



info desk

NEW ZEALAND prides itself on being a prime tourist destination – now it has even more reason to do so. Tourism Radio was launched this month, providing a service that will allow tourists to navigate their way around New Zealand from the comfort of a rental car using a fun and informative radio station. Combining unique software with GPS technology, Tourism Radio is essentially a radio station designed specifically for the self-drive tourist. The service acts as a virtual tour guide broadcasting, in real time, content on the area the listeners are in at any given time. Tourism Radio's IntelliPoint system overrides other broadcasts to play immediately relevant information. The service is the latest travel accessory for tourists who want to make their own way around New Zealand, in their own good time. Find out more about this service and how tourists can benefit from it at www.tourismradio.co.nz

IF YOU want to hang with the stars, Melbourne is turning circles to be your ideal destination. The largest observation wheel in the southern hemisphere and the third largest observation wheel in the world is about to be unveiled in Australia. The Southern Star observation wheel is located at Waterfront City in Docklands, Melbourne, and is expected to attract 1.5 million guests in its first year of operation. Standing 40-storeys high with a 120-metre orbit, the more than \$A100m wheel is only 15 metres lower than the London Eye. The Southern Star features 21 walk-around cabins, each measuring 5.6m by 3.7m. Each air-conditioned cabin holds up to 20 people and provides 360-degree views of

Melbourne, Docklands and the Port Phillip Bay area, and up to 40km beyond. At night, the wheel will become a spectacular light show, thanks to a world-first 3.7km LED lighting system. The Southern Star will operate 365 days a year. Each ride is expected to take about 30 minutes. www.thesouthernstar.com.au

IF ONE of your New Year's resolutions is to get fit, what better place to do it than in the great outdoors. Queenstown's Coronet Peak, known more for its snowy slopes in winter, now has a range of trails for novice and family mountain bikers ready for summer use. Previously, expert and advanced riders have been well catered for, but this season easier trails have been developed with the hope of attracting novice riders into the sport. The Coronet Peak bike park season opens on January 7 and will run until March 1. The park will be open between 11.30am and 7.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday each week of the season, weather permitting. A season pass for the park costs \$249 for adults and \$199 for youths. For more information on mountain biking at Coronet Peak visit www.nzski.com and click the summer tab.

THE NATIONAL Bank has just released the latest in smart travelling – a travel card. Billed as the best way to carry cash overseas, it operates just like a normal debit card, with a pin and chip for security but it is pre-loaded with the local currency of your destination so you can spend, and live, like a local. The National Bank will also provide two cards just in case something happens while you're away so

you don't have to wait for a replacement card. Unlike a credit card, you set your budget before you leave on your holiday and load up as much local currency as you think you will need on to the card. This also means it won't be affected by fluctuating currency changes. For more information, visit www.mytravelcard.co.nz

THE SECURITY of New Zealand travellers has been in the news recently following the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, and protesters closing airports in Bangkok, Thailand. At the time of going to print, the New Zealand government advisory for travellers is that there is some risk to personal security in Bangkok and they advise caution. Do not undertake travel to Thailand unless absolutely necessary. There is a high risk to personal security in Mumbai and tourist and non-essential travel is not advised because of the continuing threat from attacks. In other parts of India – Tripura, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland, Jammu, Kashmir and the India-Pakistan international border – there is also extreme risk to travellers, so the government advises against all travel to these areas.

Elsewhere in the world, caution is advised if travelling to Azerbaijan because of risks from terrorist activity and civil unrest. In Sudan, because of high levels of violent crime (including kidnapping) and terrorist activity, the government advises against all travel there.

For more information on foreign travel, visit www.safetravel.govt.nz



What goes round:
Melbourne's new Southern Star observation wheel is ready for launch.
Photo: Supplied

