

Reef

HAMILTON ISLAND &
THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

MAGAZINE

Sublime Performance
The Australian Ballet
at qualia

In the Swing
Playing Hamilton
Island Golf Club

Out Patients
Saving the sea turtle

The Spice of Life
Food and fashion of Race Week



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Editorial Director
Margaret Merten

Art Director
Luke Gallaway

Production
Louise Stephens

Contributors
Lee Atkinson, Jack Atley, Jason Busch, Andrea Francolini, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Ciaran Handy, James Hill, Kylie Hood, Ute Junker, Steve Keipert, James McRory, Margaret Merten, Katherine Munkres, Rob Mundle, Anson Smart, Damion Smy, Ben Southall, Sam Tinson, David Wachenfeld

Production Manager
Kelsey Hodges
P 02 9433 0428
khodges@hamiltonisland.com.au

Magazine Director
Javier Degen
P 02 9433 3308
jdegen@hamiltonisland.com.au

Advertising
Axxon Media Pty Ltd
P 02 4920 6716
M 0413 808 129
axxon@westnet.com.au

Printing
Webstar
83 Derby St, Silverwater NSW 2128

Publisher
James McRory
Axxon Media Pty Ltd
PO Box 490, Charlestown NSW 2290

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PO Box 490, Charlestown NSW 2290
P 02 4920 6716 M 0413 808 129
axxon@westnet.com.au
www.axxonmedia.com.au

Hamilton Island Holidays - Reservations
Lvl 3, 100 Pacific Hwy, St Leonards NSW 2065
P 13 7333 (02 9433 0444)
vacation@hamiltonisland.com.au
www.hamiltonisland.com.au

Flight only bookings
P 1300 725 172
flights@hamiltonisland.com.au

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Time Out

The hardest thing in writing an editorial for any magazine is finding a single thing to focus on, and frankly that task is even more difficult with this issue of *REEF Magazine*. Any one of the pieces in this issue would qualify for individual discussion but that would be almost unfair on the rest.

One area that certainly deserves mention is our ongoing association with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and in this issue the Turtle Hospital takes pride of place. It is impossible to over-emphasize just how important it is to protect this precious environment and the Turtle Hospital is a real example of how this is being achieved with wonderful results. The work of these dedicated individuals and all others involved is nothing short of inspirational and forms a vital part of the ongoing reef maintenance of which we are so proud.

One person who has enjoyed being a part of the region is Ben Southall, winner of Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World. His six-month stint living on Hamilton Island and exploring the Great

Barrier Reef and Whitsundays comes to an end as we go to print with the issue, so we caught up with Ben to see what he felt were the highlights of his time as Island Caretaker, no small task given the sheer number of activities the region has to offer.

In this issue, we too cover a great deal of territory, from playing a round at the brilliant new Hamilton Island Golf Club, to a breathtaking performance by The Australian Ballet at qualia – a stunning combination. From the food and fashion of Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, to architectural genius, Chris Beckingham and his part in the superb luxury resort qualia – there is a wealth of information on the island and surrounding region that will inspire and entertain.

As you relax and enjoy this issue, I'm sure you'll find the most difficult decision you will be faced with is what to read first!

Margaret

Margaret Merten
Editorial Director

An Exciting Year



Welcome to Hamilton Island and to this edition of *REEF Magazine*. Whether you have joined us for a relaxing getaway, or an action packed adventure exploring the majesty of the Great Barrier Reef region, you are most definitely in the right place. For the first time visitor, Hamilton Island will spoil you for choice regardless of your tastes and interests, and for those returning to the island, you will see that Hamilton Island has continued to evolve, with the opening of a range of new, world-class facilities.

You will find *REEF Magazine* a great way to help you 'find your way around' and get a good idea of what is happening on the island and in the Great Barrier Reef and Whitsundays.

In recent times we have seen the opening of the Hamilton Island Yacht Club, and golfers of all standing will enjoy playing the newly opened Hamilton Island Golf Club. These facilities join a raft of other upgrades and investments all over the island aimed

at providing you with the best possible experience during your stay.

Even getting to Hamilton Island has become easier with direct flights from Jetstar and Virgin Blue, including their Premium Economy option.

For those of you starting your break, spare a thought for Ben Southall, who has just finished his six month stint in 'The Best Job in the World', the Tourism Queensland initiative that created a global phenomenon when the first ads appeared world-wide. Ben has done an admirable job and it has been very successful partnering with Tourism Queensland to help showcase this fascinating area to the world.

For my part, it is a pleasure to be involved in such a vibrant and exciting place, not to mention living and working in the most beautiful location on earth. After seven years of living in Europe, I was looking for a sea change and that is quite literally what I got. Swapping the cold grey of Southampton with the year-round warmth of the Coral

Sea and the perpetual blue skies of the Whitsundays was certainly not a difficult decision to make. Steering Hamilton Island is a challenging and tremendously rewarding position and I look forward to 'polishing the diamond' even more brightly over the coming years.

Likewise, I'm sure you will find your time on Hamilton Island equally challenging as you try to decide what to do first and how to fit in all that is on offer. It may be that you will just have to keep coming back in order to sample everything – and that, I'm sure you will agree, is a very pleasant prospect.

I know you will enjoy your stay.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn Bourke".

Glenn Bourke
Chief Executive Officer, Hamilton Island

Performance
redefined.



**The new Audi S5 Cabriolet.
245 kW of power, 440Nm of torque, 360° views.**

In the S5 Cabriolet, Audi has supercharged the convertible coupé – and open top driving has never been more exhilarating. It redefines style with sophisticated lines inspired by the classic coupé – and distinctive sporty 'S' design highlights inside and out. It redefines efficiency with outstanding combined fuel consumption of just 9.7 litres per 100 kms*. And it redefines power with an advanced direct injection 3.0 V6 TFSI® supercharged engine, harnessed by quattro® permanent all-wheel drive. The dynamic Audi S5 Cabriolet. It's the new definition of progressive performance.

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Audi S5 Cabriolet shown with optional 'S' sports seats in Silk Nappa Leather and Adaptive Cruise Control. *Combined fuel consumption figure as per ADR 81/02 applies to the Audi S5 Cabriolet 3.0 TFSI® quattro® S tronic. Overseas model shown. AUDI4396/SSCAB/REEF/FPC/0101

100

Years of Audi
Vorsprung durch Technik



DEPARTMENTS

08

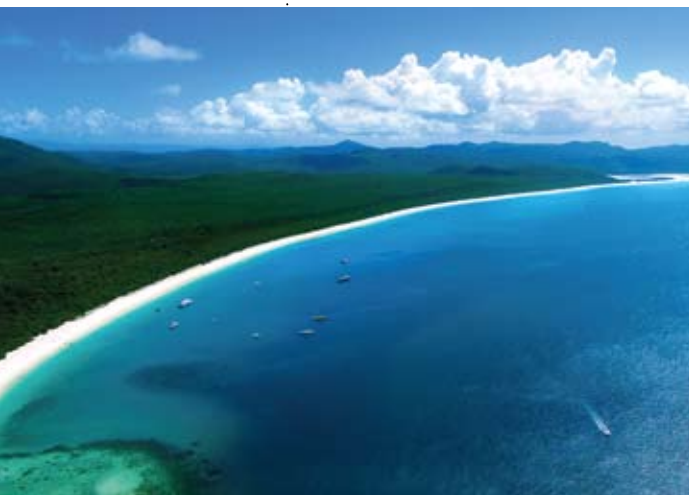
What's On

Highlights and events on Hamilton Island and in the surrounding region

10

Precious Things

Hamilton Island's retail listings



12

Essential Elements

So little time, so much to do

64

Slice of Paradise

Island Real Estate

UP CLOSE

36

Creating Eden

Jamie Durie brings his considerable talents to the task of landscaping Hamilton Island's iconic Yacht Club



56

An Air of Calm

Master architect Chris Beckingham prefers to let his work do the talking – simple, elegant structures that nonetheless make a strong statement

ON THE WATER

14

Race Week

A yachting institution, it was Race Week that captivated Bob Oatley and led to Hamilton Island's rebirth



40

Line Honours

In one of the toughest ocean races on earth, *Wild Oats XI* is without equal

Contents

REEF Magazine
Issue 02

ON THE REEF

32

Saving Our Turtles

The Great Barrier Reef Turtle Hospital brings new hope and expert care to our aquatic natives

48

Beyond Best Job

For Ben Southall, six months in paradise flashed by – but what a place and what a time



AT THE TABLE

60

A Taste for Success

A passion for food has taken Justin North to the top

THE ART OF EXCELLENCE

28

Magical Night

An arts centre with a difference, The Australian Ballet creates magic with qualia as their backdrop



18

Food, Wine, Fashion

Not all of the action of Race Week happens on the water

44

The Finest Fare

For qualia Executive Chef, Jane-Therese Mulry only the very best will do when it comes to designing a menu for the island's premier restaurant



ON THE GREEN

22

Shooting for Par

With not one but arguably several signature holes, the Hamilton Island Golf Club already has the experts nodding their approval

ISLAND LIFE

52

Mind and Muscle

If only the stunning location made it easier – the Hamilton Island Triathlon is a test of the toughest



Hamilton Island - 2010 Highlights



EVENTS ON THE ISLAND

January
26

Australia Day

March
12-14

Great Barrier Feast with
Tetsuya Wakuda – an
intimate food and wine
weekend

April
25

Anzac Day Dawn Service
and Commemoration Event

May
2

Hilly Half Marathon – 21.1km
race

June
11-13

Pas de Deux in Paradise
–The Australian Ballet
perform at qualia

24-27

Hamilton Island Outrigger
Cup – Australia's biggest,
oldest and richest outrigger
canoe event

August
1 - 6

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

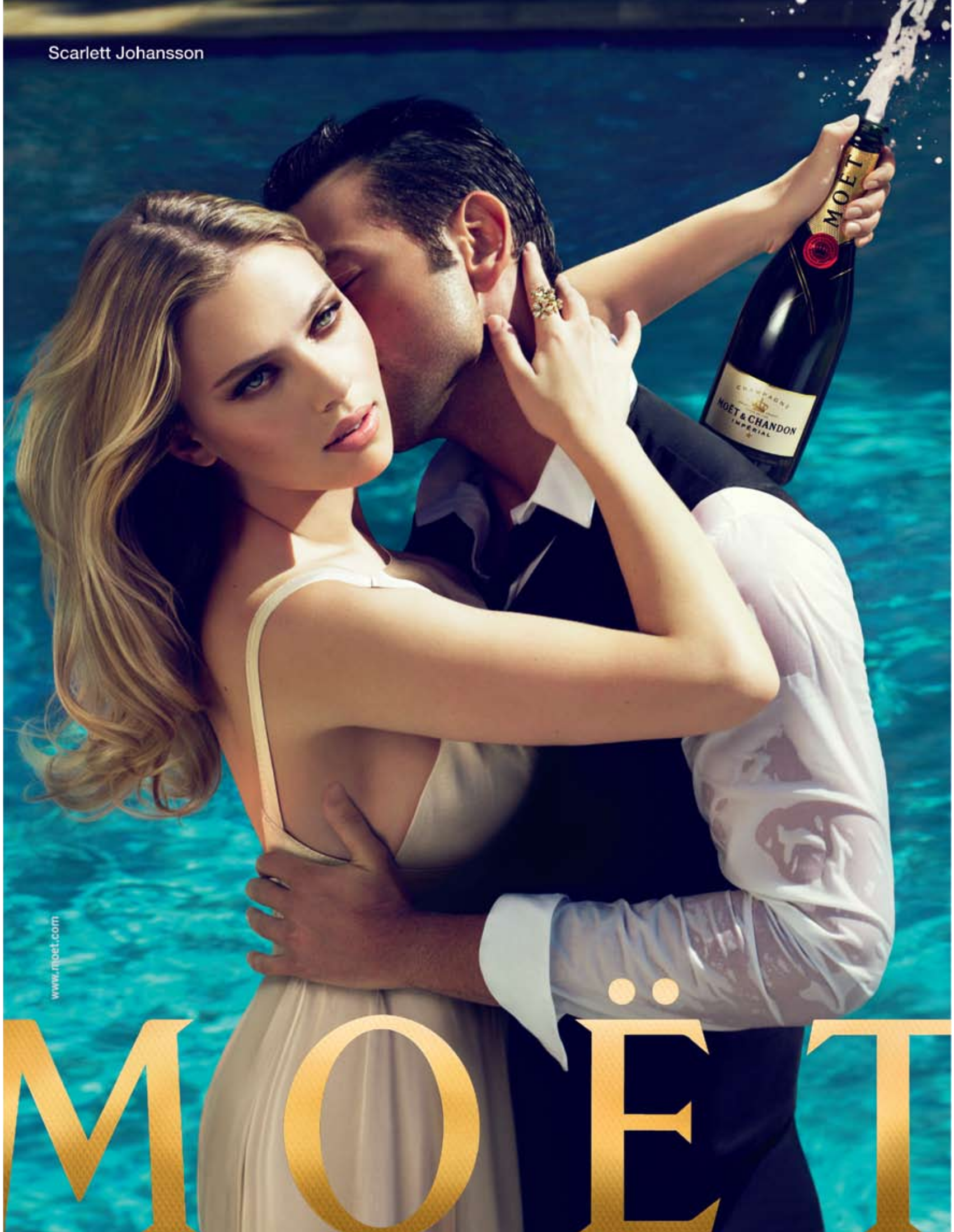
20 - 28

Audi Hamilton Island Race
Week – Australia's largest
and most exciting offshore
yachting regatta

For more event information visit
www.hamiltonisland.com.au/events

To book your accommodation and flights, contact Hamilton Island Holidays on 13 7333
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Scarlett Johansson



www.moet.com

MOËT

Precious Things

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



Camilla qualia kaftan
qualia boutique via Island Concierge,
07 4946 8929 (58929)

Hamilton Island Retail Outlets

The Art Gallery 07 4948 9657 (59657)
Australia the Gift 07 4946 8371 (58371)
Breeze Resort Wear 07 4946 8221 (58221)
Floral Collections 07 4946 8946 (58946)
Foots Artworks 07 4946 8308 (58308)
General Store 07 4946 8626 (58626)
Hamilton Island Designs 07 4946 8565 (58565)
Hamilton Island Jewellery 07 4948 9857 (59857)

Island Hair & Beauty 07 4946 8244 (58244)
Lord Nelson Menswear 07 4946 8233 (58233)
Marina Tavern Retail 07 4946 8180 (58180)
Offshore Surf & Leisure 07 4946 8273 (58273)
Photo Shop 07 4946 8690 (58690)
qualia Boutique (via Island Concierge)
07 4946 8929 (58929)
The Relaxation Centre 07 4946 8669 (58669)

Resort Centre Lobby Shop 07 4946 8232 (58232)
Reef Lobby Shop 07 4946 9999 (20008)
Resort Store 07 4946 8231 (58231)
Swimwear Store 07 4946 8284 (58284)
Trader Pete's 07 4946 8426 (58426)
Video Store 07 4946 8496 (58496)



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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 Take the Plunge

What trip to this celebrated marine sanctuary would be complete without taking the plunge and experiencing what lies beneath the surface? Be it a snorkelling trip or full scuba experience, there is no limit to the ways you can enjoy this aquatic wonderland. Take a trip to Fantasea's Reefworld on Hardy Reef, where the wonders are on show through the special underwater viewing area, or enjoy a full scuba experience with H2O Sportz. Whatever you choose, it's sure to be an experience you won't forget.

www.fantasea.com.au,
www.h2osportz.com.au,
07 4946 8305 (58305)

3 In the Swing

Breathtaking views, bracing fresh sea air and a par 71 championship golf course to test your skill. The new Hamilton Island Golf Club is a must not only for the serious golfer but for those starting on their golfing journey. Play nine or 18 holes on this superb Peter Thomson-designed course on Dent Island, just a short boat ride from Hamilton Island. Brush up with some lessons, hone your skill on the aquatic driving range, or enjoy lunch at the Clubhouse. Even if your game is not up to par, the views will not disappoint.

Contact the Hamilton Island Golf Club Pro Shop on 07 4948 9760 (59760)



4 Stepping Out

Of course there is plenty to do on dry land and the best way to take in stunning Hamilton Island first-hand is to stretch your legs and enjoy a bracing bushwalk. Arrange a picnic lunch and become one with nature as you perch on a rocky outcrop and enjoy the sublime view.

For walking trail maps, visit the Tour Desk or call 07 4946 8305 (58305)

5 Flightseeing

It is nigh on impossible to appreciate the sheer size and beauty of this area without taking to the skies. Climb aboard a helicopter for a bird's-eye view of the largest living structure on the planet, the Great Barrier Reef.

www.avta.com.au 07 4946 8305 (58305)



1 There's Only One Whitehaven

Whitehaven 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 silica sand is the stuff of postcards. Only a short boat trip from Hamilton Island, or a longer one should the mood take you, Whitehaven is the perfect spot for an intimate picnic for two or a day of exploration. Cruise Indigo, Fantasea and Hamilton Island Watersports all offer trips to Whitehaven.

www.cruiseindigo.com.au, www.fantasea.com.au, www.h2osportz.com.au
or phone the Hamilton Island Tour Desk on 07 4946 8305 (58305)

6 Sail Away

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.

www.sunsailwhitsundays.com.au,
www.adrenalinrushsailing.com.au,
07 4946 8305 (58305)



8 Trail Blazing

Negotiate the fire trails, tackle the different terrain and enjoy Hamilton Island riding your own quad bike. Tremendous fun for ages 16 and up (also available for kids), take in some exciting countryside on the way to the Resort Lookout and some of the best views and photo opportunities on the island.

Contact the Hamilton Island Tour Desk on
07 4946 8305 (58305)

9 The Long Relaxing Lunch

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 number of outstanding restaurants and cafes around the island. This is the perfect time to really take your time.

For bookings call the Tour Desk on
07 4946 8305 (58305)



7 Tropical Sunsets

What could be more luxurious – a chilled glass of something and a stunning Whitsunday sunset viewed from aboard Cruise Indigo's classic yacht **Banjo Paterson**.

Or for those with a more 'hands on' philosophy, try a sunset sea kayaking tour – a unique way of exploring some of the 74 islands of the Great Barrier Reef from water level.

www.cruiseindigo.com.au,
07 4946 8305 (58305)

10 Wetting a Line

This is what fishing dreams are made of. From some of the best sports fish in the world, to some of the best eating fish, anyone with an interest in fishing will thrill at the challenge of doing so in this part of the world. Let the experienced professionals from Renegade Charters, Rapture Fishing Charters or Hamilton Island Watersports share their local knowledge with you as you go looking for the big ones – they will even clean your catch of the day ready for the table.

www.renegadecharters.com.au 07 4946 8305 (58305)



A Week at the Races



Without doubt one of the premier sailing regattas in the Southern Hemisphere, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week attracts the very finest boats and crews from around the country and the world. It was this event which first attracted Bob Oatley to the island and has led to Hamilton Island's rebirth and the regatta's tremendous growth ever since.

STORY ROB MUNDLE PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

For those with an interest in sailing, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week (AHIRW) needs no introduction.

It is quite simply one of the greatest sailing regattas in the country, attracting the cream of yachts and crews to the stunning Whitsundays for a week of fierce competition on the water and a host of activities back on dry land.

In 2009, the 26th AHIRW was once again a resounding success, some 200 yachts battling it out for pride and the grand prize of a new Audi. For Bob Oatley and the Oatley family, owners of Hamilton Island, the 2009 AHIRW provided another reason to celebrate, with the official opening of the magnificent Hamilton Island Yacht Club, by Queensland Premier Anna Bligh. An iconic building that seems to float on the water at the mouth of the marina, the stunning new Yacht Club represents a milestone in the history of the island and of Race Week, an event which captured Bob Oatley's imagination back in the 1980s.

Of course the name Oatley is synonymous with sailing, so it comes as no surprise that it was sailing that led Bob Oatley to Hamilton Island in the first place, as he explains:

"Ironically, my love for Hamilton Island came about in the early 1980s when I sailed past it while cruising around the Great Barrier Reef. I didn't go ashore, but I could recognise the potential. It was the very early days of the development of the resort: they were building the airport and the harbour at the time, and there was a lot of activity going on. I remember saying 'what a great project that is,' never thinking that one day I'd be the owner. It's an incredible coincidence, and I'm so proud of it.



the magnificent Porto Cervo in Sardinia. At the same time the Oatley flair has seen what is now Audi Hamilton Island Race Week grow to become Australia's greatest offshore keelboat regatta.

For the future, Chief Executive Officer, Glenn Bourke, himself a three-time Laser world champion, Olympic and America's Cup sailor, says the island's vision is to host many more sailing events. During the 2009 Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, Bourke announced that Hamilton Island had won the right to stage the 2010 505 World Championship, and will be a host port for the 2011 Around Australia Ocean Race and Rally.

Certainly there was no shortage of action in 2009, the 200 yachts racing in 11 divisions put on a spectacular show and tested the skills of every crew member involved and for all it was a tremendous success. As tough as the competition is though, there is a real spirit of camaraderie at AHIRW that underpins the event and brings crews back year after year. Certainly, that competition and sense of fun had a profound effect on one particular yachtsman and the rest as they say – is history. ■



Audi Hamilton Island Race Week continues to grow and cement its place as the country's greatest offshore keelboat regatta. The opening of the new Yacht Club in 2009 was yet another milestone in the island's development and good reason for Bob Oatley and Iain Murray (top right) to smile at the official opening.

"It was some 20 years later, again because of sailing, that we came to own Hamilton Island. In 1984 the island staged the inaugural Hamilton Island Race Week, a regatta that immediately attracted a wide range of yachts, including the very best ocean racers in Australia. It went from strength to strength over the years, so it was inevitable, that when we returned to competitive sailing in around 2000, that we looked to Race Week for some good competition and fun. I really looked forward to going to the island every year for that event, and each time I was there I grew to love the region even more. It is a stunning part of Australia and a wonderful place to race and cruise. I guess you could call it Australia's answer to the Caribbean – but I think it's better," says Oatley.

At Race Week in 2003 the Oatley family would learn that Hamilton Island was for sale, and through a fortuitous set of circumstances they soon became the owners.

Since then the island has developed in spectacular fashion, the family immersed in taking Hamilton Island to a point where it will be recognised as one of the world's truly great lifestyle destinations, likened to

Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2009 results for all 11 divisions, along with the latest information on 2010 Audi Hamilton Island Race Week (20-28 August, 2010) are available online at www.hamiltonislandraceweek.com.au



The Finer Things

Although its official title is Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, it could just as easily be called Fashion Week or Food Week, such is the incredible abundance and standard of both during this internationally acclaimed event. In fact, Hamilton Island has become the destination for fine food and fashion, with top chefs and designers choosing the island to showcase their latest creations.

STORY UTE JUNKER

PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

It's a sunny Saturday afternoon. Wine glasses are arranged in neat rows, bottles rest in wine buckets, an antipasto plate tempts with a range of delicious morsels. So far, so normal. However, for the keen group of quaffers gathered in the Hamilton Island Yacht Club to sample a range of wines from Robert Oatley Vineyards, it quickly becomes clear that this is not your usual wine tasting.

For one thing, there's the spectacular setting. Inside the Yacht Club, fluid curves create surprising vistas; outside, there are those magnificent views over the preternaturally blue Whitsunday waters.

Then there are the hosts. While Darren Jahn, Robert Oatley Vineyards' inhouse communications specialist, is on hand to offer expert insight into the dozen or so wines on offer, the event hosts are Peter Evans, the talented chef from Sydney's Hugo's, and TV vet Dr Chris Brown. Neither claims to be an expert on wine, but both are entertaining chaps who find plenty to say about the various drops being tasted – particularly Chris Brown, who turns out to have a gift for making unusual analogies.

The Robert Oatley Vineyards Wild Oats Pinot Grigio, for instance, is compared to a chihuahua – because it's trendy, fashionable, and girls want to put it in their handbags. The Wild Oats Sauvignon Blanc Semillon, by contrast, has more bite – Chris likens it to a Maltese terrier. The Robert Oatley Sauvignon Blanc is good-tempered and goes down fast, prompting comparisons with a greyhound while, according to Chris, the Robert Oatley Chardonnay is playful and lighter – just like a Burmese cat.

By the time we've worked our way onto the Shirazes, the metaphors have moved out to the barnyard. Perhaps Chris' most cheeky comparison is when he likens one of the wines to a black Angus bull, describing it as "dark, meaty, full-bodied and a hit with the ladies."

It's an hilarious afternoon, as well as a chance to discover some delicious wines. By the time the tasting session is over, it's tempting to open another bottle, enjoy the sunset, and let the evening unwind. However, this is Audi Hamilton Island Race Week, and there's no time to sit still – you'll



miss out on too much.

If you've never been before, you might think Audi Hamilton Island Race Week is just about sailing. Regular AHIRW fans know better. For many participants, the on-shore activities are just as important as the action on the water. As well as wine tastings, there are gourmet lunches and dinners, and even spectacular fashion parades, from Collette Dinnigan (a poolside parade at qualia) and Little Joe designer Gail Elliott (a sunset showing at the Yacht Club) to kaftan queen Camilla Franks (a Moët & Chandon lunch).

For Dinnigan, this was the third year the island has played host to her exclusive showing, and the event continues to be a favourite for the globe-trotting designer.

"The atmosphere of celebration all over the island is contagious," says Dinnigan. "It feels very cosmopolitan...there's a zest for life because there's so much activity happening."

For Elliott too, Race Week provided an exciting stage on which to show. Many of the Little Joe items – floaty, colourful pieces in

silks and chiffons, featuring vibrant colours such as bright pinks and burnt oranges and embellished with embroidery, beads and sequins – were quickly snapped up by eager buyers. For Elliott, however, the event was more than business as usual: she invited up some friends and made a party of it.

“It’s such a glamorous event, and there’s always something going on – it’s a very fun atmosphere with lots of interesting people,” she said.

Understanding that everyone loves to frock up for a fashion parade, Race Week organisers even give guests the opportunity for a pre-parade professional styling courtesy of the team from Model Co, who have set up their headquarters in the Reef View Hotel.

The parades give guests the chance to update their wardrobes; thoughtfully, AHIRW organisers also provide plenty of opportunities to show off new purchases, such as the Wild Oats Ladies Lunch at Romano’s restaurant. The team at Romano’s has prepared lunch using some of Peter Evans’ recipes, serving a seafood feast that includes dishes such as oysters with grapefruit, mint and chilli dressing; scallops served with tomato, extra virgin olive oil, lime juice and basil; barbecue prawns with avocado salad, and Atlantic salmon with cucumber salad, beetroot and tomato sauce dressing.

Special host for the event is Todd Woodbridge, with support from Pete himself and Pete’s new mate Chris Brown, who’s been dragged along for the occasion. Pete is loving every minute of it. “Usually at these events, I’m in the kitchen – here all I have to do is sit down and eat and tell stories. It’s a tough job,” he laughs.

The afternoon stretches on, as ladies lunches often do, and soon several of the diners – including Pete himself – are in danger of running late for their next engagement: a Chef’s Table Dinner by





From high fashion to high living, Audi Hamilton Island Race Week proved once again that the action was not confined to the water. (Clockwise from centre) Collette Dinnigan launched her 2010 Resort Collection, Bob Oatley and Jim Clark, Pete Evans and Dr Chris Brown, Camilla Franks and models, Martin and Michelle Walsh, Kate Waterhouse and Merette Gearin, Kristy Hinze, Joe Coffey and Gail Elliott, Todd Woodbridge, Shannon Bennett and Nicky Oatley, Kristy Hinze and Matt Moran.



Shannon Bennett, the celebrated chef of Melbourne's Vue de Monde. The Race Week calendar features a number of gourmet dinners prepared by some of Australia's top chefs – Matt Moran of Sydney's ARIA hosts another – and the events sell out quickly.

The capacity crowd that shows up for Shannon Bennett's dinner is treated to a lavish repast. The menu starts with a series of delicately flavoured morsels, each elegantly arranged on its plate. Seared kingfish set into a sweet corn taco shell with an avocado puree and diced tomato is followed by poached quail with parmesan gnocchi and a parmesan veloute, and a ballantine of pheasant with foie gras and pistachio mousse. After a palate-cleansing tomato consommé with gazpacho jelly, more robust dishes appear, including poached crayfish accompanied by a lobster mousse cannelloni and liquorice root sauce, and a duo of Victorian squab – leg braised with carrots and leeks, and breast meat served with pistachio mousseline. The wonderfully tropical finale is a pina colada ice cream sundae with Malibu jelly and caramelised pineapple.

With such extraordinary feasts on offer, not to mention golf days and even a spot of sailing, it can be gruelling trying to keep up. Even though Pete Evans is an old hand at Race Week, he admits to a touch of bewilderment.

"It's almost a bit overwhelming for a quiet, unassuming bloke like me," he says with a cheeky grin. "There's so much on offer – where else could you enjoy a Shannon Bennett dinner one night, and the next, a crab and seafood feast with the host of (cult pay TV classic) *The Deadliest Catch*?"

For those who can't make it to all the events – because they're out sailing, for instance – there are still plenty of opportunities to get into the spirit of things, with impromptu parties breaking out all over the island. "The amount of people on Main Street is amazing – there is a party down there every night," Pete Evans says. ■

Audi Hamilton Island Race Week 2010 will be held 20 - 28 August. For more information visit: www.hamiltonisland.com.au/events





Teeing Off

Don't let the stunning views fool you, the recently opened Hamilton Island Golf Club offers a real challenge for all those willing to take it on. From the scratch golfer to the recreational player, Hamilton Island Golf Club offers a golfing experience you will long remember.

STORY STEVE KEIPERT

PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

Selecting a signature hole at Hamilton Island Golf Club is no easy task. While most golf clubs, particularly resort courses, like to nominate an iconic member of their 18 to build a reputation upon and to market the course, Hamilton Island has arguably a dozen or more worthy candidates.

Since its opening, many first-time visitors to the course, located on neighbouring Dent Island, have chosen the par-3 14th hole as their favourite, and having navigated my ball into the greenside bunker rather than the ball-swallowing bush that rings the green, I was tempted to agree. That was until I reached the 15th tee, where the course's toughest hole beckons you to take it on like a pugnacious boxer, daring you to take a swing.

A few minutes later, standing on the tee of the short 16th hole where the green is perched on a hillside, the Whitsundays sprawled out around you and Hamilton Island itself in full view, I realised that here again was another contender.

And these selections omit the gorgeous fourth hole with its eye-catching backdrop and undulating green, and numerous other stunning challenges in the 18 holes. In short, this is an exceptionally beautiful place to play golf.



Some world-renowned golf courses in remarkable settings mask design shortcomings with spectacular scenery. Not so at Hamilton Island, where the Thomson Perrett team has designed a course that will appeal to the scratch-handicap player and once-a-year holidaying golfer alike. At first glance the course appears to be a golf-by-numbers layout, where you must hit to specific, identified points to avoid the design's pitfalls – the most obvious being the jungle lining most fairways. A more intuitive golfer, however, will realise that while the course is tight, it is not overly long by modern standards, so the driver might not be required more than a couple of times in 18 holes.

With judicious club selections, even a C-grade golfer playing from the forward tees will find it possible to avoid exhausting a box of balls – if they play smart golf.

Room to move.

With little else occupying Dent Island, space is not an issue. The golf course spans much of the eastern side of the island with the two nines looping in different directions. The unique site yields several design quirks. For instance, from the 15th green you backtrack almost the full length of the hole to reach the next tee, while the journey between the 17th and 18th is almost a kilometre.

Thomson Perrett's finished product unquestionably owns the No.1 excursion to a golf course in Australia. Nowhere else is a boat (or helicopter) the only access option to reach the Clubhouse. It's a short ride, less than 10 minutes, but it reinforces the isolation of the course site.

The first two holes are a reminder of your challenge and your location: the opening hole is bordered on both sides by thick bush

while the second tee affords a clear view over your shoulder back to Hamilton Island.

It's almost preferable to play this course 'blind', without doing any homework on the holes, as for the first-timer there's an element of "what's happening next?" to the design. One minute you're scaling a steep hill to a plateau tee and the next you're being asked to drive a ball from high above the fairway to the strip of green snaking below. It's a roller-coaster ride without the seat belts and queues.

I love the par 3 fourth hole, partly because I hit a nice 4-iron just behind the flag, but also for the shot the hole asks you to play and the canvas of the Whitsundays behind it.

By the eighth hole I realise that if the driver isn't behaving, a 3-wood might be the more prudent play from the tee. Despite a slight hook with mine, I manage to find the fringe of the green in two and two-putt for a par 4. Later, I miscalculate the steep rise to



Golfers of all experience will enjoy the layout of Hamilton Island Golf Club and the view speaks for itself. The Chris Beckingham designed Clubhouse is the perfect place to relax after challenging the greens.

the 10th green and leave an awkward pitch that leads to a bogey 5, but two holes later I face a similar chip from in front of the 12th green and almost hole it for a birdie.

The tee shots and vistas from the final five tees are the layout's crescendo. Those wary of losing a ball off the side of the island on the little 16th have been given a bail-out bank on the left to bounce a ball onto the green, but there's nowhere to hide on the previous two holes. The 14th is a white-knuckle mid to short-iron par 3 with two bunkers the only respite from the vegetation. This is a tough hole, but local golfer, Bernice Petersen, became the first person to score a hole-in-one in competition at the course on this very hole! The 15th green is perched on a peninsula and its fairway so narrow you almost have to ride single file to the green.

Ross Perrett says there's a 'fluidity' to the design, and I see it on the back nine.

While I dislike the hidden nature of the 17th green, there's a simple way to play the hole without threatening its hazards. A lay-up second shot leaves a straightforward pitch to the green and a chance at par, which is how all mortal golfers should play it.

Yet the showstopper might just be reserved until the 18th, a long par 4 that plays much shorter thanks to the enormous drop from tee to green. A good drive will have your ball etched against the distant horizon for a moment before plummeting to earth and scuttling down the fairway.

The sheer range of nominees means a signature hole may not be readily identifiable, but all visitors will agree Hamilton Island Golf Club has left its mark on the Whitsundays. ■

Steve Keipert is the editor of Australian Golf Digest magazine.

HAMILTON ISLAND GOLF CLUB – QUICK FACTS

Par 71, 18-hole championship course

Designer: Thomson Perrett

Distance: 6120 metres

Green Fees: 18 holes \$150, 9 holes \$100 (includes use of an electric golf buggy on-course and return ferry transfers)

Hire clubs: Callaway

Clubhouse: Facilities include a Pro Shop and the Clubhouse restaurant and bar, which is open from 6.30am for light refreshments and from 11.00am for lunch. A refreshment buggy is available on-course.

First tee off: 7.00am

Last tee off - 18 holes: 1.00pm

Last tee off - 9 holes: 3.30pm

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Pas de Deux in Paradise

Take some of the most celebrated dancers in the country, add one of the most stunning locations and you have a recipe for pure magic. For the second year, qualia became a centre for the arts as members of The Australian Ballet performed an exclusive program of dance from some of the world's most loved ballets for the Pas de Deux in Paradise weekend.

STORY LEE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

It's a perfect Whitsunday evening as the light breeze gently stirs the palm fronds above. Guests are mingling beside the pool at qualia, one of Australia's most spectacular luxury resorts, sipping on cocktails as the sun sets and turns the sky a coral pink. But it's not just the stunning location and glorious weather that has the crowd buzzing, it's the anticipation of a very special experience to come.

The Australian Ballet left the bright lights of city concert halls behind to perform under the stars at qualia on the weekend of 23-25 October, 2009, providing a dazzling setting for a unique and very intimate evening of dance.

The four performances, on a specially constructed outdoor stage beside the pool with views of the azure blue sea beyond, wowed the crowd of 150 lucky guests in the exclusive dance spectacular. In a night that will long linger in the memories of the audience, four of the company's leading dancers – Principal Artist Yosvani Ramos, Coryphées' Stephanie Williams and Ty King-Wall and 20-year-old newcomer to The Australian Ballet, Kristy Corea – performed four mesmerising pas de deux (dance for two) from some of the world's best-loved ballet classics.

Hosted by *Getaway* travel show star, Catriona Rowntree, the ballet performance



The Australian Ballet perform under the stars at qualia.

was just the second of its kind. It followed the highly successful performance of Tim Harbour's *Wa* at the resort in October 2008, when six of the Company's dancers performed an ethereal piece from the Bodytorque series under a scimitar moon on a cloudless night. It was the first time the ballet had performed outside of a traditional theatre space.

The first of the four pas de deux ballets was from Victor Gsovsky's 1949 breathtaking display of virtuosity, the *Grand Pas Classique*, derived from music taken from the opera-ballet *Le Dieu et la Bayadere*, followed by a beautiful piece from Act 2 of *Swan Lake*, easily one of the world's favourite and



(Clockwise from top) A theatre with a difference – once again, qualia provided the perfect location, and the Coral Sea, the perfect backdrop. Michelle Glew and Tim Ross. Guests enjoyed superb culinary creations as part of the event.



most-loved ballets. But it was the second half of the evening that stole the show, firstly with the ultimate romantic ballet, *Giselle*, widely acknowledged as the pinnacle of 19th century Romanticism, and the breathtaking final duet, the famous *Le Corsaire Pas de Deux*. While the full-length three act ballet *Le Corsaire* was choreographed by Joseph Mazilier in 1856 and reproduced in 1899 by Marius Petipa, it is only the spectacular pas de deux that is still performed in the West today, a stunningly lively and athletic performance, complemented by striking coral-coloured costumes that seemed to almost capture the colour of the earlier sunset.

After the show, guests and dancers were treated to a magnificent moonlight dinner by the pool at Pebble Beach, matched with a selection of boutique wines.

"From the sublimely traditional *Swan Lake* and *Giselle* to the technical grandeur of *Grand Pas Classique* and *Le Corsaire*, it's been great fun putting the repertoire together for this evening," said David McAllister, Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, which is based in Melbourne.

As stunning as the location and performances were, the real highlight of the weekend-long event was the chance to meet and talk with the dancers. The special



Four of The Australian Ballet's leading dancers (Yosvani Ramos, Kristy Corea, Stephanie Williams and Ty King-Wall) produced spell-binding performances, with Catriona Rowntree hosting. (Below) The incredible location adds a new quality to the performance, says David McAllister, Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet.



event kicked-off with a dinner on the Friday evening at which the dancers and Artistic Director were guests, answering questions and sharing their passion for dance. There was the rare chance to watch the dancers rehearse on Saturday morning and on Sunday morning guests could join in a pilates and yoga class held by Williams and King-Wall in the gorgeous meditation pavilion at the resort's Spa qualia.

"We were delighted to have the chance to jump off the big stage for a change and bring the Ballet to an intimate gathering of guests allowing them to interact with the dancers and get behind the scenes. This is certainly a great opportunity for all of us and one we really enjoy at The Australian Ballet."

"We're no strangers to performing outdoors, but we normally present on well established stages in public arenas. To perform with the Whitsundays as our backdrop and qualia as our front-of-house is a different experience all together," McAllister said.

"To perform by the pool at qualia gave our dancers the most beautiful décor they could wish for. The fresh sea air caressing their costumes made for a magical addition to some of ballets most loved pas de deux. The dancers responded with some extraordinary dancing. It was a truly magical night in paradise!" said McAllister.

It takes a lot to outshine qualia, but for one memorable weekend, The Australian Ballet seems to have managed the impossible. ■

The 2010 Pas de Deux in Paradise will be held 11-13 June, 2010. For further information visit www.qualia.com.au



Intensive Care

There are countless perils, both man-made and natural facing the marine turtle, but thanks to the ReefHQ Aquarium's newly built Turtle Hospital, expert care and facilities are at hand to help these fascinating creatures and improve their odds of survival.

STORY KATHERINE MUNKRES

PHOTOGRAPHY GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY (GBRMPA) & DAVID WACHENFELD



The light reflecting off the water of the bright blue fibreglass hospital tank sparkles in ancient looking eyes. This latest patient is Wunjunga, a green marine turtle who although is only a teenager in turtle years, has already had a tough life. Recently, Wunjunga was found stranded in a rock pool on a beach in north Queensland. He was disoriented, dehydrated, and covered in marine leeches. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service officers rescued the injured turtle and delivered him to ReefHQ Aquarium's newly built Turtle Hospital.

Luckily for Wunjunga, who was named after the beach on which he was found, this purpose-built Turtle Hospital was officially opened just three days before his arrival. In the background, state-of-the-art filtration machinery gurgles and bubbles, keeping the water free from bacteria and parasites. The blue hospital tanks lining the walls are occupied by other patients, Emma, another green turtle, and Dusty, a small hawksbill turtle.

ReefHQ Aquarist Nick Baker looks after the Turtle Hospital's 'patients' and has been Wunjunga's carer for the past few months. He is getting ready for the weigh-in which will help determine how healthy this young turtle is today.

Wunjunga was admitted to the hospital

weighing 10.5 kilograms. He was hand fed half a kilogram of fish and squid each day. Today, the scales read a healthy 11.5 kilograms, which Nick says is good news. "This is the kind of weight gain we hope for. It confirms that Wunjunga is healthy enough to be released," says Nick. Tomorrow, the aquarist team will begin preparations to return one very fortunate turtle to his home.

Marine turtles like Wunjunga face a multitude of challenges in their perilous struggle to reach adulthood. After hatching, baby turtles must make a mad dash from their nests on the beach to the sea, navigating their way past a treacherous array of hungry predators. As they run the first gauntlet of their young lives, the hatchlings must escape the clutching talons of seabirds, pigs and goannas, and circumvent the vice-like claws of crabs waiting in holes to ambush them as they approach the sea. Once in the water their tiny flippers must carry them swiftly past the sharp teeth of lightening quick sharks, trevally and barracudas. Many will not survive the first few hours of life.

For those lucky enough to reach the sea, life's challenges have only just begun. The baby turtles are swept away by ocean currents. They will remain adrift for the first eight to ten years of their lives. Riding the oceans conveyor belts, they will forage

Six of the world's seven species of marine turtles live in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. These are the loggerhead, green, hawksbill, flatback, leatherback and olive ridley turtles.

and take refuge amongst floating mats of algae and other flotsam. When they are old enough, juvenile turtles leave the open sea to find foraging grounds – where both prey and predators abound.

Unfortunately, the hazards nature presents are only some of the threats facing marine turtles. All of the world's marine turtles are considered vulnerable or endangered largely due to human impacts like feral animals, coastal development, some fishing activities, water pollution, boat strikes, dredging, climate change and marine debris.

Rubbish washed from city streets and garbage thrown overboard from boats is a major killer of marine turtles. Along the Queensland coastline, hundreds of turtles have been found with items such as small pieces of plastic, including water and milk bottle tops, balloons, plastic wrap and bags in their digestive systems. If plastic bags, which look like jellyfish – a natural food source, don't suffocate the turtles, these and other rubbish items can lead to internal blockages which can ultimately lead to starvation.

Today, the threat of climate change is jeopardising the future of all marine turtle populations. Marine turtle mothers lay their eggs in nests they dig on sandy beaches, with the temperature of the nest determining the gender of the hatchlings. Climate change is causing nest temperatures to increase which means that more female turtles are being born, leading to an imbalance of the population. If temperatures get too high, the fragile eggs won't hatch at all.

ReefHQ Aquarium has been rehabilitating

turtles since its establishment in 1987. In 2008, the aquarium began planning for a purpose-built turtle hospital which was necessary to give turtles the best possible chance of survival. For ReefHQ Aquarium Director, Fred Nucifora, the project was a major challenge. "At first, it was very difficult getting the funds we needed to build the facility as the economy was in a downturn. Fortunately though, community members, corporate sponsors, the Australian Government and many volunteers all pitched in to help make the hospital a reality."

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's ReefHQ Aquarium Turtle Hospital was officially opened by Australia's Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett on 24 August, 2009. Since opening, the hospital has provided care for seven injured turtles. The hospital's key role is to rehabilitate turtles so they can be released back into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Six of the world's seven species of marine turtle are found on the Great Barrier Reef and the staff of the Turtle Hospital believe that Queenslanders have a special role to play in looking after them. Because human impacts are threatening turtle populations the ReefHQ team says it's our job to give back to these amazing animals by helping them out when they're in trouble.

Taking care of sick turtles is only part of what the hospital does. It has adopted what it calls the CARE philosophy – to conserve, aid, rehabilitate and educate. It is part of the National Education Centre for the Great Barrier Reef and each year provides more than 125,000 visitors from all around the

If plastic bags, which look like jellyfish – a natural food source, don't suffocate the turtles, these and other rubbish items can lead to internal blockages which can ultimately lead to starvation.





10 things you can do to help marine turtles

- **Refuse** plastic grocery bags, **Reduce** your use of plastics, **Reuse** bags and containers and **Recycle** plastic drink bottles
- Make a big commitment and **be plastic bag free**
- **Turn out as many lights as possible** during the main nesting and hatching season (October to April) – even while on holiday!
- Keep turtle nests cool by **reducing your energy use**
- **Dispose of rubbish properly**
- **Go slow in boats** and keep an eye out for turtles
- **Dispose of fishing rubbish** such as hooks, nets, lines and plastic bags in closed bins on land
- **Don't approach nesting turtles**
- **Make a donation** to a turtle rehabilitation centre or conservation society
- **Report sightings** of injured turtles by calling 1300 130 372

world with an opportunity to get up close and personal with the turtles and to learn more about what people can do to help protect them.

The hospital team has also joined forces with the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences at James Cook University in a partnership that will benefit future generations of turtles. Through the partnership, the university provides access to the latest veterinary technology including everything from x-rays to blood sampling, and students have the opportunity to learn about turtle care first-hand.

The hospital currently has the capacity to care for as many as five turtles at any given time but as more donations roll in, the ReefHQ team plans to expand the facility to cope with its ever-growing number of patients. The average cost of rehabilitating a turtle is more than \$5,000 so the hospital

relies on donations to care for injured turtles just like Wunjunga.

After 50 days in hospital, the ReefHQ aquarists are preparing Wunjunga for what they hope will be yet another lucky break in his young life. Wunjunga is lifted onto an operating table where Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service marine turtle expert, Ian Bell, fits a small metallic tag to his left flipper.

Now officially known as turtle number K97265, Wunjunga will soon become part of a turtle tagging program designed to piece together the mysterious lives of marine turtles.

Mr Bell said the tagging program provided important insights into the population structure and conservation status of the ocean-dwelling reptiles. "We find out details such as where they go, where they eat, where they breed, and how

often they breed. There are warning signs that several species are in the early stages of decline in north Queensland."

Tagged and finally ready to be sent home, Wunjunga is moved into a holding bin and transported by car to the nearby release site. The aquarists carry him down to the beach, placing him several metres from the water's edge. They want to be certain he is mobile enough to make his own way to the sea. It doesn't take long for Wunjunga to pick up the familiar sights and smells of his watery home. He quickly heads for the ocean without so much as a backward glance at those who have loyally cared for him these past months.

For the team at the ReefHQ Aquarium Turtle Hospital though, seeing Wunjunga healthy and back in his natural habitat is reward enough. "It is a very proud moment for the staff and volunteers when we release a fit and healthy patient from the hospital," Fred Nucifora says. "This turtle has been given a second chance because of the amazing support we have received from visitors, the Townsville community and our Turtle Hospital sponsors."

The successful rehabilitation of a turtle like Wunjunga illustrates why facilities like the Turtle Hospital are so important to these threatened species. Only one in 1000 marine turtles survive to adulthood and thanks to a little helping hand, Wunjunga may be one of the lucky ones. ■

Make a donation – You can make a tax-deductible donation to ReefHQ Aquarium's Turtle Hospital by calling +61 7 4750 0800 or emailing info@reefHQ.com.au The Turtle Hospital is open for tours 364 days of the year.



Gender Bender - Rising temperatures due to climate change are causing more and more turtle hatchlings to be female.

Designing Eden

Coming up with a landscape design to complement the iconic new Hamilton Island Yacht Club created its own set of unique challenges, but celebrated landscape designer, Jamie Durie is no stranger to taking challenging projects and turning them into triumphs.

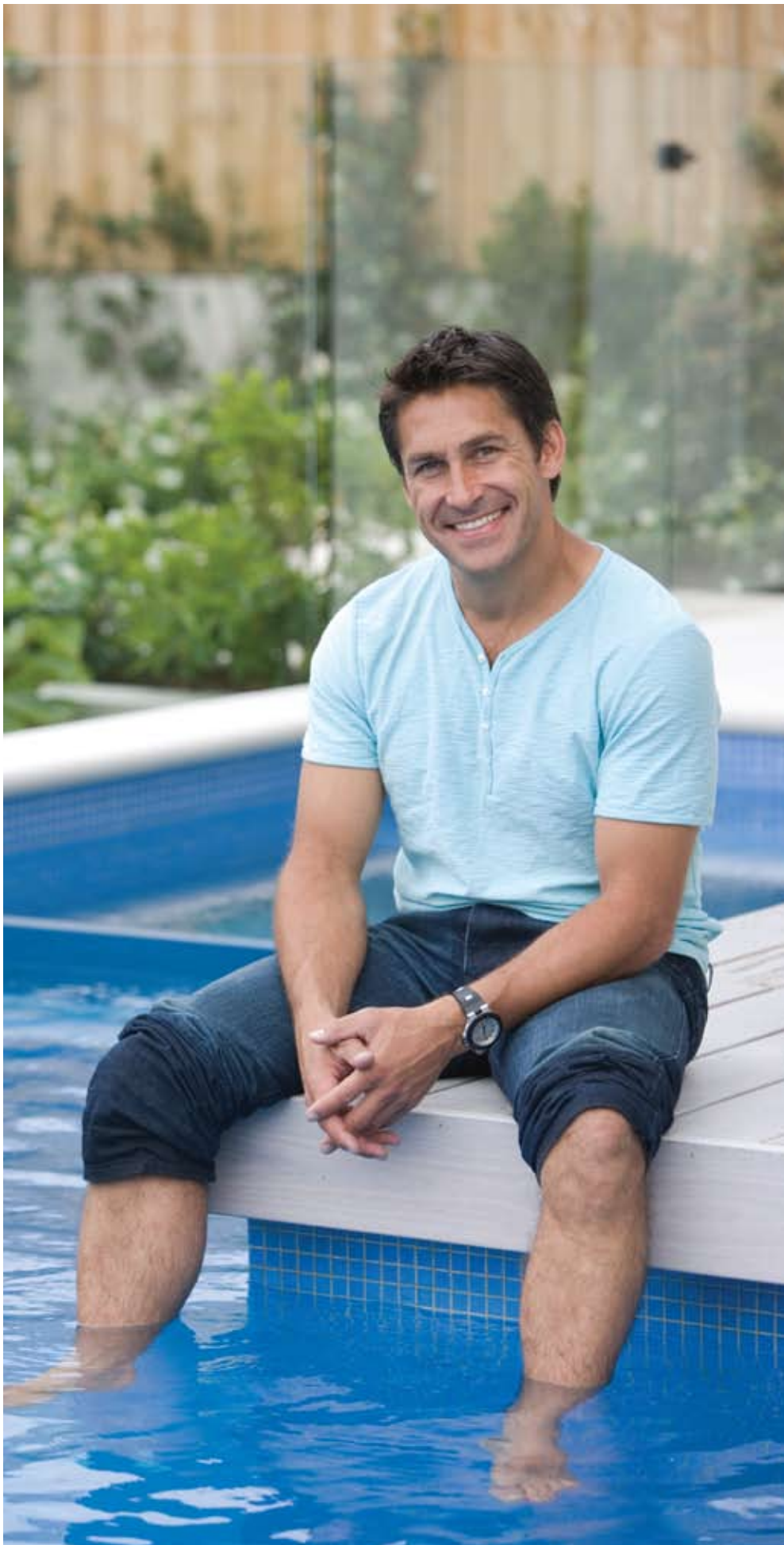
STORY SAM TINSON PHOTOGRAPHY CIARAN HANDY & JASON BUSCH

How do you improve on paradise? It's a tough question, especially when that paradise is the beautiful and fragile ecosystem that is Hamilton Island. For Jamie Durie, Australia's very own gardening guru and the man behind the delicately landscaped Eden that surrounds the Hamilton Island Yacht Club, such dilemmas are all in a day's work.

Durie was tasked with creating an environmentally appropriate backdrop to the marina's stunning Yacht Club and adjoining luxury Villas, designed by renowned architect Walter Borda. With one of the world's unique natural wonders as a canvas it was a role too important to be left to chance, and Durie – whose expertise has made him a household name thanks to television shows such as *Backyard Blitz* and *The Outdoor Room* – was considered the only man for the job.

A keen sailor and personal friend of the Oatley family, owners of Hamilton Island, Durie has long been a fan of the destination he refers to as 'the jewel of the Whitsundays'.

"I've sailed and holidayed in the area for years, and I think what the Oatley's have created with the new Yacht Club and Villas is truly phenomenal," says Durie. "It's the heartbeat of the Whitsundays."



Durie is also a big admirer of Barda – so much so that he recently commissioned the innovative architect to design his own eco-friendly residence in Sydney.

“I have a great relationship with Walter, I love his work,” says Durie. “The Yacht Club is astonishing, it’s the Opera House of the Great Barrier Reef. I took a good deal of inspiration from that, and also from the topography of the island and the vast array of native plants there.”

The challenge facing Durie was to create a sustainable landscape that complemented Barda’s groundbreaking design while remaining sympathetic to the fragile ecology of the island. No easy feat in any circumstances, and the climatic extremes of the Queensland coast did not make his task any easier.

“Any time you’re working on absolute beachfront you need first and second line salt and wind tolerant plants. Basically they need to be bullet proof. They need to be indigenous to that area – what works in some coastal areas won’t work in others – and of course they also need to do the job from an aesthetic point of view. So it’s tough, you have a limited palette. But I think we got the right mix.”

Durie went to extraordinary lengths to realise his vision, collecting seeds from plants native to the island and propagating them to use in the design.



"There's a native cycad growing on the island that I thought was absolutely beautiful, and I haven't seen it anywhere else," he says. "I propagated some and

"I've sailed and holidayed in the area for years, and I think what the Oatley's have created with the new Yacht Club and Villas is truly phenomenal," says Durie.

included them in the design. We also transplanted native pandanus from the area, along with local grasses and shrubs. What we've ended up with is a nice blend of native plants and non-indigenous species suited to the climate."

As fans of his television garden makeover shows will know, Durie is at his creative best when blurring the boundaries between inside and outside living space. While Barda is behind the innovative design of the Yacht Club's 35 private Villas, it was Durie who came up with the idea of adding individual al fresco plunge pools to some of the residences.

"I really wanted to enhance some of the private areas of the Villas," Durie explains. All who see Hamilton Island Yacht Club agree that the success of Durie's landscaping lies not in its showiness or visual drama, but in the way it blends seamlessly with the natural contours and terrain of the island. There is no place here for the uniform rows of palm trees and flower beds found on other resorts; the cycads sprout naturally at apparently random intervals, paths curve organically around boulders worn smooth by the sea. In places it's hard to tell where the landscaping ends and the beach begins.

While those lucky enough to secure one of the Villas will enjoy these things on a daily basis, sadly Durie's busy schedule doesn't allow him the time to sit back and appreciate his own creation.

"I'm too busy filming the US version of *The Outdoor Room*," he says. "Right now I've got a producer yelling in one ear and 45 frenzied carpenters and bricklayers in the other."

No wonder he sounds more than a little nostalgic when he talks about Hamilton Island. ■



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Wild Oats **XI**

It is an Australian institution, one of the toughest and most coveted sporting contests in the southern hemisphere – The Rolex Sydney Hobart Ocean Classic tests the mettle of boats and crew alike in what can be a very unforgiving race in notoriously fickle conditions – but one boat has defied the odds to win an unprecedented four times in a row.

STORY ROB MUNDLE & JAMES MCRORY PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

There are two distinct links between Hamilton Island and the record breaking Sydney to Hobart yacht race supermaxi, *Wild Oats XI*.

One is Bob Oatley, and the other is a small and very flimsy canvas-covered canoe that ventured onto Sydney Harbour in the late 1930s.

The thread goes like this: Bob and his family are the energetic owners of Hamilton Island; Bob is the owner of Australia's greatest modern day ocean racing yacht, *Wild Oats XI*; and the rickety little canoe, which had a garden stake for a mast and a bed sheet for a sail, was Bob's boyhood dream of adventure. That canoe, which he bought from a schoolmate for the princely sum of just two shillings and sixpence, was the start of a life under sail, one that would eventually lead him not only to Hamilton Island but to an enviable record in the Rolex Sydney Hobart Classic.

Bob Oatley's passion for sailing is legendary. Over the decades the evolution of sailboats in his life – which started with the barely seaworthy sailing canoe – has reached the point where his latest charge, *Wild Oats XI*, has become a champion of the seas. In 2008 she became the first yacht to win four consecutive line honours in the gruelling 628 nautical mile Rolex Sydney Hobart race, one of the world's great offshore classics.

She also established the record time for the course in 2005 (one day, 18 hours, 40 minutes and 10 seconds – which remains unbeaten) and won the race on corrected time.

Significant rule changes for 2009 meant that the allowed length for the supermaxi was increased from 98 to 100 feet (30.48 metres), and coupled with faster sails had

experts predicting speeds of more than 38 knots and the possibility of a new record time.

With seven yachts potentially in the running, this was always going to be a tough race, but fickle winds made for often slow going for the entire fleet and *Wild Oats XI* missed clinching a fifth title by just two

racing teams championship, the prestigious Admiral's Cup, contested in Cowes, England. Here he led the Australian team to triumph, that year with another great yacht, *Wild Oats IX*.

Just as is the case with his business activities, Bob Oatley has built his successful sailing teams around talent, camaraderie

Certainly, to win this epic race once is the dream of every self-respecting yachtsman or woman, but to triumph over the sea, the prevailing conditions and the cream of international boats and crews four times – that is too much for most to even contemplate. A far cry from a young man in a canoe with a stake for a mast and a bed sheet for a sail.

hours. Her record four straight and the event's fastest ever time though, beyond anyone else's reach.

At the finish of the 2009 race, Bob Oatley was characteristically gracious and understandably proud of the outstanding achievement.

"We came here this year to get our fifth line honours and missed the target, so we will have to come back next year and go again," he said with a grin.

"I'm very proud of what the *Wild Oats XI* team has achieved since 2005 – four straight line honours, a race record time that still stands, and a win on handicap. Tonight all I can add is that four wins and a second out of five races isn't bad."

(That *Wild Oats XI* won the 29th Pittwater to Coffs Harbour race only a matter of days later is a good indicator of the competitive spirit of Oatley and the crew).

Another pinnacle in Bob Oatley's sailing career came in 2003 in the world ocean

and spirit. Interestingly, across this male-dominated sport, one of his favourites is of the opposite sex; Australia's most decorated female offshore sailor, Adrienne Cahalan – who was named as navigator for the 2009 *Wild Oats XI* Sydney Hobart campaign.

Like everyone else in the *Wild Oats XI* crew, mother-of-two Cahalan was hoping to deliver Bob Oatley a fifth consecutive line honours in the 2009 Sydney Hobart race.

"It was always going to be a tough year to take line honours; there was a strong line-up of boats at the front of the fleet," said Cahalan, "We worked hard and we don't think we made many mistakes," she said.

"But as always, it very much depended on the best boat and best team sailing within the weather window," she said of the result.

By competing in the 2009 Sydney to Hobart, Cahalan established her own record, notching up her 18th race south, the most for any woman in the colourful 65-year history of the classic. ■



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HAMILTON ISLAND
GREAT BARRIER REEF AUSTRALIA



The finest Fare

Although qualia's Executive Chef, Jane-Therese Mulry built her reputation in some of the most exacting kitchens in the world, she is the first to admit that the finest cuisine begins with the freshest and very best ingredients available – a subject she is passionate about.

STORY MARGARET MERTEN PHOTOGRAPHY JACK ATLEY & ANDREA FRANCOLINI



Sourcing the best produce is a subject close to Mulry's heart and one she knows well, so the marriage between qualia and the *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* Produce Awards is a perfect match.

Using local produce is one of the most important ingredients in creating the finest cuisine and qualia shines in this regard. In fact, qualia's head chef Jane-Therese Mulry is passionate about creating relationships with local producers, and qualia itself is the major sponsor of the *Vogue Entertaining+Travel* Produce Awards. These awards, first launched five years ago, are designed to celebrate and foster the food culture of Australia, particularly local producers who are creating outstanding produce, from organic meat to growing heirloom vegetables. For Mulry, supporting the awards is a fantastic opportunity, not only to learn more but to meet up with her peers. "I'm highly involved with the process. This year I went down to Sydney for the ceremony, and obviously being the chef of the hotel that sponsors the awards, it brings

with it great benefits. I really enjoyed being in amongst it and meeting all these great people and chefs. We had fun!"

Any chef worth their salt will tell you that they and their team can only be as good as the produce they have in their kitchens, and Mulry comes with some impressive experience in developing and promoting regional produce. After completing her apprenticeship at the Hyatt Cooloom in Queensland in 1995, she decided to head overseas and spent time working in South Africa. She then headed to London where she famously became legendary chef Marco Pierre White's first ever female head chef. Back in Australia in December 2006, she began a two year stint as executive chef at Tasmania's Cradle Mountain Lodge, and this is where her interest in local produce was sparked. "Before long I ended up on

the board of a company called Produce of Heaven. It was a collective group of people who got together with their produce from Tasmania; Petuna salmon and so on." This led to one of the great moments of her career thus far: an opportunity to take the Tasmanian produce to Hong Kong and showcase it in the World Food Exhibition. "We did a huge dinner at the Landmark Oriental for all the dignitaries and government officials, and this was a real highlight of my career. Being an ambassador for the great product coming out of Australia, and Tasmania in that instance, was fantastic. I'm a great believer in it."

And this experience has set Mulry up perfectly for her job at qualia, as she brings with her a passion for using local suppliers and produce wherever possible. "When you take on a job like this it probably takes you

about a year to learn what's actually out there and it's only after that time that you can start working with the local suppliers," she says enthusiastically. "We like to use them as much as possible but it's also very seasonal. We've got our Bowen tomatoes, and we've got a lovely lady just out on Airlie Beach who is raising Berkshire pigs for us. It's taken some time to find these people

and it will be great for the guests as well. We are looking at avenues where we can offer the guests an hour of activity walking around the garden and then maybe doing a little cooking class, that type of thing. We'll start off with hardy herbs such as rosemary." One problem she confides, laughing, is that the garden will need to be possum proofed from the local fauna who might try to pop



What Mulry and her team at qualia create has to be sampled to be believed. The freshest ingredients are only one part of a whole after all.

and get them to work with us as well. It's a relationship, so we'll have conversations such as 'we don't like that, can you do this instead'; that type of thing. For example, my fisherman, Matt, he's just come on board. We've been using him for a while but he was based in Brisbane. Now he's built a beautiful factory in Bowen and he's getting these fish coming straight off his boats, which is awesome." But there are more exciting plans afoot. "Being on the island, we're now looking at growing our own produce, we're starting to set up a full-on herb garden here



by for a snack.

Her food ethos? "Fresh, local and organic where possible and presented imaginatively on the plate," Mulry answers. She pauses. "Simple, too, that's very important," she adds. She's loving the role at qualia and the opportunities it brings, not only with finding and supporting local producers, but "also mentoring my team. I've taken so much out of the industry – I'm 38 years old – and it's time to give something back. There's nothing that makes me more proud than going away on a holiday and walking back in and my kitchen is the same as when I left it. My team work fantastically together." Looks like qualia is going to be a great place for local producers, lucky guests and, possibly, the island's possums. ■

Celebrate the finest fare at qualia at the Great Barrier Feast event with Tetsuya Wakuda, 12-14 March, 2010. For more information visit www.qualia.com.au



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Beyond Best Job

They say that time flies when you're having fun, and for one man in particular, time has really flown. The man with the Best Job in the World, Island Caretaker of the Great Barrier Reef, Ben Southall, is moving on and we catch up with him to find out what's next?

STORY LEE ATKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES HILL & BEN SOUTHALL



What a view! Either from the new Hamilton Island Golf Club or his own residence on the island – the surroundings are simply without equal according to Ben (Left). Ben's parents were captivated by the outlook from his island home when they visited (above).

When 34-year-old charity fundraiser from the UK, Ben Southall, first found out that he'd scored the Best Job in the World, he was worried that he wouldn't have time to do all the job entailed. Small wonder given that the job brief included visiting and experiencing the best of Queensland's holiday offerings along the length and breadth of Queensland's Great Barrier Reef, from the Torres Strait Islands in the north to Lady Elliot Island in the south and pretty much everywhere in between, including the Queensland outback.

"The biggest challenge will be finding enough time in six short months to experience everything and report on it," Ben told *REEF Magazine* last year.

Fast forward six months and Ben reckons

he's made a pretty good stab at doing and seeing as much as he possibly could.

"The Best Job has been a truly incredible experience with my Island Caretaker life involving everything from sailing to diving and racing jet skis," said Ben "The sheer number of things that I've done in the six month adventure would fill an active person's life very easily, but to do it all in such a short period of time has been a great privilege and flipping awesome too. I've never before been quite as busy as I have for the last six months but I wouldn't change anything at all.

"I've enjoyed everything that I've had the chance to do. Opportunities like this don't just happen in life so when they're offered you have to take them... be it eating a witjuti

grub or jumping out of a plane!," says Ben, who says his best adventures were under water.

"Every time I get under the water I feel I'm having a new adventure, the Great Barrier Reef really does have some of the best diving in the world and each time I do it brings something new to the whole experience. I'm itching to get back underwater right now!"

So many places, so many adventures... but the place that really lingers in Ben's mind is the islands of the Torres Strait, closer to PNG than Australia and somewhere that few Australians have ever visited.

"The Torres Strait was the most culturally brilliant part of the Best Job adventure for me. Even though on a map it is part of Australia it really doesn't feel like it when you get there.



Ben's 'insider tips' for the perfect Hamilton Island holiday

"Having a home on Hamilton Island has been great fun," says Ben. "I get involved with the swimming and running clubs and really feel like one of the locals. The great thing about Hamilton Island is the fact that not only is it a community that many call home, but there are also lots of people here on holiday and that reflects in the atmosphere around the place with loads of smiling and good times."

We asked Ben for his top three favourite ways to explore Hamilton Island and the surrounding Whitsundays.

1. "Get out on the reef – right to the Outer Reef which is so dramatic and impressive. Having the chance to spend a night out there and witnessing sunrise over the ocean is something I'll take away with me."

2. "Head up to the top of one of the islands to watch the sun go down – that could be Whitsunday Peak, Passage Peak or for the slightly less fit try One Tree Hill... there's a cocktail bar there!"

3. "Get onboard one of the many different sailing experiences which are on offer, even if it's a day trip it gives you a very different perspective on the islands... or try a flight over them in a helicopter or seaplane for another angle altogether."

For more information about Ben's Queensland adventures, visit www.islandreefjob.com



Whether on the water, under it, or flying over it, Ben's time as Caretaker was action-packed from the start.

The people are very different, almost Pacific Islanders more than Aussie. The feeling of community and history really does run deep there with a sense of family and respect ever present. To experience and learn about the culture there was a real privilege and it's somewhere I'd love to go back to."

Which is exactly what Ben is planning on doing – one of his next aspirations is to undertake a kayaking trip on the Great Barrier Reef.

"During 2010 I will continue to work for, and on behalf of, Tourism Queensland as I



continue to discover what the state has to offer and the blog will keep reporting it to the world," explains Ben. "I'll also be starting to put the plans together for my kayaking adventure which will raise money for charity and promote protection of the Great Barrier Reef."

"I only hope that in 50 years time when my grandchildren are visiting Australia they have the chance to witness some of the amazing sights that I have – the reef needs a lot of looking after by everyone on the planet to ensure that is the case." ■



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Test of the Fittest

Despite the gorgeous location, athletes competing in the inaugural Hamilton Island Triathlon were put to the test, mentally and physically as they battled it out to see who had the right stuff.

STORY DAMION SMY
PHOTOGRAPHY CIARAN HANDY

So you like the idea of a relaxing swim off Whitehaven Beach, or a gentle jog around Hamilton Island? Perhaps a bike ride would be just the way to top it off? Well, it seems you're not alone if the turn-out for the very first Hamilton Island Triathlon is anything to go by. Of course, despite the idyllic location, there was nothing too leisurely about the pace or the effort required to mix it up with some of the greatest triathletes and Ironmen. No, this was very much the real thing, Whitehaven Beach or not.

As visitors and contestants saw first-hand, the bronzed Aussie is well and truly represented on Hamilton Island and there was no shortage of them at the inaugural Hamilton Island Triathlon. The event attracted Australia's best triathletes to the island for a

week not only of tough competition, but of education, development and of course the odd bit of relaxation. Although the event attracted many of the leading athletes in the sport, the Hamilton Island Triathlon was designed to appeal to competitors across the board. To that end, the actual competition was preceded by a hugely successful five-day workshop to help all competitors get the most out of their sport, their equipment and of course themselves.

Ciaran Handy, who helped organise the event with partners Steve Jackson and Neil McDonald, explained the thinking behind the format.

"When we started up the workshop, a big part of our philosophy was that there is no facility or course in Australia that allows a



The picturesque location wasn't the only thing taking competitors' breath away, but no one was complaining.



non-professional or non-elite athlete the kind of training to get the best out of themselves... everything that we have in Australia for triathlons is aimed at professionals," he said. So the workshop sessions, held by the likes of former world champion triathlete and dual world record holder Miles Stewart, Michael Bohl (current Australian coach of the year and coach to Stephanie Rice), sports physio Victor Popov (coaches the Russian cycling team and Stuart O'Grady) made for an exciting and informative prelude to the main event.

Despite having the big guns on hand, the competition was open to anyone, with the workshop's emphasis on non-professionals carrying over into the event. While there was an open class too, there were also five additional age categories, starting with the 14-

19 bracket, 20-29 bracket and topped by a 50+ class that attracted 10 entries for the triathlon. The class structure too was different from regular events in that it meant that there was prize money on offer for the non-pros.

"Usually, all the prize money focuses on the professionals, and there's no prize money for any of the age groups. So what we wanted to do was have our pros, and if they win, they're in the open category, which is basically the same as line honours in yachting. Whoever crosses the line first wins the open category; but then we thought that we'd give prizes for the age groups," Handy said.

That not only meant cash, but a substantial gift from the sponsors in the form of gear. Major sponsors 2XU, Asics, Fantasea and View Swimwear all pitched in to add spice to

the event for the competitors.

With the workshop out of the way though, it was time to put it all to the test on the tough but picturesque course. Obviously a triathlon consists of a swim, run leg and bike ride, but to open proceedings at Hamilton Island, there were two Saturday swims before Sunday's triathlon – a 750 metre event and another two kilometre swim, attracting an incredible 116 entrants to the stunning waters off Whitehaven.

Youngster Luke Henry, a member of the Whitsunday Triathlon Club, won the 750 metre leg while the longer race, which included former Olympians and national Ironman champions, saw seven-time Australian Ironman champion Ky Hurst go head to head with Jarrod Killey (current 800



The success of the inaugural event will ensure a bright future and no doubt see the Hamilton Island Triathlon grow to become one of the highlights of the area.

Home Grown

Hamilton Island's sporting culture is extremely rich. In fact many of the athletes that competed in the inaugural Hamilton Island Triathlon are residents of the idyllic resort destination. Locals Stephen Jackson, Karon Handy and Michaela Trigg were lucky enough to compete in an event on their own doorstep.

Trigg, who first moved to the island in 1993, is a tough competitor and came home 22nd in the triathlon, the best of this trio. She has been competing in triathlons for four years and loves the environment of Hamilton Island as a place to live and train.

"You can't get a better training ground for triathlon," she says.

"We have great trails for running, pools and the ocean for swim training and what's more, we can train year-round without suffering the effects of the chilly winter!"

Trigg clearly benefited from the event's unique format and the presence of some of the sport's greats.

"It was seriously brilliant. The workshop in the week leading up to the triathlon was run by some of the top facilitators you could possibly imagine who were all willing to impart knowledge, tips and advice for beginners in the sport, and even to a couple of the pros who attended the workshop!

"We couldn't have had a better day for the Whitehaven Ocean swim. The feedback from everyone was overwhelmingly positive – numbers will double next year! The organisation, the venue, the community spirit all made this what it was."

Despite having the big guns on hand, the competition was open to anyone with the workshop's emphasis on non-professionals carrying over into the event.

metre under 18s short course record holder and winner of the 2009 Bondi to Bronte swim). The two demolished the swim in just 23 minutes and 11 seconds, but the Ironman champion edged out the youngster in a thrilling finish.

Home in third was open-water specialist Brendan Capell, the 24-year-old who trains alongside Olympian Stephanie Rice, a mere eight seconds behind them, while Townsville's Kylee Muldoon, who has competed internationally in events as far-reaching as Hawaii, came home ninth overall to win the women's event.

And that was just the prelude! Sunday's triathlon (a sprint triathlon event) proved tough enough to test the best of the best. The picturesque hills of the island, so easy to negotiate in a golf buggy took on new dimensions for the triathletes in the five kilometre run and 20 kilometre bike legs. There's no denying the competitors got a pretty good look at the island from a completely new perspective, even Hamilton Island's airport formed part of the cycle course.

Tiffany Loftus-Hills, editor of *Australian Triathlete* was suitably impressed. "The course, although a sprint distance, was challenging with the only flat area being a stretch on the runway.

The hills challenged even the most experienced athletes like Noosa's legendary

11-time Ironman champion Belinda Granger and Olympian Courtney Atkinson, who has taken out events including Japan's Ishigaki world cup and nearby Mooloolaba Cup."

Quickest of the 95 entrants on the swim leg was Ben Shaw, who battled with Courtney Atkinson in the water and on the bikes. Atkinson nailed him on the cycling leg by one minute and 26 seconds and, despite challenges from Ryan Fisher, it was Atkinson's dominance on the pedals and overall consistency that made him the winner of the inaugural Hamilton Island Triathlon.

In the 20-29 category, 22-year-old Nicholas Hull came home in fourth overall to win his age class, while of the 34 women that entered, Kathrin Mueller finished ninth overall to take out the women's class. Brayden Tucker came home an impressive sixth overall to win the 14-19 category.

But in the spirit of this competition, just being involved made you a winner, and while there were plenty of tired legs and aching muscles at the end, it was very much a case of smiles all round.

The success of the first Hamilton Island Triathlon sees it join the destination's impressive sporting portfolio, such as the prestigious Audi Hamilton Island Race Week and the Hamilton Island Outrigger Cup. Of course not everyone comes to the island to compete, but if you're up for a challenge in breathtaking surrounds, there's more than one way in which the beautiful island can take your breath away. ■

The 2010 Hamilton Island Triathlon will be held 7-14 December, 2010. For more information visit www.hamiltonisland.com.au/events



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An Air of

Authentically Australian, elegant, timeless. qualia makes a bold statement, but does it with a rare subtlety, the qualities underpinning the timeless property being very much those of the man responsible for designing it.

STORY JAMES MCRORY PHOTOGRAPHY
ANDREA FRANCOLINI & KYLIE HOOD

Accurately describing qualia, even to the architecturally savvy, is no mean feat. Without a doubt it is a stunning place, a veritable oasis nestled on the northern tip of Hamilton Island, but it possesses a subtlety that makes it hard to pin-point that defining quality.

Certainly, the Long Pavilion, for example, has an immediate effect on all who walk through the doors, but the eye is drawn across to the infinity pool running the room's length and then to the Coral Sea beyond that, so that the architecture acts as something of a frame, constantly guiding the eye to the surrounding views but never trying to steal the limelight.

"If it's hard to describe the architecture, that's good," says Chris Beckingham, the man responsible for designing the luxury resort and more recently the new Clubhouse at the Hamilton Island Golf Club.

"That means that the building and the design don't dominate the property or detract from the views and the location."

Subtle, understated, but with a powerful

presence nonetheless. These are the elusive qualities of qualia, and form the basis of what first attracted the Oatley's to Chris Beckingham's work, not originally to build qualia, but in fact to design a house for Bob to live in.

"I'd found a house that I was very impressed with and wanted to buy it, but it wasn't for sale at the time," recalls Bob Oatley.

"It was a combination of the stone and the timber and the balance," he says. "It had a wow factor, and yet the design was essentially very simple."

That struck a chord with Oatley, as did the quiet architect, and the two became close friends with many shared tastes in design and some similar life experiences. Both had spent time living and working in New Guinea, and both shared a love for the architecture of that region. Importantly too, both shared a quiet nature, albeit underpinned by expertise in their respective fields, but a desire to get on and do a job without fanfare.

So, with a building location for the house



Simple yet striking and authentically Australian design, interiors open up to the elements, while the use of timber and stone are a perfect marriage.

selected on Hamilton Island, Beckingham was shown the Oatley home in Sydney and the one in Sardinia to give him a good idea of how the family lived – what was important to them, what they liked and equally, what they did not. Different architectural styles certainly, but an essential overview of their lives to give an accurate picture and allow Chris to come up with a lifestyle design.

“What impressed me more than anything about Chris’ design,” says Oatley “was the simplicity and the way he could make things look so elegant, even if it was just a wooden verandah post.”

That was the start, and even as work on Bob Oatley’s new house progressed, the beginnings of another project, considerably larger in scale, began to take shape.

“We wanted a world-class resort for the island,” recalls Sandy Oatley “and we liked Chris’ approach and ideas, so we broached the idea that he take on what would become qualia.”

But the project almost didn’t happen, as he felt it was too big for a ‘one man operation’.

“It was a daunting project because it was the biggest thing I’d done and represented a big commitment,” says Beckingham.

“He didn’t really want to do qualia,” Oatley admits. “‘It’s too big for me Bob’, he said, ‘I don’t want all that worry’.”

“But I said it’s not too big for you, we’ll help you and it’ll just be you and I running it. You’ll be right, you won’t have people





interfering with you.”

“I said it’ll be the greatest work you’ve done in a lifetime – and he accepted that. He accepted the job on those terms.”

And Bob remained true to his word, backing Beckingham in the project but not interfering with him. Assisting and supporting but allowing the architect to do his job.

“He’s an inspirational man. We just sort of clicked... it was more like working for a friend than for a boss or a client,” Beckingham says of the experience.

“He (Bob) is an intuitive person and that’s probably one of his great strengths in business, that he’s able to find the right people and let them do the job.”

Once the uncertainties had been laid to rest, the design process got underway very quickly.

“The time frame from when Chris started putting pen to paper to when it was

completed was quite short comparatively, although it seemed long at the time,” says Sandy Oatley.

“Before he’d even finished the first drawings, he went off and bought a dozen local trees right out of the forest to use as the main posts in the Long Pavilion.

“They just sat there for three or four months while he finished the drawings (and Dad’s house), but he already had in mind how they’d be used, and because he could only get so many, he had to design the building around those.”

This illustrates beautifully how the property came to life. An idea translated into drawings and ultimately, with the aid of some technology, became a reality.

“We had to put some people in the background,” says Sandy “to redraw Chris’s drawing because he doesn’t use a computer. We employed a draftsman and bought a specialist printing machine and all of the

graphics, so that Chris’ drawings could be turned into plans.”

But even then, it was often the case that Beckingham would have to show the draftsman how to translate his drawings and turn them into a language the computer could read in order to generate plans for council and builders.

While slightly unorthodox, the process went smoothly and qualia very much grew out of the ground. Beckingham would walk the site with his sketchpad and with his knowledge of the Whitsundays, individually placing each of the 60 villas, paying close attention to view lines to minimise the intrusion on the landscape. His knowledge of the Whitsundays too came into play, knowing how best to make use of the sea breezes.

“When we came to do qualia and the Long Pavilion, Chris said, ‘well are we going to air condition it Bob?’ and I said



The entry to the Long Pavilion boasts a wow factor without equal. The eye though is drawn through the room and out onto the Coral Sea beyond (left). An achievement worth celebrating. Chris Beckingham and Bob Oatley became good friends during the design and construction of Oatley's house, which led to qualia (above).

well yes I think we'll have to, and then he asked me which was the coolest building in New Guinea. I said, the New Guinea Club in Rabaul which doesn't have any air conditioning. He knew I knew that.

"The open design, allowing the cross flow of air was what he was driving at, and that was incorporated into the design."

And so qualia came to be, a three year build that evolved to become arguably the most celebrated property of its type in the country. The cues are there from a number of influences, but it remains difficult to pinpoint just what it is that makes it so impressive. There are subtle tastes of Asia in the design, particularly in Spa qualia, and there is no shortage of beautiful timber used throughout to great effect.

New Guinea Rosewood, Hoop Pine, Kwila hardwood and Queensland Spotted Gum each bring their own special qualities. The use of stone, including Bowen Blue

"He's an inspirational man. We just clicked... It was more like working for a friend than for a boss or a client." - Chris Beckingham

lending it a substantial feel, but again, not one which dominates.

It is a unique style, which defies description, even from Beckingham himself.

"Modern tropical Australian," he says with a laugh when pushed, but there is no denying the note of pride in his voice when discussing qualia.

"A job that size... it is the culmination of my career."

Bob Oatley though is unreserved in his opinion of Beckingham and indeed the award-winning property that is qualia.

"I would say if we'd travelled the world looking for an architect to do the job, we could never have been as satisfied as we are with what Chris has done for us." ■

A recent visitor to Hamilton Island for the 2009 *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* Produce Awards event, Justin North is looking forward to what he believes is an exciting future in Australia's burgeoning food and wine industry.

STORY MARGARET MERTEN

PHOTOGRAPHY ANSON SMART & JACK ATLEY

A Taste for Success

In these current times, it's a fabulous problem to have too many people in your restaurant and that's exactly what chef Justin North is facing right now. His solution? Open a champagne bar in said restaurant to offer patrons a choice of premium bubbles with small dishes. Genius. It's just another addition to his growing empire of restaurants and cafes which now includes his flagship restaurant Bécasse, the more relaxed Etch (where the champagne bar will open in early 2010), the new café, Le Grande Café, at the new Harry Seidler designed Alliance Francais building in Sydney's CBD, where already the whisper on the street is that he is serving the best croque Monsieur in town. But North admits 2009 has "been bloody tough because of the GFC," as any restaurateur would attest. "But it's been quite satisfying in another sense as well," he adds. With the new additions,

"we've doubled the size of our company."

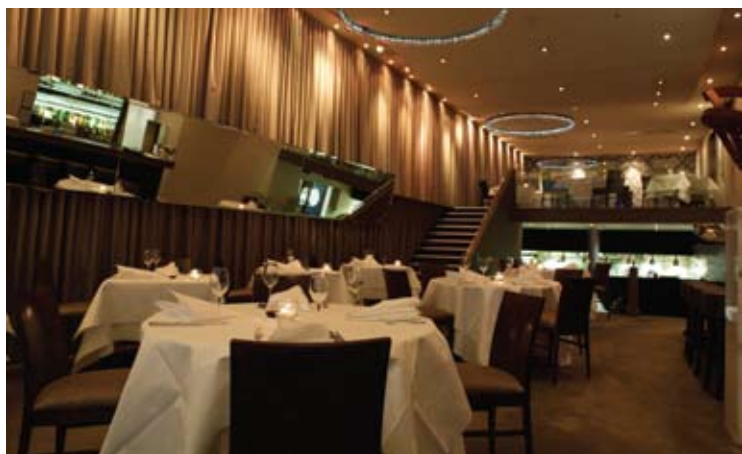
North, born and raised in New Zealand, first worked in some of the world's best restaurants, cutting his teeth in such culinary temples as Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in the UK, becoming, at a tender 22 years of age, Blanc's youngest second sous chef. With this bright start, he then went to two of Paris' legendary 3 Michelin starred restaurants, Pierre Gagnaire and Guy Savoy. Deciding to return home, he then joined what was considered one of Sydney's finest restaurants, the brief but spectacular Banc restaurant under chef Liam Tomlin. It was really only a matter of time before he struck out on his own, with wife and business partner Georgia North (legendary for her exquisite front-of-house skills) and became famous in his own right for his much-awarded fine dining restaurant Bécasse in Sydney, winning the prestigious



(From left) Jane-Therese Mulry - qualia, Kym Machin - Urbane, Matt Wilkinson - Circa, Matt Moran - ARIA, Alla Wolf-Tasker - Lake House at Daylesford, Justin North - Bécasse and David Rayner - River House.

Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide's Restaurant of the Year in 2007 and taking out Chef of the Year in 2009. As his latest ventures attest, he has been on a roll.

He's also a passionate supporter of Australia's local producers, having been in the vanguard of chefs who sought out specialist producers to use their produce in his kitchen many years ago, way back in 2001 when he first opened Bécasse in Albion St, Surry Hills. "We just have so many amazing producers in this country," he says enthusiastically. He visited Hamilton Island earlier this year as a judge for the *Vogue Entertaining+Travel* Produce Awards ceremony (qualia is Gold Sponsor of the awards), which he loved doing. "It was great to catch up with the other judges and chefs such as Matt Moran and Alla Wolf-Tasker and we did a dinner with the winning produce, each doing a course. It



But watch this space as he has an even bigger idea, and 2010 is shaping up to possibly be one of his most exciting years yet.

The Vogue Entertaining + Travel Produce Awards saw North head... well, north, to qualia as a judge (pictured with Nicky Oatley). The stunning Bécasse in Sydney (above) is North's showpiece in a growing business empire.

was great fun. qualia is just amazing," he adds with admiration.

But that's not the only connection North has with Hamilton Island. He also serves owner Bob Oatley's wines in his restaurants Bécasse and Etch. "The Oatley's are a family business too, and we really respect their passion for their family business," he says.

His commitment to showcasing leading produce is taking shape through his producer's lunches which he holds at Bécasse throughout the year. "I launched these because I wanted a space where we could bring great producers to the table," he explains.

"We have an open mic session, where the producers can take questions from the audience. It's great fun." Some of the producers he's had along recently include Arcadia Saltbush Lamb, Capparisi cheese makers and Australian Perigord Truffles. "This was fantastic because we went out to the farm and dug up the truffles on the Monday and cooked them for the lunch on the Wednesday. It's such a great thing to do," he says laughing at the memory of such an immediate relationship between the paddock and plate.

And he's not above creating his own outstanding produce, at least in the form of baking bread, revealing they make all their own bread for his restaurants and cafes.

"We are looking to streamline this as at the moment we use the Bécasse kitchen to make all the bread. We're actively pursuing a production kitchen for this and we've just purchased a van as well which will help with deliveries." It's all these practicalities that make up new opportunities, such as a new café I suggest. North agrees. "Exactly, once you've got that infrastructure there, commonsense says it might be good to have a retail frontage too."

But watch this space as he has an even bigger idea, and 2010 is shaping up to possibly be one of his most exciting years yet. He confides he has a vision for a "bigger complex, more of a dining and eating precinct with a cookery school and a retail shop and a fresh food market and a wine shop."

Now this sounds very exciting. Where is he planning on doing that? "You might just have to wait and see on that one, I think," he answers with a smile in his voice. He admits he is actively looking for sites in the city. It's typical of his passion for food and great produce and sounds like exactly the type of thing an international city like Sydney should have. In fact, listening to him describe the idea makes one wonder why the city doesn't already have such a precinct. And if anyone is going to make it happen, it'll be Justin North. Bring it on, we say. ■

Dreaming of a white wedding?



Whitehaven Beach



HAMILTON ISLAND
GREAT BARRIER REEF AUSTRALIA



Whether you choose to get married in the beautiful island chapel or to break with tradition and have a barefoot ceremony on the beach, Hamilton Island at the edge of the Great Barrier Reef offers the perfect location for your dream wedding or honeymoon. From the flowers to the cake, for two to 200, there is no detail our experienced team of wedding consultants can't look after. To find out more about having your dream white wedding on Hamilton Island, call Hamilton Island Weddings on 07 4946 8515. To plan the perfect honeymoon, or simply a romantic getaway, contact Hamilton Island Holidays on **13 7333** or visit **www.hamiltonisland.com.au**



HAMILTON ISLAND
WEDDINGS
Great Barrier Reef Australia

The Edge on Hamilton Island

Apartment 6

Auction April 2010

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 1 buggy park

Open Home

Situated beside the stunning complex facilities consisting of a 25-metre wet-edge pool, spa and barbeque area at both ends, The Edge Apartment 6 is a modern, two-level waterfront apartment featuring three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The main ensuite includes a spa, double basin and walk in robe. Gourmet chef's kitchen leads to an expansive entertaining balcony, lock up garage and separate private storage room. C-Bus system is fitted throughout and the property includes a modern furniture package encompassing a bar and wine fridge.

Located within easy walking distance to the marina and restaurants, this property also provides a private tranquil setting that captures the amazing sunsets that the Whitsundays are renowned for. The motivated vendor has instructed us to obtain offers, and with sales in this development historically reaching as high as \$3,100,000, this is your chance to secure a magnificent property well below previous sales prices. This truly is your opportunity to prosper. ■



Cutting edge...the latest style and design features make this the perfect modern Whitsundays abode.



Island Life



There are many ways to enjoy Hamilton Island, but what better way than in your own house? If buying a piece of paradise is not a practical consideration, perhaps 'taking a home' on the island for a week or so is more to your taste.

Over the years, who hasn't dreamed of living on the Great Barrier Reef? Trading the madding crowds for a relaxed lifestyle in one of the world's most picturesque locations requires little time to consider, but in many cases, a lifetime to achieve.

That need not be the case though, and there is no reason why calling Hamilton Island home for a week, or longer, need be any more difficult than consulting the Holiday Homes website and perusing the magnificent apartments and houses at your disposal.

Every taste and individual need is catered for simply by going to the website (below) and looking at the vast array of properties on offer. From three to five star options, one to four bedrooms, marina-side to the more sedate and peaceful northern end of the island and all other locations in between, the website allows you to view each property online before making an informed decision as to what will best suit your stay.

Location, appointment, availability and pricing tailored to the time of your intended stay are all available online, making the process of securing your own property on Hamilton Island easy. And, as a guest (albeit with your own home), you'll also receive a four-seater golf buggy, the preferred mode of transport on the island, for the duration of your stay.

Where better to call home? ■



HAMILTON ISLAND

YACHT CLUB VILLAS

GREAT BARRIER REEF AUSTRALIA

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