

Media Release
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Top UK travel retailer profiles Qualmark in new brochure

One of the UK's leading travel retailers, Quest Travel, has become the first UK travel business to incorporate the Qualmark™ into its New Zealand dedicated travel brochure. This is a significant step in creating awareness for New Zealand tourism's official quality mark overseas.

The milestone will be celebrated at the World Travel Market (WTM), being held in London this week (10 - 13 November). The WTM is a global event for the travel industry where countries come together to showcase their offerings.

Both the Minister of Tourism, Hon Mark Burton, and Tourism New Zealand chief executive, George Hickton, are at the event to support New Zealand's involvement as well as to endorse Quest's support of the Qualmark™.

Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive, George Hickton, says that the inclusion of the Qualmark™ in the Quest brochure, which will be released in early 2004, is a significant step forward for New Zealand's marketing efforts in such important market.

"The UK is our second-largest market in terms of visitor arrivals, so to be able to offer UK travellers this form of quality assurance plays an important part in helping to ensure they have an exceptional experience in New Zealand," says Mr Hickton.

"The Quest brochure offers an ideal platform to spread the quality message, as Quest specialises in long haul travel to destinations such as New Zealand. A large part of their client base also fits the profile of the 'Interactive Traveller', who has been identified as New Zealand's ideal visitor."

"These travellers are looking for active and learning experiences, and expect good facilities and services as part of their experience. The Quest brochure incorporating the Qualmark™ will make it easier for these travellers to identify quality products and services that will deliver on their expectations."

Quest Travel managing director, Dave Simmons, says the inclusion of the Qualmark™ in their brochure will offer great value to Quest's clients and to the greater UK marketplace.

"I believe that the concept and values of the Qualmark™ are extremely positive for the New Zealand tourism industry and demonstrates a real desire to ensure visitors to New Zealand have sufficient information to choose product that is appropriate to their needs and then meets their expectations," he says.

"I am thrilled that we are assisting to launch the Qualmark™ in the UK marketplace to help our customers become aware of the New Zealand specific tourism licensing system before arriving in the country."

Local support as well

Qualmark is also receiving significant support from a leading inbound tour operator. ATS Pacific are specialists in providing inbound travel management services for New Zealand, Australia and Fiji for international tour operators they have included details of the Qualmark™ system in their latest travel manual, which will be released to travel wholesalers around the world this week.

ATS Pacific Marketing Manager, Jan Haynes, comments: "The Travel Trade Planner produced for our clients, is a one-stop information source for international staff developing New Zealand travel programmes for travellers from around the world. By introducing the Qualmark™ system to this manual, ATS Pacific believes overseas staff selling New Zealand will be better informed about the quality of service our suppliers offer. Qualmark is offering a consistent quality assurance programme for our industry."

Qualmark chief executive, Fiona Luhrs, says that the support of these two leading tour operators is a sign that travel businesses around the world are starting to take Qualmark very seriously.

"The Qualmark™ provides tour operators with a robust and trustworthy system that they can count on to assist their clients in selecting and selling quality New Zealand product," says Ms Luhrs.

"As the number of Qualmark™ star graded and endorsed businesses grows, so will the support of travel intermediaries who are realising the value the system has in building and sustaining the success of their businesses."

Notes to editor

The Qualmark™ is New Zealand tourism's official quality mark and is backed by Tourism New Zealand, New Zealand Automobile Association, Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIANZ) and other leading industry organisations.

Qualmark licences accommodation and tourism businesses to use the Qualmark™. Eligibility is determined by an onsite assessment and ongoing customer feedback. The assessment takes the form of a star grading system for accommodation businesses and a quality endorsement system for other tourism businesses, such as visitor activities, attractions and transport.

Qualmark acts as a service to the tourism industry, assisting operators to improve business practices and their delivery of visitor experiences. It is the way the industry directs travellers to quality assured products and services. Currently over 1000 accommodation and other tourism businesses are part of the Qualmark™ licensing system.

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