been a great experience helping to grow the numbers of people visiting Skyline Skyrides in the past 25 years, assisting staff to grow and achieve their goals, and contributing to the Rotorua visitor experience for tourists and locals alike," he says.

"There are a lot of great people who have contributed to the success of this property

and a lot of great stories I could tell about my time in the company.

"The greatest benchmark of the ongoing success of Skyline is that the children of children, who came along as kids with their parents, are now enjoying their first visit to Skyline Skyrides.

"We have positioned Skyline Rotorua now for the next 25 years and beyond by constantly investing in the property and staff training, we have an exciting future ahead."

Plans are now underway for celebrations around this milestone for later in the year for the public, trade, and staff to enjoy.



Warm weather brings the crowds

More domestic visitors and excellent weather in the upper North Island made Skyrides a very popular place this summer, for visitors and staff alike.

All of the hard preparation work for the busy season including staff training and in-depth planning paid off with customer surveys being returned with numerous positive comments.

The crowds kept coming, especially during the Christmas and New Year period when an extra temporary cash register and till had to be installed to handle the volume.

Staff can take a great deal of satisfaction in knowing the situation was well handled as the all-important word-of-mouth publicity machine generated these huge numbers and has kept Skyrides at the top of the 'must-do Rotorua' list.



SkyCity first choice for Festival fun

Winter Festival's around the corner and once again SkyCity Queenstown Casino is a proud sponsor.

The town-centre venue will be offering fantastic free live entertainment on site, including the Mardi Gras After Party with Jason Schmidt and the Rockers.

The casino's also the naming sponsor of the Winter Festival SkyCity Cabaret night on Thursday July 1.

Check out the free entertainment line-up and don't forget to pack your dancing shoes if you're heading south for the week

Fri Jun 25	9.30pm - Lipstick
Sat Jun 26	7.30pm – Live Rugby All Blacks v Wales 9.30pm - Pearly and the Oysterman
Tue Jun 29	9.30pm - Jason Schmidt and the Rockers
Thu Jul 1	9pm - Brett Strachan
Fri Jul 2	9.30pm – The Thunderbirds
Sat Jul 3	9.30pm - Groova

Win capital in poker adventure

SkyCity Queenstown Casino has been selected to host the NZPT Queenstown Alpine Adventure poker tournament again this year from July 20 to 25.

The New Zealand Poker Tour is a hotly contested series of events and early booking is advised as seats at this competition are bound to be in high demand.

The casino has also been running two 10-week satellite tournaments every Thursday and Sunday night since March.

The grand final for these tournaments will be held on July 15 and 18, and the winners will receive an entry into the SkyCity Alpine Adventure Tournament.

Players can buy in directly for \$2,500 for the chance to compete against some of the best poker players in Australasia.

The field is expected to number around 200 poker players all vying for a maximum prize pool of \$450,000 dollars (pot based on full participation).

Dining's a real safe bet at Wild Thyme

SkyCity's famous two-for-one dinners are back every Sunday with a whole new menu available, as well as a great drinks special. It's all on offer at Queenstown's best kept dining secret, Wild Thyme Bar and Restaurant where bookings are recommended (okay, some people already know the secret!).

The hugely popular \$10 lunch menu has been increased too, going from two

options to six with some amazing dishes including the renoenwed BLT, fish and chips, pasta, and beef sausages on bubble and squeak.

It's a real hit with locals dining with friends, family and business partners alike.

Skyline staff receive a 10 per cent discount on food and beverages at any time (excluding specials) too.