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REEF

HAMILTON ISLAND & THE GREAT BARRIER REEF MAGAZINE

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Time Out

Whenever I'm here on Hamilton Island, I am constantly delighted to see how you, our guests, enjoy and appreciate the ever-evolving vision my father had when he surprised our family back in 2003, and said "I think we're going to buy the island".

History now speaks for itself, but I can vividly recall that we were all having a bite to eat on the island's harbour during another exciting Race Week at the time, and to say we were a little surprised is an understatement.

But just as Dad's energy and ideas soon captivated our family, we have all watched on as you have either come here for the first time, revisited on a regular basis or now call the island home. Each time, enjoying the changes, surprises and new experiences on offer.

Personally, it is an incredibly warm and wonderful feeling to know that the many things our family hoped for are now enjoyed by so many of you.

This latest issue of *REEF Magazine* takes us all back to a time well before our involvement with Hamilton Island. *Island Evolution* gives a glimpse into the history of this beautiful place we are all connected to, highlighting the island's history and growth in popularity from over 250 years ago until the present day.

Our cover story looks at some of the breathtaking architecture on the island, drawing on the landscape, climate and incredible vistas as part of their design philosophies.

A great deal has changed since the island 'opened for business' in 1982 - incidentally, the same year the first Race Week was staged. Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, as it is now known, has grown to become a hugely

popular drawcard on the international yachting calendar. Rob Mundle, our great friend and noted yachting commentator, looks at last year's event, including the story behind the special guest appearance by that pinnacle of yachting supremacy - the original, 160-year old America's Cup.

Another historically popular event here is the annual Hamilton Island Cup, a major fixture on the international competitive outrigger circuit. Usually, we see outriggers from across the world descend on the island but this year we are significantly expanding the event. Now a four-day paddle-fest to be known as the Gatorade Battle of the Paddles, it will include Surf Ski, Stand-Up Paddle Boarding and Board Paddling disciplines.

Keeping with the sporting theme, and with the London Olympics firmly in mind, my daughter Lyndal, riding our family's horse Potifar, is attempting to follow her cousin, Kristy (who represented Australia in the dressage competitions at both the Sydney and Beijing Games) and become our family's second Olympic dressage rider by being selected for the Australian 2012 Olympic equestrian team. I hope you will join me in wishing Lyndal all the very best.

We are very pleased to have you join us at this point in time and, just as my family and I were back on that life-changing day in 2003, we trust you will continue to be happily surprised by what is on offer here on Hamilton Island.

Sandy

Sandy Oatley
Chairman

Contents

REEF Magazine

Issue 01/2012

DEPARTMENTS

Highlights

Upcoming events on Hamilton Island 06

The Bare Essentials

No trip to Hamilton Island would be complete without... 10



UP CLOSE

Wish You Were Here

Australian actress Teresa Palmer has the world, and Hollywood, at her feet 38



ON THE WATER

World Class

A world class event, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week in 2011 sets new records and new standards 16



THE ART OF EXCELLENCE

Going for Gold

Although geographically miles away, the London Olympics 2012 has close ties with Hamilton Island 50

ON THE GREEN

What a Round

Golfing great Karrie Webb takes on the stunning course that is Hamilton Island Golf Club 30



ISLAND LIFE

Island Evolution

From humble beginnings, Hamilton Island has become a world class destination with a rich history 54

Grand Designs

Drawing inspiration from the landscape and vista, stunning architecture has become a feature of Hamilton Island 24



Retail Therapy

Your island shopping guide 08

Island Home

Your guide to owning your own piece of paradise 62

Hamilton Islander

From Ireland to a place in the Whitsundays, Ciaran Handy has found home in paradise 46

The Spectator Fleet

From high fashion to high flying – nothing compares with the glamour and excitement of Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 20

Battle of the Paddles

Outrigger, surf ski or paddling – dig deep and give it all you have for the Battle of the Paddles 32

THE LITTLE THINGS

Island Oasis

An exciting initiative sees new employment opportunities and new beginnings in paradise 36

AT THE TABLE

Recipe for Perfection

The Great Barrier Feast and the brilliance of Dan Hunter 12

ON THE REEF

Majestic Giants

Little is known about the habits and movements of the Manta Ray. Research into these graceful giants of the deep is providing some of the answers 42

WORK AND PLAY

Down to Business

Not just a favourite with those looking to relax, but the perfect location for business as well 58

Highlights

Hamilton Island 2012 Events

Hamilton Island is an inspiring destination for many, including some of Australia's finest food and wine experts, artists, designers and sportspeople, who choose the island as a place to shine in their chosen fields. Whether it be enjoying fine food and wine with great Australian chefs at the Great Barrier Feast series, a thrilling outdoor performance by The Australian Ballet, or learning photography with some of the best photographers in the country, these are experiences that are simply unforgettable.



For more details on Hamilton Island's exciting calendar of events, visit www.hamiltonisland.com.au/events. To book your accommodation and flights, contact Hamilton Island Holidays on **137 333 (02 9433 0444)** or email vacation@hamiltonisland.com.au. For flights only call **1300 725 172 (02 9433 0444)** or email flights@hamiltonisland.com.au.



MAY 2012

6 Stamford Financial Hilly Half Marathon

Push yourself to the limit in Hamilton Island's stunning surroundings

JUNE 2012

14-18 Gatorade Battle of the Paddles

Be part of the action as the outrigger canoes take on surf skis and paddlers in this spectacular challenge

JULY 2012

6-8 Great Barrier Feast

Great Barrier Feast welcomes celebrated chef Guillaume Brahim

29 Jul – 3 Aug AWAY in the Whitsundays

AWAY Photography Workshop with hosts David Oliver, Peter Eastway and Bruce Pottinger

Giants of the Deep

Keep an eye open for migrating whales from July right through to September

AUGUST 2012

17-25 Audi Hamilton Island Race Week

Action on and off the water in the most celebrated regatta and social event in the Southern Hemisphere

OCTOBER 2012

1 Spring Festival

Celebrate the change of seasons with a dazzling array of Spring activities

NOVEMBER 2012

6 Melbourne Cup Magic

Enjoy the race that stops a nation with Hamilton Island's Melbourne Cup Day Lunch & Calcutta

10 Fujifilm Hamilton Island Triathlon

Take the challenge and test yourself in the famous Fujifilm Hamilton Island Triathlon

11 Fujifilm Whitehaven Beach Ocean Swim

Dive into the crystal waters for the Fujifilm Whitehaven Beach Ocean Swim

16-18 Pas de Deux in Paradise

Enjoy the magic of The Australian Ballet as never before at this unique event in paradise

DECEMBER 2012

1 Summer Festival

New activities and excitement to herald in the Summer season

13-20 SB3 Action

World class sailing action as the spectacular SB3s do battle at Hamilton Island

24 Season Celebration

Carols by Candlelight

31 New Year's Eve

See out the old year and welcome in the new with the celebration to end them all

Retail Therapy

No relaxing holiday is complete without some retail therapy, and you'll find plenty of opportunities on Hamilton Island.

Deus ex Machina
Available at **Marina Tavern Retail**
Ph: 07 4946 8180

Hamilton Island Retail Outlets

The Art Gallery – 07 4948 9675
Australia The Gift – 07 4946 9015
Breeze Resort Wear – 07 4946 9277
Floral Collections – 07 4946 9104
Foots Artworks – 07 4946 9062
General Store – 07 4946 9095
Hamilton Island Designs – 07 4946 8565
Hamilton Island Jewellery – 07 4948 9857

Island Hair & Beauty – 07 4946 8244
Lord Nelson Menswear – 0459 233 148
Marina Tavern Retail – 07 4946 8180
HI Golf Pro Shop – 07 4948 9760
HI Photography – 07 4946 8690
qualia Boutique – 07 4948 9473
Spa wumurdaylin – 07 4946 8669
Resort Centre Lobby Shop – 0427 148 952

Reef Lobby Shop – 0427 148 623
Resort Store – 0427 148 793
Swimwear Store – 07 4946 9281
Trader Pete's – 07 4946 0907
Video Store – 07 4946 8496

"It is our absolute pleasure to ensure each and every guest and visitor receives exceptional service, making your stay an even more memorable one"

– Leni Fries, Executive Concierge

At Your Service

Hamilton Island Concierge

Arranging a round of golf on Hamilton Island's championship golf course, booking a table for an intimate dinner, or organising that extra something for a special occasion, Hamilton Island has a team at the ready and at your service – literally. The Concierge team is here to help you with anything you can think of, and the things you can't, to ensure an unforgettable trip. From the simplest advice on what to do while you're here and how best to go about it, to elaborate plans that need a special inside knowledge, Island Concierge offers a seamless, professional service available to every guest visiting Hamilton Island.

See your dedicated Concierge located at the Yacht Club, Tour Desk, Reef View Hotel, Beach Club or qualia for personalised service that is open to all guests, visitors and residents.

The bare Essentials

It would be almost impossible to do everything on even an extended visit to Hamilton Island and the Great Barrier Reef, but for those wanting to get a good 'feel' for the area, there are at least 10 essential elements to any visit.



2 Simply Stunning

Whitehaven Beach is one place that simply must be experienced to be believed. Without doubt one of the most beautiful beaches on the planet, its dazzling white sand is the stuff of postcards.

Just a short boat trip from Hamilton Island, Whitehaven is the perfect spot for an intimate picnic for two or a day of exploration. Cruise Indigo's On the Edge, Fantasea Adventure Cruising, H2O Sportz and Hamilton Island Watersports all offer trips to Whitehaven.
cruiseindigo.com.au
fantasea.com.au
h2osportz.com.au



3 Fine Food

When the idea of kicking back and relaxing over a long lunch is the most pressing appointment in your diary, Hamilton Island is the perfect place to be. You are spoilt for choice in your search for fine food and wine, from the superb Bommie restaurant in the iconic Hamilton Island Yacht Club to any of the outstanding restaurants and cafes around the island. This is the perfect time to really take your time.

5 Dream Drives

The stunning 18-hole Hamilton Island Golf Club on neighbouring Dent Island is a must, not only for the serious golfer, but for anyone looking to improve their skills or just enjoy a round. With a Pro Shop stocking the latest golf apparel you can be sure to look the part, or hire a set of Callaway clubs and brush up with some lessons before enjoying lunch in the Clubhouse. Otherwise, back on Hamilton Island, you can also fine tune your game at the Palm Valley Golf Driving Range.

Hamilton Island Golf Club
Pro Shop 07 4948 9760 (59760)
Golf Driving Range 07 4946 8033 (58033)

4 Under Sail

Hamilton Island is the perfect place from which to set sail. From instruction for beginners to offshore skipper and international qualifications, stay and sail packages or skippered charters, the Whitsundays await you. As relaxing or as exciting as you like, riding a gentle breeze or literally 'hanging out' on the trapeze aboard Adrenalin Rush, a 36-foot Nacra catamaran – your experience under sail can be whatever you want it to be.
sunsailwhitsundays.com.au
adrenalinrushsailing.com.au
www.oceandynamics.com.au



6 Absolute Pampering

Feel the tension melt away when you visit Spa wumurdaylin and indulge in a choice of nourishing spa, massage and skin therapies utilising the beautiful signature LI'TYA and Waterlily products. If you are visiting the island for a special event or occasion, or just looking to spoil yourself, why not visit Island Hair & Beauty for a new look or professional makeover. The team also specialise in bridal party hair and beauty needs.
Bookings recommended
Spa wumurdaylin 07 4946 8669 (58669)
Island Hair & Beauty 07 4946 8244 (58244)



7 Natural Appeal

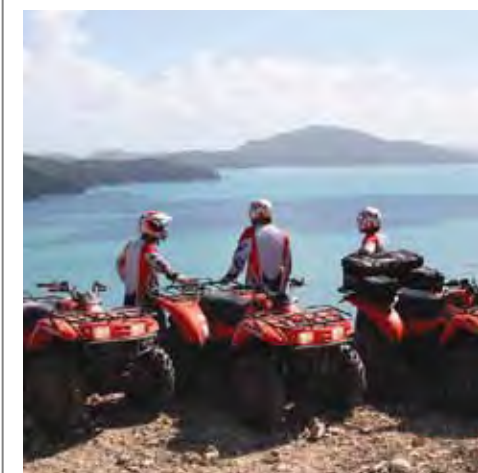
With more than 20km of walking trails on the island, a guided walk to the highest point, Passage Peak, will give you a fauna and flora lesson along the way and you'll be rewarded with amazing 360-degree views when you get to the top. If you're feeling even more adventurous, why not take a free audio tour of Passage Peak? Available from the Tour Desk in a range of languages, choose from either the 'Passage Peak Walk' or the 'Village Trail' to learn about the history of the island. Tours can even be downloaded onto your smart phone at hamiltonisland.com.au. Or, for something at sea level, there is no more relaxing way to experience the magnificent waters of the Whitsundays than from a sea kayak. Glide over the coral reefs and take in the spectacular schools of tropical fish as you guide your kayak through the pristine waters. *For walking trail maps and information on kayak tours, contact the Hamilton Island Tour Desk*

1 The Reef Experience

There is no limit to the ways you can enjoy and experience the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef. Whether it be from above with Hamilton Island Air, or from beneath the surface of the pristine waters, the reef defies description. Try snorkelling or a scuba dive experience with H2O Sportz. Venture out to Fantasea Adventure Cruise's amazing Reefworld on Hardy Reef where a world of wonders are on show through the special underwater viewing area. No matter how you see it, the Great Barrier Reef is an experience you will never forget.
fantasea.com.au
h2osportz.com.au
hamiltonislandair.com

8 Born to Ride

Negotiate the fire trails and tackle the island's rugged terrain on the Quad Bike Adventure Tour. Tremendous fun for ages 16 and up (for the younger thrillseekers, kids 6-14 years can try the quads for kids adventure course), take in some exciting countryside on the way to the Resort Lookout and some of the best views and photo opportunities on the island.



10 Baiting a Line

Renegade Fishing Charters offer private or share charters and the crew will even help clean and prepare your catch ready to eat that night. Or for something a little bit more relaxing, hire a dinghy and set off to explore the local waterways – Hamilton Island dinghy hire can supply bait and tackle.
renegadecharters.com.au



9 Pure Adrenalin

On Hamilton Island you will never be short of fun and adventurous things to do. The island's go-kart track will challenge the best, while the Kegel 9-pin Island Bowling centre boasts seven lanes and fun for the entire family. The universal favourite, mini golf, is always a winner and nothing beats getting out on your own Kawasaki jetski in the pristine waters.

For further information on all tours and activities, contact the Hamilton Island Tour Desk on **07 4946 8305 (58305)** or if you are on the island, visit the Tour Desk in the Resort Centre.
hamiltonisland.com.au/activities



Dan Hunter at the Electrolux Masterclass

Recipe for Perfection

Take the stunning vistas of Hamilton Island, add liberal amounts of relaxed atmosphere and mix in the finest chefs in the country and you have something very special. Finish with the country's finest wines and ingredients and you have the Great Barrier Feast.

STORY MATT ARMENDARIZ PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI



For those who have been blessed enough to have visited Hamilton Island, it goes without saying that it's nothing short of paradise in the Whitsundays. And if you've been further blessed by spending time at qualia, you'll know it's one of the most beautiful locations on the planet. With 60 individually designed pavilions, qualia sprawls out over several hilly acres, making its way to the edge of the island at Pebble Beach. With dozens of awards under its belt, including 2011's *Australian Gourmet Traveller* award for Best Australian Resort as well as Best Spa, there's a relaxed elegance to this place that is simply unmatched. Fusing a laid back and carefree attitude with service of astronomic levels makes for the very best of all worlds.

But just when one thinks the service, view and surroundings couldn't possibly get better, dozens of food lovers and a handful of Australia's best chefs converge for a weekend of haute cuisine with Hamilton Island's Great Barrier Feast, its most recent round held this past December. Now in its third year, Great Barrier Feast manages to do something many food and wine festivals fall short of – it combines a gastronomically-focused weekend of dining, education and pure fun without pretense, stuffiness or rigidity. Put a food event like this next to a backdrop of Hamilton Island's dark green peaks and jet blue water and you've got a recipe for perfection.

December's Great Barrier Feast featured award-winning chef Dan Hunter of the Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld, as he hosted two Electrolux Masterclasses and a showpiece Dinner, complimented by plenty of superb wines, selectively sourced Australia-wide, including of course Robert Oatley Vineyards.

With these gorgeous wines selected by Australia's own beloved wine critic James Halliday, the weekend was enceed by food writer and critic, Simon Thomsen, with a variety of food writers and editors in attendance. Guests from all over were treated to demonstrations of Chef Hunter's visually striking plates and creative cooking methods.

From Chef Hunter's kitchen in Dunkeld (three hours west of Melbourne), Dan creates cutting edge cuisine with razor-sharp attention to ingredients and preparation. With a long resume of impressive experience (he spent time at Mugaritz in Spain as well as at some of the world's finest restaurants), life at rural Royal Mail allows him to farm and grow his own produce, not to mention that it also affords him the opportunity to walk to work and do his own thing. What one may find most impressive, aside from the shockingly beautiful dishes he crafts, is his singular vision and commitment to local ingredients, many of them unique and not seen on the plate of your everyday restaurant. For the Great Barrier Feast, Chef Dan not only brought his favorite ingredients straight from his kitchen but also sourced local ingredients from Hamilton Island and the Whitsundays. It was local eating at its best.

Spend a few minutes with Chef Hunter and you realise what drives him to create these unique meals. "I think food needs to seem untouched. I live in a very natural environment. I wake up in the morning, I open my bedroom curtains and I see trees and mountains, kangaroos, my dog. I have a shower, I have breakfast, I walk to work, I walk down a hill, across a creek, through a fruit orchard and I see clouds, trees, leaves, my vegetable garden. What I don't see is



(Clockwise from top left) Dan Hunter divulging some of his trade secrets at the Electrolux Masterclass. The rapt Electrolux Masterclass audience. Dan Hunter and Simon Thomsen during the Electrolux Masterclass. Michael Shafran and Sarah Hyland. James Halliday entertains guests with his wine matching anecdotes. Suzanne Halliday, Lyndey Milan and Sally Webb. Dan Hunter plating up for the Showpiece Dinner. Simon Thomsen, Alastair Waddell, Jane-Therese Mulry, Dan Hunter and Nicky Tindill. Guest and highly acclaimed patissier, Adriano Zumbo, with emcee Simon Thomsen.

structure. I see irregular, naturally occurring things. So when I put food on a plate, I'm putting natural things down and it seems silly to me to try to construct it too much. I say this to my chefs all the time: we want it to look untouched, as if the hand of man hasn't been there. I mean, think of a forest with leaves on the ground, branches falling ... it's still beautiful. Imperfection in what we do and see are sometimes the most beautiful things."

Saturday night's showcase meal, held in qualia's Long Pavilion, was the crown jewel of the event. With live music and free-flowing glasses of Veuve Cliquot, guests mingled for a bit before finding their seats for the meal. Live video feeds from the kitchen screened through ad hoc stations set up throughout the pavilion allowed guests to observe first hand the Chef's precision and stringent vision. However, this precise style doesn't mean fussy or staid; course after course arrived with a delicious seasonal spontaneity and thoughtful editing of ingredients.

The Hamilton Island Great Barrier Feast is a study in absolute perfect moments; it's a place where sublime service, serene surroundings and the best chefs in Australia come together for an unparalleled weekend of celebrating food and wine. You may find it hard to return to regular life after a weekend at qualia; luckily for food lovers there's another fantastic weekend right around the corner. ■

Hamilton Island's next Great Barrier Feast will be held from 6-8 July, 2012 and features Sydney Chef Guillaume Brahimi of Bennelong. Individual tickets are available to all island guests. For more information or to book please call a Luxury Specialist on **1300 780 959** or visit hamiltonisland.com.au/events

- COLLETTE DINNIGAN - ERES - ESCAPULARIO JEWELLERY

GEORGE GINA & LUCY HANDBAGS - GOTTEX SWIMWEAR - LITTLE JOE -

LEFT TO RIGHT
Odyssey Vneck Drawstring Dress W Siren cape
Siren Grecian dress W Mermaid reversible cape and Medusa leggings
Siren Long angel cape

qualia
boutique



- AUSTRALIAN PEARLS - AXEL MARINO HATS - BVLGARI SUNGLASSES - CAMILLA -

- TRELISE COOPER - VERSACE - VICTOR ODIL SHOES - ZEGNA

- QUALIA BOUTIQUE, OPEN 10AM - 4PM DAILY FOR A PERSONALISED VIEWING CALL 07 4948 9473 (59473).

- REBECCA THOMPSON - SAMANTHA WILLS -

NAT SUI SHOES AND ACCESSORIES - PHYLLIS BOHO - PRADA SUNGLASSES -



World Class

From the spectacular racing to the on-shore celebrations, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week outdid itself in 2011. With celebrity guests from around the globe, including a 160-year-old yachting icon joining a massive fleet for the world class competition, it was the place to be.

STORY ROB MUNDLE PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

The America's Cup – the oldest trophy in the history of sport – is not something you would expect to see sitting proudly on a pedestal in Hamilton Island's magnificent yacht club. But there it was in all its glory; its highly polished and curvaceous surface reflecting the golden hues of the sun that was setting over Whitsunday Passage.

This bold and baroque silver ewer has tormented millionaires, billionaires and the world's finest yachtsmen for 160 years. Since 1851, when it was won in a regatta in Cowes, England, by the yacht that gave it its name, the schooner *America*, it has become the ultimate prize in the world of international yachting. But it is far more special than that: sporting history reveals that the contest for this remarkable trophy began before sports such as tennis, soccer, rugby union and cricket, as well as the modern Olympics, appeared on the world stage.

So, what was the America's Cup doing at Hamilton Island, along with the man who steered the yacht that won it for America in the latest series, Australia's Jimmy Spithill?

Its presence was a tribute to Bob Oatley (the patriarch of the Oatley family who own Hamilton Island). It was recognition for what he has done for yachting in Australia and internationally via the development of Audi Hamilton Island Race Week; for his on-going support of the Australian Olympic Sailing team, and his achievements in the Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race with his remarkable supermaxi, *Wild Oats XI*.

Because it is held in such high regard, the Cup always travels the world in a specially designed Louis Vuitton case, strapped into its own first class seat, and it was no different this time. Interestingly, while the Cup was high over the Pacific en route from San Francisco to Hamilton Island, it celebrated its 160th birthday. It was on 22 August, 1851 that the New York Yacht Club's rakish and radical schooner, *America*, beat the best yachts the English could muster in a race around the Isle of Wight. The stunning victory led to the Americans being awarded the Royal Yacht Squadron's '100 Guinea Cup', and it became the America's Cup. It was a victory that signalled the start of the longest winning streak in sporting history – one that lasted

for 132 years until the 'Little Aussie Battler', *Australia II*, claimed it in a dramatic series in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1983. The come-from-behind victory it achieved in the final race literally stopped the nation and caused incredible celebrations, the likes of which had never previously been seen in Australia, or since for that matter.

The America's Cup visit to Audi Hamilton Island Race Week was organised by Iain Murray, the Commodore of Hamilton Island Yacht Club. Murray is also the CEO and Regatta Director for the next America's Cup match, which will be staged in San Francisco next year.

Much to the delight of the crews of the 195 yachts contesting Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, three special seminars were held during the regatta so Iain Murray, Jimmy Spithill and the man who accompanied the Cup to the regatta, 30-year America's Cup legend Tom Ehman, could bring everyone 'up to speed' on developments for the next match for the Cup, one which will see unbelievably fast, 22-metre long super catamarans competing for the prize.

Being at Audi Hamilton Island Race Week certainly was an eye-opening experience for Ehman. He'd heard plenty about the internationally acclaimed event, but what he saw was something very special, as his parting comment reflected:

"Hamilton Island Race Week is the best kept secret in the world of yachting. The organisers of any major race week should look at how Hamilton Island makes this more than a sailing event: it's also a social and cultural happening. Through resources, imagination and hard work it has really come into its own."

As Ehman suggested, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2011 set itself apart from any other similar regattas in Australia, possibly the world. The weather was perfect, the racing keen, exciting and satisfying, and the party atmosphere onshore second to none.

The sailing scene on the island-laced waters of the Whitsundays was nothing short of



spectacular. The yachts left a zigzag pattern of white wakes on the sapphire-hued sea while spinnakers continually brought an impressive blaze of vibrant colour to the natural surrounds. There were many outstanding results across the 12 divisions, none more so than that of Sydneysider Marcus Blackmore, who had dreamt of winning the major prize at Hamilton Island after taking out what he refers to as 'The Chocolate Box Division' - the Arbitrary Handicap Division - at the inaugural Race Week in 1984.

For this Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, Blackmore purchased one of the world's fastest 52-footers, named it *Hooligan* then assembled the best crew possible, including Australia's multiple Laser world champion and Rolex ISAF World Sailor of the Year, Tom Slingsby. By the end of the week Blackmore had achieved his dream of 28 years: he won the Grand Prix IRC division by a handsome margin, and in doing so claimed the Audi IRC Australian Championship as a bonus.

Back on shore there was the full spectrum of social activities for the sailors and their friends and families to enjoy, from dockside celebrations and nightlife dance parties on the harbour front through to stunning fashion parades, sumptuous lunches and dinners, fabulous entertainment and relaxing sunset drinks at the yacht club's Bommie Deck. This wonderful atmosphere was topped off by plenty of familiar and friendly faces around the waterfront and on the yachts, including Naomi Watts, Megan Gale, Tom Williams, Matt Moran, Shannon Bennett, Catriona Rowntree, Sandra Sully and Mark Beretta.

When the curtain came down on the 28th edition of Audi Hamilton Island Race Week it was considered one of the most successful to date. Now, the organisers are busy planning Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2012, which will be staged from August 17 to 25. It is anticipated that the fleet will again number near 200, and if early entries are any indication, that looks like being the case. ■

To find out more about Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2012, visit hamiltonislandraceweek.com.au

Destination n3xt.

Introducing the new Audi Q3 urban SUV.

Blending the strengths of an SUV with advanced driving dynamics, exceptional efficiency and coupé-inspired lines, the new Q3 is the urban SUV that only Audi could create. Perfectly attuned to a contemporary urban lifestyle, it is equally at home on busy city streets or a weekend adventure. Performance is also assured, with quattro® permanent all-wheel drive* and dual clutch S tronic transmission* that combines the sportiness of a manual with the convenience of an automatic. The new Audi Q3. It's the driving experience you've been waiting for - and Destination n3xt for progressive drivers.

To experience the new Audi Q3 urban SUV for yourself, visit your preferred Audi Dealer or audi.com.au



AUDI5222/Q3RM/FPC *Not available on 2.0 TDI manual.



Australian Yachtsman and America's Cup winner, James Spithill, with the sport's most sought after trophy

"Hamilton Island Race Week is the best kept secret in the world of yachting," Tom Ehman, America's Cup legend.



The Spectator Fleet



Bob Oatley (left), James Sprhill and Iain Murray with the coveted America's Cup



Melissa Hoyer



Deke and Eve Miskin

Audi Hamilton Island Race Week

One of the greatest combinations of sporting prowess and social style, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week always attracts an eclectic mix of people from around the globe – and 2011 was no exception!



Audi Australia Managing Director, Uwe Hagen, with Catriona Rowntree and Shannon Bennett



Sandra Sully and Matt Moran



Gail Elliott and Jo Coffey



Naomi Watts



Collette Dinnigan and husband Bradley Cox



SKB Krew



Henri Lloyd Fashion Parade

Fun, fresh and fantastic – Henri Lloyd never fails to make the right impression. An explosive performance by the SKB Krew to open proceedings, paved the way for a stunning fashion parade styled by Ken Thompson. This really is 'one for the sailors', with many of those competing during the week strutting their stuff on the catwalk.



'Collette' by Collette Dinnigan

For the first time ever at AHIRW, Collette Dinnigan presented a second parade, this time as part of the Wild Oats Wines Ladies Lunch. Held at the iconic Hamilton Island Yacht Club, it showcased her diffusion range.



Kylie Speer and Louise van de Vorst



Matt Moran, Sandra Sully, Collette Dinnigan, Uwe Hagen and Megan Gale



Megan Gale



Anthony Bell, Kelly Landry and Larry Emdur



Collette Dinnigan's Cruise Collection Launch

Held at qualia's Pebble Beach, Collette Dinnigan's annual Cruise Collection is one of the biggest events on the fashion calendar. With the ever-glamorous Megan Gale emceeing the evening and internationally acclaimed model, Louise van de Vorst on the catwalk, it was a stellar event.



Backstage makeup by MAC

Moët and Chandon Lunch

Nothing goes together quite as well as a warm island day and a glass of bubbles, and the Moët and Chandon lunch, held at qualia's Long Pavilion was a perfect place to enjoy both.

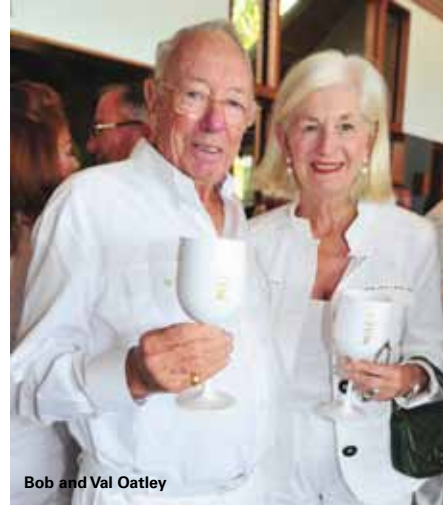
DJ Simon Philby



Layne Beachley and Kirk Pengilly



James and Jennifer Spithill



Bob and Val Oatley



Gracie Otto

Cool as Ice - Moët Ice Imperial launch

Where better than the Whitsundays for a new champagne launch? Naturally, Moët and Chandon chose Hamilton Island as the place to launch its new Moët Ice Imperial champagne with a superb event at Hamilton Island's inspiring Yacht Club.



Tom Williams



Kelly Landry



Moët and Hennessy Managing Director, Boris de Vroomen with wife Liesbeth (left) and Katie Jacobs



Kylie Speer



Nicky and Troy Tindill



Victoria Schultz and Sophie Baker



Katie Jacobs of Moët Hennessy

The MAC Team

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Grand Designs

It is hardly surprising that such a stunning location as Hamilton Island has provided the inspiration for some of the most spectacular structures in the country. Sensitive to the environment, embracing and harmonising with the elements, these buildings compliment their surroundings and bring their own contribution to this island paradise.

STORY ROBERT MCMILLAN PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI,
RENATO D'ETTORRE ARCHITECTS

For a student of architecture or even an enthusiastic admirer, an afternoon spent driving or walking around Hamilton Island is time well spent. If only from a 'wishful thinking' perspective, the island boasts some of the most spectacular buildings in Australia and indeed, many would have to rate on a world ranking, such are their extraordinary designs, set against a backdrop that never fails to inspire.

Of its 740 hectare land mass, more than 70 percent of Hamilton Island is maintained in its natural state, and the ideology when it comes to development and building on the Whitsunday island is that structures must be sympathetic to their surroundings to maintain an all-important balance and harmony. No jarring structures allowed.

Indeed, outstanding architecture has become a feature of Hamilton Island, as both private homes and holiday retreats, as well as the newest world class facilities like qualia and the iconic Hamilton Island Yacht Club are testament to the importance the Oatley family place on striking architectural design that compliments rather than competes with the surrounding environment.

Although the designs can differ enormously from home to home, Hamilton Island has its own distinctive style. The work of master architect, Chris Beckingham (the man behind many of the glorious private homes, as well as qualia and the Hamilton Island Golf Club clubhouse), is instantly recognisable through

his use of local materials, the combination of stone and wood together creating a feeling of solidity and oneness with the environment.

Keeping it simple and uncluttered and letting the landscape tell the story was the basis of his design philosophy and the approach he used when asked to design qualia.

This was exactly the quality Bob Oatley was after in the unique resort property, and a design ethos he was so impressed with, he had Chris Beckingham design his own home on Hamilton Island.

It's difficult to actually pinpoint the style, but Beckingham is happy with that:

"If it's hard to describe the architecture, that's good," he says. "That means that the building

and design don't dominate or detract from the views and the location."

The striking entrance to the Long Pavilion at qualia is a perfect case in point, the eye is drawn through the room and straight out to the view of the Coral Sea behind – the building elements effectively framing the picture. That is just the 'wow factor' Bob Oatley was after, yet the design is a study in simplicity.

Other simple elements from as far away as New Guinea were also employed to great effect. Bob Oatley spent many years working in New Guinea in his earlier days, and both he and Beckingham share a fondness for the place and its architecture.

The open design of the New Guinea Club



(Preceding page) Azuris takes full advantage of the climate. (Clockwise from top) The entrance to qualia's Long Pavillion never fails to impress.

Solis brings the outside in. Solis is an inspiring property at home with its surroundings. qualia's warm natural materials marry with the landscape.

in Rabaul, played a part, given that in spite of having no air conditioning it was the coolest building in New Guinea.

"The open design, allowing the cross flow of air ... that was incorporated into the design," Bob Oatley recalls.

The result is a very special place that never fails to leave an impression on anyone visiting the property. Bob and the Oatley family are on record as saying they couldn't be happier with the final building, and even the very quietly-spoken Beckingham admits it is "... the culmination of his career."

Taking a completely different approach, yet still creating a masterpiece that seems perfectly in sync with its surroundings, is the

stunning property Solis. Sydney architect Renato D'Ettorre was commissioned to create a dwelling that would make the most of the breathtaking vistas and tropical climate. The result is a smooth, modern design that remains sympathetic to its surroundings – impressive in its execution, and yet not dominating or competing with its surroundings in any way.

"For a site like that, you really don't need too much of a detailed brief," says Renato D'Ettorre of the Solis genesis.

"It's really about responding to the environment, to the climate and to the topography," he says. "The site always has to rule, and guide you to what the house or the architecture should be."

Certainly, the topography of the site played a significant role in the final design, with a slope in the order of 30 to 40 degrees, the unavoidable under cross space was utilised for two of the three bedrooms, as well as for the plant room.

"With a sloping site you always get under cross spaces," says D'Ettorre "and you either expose them and have the property on stilts, or you make use of them."

"We decided to use them and place two of the bedrooms there."

This positioning in fact puts them right under the stunning swimming pool, which not only serves a structural role according to Renato, but has the dual role of providing additional insulation to these rooms – not to mention the

superb views.

A combination of concrete and block work, with extensive use of glass, Solis seems to morph from the surrounding landscape, a less formal finish used on the concrete for a more textured result and much softer feel.

"The colour and the material relates to the surrounding setting, and it (concrete) is robust and has the thermal properties to keep the house cool in summer and warm in winter."

This choice of material also facilitated another key design element, that of the building being 'transparent'. Being able to open up to the island climate and become one with the outdoors was an important consideration, and the result is a dwelling that you can actually see

through from any angle.

"We eliminated all periphery walls," says D'Ettorre. "Only certain walls are there and these are for structural reasons and obviously for a certain level of privacy."

Aside from capturing the outlook from all living spaces, this approach allows for maximum airflow in the tropical climate and from an aesthetic perspective, means that minimal concrete was required in the upper levels of the building, giving it a 'lighter' feel.

The result, from any angle is stunning – a perfect 'platform' from which to enjoy the breathtaking views.

Not surprisingly, Solis has collected a raft of awards, from the Robin Dods Award for

residential architecture, to House of the Year (Central Queensland region) from the Australian Institute of Architects.

Indeed, another of Renato D'Ettorre's designs in the same area of the island, Azuris, is nominated for a number of designs this year. This three bedroom dwelling incorporates projecting roofs creating gentle transitions between the elements and the interior. Once again sympathetic to the climate and surrounds, the walls and devices used for shade are easily opened to bring the outside in, as well as improving airflow and reducing the need for air conditioning or artificial lighting.



A unique design that seems to morph from the shoreline and anchor the marina. The iconic Hamilton Island Yacht Club leaves a lasting impression.



Hamilton Island's iconic Yacht Club represents a completely different style of structure, but one that still celebrates its surrounds. Architect Walter Barda's flowing design anchors the whole marina precinct, drawing inspiration from the sea and sailing, with the building seeming to emerge from the water's edge.

"I sensed an opportunity that the yacht club project should celebrate and enhance its site," remembers Barda of his first visit to the location perched on the edge of Dent Passage.

"I remember Bob Oatley's enthusiasm for 'sails and water' as a starting point for the imagination."

Bringing together all of the elements that make the island so special and mark it as a unique location, Barda describes his ultimate interpretation as:

"... a celebration of tropical, marine life and boat form and the drama of yachts taking on the natural forces of wind and water," says Barda of the design which has become one of the most distinctive and celebrated buildings in the region.

Realising such an ambitious design was no mean feat; conditions peculiar to the area were a major consideration in the construction process, such as the five metre daily tides and the condition of the ground at the site.

Yet, despite practical challenges, the building with its sail-like roof 'opening up' and presiding over the marina has become a reality.

The unique composition manages to make a bold statement, yet sits with the surrounding land and sea scape. The daring elements, unusual angles and shapes employed, first capture the eye and then guide it around the structure.

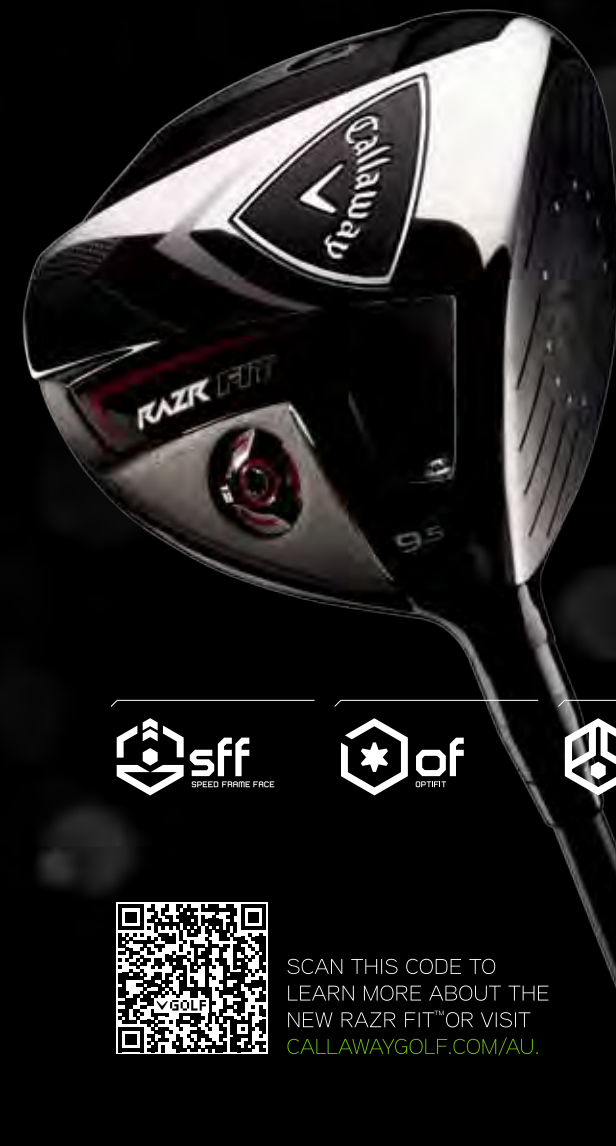
The nautical inspirations are obvious, yet other facets are more organic and draw on the sea and its moving changing shape.

"The imagery of the building provokes many analogies, yet the ambitious perspectives of the building will keep us guessing as to what it all means, but hopefully strike a chord of emotion about this beautiful place," says Barda.

The natural beauty of this island and region are a given, and designs like these have used these existing elements and 'natural architecture' in their own grand designs. ■

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What a Round



Taking on the spectacular Hamilton Island Golf Club layout, Australia's greatest-ever female golfer, Karrie Webb, came away impressed with the course, the view and the challenge.

STORY ROHAN CLARKE
PHOTOGRAPHY JUSTIN BLANK

Rarely is a professional golfer moved to gush about a particular golf course. One course can start to resemble the next for the seasoned pro. However Karrie Webb was awestruck by her initial impression of the Hamilton Island Golf Club.

Webb visited the Whitsundays for a holiday last summer during her off-season when she resides in Townsville, just a short trip to her family's home in Ayr. The seven-time major winner was full of praise for the layout that made its debut at number 39 on *Australian Golf Digest's* biennial ranking of Australia's Top 100 Golf Courses. That places Hamilton Island as the fourth best course in Queensland and number 1 layout in the whole of northern Australia according to the country's most respected golf publication.

It was the degree of difficulty in combination with breathtaking scenery that left Webb gob-smacked by the Thomson Perrett design, which is situated on nearby Dent Island and requires a seven-minute ferry ride to traverse the 900-metre carry.

"It's one of the most challenging courses you will play with the most beautifully scenic backdrop of the Whitsunday Islands.

You won't play in a much better setting than Hamilton Island Golf Club," says Webb.

Dent Island is located within a world heritage marine park. Hence, it was a monumental task to transform the rugged terrain into what five-times British Open champion Peter Thomson labels "a sensible golf course". While a lot of vegetation was cleared to create the tees, fairway corridors and green complexes, a major emphasis was to retain as much tropical vegetation as possible.

Thomson Perrett made a conscious effort to make best use of the rugged, undulating topography and the result is a spectacular layout that has taken advantage of the unique location. Every hole has oceans views with the highest point being 140 metres above sea level. Webb commented:

"I think the par-3s are four of the most beautiful par-3s I've ever played."

Hamilton's short fourteenth (150 metres from the back tees) was Webb's favourite. Playing across a gully, it resembles the photogenic seventh at The National's Old Course on the Mornington Peninsula. "The backdrop behind and to the right of the green is stunning," says Webb. "It's a great look from

the tee with that background and the deep ravine to hit over in front of the green."

Familiarising herself with the work of Thomson Perrett has been a priority for Webb ever since they teamed in the tender process to design the golf course for the 2016 Rio Olympics. The hotly contested bid was narrowed to a shortlist of eight candidates as golf re-enters the Olympics after an absence of 112 years. Since the course will host tournaments for men and women in alternate weeks, some firms have opted for star power. Other high-profile pairings were Jack Nicklaus and Annika Sorenstam, and Greg Norman and Lorena Ochoa.

Previously, Webb had collaborated with Thomson Perrett on course proposals at Laguna Quays and Keysborough Golf Club in Melbourne. On the Rio proposal, Thomson and his design partner Ross Perrett were very impressed by Webb's instinctive design flair and comfortable confidence.

"She's very hands on," says Perrett. "Peter put the pressure on and he shoved a pen in her hand and said, 'Come on, show us what you can do.' A lot of people would have shied away from that. But she grabbed [the opportunity]".

For example, they re-jigged the eighteenth hole based upon Webb's design. It was completely contrary to what Thomson and Perrett had in mind originally. Webb suggested reversing the bunkering pattern on the double-dogleg par 5. That Thomson and Perrett embraced the idea suggests the partnership could evolve into something more substantial in the longer term.

"Having played on the tour for so long, she understands the game of all the best women golfers – which we don't," Perrett says. "It's also about attitude. She knows what they will take on and what they won't. The Korean girls aren't as gung-ho as Rory McIlroy for example. So she has an insight into the psyche of it as well."

Entering her 19th season as a professional, Webb's playing career is closer to the finish than the start. But a career as a course architect for the 37-year-old may be in its infancy. According to Perrett, she's very easy to work with and has an open, engaging personality. And she's got an eye for golf-course architecture.

"Even the way she held the pencil was like an artist. I think she's got it in her," Perrett

says. "Like most successful international golfers Karrie has been exposed to many of the best golf courses in the world. However not all have the ability to recall these experiences and apply them to golf course architecture." Karrie Webb though has no trouble translating her experience to design, or in offering some tips on how to best enjoy a particular course.

Karrie Webb's advice for the first-time visitor to Hamilton Island Golf Club? "I would either load up on golf balls or get someone who has played the course to show you where to go. Most importantly though, remember your camera!" ■

PLAYING THE COURSE

To book your tee time, contact Hamilton Island Golf Club on **(07) 4948 9760** or email: golf@hamiltonisland.com.au For further information about Hamilton Island Golf Club visit hamiltonislandgolfclub.com.au



Battle of the Paddles

Hamilton Island's famous outrigger competition will be bigger and even more competitive than ever this year, as new disciplines and more teams journey to paradise to churn the waters around Hamilton Island to foam!

STORY LEE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI,
COURTESY 2XU

The normally serene seas surrounding Hamilton Island are set to get more than a little churned up when one of the world's largest canoe regattas hits the water during the Gatorade Battle of the Paddles from 14-18 June this year. A fixture in the international competitive outrigger circuit since the mid 1980s, more than 600 paddlers from all over the country and the world are expected to take part in Australia's oldest and largest outrigger event, The Hamilton Island Cup, competing beside teams from Hong Kong, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Canada in some of the toughest racing in the world. This year, the event is going to be even bigger than ever, with a new name: the Gatorade Battle of the Paddles. Surf Life Saving Australia is joining in the fun and the outriggers will be joined by athletes from three other popular paddle disciplines,

surf ski, stand-up paddle board and board paddling. The four-day event features more than 100 sprint and medium-distance races and caters for every type of paddler. Races include a special long-distance downwind surf ski race course from Lindeman Island to Hamilton Island's Catseye Bay, a sprint stand-up paddle course, sprint, medium-distance and marathon outrigger races and the infamous 42 kilometre Hamilton Cup outrigger marathon on 17 June. That it takes place in the beautiful Whitsundays should come as no surprise – it's been a popular place for paddling for more than 9000 years! It wasn't for nothing that the original inhabitants of the Whitsundays, the Ngaro people, were known as the 'Canoe People' (see feature this issue on page 54). One of the earliest reports of the Ngaro was made in 1770 by Captain (then Lieutenant) Cook,

who noted in the Endeavour's logbook that "On one of the islands we discovered with our glasses two men and a woman, and a canoe with an outrigger, which appeared to be larger and of a construction very different from those of bark tied together at the ends, which we had seen upon other parts of the coast." They used these canoes, usually crafted from pieces of paperbark with an attached outrigger, to sail between islands, fishing and hunting along the way, impressing European explorers with their sailing and navigational skills. These days, the intrepid paddlers are still impressing onlookers, particularly during the National Changeover Titles when the six-person canoes race through the water, changing crew members as they go. "There's nothing like it in the world," says Ange Partington, President of the Hamilton Island Outrigger Canoe Club. "The cream

Below: Hawaiian Stand-up Paddle Board Champion, Jenny Kalbach, who will be competing at Gatorade Battle of the Paddles on Hamilton Island in June



HAMILTON ISLAND WEDDINGS KING OF THE MOUNTAIN FOOT RACE

Coinciding with the Battle of the Paddles is the King of the Mountain Foot Race, a gruelling 6km run to the top of Passage Peak, the highest point on Hamilton Island. After a relatively easy start across the flat through the resort, the trail soon hits the bush and ascending quickly (or not, depending on your fitness levels!) more than 800 metres before racing across the plateau to Saddle Junction. The final 200 metres to the peak is all steps and guaranteed to get both the lungs and legs burning. The view from the top is breathtaking (assuming you have any breath left to take) but there's no time to stop because the race isn't over until you've hit the beach and the glory goes to he, or she, who gets to the bottom first. It's a race for the fearless.

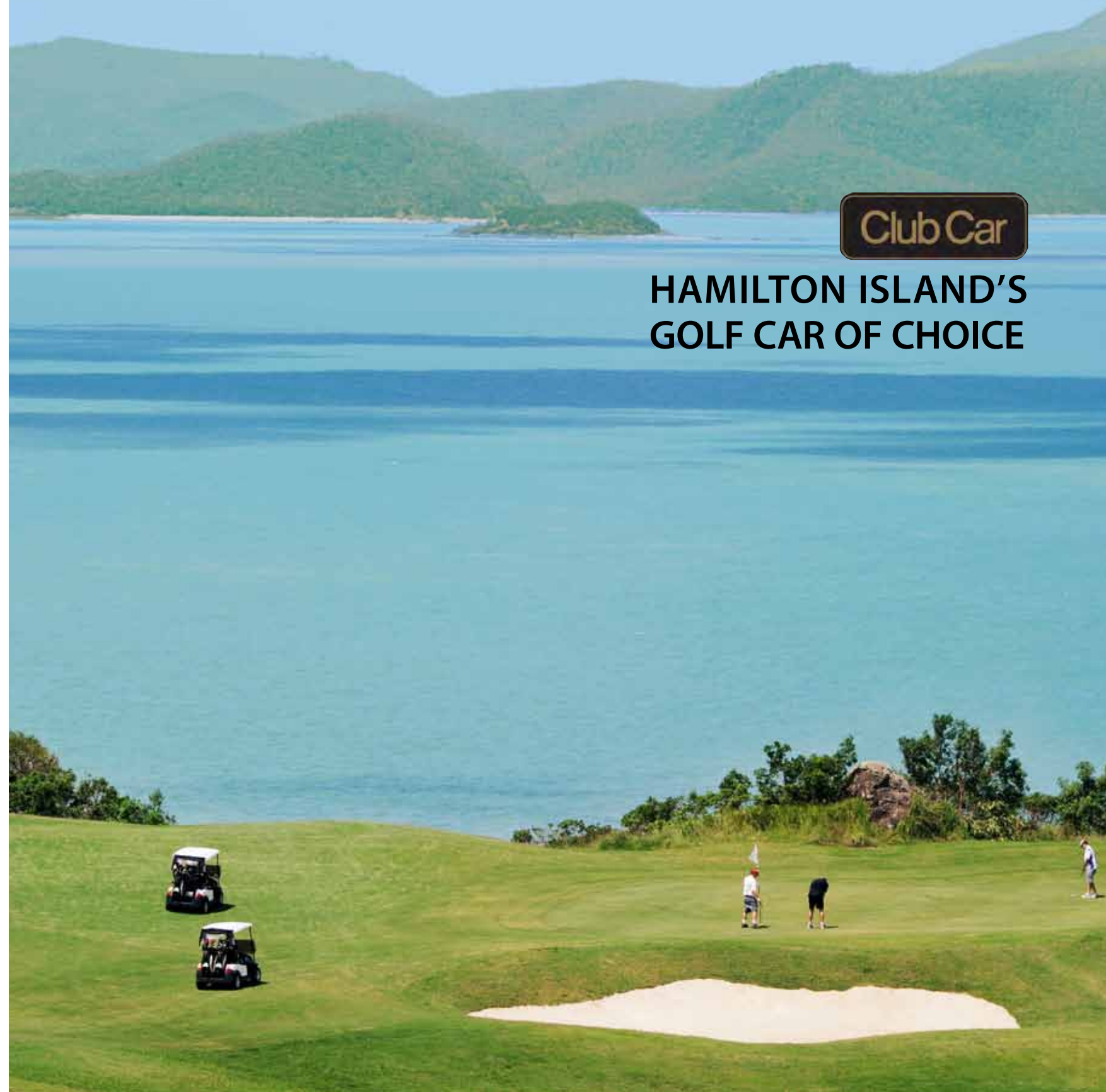
of the world's paddlers arrive on the island ready to compete. The same people come back year after year, but you never know what the end result will be. We have such extreme conditions here, one day can be entirely different from the last, which means in some ways it's a game of luck. The conditions on the water can change from a mill pond to a washing machine and back to perfect, all in one day. It's a tough event, but everyone loves the challenge".

First held in 1984 with just a handful of outriggers as a local inter-island contest, the Hamilton Island Cup quickly grew to become one of the country's richest outrigger events, with thousands of dollars in prize money up for grabs, a far cry from the early days when the main prize was not much more than a case of beer.

"When the race first started women were not even allowed to compete for the first four years," says Ange. "The 42 kilometre

changeover race was deemed to be too tough for the girls. What a joke!" she laughs. "Women now often beat the men's teams." But you don't have to paddle hard to play hard during the Cup. On-land activities during the four days include a trade expo, special beachside dining and race viewing facilities during the day, photography displays and even a Fun Zone where the kids can enjoy themselves. Each night, there is a big screen display with footage of all of the day's racing action, plus lots of live music and entertainment. A closing ceremony marks the end of the week on the last night and is the one party not to be missed. ■

To find out more about the 2012 Hamilton Island Battle of the Paddles, to be held from 14 -18 June, visit hamiltonisland.com.au/events



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Island Oasis

Hamilton Island has long enjoyed the reputation for being the place to go and recharge, but as part of an ongoing initiative, it is playing an even more significant role in the lives of young people looking to kick-start their future.

STORY JAMES MCRORY PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE SALVATION ARMY AND HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY

For visitors to this superb location the island represents an escape from the mundane every day. But for a special group of young people, Hamilton Island has come to mean a great deal more than a holiday escape, but rather, a chance at a whole new life and future.

In co-operation with the Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Support Network, Hamilton Island and the Oasis Pathways program has been offering a number of employment placements each year to young people actively seeking to change their circumstances, working on the island and gaining not only invaluable experience, but furthering their education and training in a new and inspiring environment. It helps them to make the crucial step into real employment, developing their skills and gaining the all-important experience required to build a career and radically change the direction

of their lives.

"These young people come to us from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds," says John Harris, The Salvation Army's Youth Liaison Officer for NSW, QLD and the ACT.

"We work with them to help change their attitudes, get their education on track and sort their accommodation," he says, but when it comes to actually getting employment and gaining experience, the lack of a resume, or even getting to first base and landing an interview puts the prospect of real employment beyond reach, says Harris.

"What Hamilton Island does is to provide an opportunity and we then work on the process of recruitment, to get that young person ready to take advantage of that opportunity. Everything else regarding the job, like the interview, the recruitment process, probation period, remuneration, is exactly the same as any other

potential employee. All we do is by-pass the competition in the job market, and we give the young person an opportunity to bridge a gap in their resume," says Harris.

"Oasis Pathways is a place that offers hope and points them in the right direction," says Major Paul Moulds of The Salvation Army.

Giving hope where in many cases all seemed lost has been pivotal in changing these lives. At just 15 years of age, one candidate came home to find that their mother had overdosed, the first tragic incident in what would become a long and increasingly hopeless period of homelessness and feelings of utter helplessness.

Upon discovering The Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Support Network, some sense of stability was restored, and then the chance to take positive steps for the future.

"I enrolled in the Pathways Program run by Oasis ... it was the first step I made in changing

my life," they said.

Another's life was turned upside down when their parents divorced. After enduring tremendous hardships and desperation, through The Salvos, they were able to find their feet and look for positive ways to start again.

"My confidence was not strong due to never having worked before and my address being a crisis refuge," they recall of the turning point.

"There was one thing that did catch my eye ... The Salvation Army had a program with Hamilton Island and were providing a once in a lifetime opportunity for former homeless youth to find their feet and career dream."

"When I first applied for the Hamilton Island Oasis Pathway I didn't get in. I was still 17 years old and needed to be 18 or over. But I didn't give up. I continued to stay focused on my training, counting down the days until I was 18. The Salvos' got in touch with me just prior to my 18th birthday and we worked out I was ready and they were able, yes!"

"The joy and hope that filled my heart when I knew I was going to the island and they were going to give me a new chance at a new life with them was amazing!"

The program has completed its pilot phase of 12 months and Hamilton Island's General Manager of People, Culture and Development, Margaret Aboody's enthusiasm for the project and its success to date is palpable.

"We give them employment and the opportunity to make something of it," says Aboody, stressing the fact that this is an important partnership for the island and not a charity. "There is no special treatment, and what they make of the opportunity and where they want to take it is up to them," she says.

John and his team provide ongoing support and mentoring which has proved invaluable not only to the participants but provides additional feedback to Margaret and her team about working and living on Hamilton Island.

Since kicking off in late 2010, the Oasis Pathways Program has seen 17 new staff join the Hamilton Island 'family' of some 1,100 staff and by any standards, has proved to be a tremendous success.

The individual candidates are carefully selected by The Salvos' and have all completed their schooling, gained the necessary life skills and have demonstrated a willingness to make positive changes and embrace the opportunities being offered.

"It's very much up to them," says Harris, who is intrinsic in the selection process and who personally mentors each candidate even once they begin working on the island.

"It's a matter of taking responsibility for their actions and their future ... they get to live in this

"There are no negatives about this program ... and if we can change a young person's life, we can then alter the destiny of the next generation."

– John Harris



amazing environment, this therapeutic place where they can unpack their past and have the hope and the opportunity to realise their potential," he says.

Training is ongoing as it is with all employees, so that should they decide to move on and seek employment back on the mainland, they do so armed not only with the experience gained through their time on the island, but with nationally recognised qualifications.

Having already obtained their Certificate III in hospitality, some of the participants are continuing their training as well as accepting more senior roles through their dedication and hard work. Many of the candidates are already in front-of-house positions, and two are moving into supervisory roles – such has been their dedication and application.

"To see a young person come to a place like this (Hamilton Island), nervous and lacking confidence and to come and visit them some months later, it's almost indescribable to see the change that has taken place," Says Major Paul Moulds. "The new confidence, the aspiration for the future."

"There are any number of opportunities on the island," says Margaret Aboody. "This is often a very transient industry, and we are always looking for good staff. The opportunity is always there for our employees to take on



(Above) Major Paul Moulds of The Salvation Army, says the program produces tremendous results. (Left) The Salvation Army's Youth Liaison Officer, John Harris, mentors candidates in the program.

more work, extra shifts or to explore different areas, it's very much up to the individual."

Harris agrees that it is all about empowering the individual to take responsibility for themselves, and Hamilton Island offers a unique environment for them to do just that.

Living in staff accommodation, the close-knit community spirit of the island provides the perfect support structure and sense of belonging – something most of these young people have not experienced in their pasts – to allow them to grow in experience and confidence. At the end of the day, they are employees, pure and simple.

"Everyone involved to date is extremely positive about its ongoing success," says Margaret Aboody. "We're getting some really good employees from the initiative," she says.

"We enjoy the interaction with Paul, John and the rest of the Salvo's team. Their enthusiasm and passion for what they do is infectious. We would strongly recommend that other businesses get involved; the benefits to Hamilton Island from the program are just as tangible as to the kids themselves," says CEO Glenn Bourke.

John Harris is likewise enthusiastic.

"In this program and their approach to it, Hamilton Island has shown a dignified tenderness from the top down," says Harris.

This is a youth intervention that produces positives. "There are no negatives about this program ... and if we can change a young person's life, we can then alter the destiny of the next generation," says Harris.

As they say, a change is as good as a holiday, but for this group of young people, and those yet to join the island's workforce, Hamilton Island represents considerably more. For them, the change of outlook goes hand-in-hand with a change of attitude and a tremendous change of circumstance which can equate to a whole new life direction.

To find out more about the Oasis Youth Support Network, visit salvos.org.au/oasis



Wish you were Here

Although Australian actress Teresa Palmer spends the bulk of her time on-location around the world, when the opportunity arose for some well-earned down time, she escaped to Hamilton Island to recharge ahead of another busy year in a burgeoning career.

STORY ALLISON TAIT PHOTOGRAPHY CIARAN HANDY, COURTESY WARNER BROS. FILMS

If you were casting the role of the quintessential Australian beach girl, Teresa Palmer would be at the top of your callback list. Young, blonde and beautiful, Palmer's wholesome style is as at home on the red carpets of Hollywood – or the white sands of Hamilton Island.

"Having grown up in Australia, I'd visited the Whitsundays before and loved the laid-back environment," she says. "It's a different world up here and you can't help but feel relaxed. I heard about *qualia* through (agent) Ann Churchill-Brown and I knew it was a celebrated resort. I was very excited to visit!"

Her latest film, *Wish You Were Here*, opened the Sundance Film Festival in late January, but before the prestigious event, 25-year-old Palmer took the opportunity to check-in to *qualia* for a short break with boyfriend Scott Speedman.

The Australian film, directed by Kieran Darcy-Smith, and also starring Joel Edgerton, will be released across North America and Canada, and tops a busy couple of years for Palmer. Born and raised in Adelaide, South Australia, she dabbled in acting at high school before beginning studies in journalism. The course of her life changed, however, thanks to a chance encounter with a film director. That movie was *2:37*, by filmmaker Murali K. Thalluri, which premiered at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, and Palmer was nominated for an AFI for Best Lead Actress for her performance.

"That first film was a turning point in my career," she says. "I never thought that the idea of being an actress could be a reality. Then I met Murali Thalluri, who presented me with a script. We shot the low-budget, student film in four weeks. Murali pushed me, taught me to believe in myself, and gave me confidence. It was a scary position, to be 19 and in the world of LA."

Several films followed, including *December Boys* with Daniel Radcliffe, *Bedtime Stories*



(Previous page) Teresa Palmer at qualia's Pebble Beach. (Above) In *Wish You Were Here* with Joel Edgerton. (Below) At the world premier of *I Am Number Four*.



with Adam Sandler, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* with Nicolas Cage, and sci-fi thriller *I Am Number Four*. "My career really gained momentum with *I Am Number Four*," she says.

Asked how she chooses her roles – which have been incredibly diverse and included comedy, drama, sci-fi and horror – Palmer has just one answer: complexity. "If the role is complex, layered and challenging, both physically and mentally, then I find that a huge drawcard," she admits. "I don't have a favourite genre – though I would love to find a 'corsetted' role in a period piece!"

It is perhaps all that complexity at work that has her seeking something completely different in a holiday location. "I look for relaxation first and foremost," she says. "And that's easy when you're staying in the most incredible room at qualia. I enjoyed reading books and the heli trip over the Great Barrier Reef and Whitehaven Beach. The crystal clear water and sand is almost surreal – so pristine and luxurious. qualia has exceeded my expectations in every way."

Given her busy schedule – not just acting, but a full schedule of promotional commitments and other projects – it's no surprise that Palmer takes the time to plan her getaways. "You just have to make time and commit," she says. "It's very easy just to be an 'energiser bunny', but it's imperative to take time out to be with yourself and listen to your body."

Not that she's planning to slow down any time soon. Following her island break, Palmer has thrown herself into a very busy year.

"I have two films scheduled for release after *Wish You Were Here*," she says. "*AWOL*, with Liam Hemsworth, which is a movie based around the time of the Vietnam War, and *Warm Bodies*, starring John Malkovich, which will be released on August 10. I'm also developing a blog – and keeping healthy in between."

Also on the cards in the future is her directorial debut. "I'm in the development stages of a project called *Track Town* with my producing partner Tahyna Tozzi," she says. "We hope to shoot that in 2013 and I have my sights set on directing a piece."

While Palmer has written her 'dream character' into the script for *Track Town*, and will play a role, other parts are up for grabs. So do the other actors and the director attached to a film have an influence in the choice of her roles?

"It plays a very significant role," she says. "I'm attracted to projects that inspire and actors whose work I'm passionate about. [Working with them], you learn so much about your own craft."

With a dedication to her craft that saw her learning slips, fencing and wirework for her role in *I Am Number Four*, there's no doubt that Palmer has an interesting, varied and, dare we say it, complex career ahead of her. With any luck she has more downtime at qualia penciled into her schedule as well. ■



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Majestic Giants

Supremely graceful and harmless despite their size, the giant manta rays found in Australia's eastern waters are both captivating and mysterious. Little is known of these magnificent creatures, but research by a dedicated team in the Whitsundays is slowly gaining an understanding.

STORY STEPHEN COOK PHOTOGRAPHY LYDIE COUTURIER, MARK SIMMONS

AND TAKATO OKOHIRA

Lydie Couturier captures a rainbow moment on the reef



'Grace' - the very first manta ray Mark Simmons ever encountered

Magical. Mystical. Magnificent. Majestic. Their name is Spanish for "cloak", and with their beautiful cape-like wings, they have entranced and danced for many a captivated diver here on the Great Barrier Reef.

They are the giant manta rays of eastern Australia and, despite evidence suggesting they have been around for millions of years, they remain one of the largest yet least-known fish. Studying them is difficult and time consuming.

Australian Mark Simmons and French-born Lydie Couturier have each spent much of their lives researching the enigmatic manta. Mark worked for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in the 1980s. A Bachelor of Science, he wrote his first study paper on the Reef's manta rays in 1984 and later worked for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. In 2001, he established the first eastern seaboard study of mantas at Lady Elliot Island, on the Reef's southern tip.

For four years, he and wife, Deb, tagged and observed the mantas, took photos and notes and led dive expeditions as they researched the lives and habits of the local mantas.

"It was a true labour of love for us. We were doing something no one else was doing at the time and lifting the lid on their hidden submarine lifestyles," he says. "Every day in the field I saw something new."

Mark says from the very first moment a manta came up to him while diving, he was instantly fascinated by its size, grace - and interest in him!

"I turned to find a manta right beside me. I turned on my side; so did she. And we swam

like that, gracefully, belly-to-belly all the way back to the shore, just eyeing each other off. I immediately named her Grace," he says.

"Most animals that big are capable of doing something nasty to you. But these guys are harmless and often show an affinity for human contact, which is both endearing and strange.

"From an aesthetic perspective, they are also one of the most exquisitely beautiful animals; with their curves, folds and angles - terrific to photograph. Their movements are like liquid ballet and their size totally belies their athletic grace underwater."

Mark's time with the mantas had such impact on him that, last year, he wrote and published his first novel. It's title? Manta. For 26-year-old Lydie, born in Grenoble in the French Alps, her contact with mantas began in Australia in 2007 when she began work on a manta ray research project, ironically also partly based on Lady Elliott Island.

Lydie fell in love with the underwater world at the age of 10 after her first dive in the Mediterranean Sea. She was especially excited when, as a marine biology honours student, she joined the University of Queensland's Project Manta team, founded by respected marine biologist, Dr Kathy Townsend.

One of only a small group of research programs around the world dedicated to manta rays, Project Manta is based on both North Stradbroke and Lady Elliot islands. The team includes scientists, marine biologists (including Lydie), a climate change specialist and a shark and ray specialist.

10 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT MANTA RAYS

1. Manta rays are found in the world's tropical waters as they provide the best environment for both the rays' food source – zoo plankton - and for breeding.
2. In Australia, they are found along the northern coast of Western Australia and on the east coast - from southern New South Wales, throughout the Whitsundays and to the tip of Cape York in our far north.
3. Unlike their cousins the sting rays, they do not have a sting or barb and, although they are related to the shark, are completely harmless.
4. Just as we each have unique fingerprints, each manta has his or her own unique patterns and markings on their belly.
5. There are two widely-known species: the large, pelagic or open sea (Manta birostris); and the small or coastal (Manta alfredi).
6. The 'smaller' rays have a wing span of around 5 metres and the 'larger' ones measure up to 8 metres or more.
7. The two species have visually distinctive colours and markings and lead separate lives. The larger ones migrate across our oceans while the smaller ones remain closer to coral reefs.
8. Manta rays can live for over 30 years and can weigh up to two tonnes.
9. No manta ray birth has ever been seen in the wild. But they gestate for one year before giving birth to a live baby, called a pup.
10. Unlike fellow plankton feeders the whales, they don't seem to take any parental care of their young after birth.



(Top) Project Manta team members with manta 'Richie'; (Left) Lydie Couturier fell in love with the ocean after her first dive at just 10 years of age; (Above) Mark Simmons; (Below left) Couturier with the manta ray named Carlos.

Together, they identify individual mantas via DNA and photographic analysis; detailing their population, behaviours, feeding patterns, movements and migrations.

Now midway through her PhD, Lydie remains constantly amazed by the gentle marine giant she spends her days studying.

"You can really connect with them because they come right up to you and look right at you. I have had a few really amazing close encounters over the past six years and, honestly, you are a changed person after each one," she says.

But researching mantas is not just about diving. There are long hours in the lab compiling and cross-checking data and out on boats taking plankton samples and testing currents. Tagging fast-moving mantas is also difficult. As is delicately obtaining tissue samples and recording each manta's unique belly markings.

"It's not an easy task, trying to get underneath a fast-moving manta to get a good, clear focussed shot of its markings as it rushes by you!" Lydie laughs. And then the real fun begins: "We name them all," says Lydie, citing

Taurus, Batman, Elvis and Diva among her favourites. Then there's Venus, Lula Schmula, Romulus, Unicorn, Java and Etoile.

Today, Project Manta has over 620 manta rays on its database, allowing them to monitor the lives of each "registered" manta. They also compare and share data with other programs in places like Mozambique, Yap in Micronesia, the Maldives and Mexico.

Using "citizen science", the team also asks local divers to share their manta belly shots with them to help further research.

"If a new manta is found from a diver's photos, then that diver gets to name their own manta," says Lydie.

"The thing about manta rays is they constantly swim around our oceans and you have to wait for them to come to you, or where you are, to get the next lot of information. So there's always more to learn about these majestic creatures. And that's what I love." ■

Mark Simmons' novel 'Manta' is available as a Kindle ebook at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) For further information on Project Manta visit <https://sites.google.com/site/projectmantasite/home>

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Clockwise from left: A hot air moment caught on film whilst passing a balloon on take off; Firey sunset on Hamilton Island; Acclaimed chef Marco Pierre White on location in Covent Garden London; 82 year old unknown competitor catches his breath after completing the 2km Noosa Ocean Swim; Ciaran Handy.

Hamilton Islander

Hamilton Island couldn't be much further from his native Ireland, geographically or in terms of climate, but after 16 years of living in paradise, there's nowhere else Ciaran Handy would call home.

STORY JAMES MCRORY PHOTOGRAPHY CIARAN HANDY

According to old wisdom, you should always keep your professional life and personal life separate, but what happens when work doesn't feel much like ... well, work at all? That's the enviable position Ciaran Handy finds himself in on Hamilton Island, where a working day is typically no chore and is simply a part of life.

"I love my work and I love living here," says Ciaran, his Irish lilt not blunted by years spent living all over the world. "And I love the lifestyle that I've got as a result of it."

Taking in the surroundings, and the fact that the environment also allows him to pursue his love of photography, it's not hard to see what he means, although you'd think that a high profile position like General Manager Hotels and Resorts would also be high pressure, but according to Handy, that's simply not the case.

"I have a great team around me," says Handy, whose responsibilities include

overseeing the smooth running of all of the accommodation on the island, from qualia on the northern tip of the island to the bungalows right in the island's heart, as well as all conferencing and events!

"We're a well-oiled machine with the properties," he says, "most of my managers have been with me for a long long time, so we have a very good understanding and working relationship which ensures smooth operations," he says.

But the enthusiasm and affection he so obviously has for Hamilton Island is not simply born from immense job satisfaction, although that obviously helps. It's as much about the attitude that comes with living in this special place and being a part of the tight-knit community and its 1500 permanent residents that exists on Hamilton Island. Buying his own piece of paradise and deciding to put down roots on the island was never a difficult decision for Ciaran.

Indeed, there's no doubt that his decision to settle in the Whitsunday's was an informed one, given his considerable experience built living and working around the world in any number of glamorous locations.

After finishing school in Ireland, Ciaran studied catering, winning a scholarship to finish that training in France. On completing his formal training it was straight to work, remaining in France initially and working in Michelin star restaurants before returning to Ireland to take up a position in the country's leading boutique hotel in Cork.

From here, Ciaran was sponsored to study hotel management, a four year course which involved both study blocks and practical working components. It was as part of one such practical course component that Handy found himself working at a five star hotel in Interlaken, Switzerland, the *Grand Hotel Victoria Jungfrau*.

On completing this exhaustive hotel

management course, Handy was once again on the move, this time to London for several years where he worked at the impressive *London Tara Hotel*, and it was in the old dart that his life was changed through a meeting with a young Brisbane girl doing the Australian pilgrimage to Europe.

The two were married, and by way of a honeymoon, headed down under to visit his wife's homeland and expose Ciaran to the Antipodes for the first time.

"At the time you could get a fillet of beef in Brisbane for the same price as you could get a can of beans in Sainsbury's," Ciaran recalls "so it didn't take much persuasion to stay in Australia."

Ciaran went to work for *Southern Pacific Hotels* in Brisbane looking after all of their conferencing business, before accepting a promotion to the country's red centre to look after its Ayers Rock Resort. As unlikely as it may seem, it was from Uluru that Handy



(Clockwise from top) As a storm passes Hill Inlet its beauty is ever present; The crystal sands of Whitehaven Beach; a storm looms over Catseye Bay Hamilton Island

ultimately made the jump to island life.

At the time, Hamilton Island was in receivership, so Ciaran's visit was in conjunction with the public company float, to look at the island's conferencing facilities and see how it be best brought up to speed.

"I agreed to do it for six months or a year, but 16 years later I'm still here," he laughs.

"It's a small community and it's absolutely beautiful," says Handy of the island. "You just fall in love with it." And that's exactly what happened to Ciaran and Karon from day one.

Certainly the island, its facilities and standing on the world stage have changed immeasurably in the intervening 16 years, and it is as much for this as the environment itself that Handy says he has stayed and is so happy living on Hamilton Island.

"I think the thing that's had the biggest impact on me and why I'm still here is our owners," he says of the Oatley family taking over the island eight years ago.

"What they (the Oatleys) have done with Hamilton Island, their vision and just values as a family, you just can't help but get sucked into it, and they enjoy sucking you into it because they make you part of the family."

"That would have to be the biggest turning point, and prior to that it just didn't have

the same feel or have the same sense of achievement that I get today."

Ciaran also derives enormous satisfaction from another island inspired activity – photography. What started as testing out a new activity to offer on the island has become a consuming passion, the abundance of natural subject matter on and around the island, fueling an interest that has led to multiple photographic awards, a burgeoning photographic business and publication in numerous national magazines.

Indeed, the photographic course that started it all as a trial activity for the island has grown to become a tremendous drawcard over the last 10 years, attracting amateur and professional photographers alike to Hamilton Island, as well as regular conference groups from the likes of Nikon, Canon and Fujifilm.

For Ciaran it is a constant source of enjoyment and, as is the case with living on the island, has morphed into a part of his job, his talents often called upon to capture unique events on the island, as for the pages of *REEF Magazine* each issue.

Whether it be capturing the action of the island triathlon – Handy has built a considerable reputation for his triathlon and ironman photography since wife, Karon, became a serious competitor some years

ago – to photographing a visiting celebrity or capturing the wonders of the natural world – he's up for the challenge, as long as it's above the surface of the water.

"Being Irish, I couldn't swim if my life depended on it," he confesses. "I was once asked to do an underwater shot, and Glenn Bourke the CEO, who's a born swimmer and champion sailer, threw a lifejacket on me, and kept me from drowning while I got the shot and then dragged me out of the water."

In fact, Handy used to take his camera to neighboring islands on his jetski to take photos.

"I'd tell the boys in the marina where I was going and how long I'd be and they'd say 'we'll come looking for you if you're five minutes late,'" he says.

Such is the spirit of the place he and Karon fell in love with and there is no chance of them ever leaving. Even as their girls grow up and look to travel as he and Karon did – Tara is on sabbatical in Italy, and Siobhan will soon finish boarding school in Mackay – the feeling of belonging has never felt stronger, so on the question of ever leaving, the answer is an almost incredulous laugh.

"No way. Why on earth would I?" ■



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Going for Gold

Although worlds apart, the connection between the Olympic Games in London and Hamilton Island run deep. A long-standing association between two Olympic disciplines and Bob Oatley could make all the difference come July.

STORY ROB MUNDLE PHOTOGRAPHY
COURTESY AUSTRALIAN SAILING TEAM, GETTY
IMAGES AND REITSPORT



Bob Oatley with Australian Sailing Team Head Coach and friend, Victor Kovalenko after the Beijing Olympics. Australia Sailing Team members, Malcolm Page and Mathew Belcher (Left)

Thundering hooves – the harmony of horse and rider in the dressage arena – a racing yacht crashing through waves on an open ocean – young sailors beating the world’s best – glistening Olympic medals. These powerful and captivating images of sporting life come together under one name in Australia: Oatley.

Guided ever so ably by patriarch Bob Oatley, the Oatley family is synonymous with three contrasting corporate and sporting activities: the highly acclaimed Hamilton Island holiday destination on the fringe of the Great Barrier Reef; the rapidly emerging Robert Oatley Vineyards, and the sport of ocean yacht racing. However, there is another little-known facet to this proudly Australian family, one that could well contribute to medals being won on two fronts at the 2012 Olympics in London – in sailing and equestrian.

This comes as a consequence of Bob Oatley’s devotion to both activities: he has been an active and successful sailor since he first steered a flimsy canvas-covered sailing canoe on Sydney Harbour as an 11-year-old – 73 years ago! And, throughout his adult life he has always had a love of horses and associated competition. Today, through a desire to see others achieve their Olympic dream, the Oatleys support the Australian Olympic yachting program. But even closer now to Bob’s heart and home is the fact that in March this year his granddaughter, Lyndal, was named as one of the seven finalists in Australia’s 2012 Dressage National Elite Squad, the group from which the Australian Olympic team for London

will be chosen. Making this an even greater family affair is the fact that her superbly-trained horse, Potifar, is owned by Lyndal’s parents, Carol and Sandy Oatley. Sandy is Bob’s eldest son and now chairman of the family enterprise.

Olympic representation in equestrian events is not new to the Oatley family. Lyndal’s cousin, Kristy, the daughter of Bob’s only daughter, Ros, has enjoyed her own Olympic journey after following her mother’s lead into the sport. She represented Australia in the dressage competition at both the Sydney and Beijing Olympics and in doing so became Australia’s most successful dressage rider to date. Kristy was the German, then European, Junior Dressage Champion before becoming the youngest rider competing for any nation, not just Australia, in Olympic dressage. She is hopeful she can try for her third Olympic representation – and be alongside her cousin Lyndal in London.

For many years Sandy, Ros and young brother Ian, were raised in an environment where horses were part of their everyday life. This came about when Bob established his first vineyard in the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney, in the late 1960s. It was little more than a hobby farm back then with no great appeal for the youngsters ... until Bob successfully plotted a way to entice them from their Sydney home so the family could spend weekends at the vineyard:

“Dad decided that the best way to have us want to go to the Hunter every weekend was to create an incentive,” Ros recalled, “One Sunday morning, when I took a cup of tea into Mum and Dad at home Dad

Just as this issue went to press, Lyndal Oatley was nominated for International Athlete of the Year in the Equestrian Australia Sport Achievement Awards.

said 'How would you like a horse?' I was dumbstruck. I was 14, a city girl and I'd never thought about a horse in my life. That didn't matter: it was 'decision made' as far as Dad was concerned, and the next thing the entire family was heading for Kellyville, on the outskirts of Sydney, to look at a horse that was for sale," Ros remembers.

That horse was purchased on the spot and trucked to the Hunter Valley much to the delight of Sandy, Ros and Ian. However, over the ensuing weeks they became concerned because this horse, named Treasure, was getting fatter by the day. They then realised there was good reason – Treasure was in foal! The subsequent birth of the foal led to Bob meeting the local vet, John Morgan, a man highly respected in the thoroughbred horse industry, and this encounter reignited the childhood interest Bob had in horses; one that stemmed from school holiday adventures in the NSW outback with his father. There was no turning back, and before long Bob had bought a second property in the Hunter Valley and established what is now a very successful thoroughbred stud – and there lies the source of his first interest in Olympic competition:

"My passion was such that in the early 1970s I decided to try to help lift the standard of our future Olympic equestrian teams by bringing into Australia the first of what was considered to be the very best show-jumping breed in the world, the Hanoverian. The breed was essentially exclusive to Germany, and it took more than a year to organise, but once the horse was here I employed a trainer from Germany to come to Australia and work with the program," says Bob Oatley.



Australia Sailing Team members, Malcolm Page and Mathew Belcher (above). Kristy Oatley in action at the 2000 Sydney Olympics (Top left). Lyndal Oatley (Right), bound for London and nominated as International Athlete of the Year in the Equestrian Australia Sport Achievement Awards.

To this day that project is recognised as being a turning point for Australia's standing on the international equestrian scene. As for the vineyard which Bob started as a hobby farm: it took the original name of the property, Rosemount, and went on to become Australia's most successful winery, blazing a new trail for the export industry into Europe and America and achieving the world's highest awards. At its zenith in the 1990s the bottling plant at Rosemount – the most efficient in Australia – was producing an amazing four million dozen bottles of wine annually.

Over this period Bob's love for sailing never waned, and today he is known worldwide as owner of the record breaking Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race supermaxi, *Wild Oats XI*, the yacht which currently holds the fastest time for the 628 nautical mile course and has five first-to-finish awards in the trophy cabinet. And, just as he supported the Australian Olympic equestrian movement with the importation of the horse from Germany, his highly admirable philanthropic endeavours have extended to his second sporting passion in life – sailing. Whenever and wherever possible, Bob Oatley has contributed to efforts that encourage young people into this clean and healthy international sport. Today much of that effort is concentrated on the Australian Olympic yachting team.

This has evolved because of the profound admiration he holds for the man who is known worldwide as 'the medal maker' – Australia's Head Coach for the Olympic campaign, Victor Kovalenko. Now an Australian citizen, Ukraine-born Kovalenko has coached 10 crews to world championship wins and been the coach of crews that have

won three Gold and three Bronze Olympic medals. Experts looking to London this year see the possibility of Gold in four classes, with one other an outside chance – all thanks to Kovalenko's guidance. As he prepared to depart for Europe and the final stages of the Australian team's preparations for London, Kovalenko took time to pay tribute to Bob Oatley and his contribution to the Australian Olympic effort.

"Bob Oatley is an incredible man. He was the first person to step forward and back our medals plan, which we established in 2005, and he is still behind us. He represents the real foundation for Olympic yachting in Australia," says Kovalenko with no attempt to hide his admiration.

"In the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics he put all the facilities at Hamilton Island at our disposal so we could establish a training camp there. He is a remarkable man who wants to share everything with us and share in our success.

"Personally, I see Bob Oatley as being larger than life: an exceptional man when it comes to leadership, being a great sailor and a good friend. He is a man with a big heart, a hard worker and a real Australian in every sense. We love him, respect him and admire him." Come the London games this year, as the Australian team steps up the challenges of meeting the world's best, both the equestrian and sailing teams will have one extra member with them on board, whose contribution might just be what they need to get them across the line.



Island Evolution

A natural beauty, right in the very heart of the Great Barrier Reef, Hamilton Island has become a world-renowned island destination, but its history is as captivating as its location, as Lee Atkinson discovered.

STORY LEE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF TOURISM QUEENSLAND

Starting out to sea and watching a flotilla of sea kayakers flit across the water from the super-luxe surrounds of qualia's Long Pavilion, it's hard to imagine what the original inhabitants of Hamilton Island, the Ngaro people, would have thought if they had been able to see into the future 250 years ago. But then again, maybe they wouldn't have been so taken aback; we're just doing the same things they did for more than 9000 years before the Europeans came along and discovered for themselves just how beautiful paradise could really be. Known as the 'Canoe People', the first inhabitants of the Whitsundays and neighbouring coastal fringe were the Ngaro Aboriginal people, who left behind a wealth of archaeological evidence in the form of great

middens of shells and bones, stone fish traps, stone axes and cutting tools. They wove grass nets to gather shellfish and fish and carved fishing hooks from wood, bone and shells and according to accounts written by early explorers, they were great sailors and skilled navigators, often seen paddling vast distances between islands with only their innate sense of direction to guide them. The first European to name the Whitsundays was then Lieutenant James Cook on the *Endeavour*, who sailed into the stretch of water now known as Whitsunday Passage on Whit Sunday (June 3) in 1770. Hamilton Island, however, wasn't charted for almost another 100 years, in 1866, and even then it was mistakenly shown as part of Dent Island and the whole thing named Passage

Island. Two years later Hamilton Island was described separately and named, probably after one of the crew members on the survey vessel. The first settlers to the region were timber-getters, graziers and sugarcane farmers, and from 1898 through to the 1920s Hamilton Island was used for sheep grazing. By the 1950s word about just how wonderful the Whitsunday Islands were had started to spread, and simple holiday huts, often just made out of galvanized iron and scraps of tin, appeared on several of the islands. Around that time, the owner of Daydream Island acquired the lease of Hamilton Island and built some holiday cottages, but the venture was unsuccessful and the island became home for sheep once again.

In 1975, entrepreneur Keith Williams was cruising through the Whitsundays aboard his motor yacht when he realised that Hamilton Island has one of the few north-facing beaches to be found anywhere on the east coast of Australia. Along with business associate, Bryan Byrt, he purchased the grazing lease, and effectively became the owner of the entire five-square kilometre island. Plan A was to breed deer on the island, but when Byrt died in 1978, Williams assumed sole ownership and started planning for a major tourist resort. Williams began work on the Hamilton Island marina and resort in 1982, and the first guests arrived in 1983. He also built a commercial airport on the island – the only island in the Whitsundays to have an airport capable of handling wide-bodied jet aircraft. It wasn't all plain sailing though. In 1985, a fire destroyed most of the central portion of the resort complex, which was completely rebuilt by 1986. In 1989 a prolonged pilots' strike made getting to Hamilton Island almost impossible, but despite this the Reef View Hotel, complete with the highest external lift in Australia, opened in 1990. The resort now boasted 11 restaurants, eight swimming pools, a convention centre and more than 25 speciality shops. Together with the marina, the facilities and tourism provided employment for around 1200 permanent residents as well as a primary school for children. More importantly, Hamilton Island was well on its way to becoming Australia's premier tropical island resort destination.

In 1996 Hamilton Island became a public company with the major shareholder being Bankers Trust and three years later, the five-star boutique Beach Club opened. In a quirky twist of fate, history was set to repeat itself however. Just as Williams had done in the 70s, Australian winemaker Bob Oatley was cruising around the Whitsundays in his yacht in the early 1980s and was instantly smitten with Hamilton Island. "I didn't go ashore, but I could recognise the potential of the island," Oatley said. "It was the very early days of the development; they were building the airstrip and the harbour at the time, and there was a lot of activity

(Clockwise from left) Hamilton Island as it is today. The early days of development on the island. The original Polynesian-style hotel, which is now the Resort Centre. The Dolphin pool and Toucan Tango restaurant and bar as it was, and as it is now, the Sails and Verandah Bar; (bottom).





(Top) The Hamilton Island Yacht Club. (Above) Preliminary plans for the marina development, circa 1978. (Above right) Early development work for the Hamilton Island marina.

going on. I remember saying 'what a great project that is,' never thinking that one day I'd be the owner." Bob Oatley and his family purchased Hamilton Island in 2003 and extended developments to include an expanded marina precinct, the award-winning luxury resort qualia, which opened in 2007, and the iconic Hamilton Island Yacht Club, its striking architectural design featuring a billowing sail-shaped copper roof dubbed the 'Opera House of Queensland'. Opened by Queensland's then Premier, Anna Bligh, during Audi Hamilton Race Week in August 2009, it coincided with the opening of the Hamilton Island Golf Club on neighbouring Dent Island. The 18 hole championship course, designed by Peter Thomson, is the only 18 hole championship course on its own island in Australia.

The Oatleys have invested heavily in the island, realising a dream to see it recognised as a world-class destination and a jewel in Australia's tourism crown. Building new facilities, as well as enhancing the island's infrastructure, has

seen Hamilton Island reach new heights and become one of the top destinations in the world. The Hamilton Island airport is now among the 20 busiest airports in Australia and the island was rated as the 'most popular travel destination' in Google Australia's annual 2011 Zeitgeist list, published in December last year. This category also included international destinations making 'Hamilton Island' the top international travel destination search term used by Australians, ahead of other famous holiday hot spots like Hawaii, New York and Las Vegas.

Awards are too numerous to mention, but most recently include qualia listed as 'Best Leisure Facility' on U.K. *Condé Nast Traveller Gold List 2012*, and Hamilton Island voted 'Best Family Experience' at the 2011 *Australian Gourmet Traveller Awards*. But despite the marina, yachts, resorts, day spa, private residences and vanishing-edge plunge pools, there's one thing that hasn't changed on Hamilton Island in the past 9000 years, and that's the simple pleasure of soaking in a sea view, just like the Ngaro used to do. ■

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Getting down to

Business

Think Hamilton Island and you instantly think of a tropical island getaway, but the Active Media Group team from Fitness First found it was the perfect place to mix business and pleasure.

STORY JESS BRADY

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY FITNESS FIRST, ANDREA FRANCOLINI

When the world's your oyster, deciding on the right venue for an all-important conference would be a tough one. For Michael Ryan, Director of Active Media Group, the Sydney-based Australian media and advertising arm of the world's largest global health club and gym operator, Fitness First, the decision was easy. As a conference venue, Hamilton Island was the only choice.

Active Media Group held their annual four-day conference on Hamilton Island in December last year.

"Most of our team is based in Sydney, and we wanted somewhere that was a short haul flight. Hawaii's great, but I needed our team to hit the ground running, and I didn't want to have to battle jet lag or waste time," said Ryan. "The fact that we could fly directly to Hamilton Island and would be able to get

right into it as soon as we arrived made it the number one choice for Active Media Group." But it wasn't just the easy access that convinced Ryan Hamilton Island was the best conference choice. In Ryan's case, a good range of facilities was also crucial.

"I wanted an island, so we could relax straight away, but I also really liked the idea that Hamilton has a range of restaurants and bars, pool and beach areas, so there was lots of diversity, but it's small enough to keep the team together. Hawaii might have worked, but it's a lot harder to keep everyone together in a place like that. On Hamilton Island, no one can get lost, so you don't have to worry about people not turning up to the conference each day," said Ryan.

Not turning up didn't turn out to be a problem. For the 25 delegates, the conference was a mix of work and play, part team

building, part business planning, a little bit of incentive and, according to Ryan, a whole lot of fun.

"We would spend two or three hours each day in the conference room, working on plans, sharpening our focus for the next year, all the sorts of things you do at these types of team meetings," said Ryan. "Having a conference co-ordinator from Hamilton Island looking after everything we needed made a big difference. Everything was so professional. I found that personal approach to be very valuable."

"But the meeting was just as much about building morale," said Ryan, "and that's where Hamilton Island really stood out from our previous conferences in past years.

"I don't really see the point of flying the team somewhere, then locking ourselves in the same room each day, all day, and eating



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in the same restaurant each night. I mean, you could be anywhere really; let's face it, one conference room generally looks just like any other. When you do that, you can see people's energy levels decline and the enthusiasm drops. I wanted to go somewhere where there would be a range of activities to get people excited. After all, the four days were just as much about rewarding my staff and building up a team spirit as it was about planning our goals for the future." "Every day we would split up into smaller groups and go off and do different activities, from island-wide treasure hunts in the resort's golf buggies to jetski safaris, reef snorkelling and even a round of golf at the Hamilton Island Golf Club, which the team members are still raving about – they reckon it was one of the best places they've ever played. "At night we would meet up again for a team dinner to talk about the day and the variety of restaurants on the island meant we could go to a new place and enjoy a different type of cuisine each night, from seafood to Italian.

It was fantastic," said Ryan. "A standout highlight was our six-hour cruise around the Whitsunday Islands. Being December, it doubled as our staff Christmas party. In 2010 we had chartered a boat on Sydney Harbour, and I didn't think we could top that because Sydney Harbour is one of the most beautiful harbours in the world – but we did. Everyone was blown away by the day, which included lunch on board and an afternoon sailing around the islands. It was just outstanding." As far as Ryan's concerned, the conference was an unmitigated success. "I think you can measure the success of a meeting like ours by the way the staff talk about it afterwards. Everybody truly loved it and they are still talking about it months later. As far as boosting morale goes, you couldn't ask for more," he said. Would Michael bring his team back to Hamilton Island? "Oh yeah! 100 percent. But next time I'd like to stay at qualia," he laughed. "That would really get the team revved up!" ■

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Your property guide for investing in your own piece of the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsundays.



"Woodlands" Lot ZA

1 Island View Way, Hamilton Island

FOR SALE. \$3,750,000 4 🏠 3.5 🚗 2 🚙

Contact.

Wayne Singleton 0416 024 168

"Woodlands", located in the exclusive Point Henning Estate, is a luxury multi-level four bedroom residence with sweeping South West views from Dent Passage to Shute Harbour and to the north towards Hamilton Island's luxury resort, qualia. Built in 2005, workmanship is faultless and the owners have kept this property in pristine condition, making it still present as a show home. The property is cleverly designed for Whitsunday living with 339sqm of internal living and 223sqm of deck and balcony space, making the total size of the outdoor/indoor living areas 577.6sqm.

Perched high on a generous 1613sqm land site, this beautiful home consists of two large entertaining decks with a built-in barbeque kitchen area and a further six balconies, 1.8m deep pool, two separate living areas, wine cellar, lock up double garage.

The properties featured in the REEF Magazine Real Estate section are available at time of print, but for a full listing of properties for sale or to review recently sold properties, visit the Hamilton Island Real Estate office on Front Street or go to www.hamiltonislandrealestate.com.au
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Shorelines on Hamilton Apartment 11

5 Acacia Drive, Hamilton Island

FOR SALE. \$890,000 ONO 2 2.5 1

Located in the popular Shorelines apartment complex, this property is positioned directly over Dent Passage and offers beautiful North West facing sea, island and golf course views from both the open-plan living area and master bedroom balconies. Offered for sale as a fully furnished and operational holiday let property, this unit displays a solid history of returns. Shorelines on Hamilton is a stylish and modern option for holiday guests, featuring three split-levels, two bedrooms and two-and-a-half bathrooms. Inspection is a must to appreciate this modern townhouse.

Sustainability Declaration available upon request.

Contact.

Wayne Singleton 0416 024 168

Edge 12

5 Acacia Drive, Hamilton Island

FOR SALE. \$2,100,000 3 2 1

View: West

This is a great opportunity to purchase world class, luxury living on Hamilton Island. This pristine top floor, three-bedroom apartment offers the ultimate in style and waterfront luxury. Showcasing captivating Coral Sea and island views from almost every room, floor-to-ceiling glass doors from the expansive open-plan living area open out to a generous width-to-width balcony for stunning Whitsunday sunsets. With an ultra modern decor, sleek finishes and stylish fixtures and furnishings throughout, the property offers a deluxe, open-plan kitchen, a magnificent master bedroom with its own balcony and designer spa ensuite, plus sophisticated smart technology and security systems. The Edge complex facilities include a 25m wet-edge pool, two spas and a barbeque area, and is located within easy walking distance to the marina and restaurants.

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Cooinda Gardens 1

14 Whitsunday Boulevard, Hamilton Island

FOR SALE. \$1,225,000 4 🏠 3.5 🚗 1 🚗

Showcasing a sleek contemporary design, this 306sqm, two-story open-plan townhouse encapsulates modern simplicity. Perfectly situated in a peaceful, leafy setting in the northern precinct of Hamilton Island, features include vast windows, high vaulted ceilings, and a bright, fresh decor that enhances the sense of space and light throughout, with the interior flowing seamlessly to the outdoor areas. Boasting two balconies, one patio area, lock up garage, four bedrooms and open-plan living, this property is only one of six residences in a resort style complex and can accommodate large groups or families, giving it substantial holiday letting potential.

Sustainability Declaration available upon request.

Contact.

Wayne Singleton 0416 024 168



Lot MB

16 Resort Drive, Hamilton Island

FOR SALE. Expressions of interest.

Lot MB is a superior north-facing elevated site, offering an impressive 2469sqm in area. This block is host to stunning 240-degree views over Whitsunday waterways and the surrounding natural beauty of the Whitsunday Islands.

This vacant lot abounds a picturesque natural environment, surrounded by native plants and wildlife, whilst neighbouring sizeable multi-million dollar homes and award-winning 'qualia'.

Lot MB is a gently sloping site leading towards the water, perfect for constructing a single-level executive residence with sweeping balconies that captures the beauty of Passage Peak on the eastern side, Whitsunday Island and Fitzalan Passage in front, and amazing sunsets over Henning Island on the western side. It would be difficult to find another site with such potential.

Contact.

Wayne Singleton 0416 024 168

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