

CITY BEAT

WITH GLEN NORRIS



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PROFESSOR'S WANDERLUST

SENTINEL Property's Michael "The Professor" Sherlock has had the travel bug since he was a kid. Now the former Brumby's boss, who has visited 113 countries over the years, has had his passion vindicated by international travel site TripAdvisor. Sherlock (illustrated) has topped TripAdvisor's leader board as the No 1 Queensland-based reviewer after writing more than 1400 individual reviews of international hotels, restaurants and attractions. Sherlock heard about the honour while on his most recent travels, in which he took in this month's Euroshop retail trade show in Dusseldorf, Germany, alongside Sentinel Property Group pals Warren Ebert and Michael Kopittke. On the way home, he added Israel and a handful of neighbouring countries to his tally. Sherlock, who spent four years backpacking around the world in his youth, says he spends a lot of time in airport lounges and this gives him the time to reflect and write about his experiences. His most scathing reviews have been of restaurants and hotels in Cuba. He says the place has been overrun with American tourists since the détente between the US and the communist island but tourist infrastructure remains woeful. "We went to restaurants where they did

not have enough chairs or knives and forks," he says. "You had to eat your dinner with a teaspoon. The hotel where we stayed was a fire trap." Sherlock, who is the marketing guru at Sentinel and an adjunct professor at Griffith University's Asia-Pacific Centre for Franchising Excellence, says his most glowing review was

reserved for a boutique hotel in El Salvador. Of course, everything is luxurious compared to his backpacking days where his experiences included almost being kidnapped and shot at in Laos and being targeted by a gang boss in Thailand.

OPPORTUNITY KNOX MORGANS chief economist Michael Knox has popped up as a non-executive director of local debt chasing firm Collection House Group. Knox, who has been with Morgans since 1988, is also a former Australian Trade Commissioner for Saudi

Arabia and Indonesia. Collection House chairman Kerry Daly says Knox has "specialist capabilities in predictive analytics and financial modelling". Those skills may come in handy as the Brisbane company last month vowed to go harder after people who owe money.

BUILDING UP

GOOD to see some confidence in our local engineering sector. UK-based JBP has recently set up shop in Queensland and is doing work with councils on coast infrastructure. JBP managed to rustle up some politicians this week for an official launch even though they've actually been in Brisbane's Spring Hill for about four months. They have about five staff so far, and director Dan Rodger said they planned to use Brisbane as a base for Australian and Pacific work. JBP's work to date included assessing the financial value of coasts with the likes of Moreton Bay council, and they are specialists in flood-risk maps. Rodger said State Government support and Brisbane's environment - including being business-friendly in terms of rent - helped in the decision to set up here. JBP is part of UK-based JBA Consulting.

SIGNS OF THE TIME

AN UPDATE on those long broken TransLink passenger information signs at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) bus station. You might recall the signs have been inoperative for more than two months, much to the chagrin of hospital staff and patients wanting to catch a bus. TransLink now tells us the signs are unable to be repaired and will be replaced by the end of this month. It says the signs, which were installed in 2009, can develop technical faults for a range of reasons. That's little cheer for the walking wounded making their way to and from the hospital without knowing when the buses will arrive or depart.

