

EXECUTIVE TRAVEL

Waiheke resort construction starting

Graeme Kennedy

Work is scheduled to begin on Waiheke Island next month for the five-star \$50 million Langham Place Vineyard Resort and Spa (pictured), the first such property outside Asia.

Only two Langham Places are open, in Hong Kong and Thailand, with three others

planned for China.

The boutique 78-room Waiheke Island property near Onetangi will be built by Isola Estate and is expected to open by 2010.

The Tuscan-styled resort will feature a Chuan Spa, gymnasium, tennis courts, a premium restaurant and conference and banquet facilities for up to 300.

Incentive groups and wine tours will also be offered.

Isola managing director Brent Gibson said the development would create a new level for New Zealand's luxury wine tourism market and excite meeting planners seeking new ideas for conference destinations.

Langham Place is described as the "contem-

rary sister-brand" of Langham Hotels International which has six properties worldwide. Auckland managing director John Dick will leave next month to begin managing the first of Beijing's two Langham Places, a new downtown hotel with 422 rooms and 55 apartments, for its opening in November next year.



Top coach firm joins corporate market

Luxury coach operator Tim Cantlon has adapted his five-star tour product Green Realm Travel to the corporate conference and incentive markets.

The former Tourism Holdings coaching division general manager began Green Realm a year ago, aiming for top-level inbound tourists with 18-seat low-emission vehicles configured more like executive jets than buses.

"But in March this year we began strongly marketing to the business sector," Mr Cantlon said.

"We have since then carried groups from six to 300 New Zealand and Australian delegates for major corporate conferences and offer them the same five-star accommodation, dining and service we provide for our leisure travellers.

"Conferences are ideal for off-season revenue streams and professional meetings organisers are now coming to us to arrange top-level events.

"Green Realm was created to fill a gap at the top end of the market – a niche existed but no one was in it."

Mr Cantlon said the corporate sector also fitted his just-launched Boutique New Zealand product, which offers fully escorted luxury tours and hotels for groups limited to six people.

The concept includes land, water and air activities and cultural experiences popular in the incentive market, he said.

"We believe this is a logical extension of our product portfolio and gives the option for travellers to meet new people or travel together as a family group," Mr Cantlon said.

Boutique New Zealand will be ready for the coming summer season with 10 and 11-day North and South Island tours for around \$9500 twin-share and a 20-day nationwide trip at \$1740.

– Graeme Kennedy



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