

A quest for Travellers Choice Gold

A GROUP of award-winning Travellers Choice members ventured to Ecuador's interior last month on an Adventure World itinerary that read like the plot of a Jules Verne novel.

The 'ripping yarn' began with a three-night cruise into the heart of Ecuador's Amazon and included encounters with an array of colourful locals, including monkeys, sloths, toucans, macaws and even some notoriously shy pink Amazon dolphins.

A few brave souls even dipped their feet into the black waters of Lake Piranha and had their toes duly nibbled by some curious – but thankfully not too hungry – inhabitants.

The agents – all Gold Choice Award winners – then jumped aboard an antique steam locomotive for the 'Train of Wonders', a luxurious journey from the Andes to the Pacific coast via the Avenue of Volcanoes, charming Haciendas and the mythical Devil's Nose pass (one of the steepest stretches of railway in the world).

Each year a total of 30 Travellers Choice members are awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze Choice Awards based on their level of support for preferred suppliers. As well as dedicated educational trips, winners enjoy exclusive sales incentives and service grants worth up to \$1,500 per agency. For more information please visit www.travellerschoice.com.au.



MEETING the locals and their traditional Ecuadorian devil masks!

CONQUERING the Andes: Sherrilyn Wigg, Discover Travel & Cruise; Lucinda Metcalfe, Maria Slater Travel; Lesley Shepherd, Select World Travel; Deb Long, Weston Cruise & Travel; Christian Hunter, Travellers Choice; Leonie Ivey, Windsong Travel; Tania Allen, Oliver Travel; Mark Brady, Ballina Cruise & Travel; Dave Hulsman, Ucango Travel and Ana Salazar, Adventure World.



EMBARKING on the 'Train of the Wonders'.



GOLD Choice winners in Ecuador's capital Quito.

CHRISTIAN Hunter with the last glacier-ice merchant, who hauls blocks of ice from Mount Chimborazo to sell to local traders.



TREVOR rides with a chagra (Ecuadorian cowboy).



3,600M above sea level in the Andean highlands.



A DEADLY jungle blowpipe-wielding Dave Hulsman with fellow 'hunter' Travellers Choice mascot Trevor.