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REEF MAGAZINE

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HAMILTON
ISLAND
& THE
GREAT
BARRIER
REEF

40 years of Hamilton Island Race Week

Excellence all areas
FOOD JOSH NILAND
WINE LARRY CHERUBINO
ART TIARNA HERCZEG
GOLF GRANT FIELD

ISSUE 30
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Introduction

There's something special about Hamilton Island; a feeling that's hard to put into words and which I expect is unique to each visitor. Yet that specialness has a way of leaving a lasting impression.

I often find myself running the island's trails early in the morning. Seeing first light over The Whitsundays from Passage Peak as the island wakes is a beautiful reminder of how special this place really is. Here, you're never far from nature and that connection is part of what draws people back time and again.

Of course, our community is the heart of Hamilton Island – our guests, employees, residents and visitors – and this edition of *REEF* showcases that community spirit, with stories of craftsmanship, reflections on tradition, highlights of our journey and a glimpse of what's coming.

In the past year I have had the privilege of working with our community to set out on a dynamic new path for Hamilton Island. As Australia's Tropical Island, we're doing more than ever, with new and refreshed hotels, reimagined dining, a range of island enhancements and a new identity that reflects the spirit of this place: *a little island ... can do wonders*. Our team could not be more excited, or more proud.

This year also marks a special milestone: 40 years of Hamilton Island Race Week. It was during Race Week 2003 that Bob Oatley, inspired by his love of sailing and the island's potential, decided to buy Hamilton Island. That moment laid the foundation for everything the island is today. It is an honour for me to carry forward the legacy of an event that means so much to so many.

In this edition of *REEF* you'll find a pictorial history of Race Week, together with stories exploring what's new, including the Trans-Tasman 49er Series, which showcases high-performance Olympic-class match racing.



Race Week really is a celebration of the very best of sailing, community and island spirit, and I'm certainly looking forward to getting out for a sail on *Wild Oats X*.

This issue *REEF* also introduces guests to Tiarna Herczeg, the artist behind the bespoke works adorning our new boutique hotel, The Sundays. You'll hear from acclaimed chef Josh Niland about his collaboration with N25 Caviar and his produce-driven philosophy behind the menu at The Sundays' signature restaurant, Catseye Pool Club. You'll also meet Larry Cherubino – one of Australia's most respected winemakers – who has worked with three generations of the Oatley family, from Bob to Sandy and now Sandy's daughter, Nicky. Larry's reflections on family, legacy and working across generations are a highlight. You'll also discover what's new on island, including our e-mountain biking experience, new activities at the Sports Club including reformer Pilates on demand, a brand-new kids

playground and the new lounge at Hamilton Island Airport. We are also busy refreshing the Resort Centre and planning further additions. Yet against this busy backdrop, Hamilton Island can be just as much about slowing down, mindfulness and wellbeing. Writer Ute Junker captures the essence of this in a thoughtful article on the latest travel trend, "calmcation". So, whether this is your first visit to Hamilton Island or your 40th, thank you for being part of our story. I hope this issue of *REEF* gives you a deeper understanding of what makes Hamilton Island Australia's Tropical Island, and why a little island really can do wonders. Have a wonderful stay.

Nick Dowling
CEO, Hamilton Island

Hamilton Island would like to acknowledge the Ngaro and Gia people, and their connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past, present and future generations to come and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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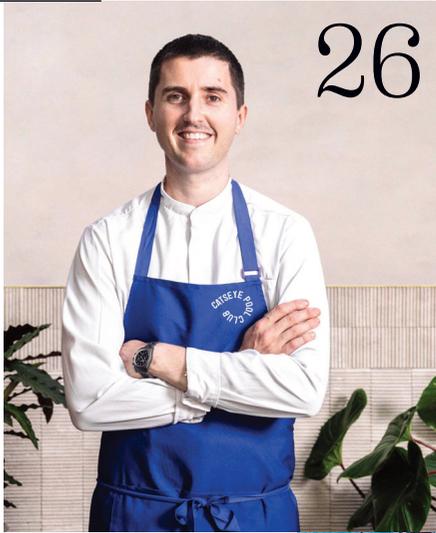
What if the best day of the week,
was every day of the week?

The Sundays.

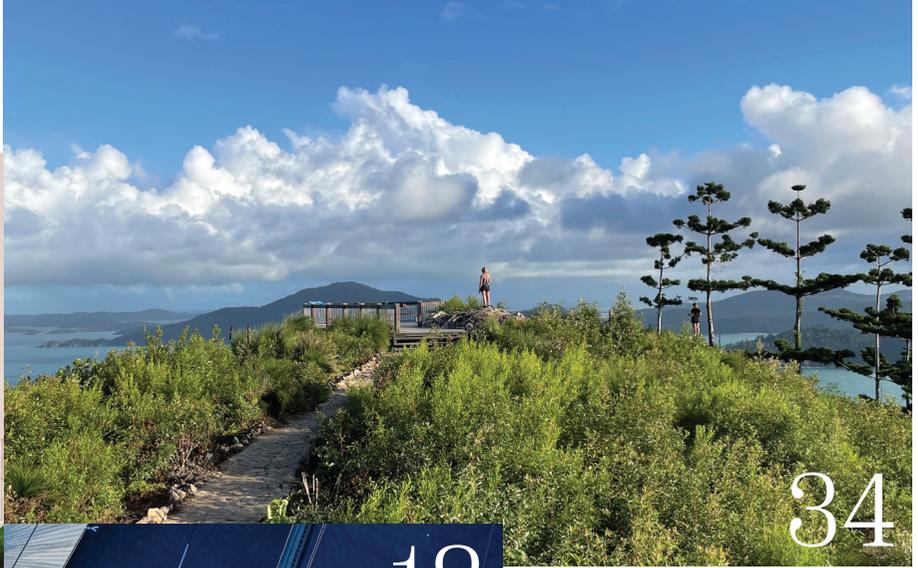
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Contributors



Lisa Ratcliff

The sailor, journalist and media manager from Sydney's Northern Beaches has been involved in the sailing industry for more than 20 years. Ratcliff has worked with some of Australia's biggest regattas and races, including the Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race and Hamilton Island Race Week.

Favourite boat to sail on and time of day?
When I'm racing on Pittwater in Sydney's north on the 40-footer called *Mercury* I've crewed on for years, the late-afternoon autumn or spring sun and clear skies are glorious. Being on a boat means the phone is nowhere near and you're working as a team to achieve whatever the goal is and plenty of laughs along the way.

Most uplifting/crazy memorable nature moment for you during a sail?
Crossing Bass Strait during the 2019 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race in a sea mist then suddenly a flock of albatross circled the boat. We felt less alone, given we were one of the slower entrants still out and couldn't see anything beyond 10 metres.

Which great yachtsperson would you want to have dinner with?
Through my yachting journalism and being at two Olympics I've fortunately met many of the greats. I would have loved the chance to meet Sir Peter Blake from New Zealand, both for his yachting exploits and environmentalism.

Best island holiday memory?
Passage Peak at sunrise. A tough walk with an amazing reward at the end.

Best beach read you have pending?
It's a bit heavy for a beach read but *The Collaborator* by Diane Armstrong. I'm partial to a World War I or II love story.

Your regular island activity?
Dinner at coca chu.

Essential holiday pleasure?
I need to consciously slow down on holidays as I'm always busy. A couple of sleep-ins and a good book usually do the trick.



Michael Harry

The lifestyle journalist and editor has written for Gourmet Traveller, Good Food and Good Weekend, and is a former editor of Broadsheet. He is also publisher of Josh Niland's cookbook Fish Butchery, and in this issue chats to Niland about his collaboration with N25 Caviar.

Favourite ingredient to cook with?
At the moment I love sneaking Lee Kum Kee Chicken Bouillon Powder into whatever I can. It adds a delicious umami sharpener to things like potatoes, stir fries, or even bolognese.

Your signature dish?
I'm obsessed with spicy food so anything with lots of chilli. I make a mean mapo tofu (using Fuchsia Dunlop's recipe) or Thai pad krapow chicken with handfuls of fresh holy basil topped with a fried egg.

Best caviar "life" moment so far?
I once went to Paris to write a story about Penfolds launching its first Champagne. They hosted this spectacular, completely over-the-top dinner at the Ritz with, of course, plenty of caviar. I'll never forget I saw Meg Ryan in the lobby, just hanging out.

Best island holiday memory?
The first time I went to Hamilton Island Race Week and stayed at qualia in 2016. I was technically working but it felt like a holiday. I escaped a bitter Melbourne winter and arrived to see the sparkling blue water beyond the resort, glass of Charles Heidsieck in hand. I had to blink twice to make sure it was real.

Early riser or night owl? Sunrise or sunset?
Definitely a night owl. Sunrise, but still out from the night before.

Go-to island activity?
The breakfast buffet.

Essential holiday pleasure?
I plan my holiday around where I'm going to eat and spend weeks reading menus online. But I try to be spontaneous and hope I can stumble across something delicious by accident, too.



Jane Albert

Albert regularly contributes to some of Australia's leading publications including Good Weekend, Vogue, The Weekend Australian and WISH magazines. The author and journalist is passionate about the arts and for this issue interviews First Nations/Hungarian artist Tiarna Herczeg.

Favourite artist to collect if the budget was no object?
I like to support local: Thea Anamara Perkins has been on my wish list for a while; and I love photographer Tamara Dean's works, particularly the *Palace of Dreams* sequence.

Most uplifting/loved art gallery for you in the world?
I lived in Bologna for a few months learning Italian and art history and the Morandi Museum there will always be special.

Which artist would you want to have dinner with?
Brett Whiteley – the stories he must have and that irrepressible imagination ...

Best island holiday memory?
Anything to do with Lord Howe Island – scaling Mount Gower, swimming with turtles, no wi-fi ... heaven on earth.

Your ultimate holiday playlist features...?
Currently Gracie Abrams, Spacey Jane and some Massenet on the classical side.

Best beach read that you have pending?
John Boyne's *The Elements* series, four novellas titled *Earth, Fire, Water* and *Air*.

Early riser or night owl? Sunrise or sunset?
Sunrise but I can definitely pull out the odd sunset if need be!

Go-to island activity?
A hike, some reading time and a beachside gin and tonic (or two).

Essential holiday pleasure?
Reading and sleep. There's never enough time in day-to-day life.

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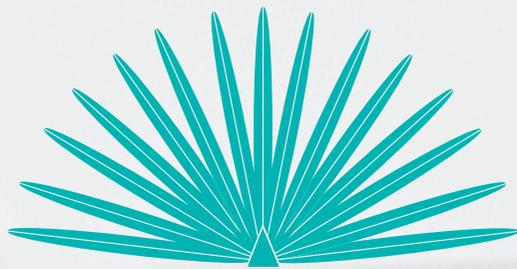
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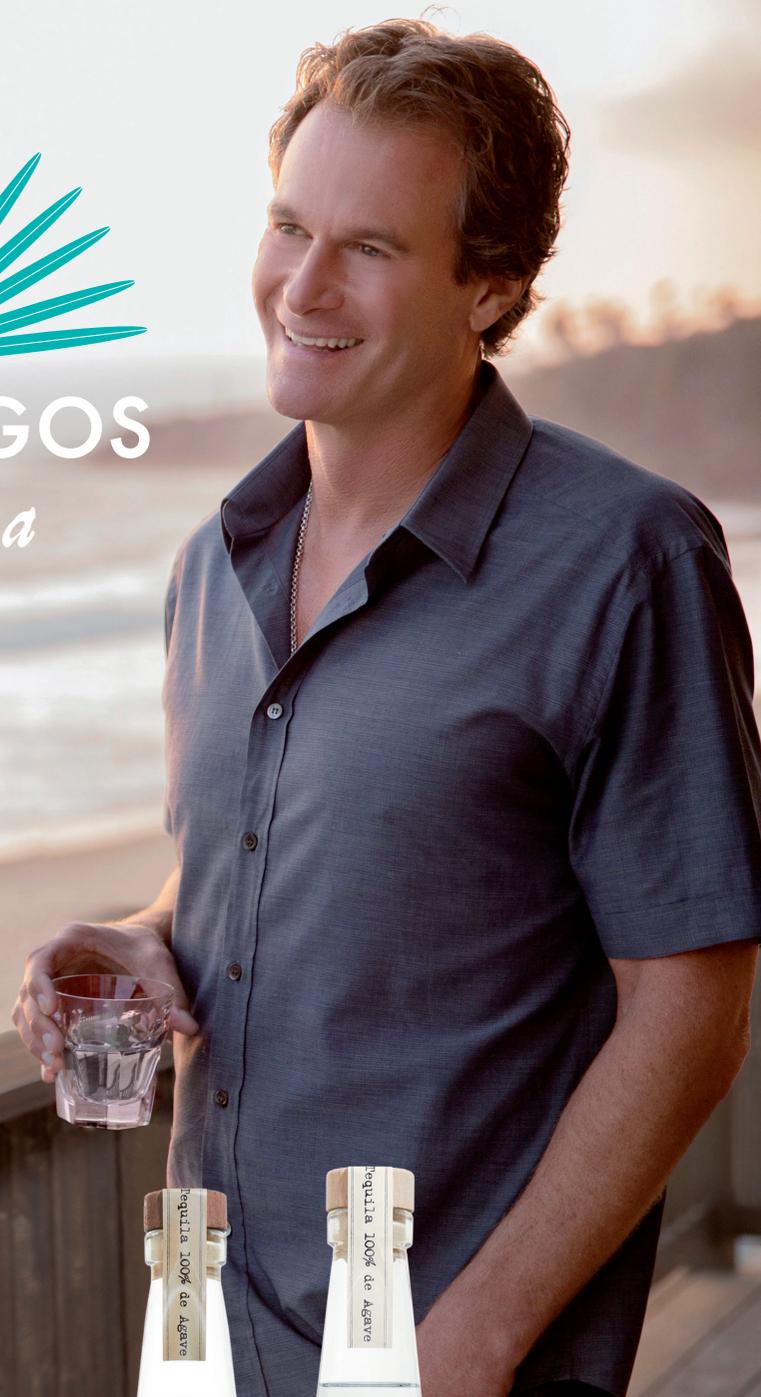
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David Hallberg.

David Hallberg

Imagine you've been stranded on a remote desert island but granted a few life-saving essentials. The acclaimed artistic director of The Australian Ballet, David Hallberg, takes up the challenge and shares his Robinson Crusoe game plan.

Three essentials to pack?

Peanut butter ... for obvious reasons. A notebook to download thoughts. And my favourite Japanese ballpoint pen.

What would you most regret not packing?

Practical things that I don't really think/care about: binoculars, a hot plate and a raft.



PHOTOGRAPHY: PIERRE TOUSSAINT, SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY.

Faithful companion: a golden retriever.



What would you miss most about reality?

Live performance, Melbourne coffee, a pub meal (in that order).

Dream companion?

A golden retriever, for unconditional love.



A burger and a beer post rescue.

What would you wear?
Nothing, as nature intended.

Your No.1 accessory?
Eyewear, to see the horizon clearly.

Your island mantra?
The grass isn't greener (if there was any grass).

Island hobby?
Exercise. Too boring?

What spirituality lessons that you've learnt would you apply to your time stranded on the island?

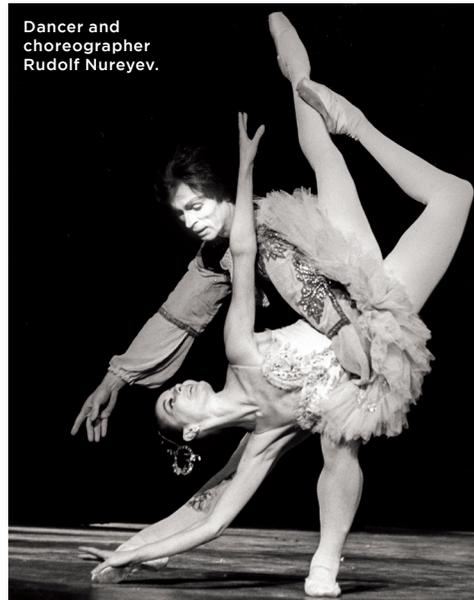
Everything happens the way it is meant to, like me on this island with this dog.

How would you send your SOS?
Interpretive dance!

Who would rescue you?
Another golden retriever.

Dream meal once you've finally been rescued?
Burger and a beer at my local pub.

One essential tool for the island?
Great headphones (and Spotify).



Dancer and choreographer Rudolf Nureyev.

If you could channel a legend of the ballet world in your island "downtime", who would it be?
Rudolf Nureyev; there is no other singular force.

Top island tune?
A two-hour set by Vincent Neumann, the most amazing German DJ.

Catch of the day? Or?
My catch of the day would be someone with me; I'd be nourished with love.

Which book would you bring with you?
The History of Art, hopefully in about 45 volumes.

First place you'd go when you return to land?
To an amazing live performance.



Close encounters: the Great Barrier Reef

There are many memorable ways to enjoy the World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef and get up close and personal with its incredible tropical fish and coral. Hop aboard Cruise Whitsundays for a journey to Reefworld for a full day of snorkelling and exploring Hardy Reef. Cruise Whitsundays also offers the once-in-a-lifetime Reefsleep, a magical night of sleeping beneath the stars on the Reefworld pontoon in the supremely comfortable Reefbeds. Explore Group also tours some of the more secret spots on the fringing and outer reefs of The Whitsundays, with the option of both half- and full-day trips.

2 Wonderworld: Whitehaven Beach

Want to visit one of the world's most pristine places? Whitehaven Beach, located on neighbouring Whitsunday Island, is a flawless seven-kilometre stretch of gleaming white silica sand fringed by incredibly clear turquoise waters. This must-visit spot is ranked one of the world's best beaches and it is just a short trip from Hamilton Island by helicopter, speedboat, sailboat, seaplane or high-speed catamaran. There are many tour options for exploring Whitehaven, with half- and full-day tours available. Walk, swim or just relax on the white sands and marvel at this remarkable natural wonder.



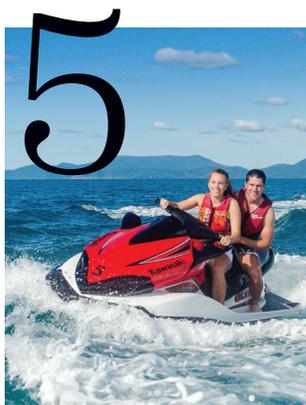
Discover: exploring country

Ngaro man Robbie Congoo leads visitors on a truly memorable journey to Hook Island aboard private vessel *Pebble Beach*. This immersive experience highlights the rich cultural heritage of The Whitsundays and visits the ancient location with its incredible millennia-old rock paintings. Discover the role of native flora

and fauna in Ngaro traditions while learning about their spiritual connection to country through stories that bring the island's history to life. Champagne and canapés crafted by qualia executive chef Joshua Hingston and featuring native ingredients and distinctive Australian flavours are then served on the return journey.

4 Go-go: adventure class

Hamilton Island's Palm Valley go-kart track is pure undiluted fun. These easy go-karts can reach speeds of up to 45 km/hour around the track. Offroad Adventure Tours offers exciting experiences for riders aged 20 and above. Those with a full driver's licence can jump in an all-terrain vehicle or enjoy an expert guided journey through scenic fire trails and up to the Resort Lookout. Children aged 12 and over can also join in the action, riding as passengers in a double kart. For children aged six to 14 years, Hamilton Island's Quad Bikes for Kids operates a short, child-friendly circuit that offers some full-throttle fun in the fast lane.



Jet set: making waves

Hamilton Island Jet Ski Tours offer an adrenalin-pumping experience in a place of unrivalled beauty. It's a winning mix of adventure and action, and a great tour for the thrill-seeking traveller looking to maximise time on the water. Riders have their own jet ski but are accompanied by an experienced instructor who guides your safe passage through the waterways of The Whitsundays. The tours are available to riders aged 18 years and older and passengers aged 12 years and above. No licence is required, all safety gear is included and the tour takes 90 minutes, which includes a safety briefing before the action gets under way.



Definitely a stretch: yoga heaven

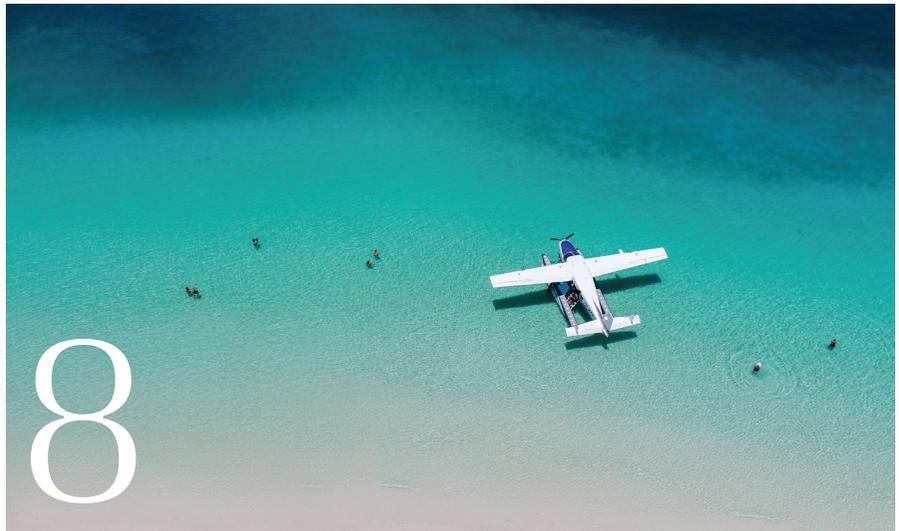
Could there be a better start to an island morning than a short boat ride ahead of a blissful yoga session? Sunrise yoga is held on the first Sunday of each month on Dent Island, the chance for a personal reset during one of the most calm and beautiful moments of the day in The Whitsundays. Bookings for the session include ferry tickets and a mat: all you need to bring along is water and a hat. Stay grounded with reformer Pilates at the Hamilton Island Sports Club, with online classes available daily. Wellness is also the priority at Spa wumurdaylin, with its menu of beauty treatments using LaGaia UNEDITED, the Australian-formulated range packed with potent vitamins and botanical extracts. Spa wumurdaylin is extremely popular with visitors so please book early to secure your you-time.



Relax: sunset rules

Hamilton Island boasts countless attractions but one of the most memorable is its spectacular sunsets. A beautiful way to enjoy these moments is on the water. A privately chartered sunset cruise can be booked on one of the luxury vessels: *Alani*, *Palm Beach*, *Nisi*, *Impulsive*, *Murcielago* or *La Mar*. Explore Group offers a daily sunset sail around the Whitsunday islands aboard their catamaran *On The Edge*, and a longer dinner cruise aboard *Ocean Explorer*. Ricochet Yachting's sunset sail aboard their supersleek 47-foot catamaran takes up to 16 people but can also be booked privately for a more intimate experience. On land, head for sunset drinks at One Tree Hill to watch the sun sink into the Coral Sea. Or grab a sundowner at Hamilton Island Yacht Club's *Bommie Deck* and watch the light fade over the Marina. As darkness falls, enjoy regular live music at The Palms, or take the family along to the Marina Tavern lawns for the complimentary Moonlight Movie night during school holidays.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUSTIN RIDLER; DEAN MARCHINI; HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY.



Airborne: take a scenic flight

The best way to appreciate the sheer beauty of Hamilton Island and the Great Barrier Reef is to take to the sky with Hamilton Island Air. The one-hour Heart Reef and Whitehaven Beach Express flight is the most affordable way to see Heart Reef from above. The Best of Both Worlds helicopter tour delivers amazing views of the reef and includes a landing at the Reefworld pontoon moored permanently above Hardy Reef, as well as a stop at blissful Whitehaven Beach. Bucket-list worthy is Journey to the Heart, an experience exclusive to guests of Hamilton Island. Helicopter out over Hill Inlet and Whitehaven Beach before heading to the Heart Island pontoon for a glass-bottomed-boat ride and snorkelling in the lagoon.

Tee time: let's play

It is not just keen golfers who can appreciate the challenge of Hamilton Island Golf Club. This championship course, designed by five-time British Open champion Peter Thomson, is situated on Dent Island, a short ferry ride away. Head on over for lunch at the airy Clubhouse, taking in incredible island views and perhaps sighting a humpback whale during their migratory season from May until September. Lunch guests can also opt for a self-drive buggy tour of the course. Golfers should expect a challenging day's play, with their focus undoubtedly distracted by The Whitsundays panorama. There's also a well-stocked pro shop for any last-minute needs. The 10-minute scenic trip to Dent Island is a wonderful way to begin and end a day's play, too.



Just the ticket: island superpass

The Hamilton Island Activity Superpass includes tickets for two adults and two children to enjoy three activities on island. Kick off with a round of mini golf at the 18-hole rainforest course, a family-friendly activity with tunnels, bridges, corners and obstacles for amping up the fun. A visit to Hamilton Island Wildlife is a must-do, for the opportunity to see some of Australia's most incredible creatures up close while also learning about our native animals and fauna. Finish off your action-packed day with a one-hour session at Island Bowling. Activities can be done in any order. Just grab your pass and go.

Booking ahead of your stay is highly recommended for all tours and activities. To book scan the QR code or visit the Hamilton Island website and submit an online Tour Booking request. To find out more, download the Hamilton Island app or visit the Tour Desk, located in the Hamilton Island Resort Centre.





Bulletin BOARD

Best of the beach

Whitehaven Beach has taken top honours at the 2025 Lonely Planet Best in Travel Awards, officially named the world's best beach. The picture-perfect Whitsundays destination is known for its super-soft white sand and turquoise water. Chris Zeiher, senior director at Lonely Planet, says Whitehaven's nod for best beach reflects more than just natural beauty. "It's about unique experiences that connect travellers with nature in a meaningful way." Whitehaven delivers on this with its eco-conscious access and sustainable tourism practices. And Hamilton Island also achieved some significant recognition, named No.1 in Escape's Best Short Breaks 2025 and praised for its ease of access from mainland Australia, world-class hospitality and exciting new openings. Among these, The Sundays, the boutique retreat on Catseye Beach, where culinary stars Josh and Julie Niland helm the Catseye Pool Club.

Tables of plenty

Hamilton Island's elite dining offerings have been recognised, with both Bommie and Long Pavilion awarded Chef Hats in the Australian Good Food Guide 2025 Restaurant Awards. The fine-dining Bommie earned its hat for chef Alice James's deft use of seasonal Australian produce and unforgettable flavours. James recently passed the baton to Ryan Locke as Bommie's new executive chef. Long Pavilion at qualia, meanwhile, received two hats. It serves up an elevated, immersive dining experience that honours regional flavours and local produce. The Australian Good Food Guide's Chef Hat awards recognise creativity and consistency and these accolades underscore the island's commitment to culinary excellence.



Celebrating safely in the sun

Our favourite beauty brand, MECCA COSMETICA, returns for its fourth consecutive year as official SPF partner of Hamilton Island Race Week. Even better, it is putting sun safety at the forefront of celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the prestigious regatta with an exciting limited-edition launch: a supersized 150-gram version of its cult favourite To Save Face SPF50+ Superscreen. The new size is perfect for all summer adventures and will be available in MECCA stores across Australia and New Zealand, online at mecca.com and on island during Race Week. Alexandra Bokeyar, general manager of MECCA-Maginations, says the ongoing partnership is rooted in shared values. "Our partnership perfectly aligns with our passion for beauty, sun safety and the Australian lifestyle. We're so proud to be protecting the skin of sailors, spectators and sun-seekers during this iconic event."

PHOTOGRAPHY: KARA ROSENLUND; WORLD SAILING; HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY; SASKIA WILSON.



Fiore and Bob’s collaboration proving positive

In an exciting union of baking excellence, Fiore Bread – one of Sydney’s most respected bakeries – is collaborating with the culinary team on Hamilton Island to bring traditional sourdough to its menus. Fiore is renowned for its focus on long fermentation, organic flours and old-world techniques and its expert bakers are providing hands-on training to the team at Bob’s Bakery. As a result, fresh sourdough will soon be available daily at Bob’s while guests can already enjoy pastries on the menu at The Sundays. “Working with Fiore means we’re delivering better bread and we’re building lasting knowledge and techniques that raise the bar,” says Chris Woodyard, Hamilton Island general manager food and beverage.

Smells like... bespoke fragrances by The Raconteur

The Sundays, Hamilton Island’s new boutique hotel, offers guests an indulgent way to unwind – via bespoke scents created exclusively by luxury Australian fragrance house The Raconteur. The custom collection tells the botanical story of Hamilton Island and includes candles, bath salts and room sprays, rooted in native Australian flora. Each fragrance evokes a sense of relaxation to reflect the spirit of the new hotel. “The collection was created to offer a full-sensory escape,” says The Raconteur’s founder, Craig Andrade. “It’s about bottling the feeling of being here.” The fragrances are used in guest rooms and communal spaces, adding an invisible sensory layer to the experience.



The new adventures of Hamilton Island

We love active luxury — a combination of relaxation and adventure — and now there are two new ways to embrace this when on Hamilton Island: e-mountain biking and reformer Pilates. The new electric mountain bikes open up the island’s trails, offering easier access to remote and scenic spots including Passage Peak, South East Head, Escape Beach and Saddle Junction. Riders of all fitness levels can explore the island’s diverse terrain while enjoying the freedom of the open trail using the e-bikes equipped with pedal-assist technology. And reformer Pilates is now at the Sports Club. A digital platform allows guests to plug in to guided classes on demand. Sessions offer routines focused on core strength, posture and flexibility, and can be customised to suit everyone from beginner to the Pilates pro.



Flight mode: Dent Passage turns on the action for wingfoilers and Olympic-class sailors

This Race Week sees the introduction of Olympic-class match racing as an exhibition series, with the Australian and New Zealand men’s 49er and women’s 49erFX teams competing in a trans-Tasman clash from August 17-19. The series, affectionately dubbed the “Wetisloe Cup”, will see a total of 13 skiff teams representing both sides of the Tasman battle it out in Dent Passage. The Palm Beach Motor Yachts Trans-Tasman 49er Series will take place daily from 4pm off the stunning Hamilton Island Yacht Club. “As The Whitsundays prepares to host sailing at the Brisbane 2032 Olympics, we’re delighted to showcase Olympic-class sailors in action,” says Nick Dowling, chief executive of Hamilton Island. And from Olympic-class rivalry to open-air adrenalin, wingfoiling debuts at Race Week on Saturday, August 16. Sailors, locals and guests are invited to show off their speed, agility and freestyle tricks on the water, all against a Coral Sea backdrop. Spectators can enjoy the action from Bommie Deck at Hamilton Island Yacht Club, with epic views and a vibrant atmosphere guaranteed.

NZ sailors Isaac McHardie (left) and William McKenzie claim silver in the 49er event at the Paris 2024 Olympics.



SAVE THE DATE

It's another action-packed year on Hamilton Island, with everything from world-class sailing and scenic endurance events to magical celebrations by the sea. Whether you're here for the sport, the spectacle or the seasonal festivities, there's something on the calendar for everyone.

2025

August 16-23

Hamilton Island Race Week

Australia's favourite yachting regatta officially turns 40 and we are celebrating. This is an event that ranks among the world's most prestigious, with a fleet ranging from high-performance yachts to trailer-pulled family favourites heading to Hamilton Island to compete. Race Week comprises a series of short races staged close to Hamilton Island and longer passage races around The Whitsundays. Onshore celebrations are many and varied and include exclusive events hosted by some spectacularly talented guest chefs throughout the week. From sunrise, when crews prepare their yachts for racing, to dusk when everyone converges at Hamilton Island Marina for drinks and dancing after a full day of racing, everyone agrees that Race Week is an unmissable annual highlight on the sailing calendar.

November 15

Hamilton Island Triathlon

The Hamilton Island Triathlon is a tough but rewarding combination of a hard and fast swim in tropical waters, a challenging cycle leg, and a run with incredible views from the island's highest peaks. Even better, the spectator-friendly course means everyone can soak up the action during this unrivalled physical challenge. The junior triathlon and a splash'n'dash fixture follow the main event, guaranteeing a fun day of family participation.

November 16

Hamilton Island Ocean Swim

Catseye Beach hosts the Hamilton Island Ocean Swim, the final event in the island's annual Endurance Series. Competitors can choose between a two-kilometre swim or a shorter 750-metre course, plus a hotly contested junior event run across 350 metres, for swimmers aged 13 and under. Expect a competitive field, and the welcome post-race dilemma of whether to recover on the sand or dive straight back in.

December 24

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve at the Beach Pavilion on Catseye Beach is a fun-filled family event capturing all the anticipation and magic we love about the festive season. Enjoy a relaxed beachside barbecue, dazzling fireworks and a special visit from the big man in red. It's festive, it's fun and it's one of the most joyful nights on the island.

December 31

New Year's Eve

Celebrate the mid 20s ... Say goodbye to 2025 and kick off 2026 with a street party sure to get everyone up and dancing. There is live entertainment at the Marina Tavern forecourt from 9pm, followed by a spectacular fireworks display once the clock strikes midnight. Events are also held at the Beach Pavilion near Catseye Beach and include a family-friendly fireworks display from 8.30pm. Guests of quality enjoy live music and a midnight fireworks display, too. Hamilton Island's celebrations are a memorable way to ring in a new year.

2026

April 25

Anzac Day

The dawn service, held each Anzac Day at the time of the original landing at Gallipoli during World War I, is a poignant way to acknowledge the men and women who have served our country. Like those who congregate at memorials across Australia, on Hamilton Island we gather to commemorate the lives of fellow countrymen lost in military operations. Join friends and families at the Beach Pavilion for the service, followed by a classic sausage sizzle and games of two-up at the Marina Tavern. Gold coin donations are directed to Airlie Beach RSL.

May 3

Hamilton Island Hilly Half Marathon

Serious training is required to be ready for the challenge of the famed Hamilton Island Hilly Half Marathon. The May event includes a half marathon for the super fit and fearless, a relay, and three distance options for kids. The diverse terrain makes this an ever-changing experience that challenges athletes of all fitness levels as the courses weave through the island's bushland interior, along roads, fire trails and walking tracks. It is The One.

May 15-17 and May 17-19

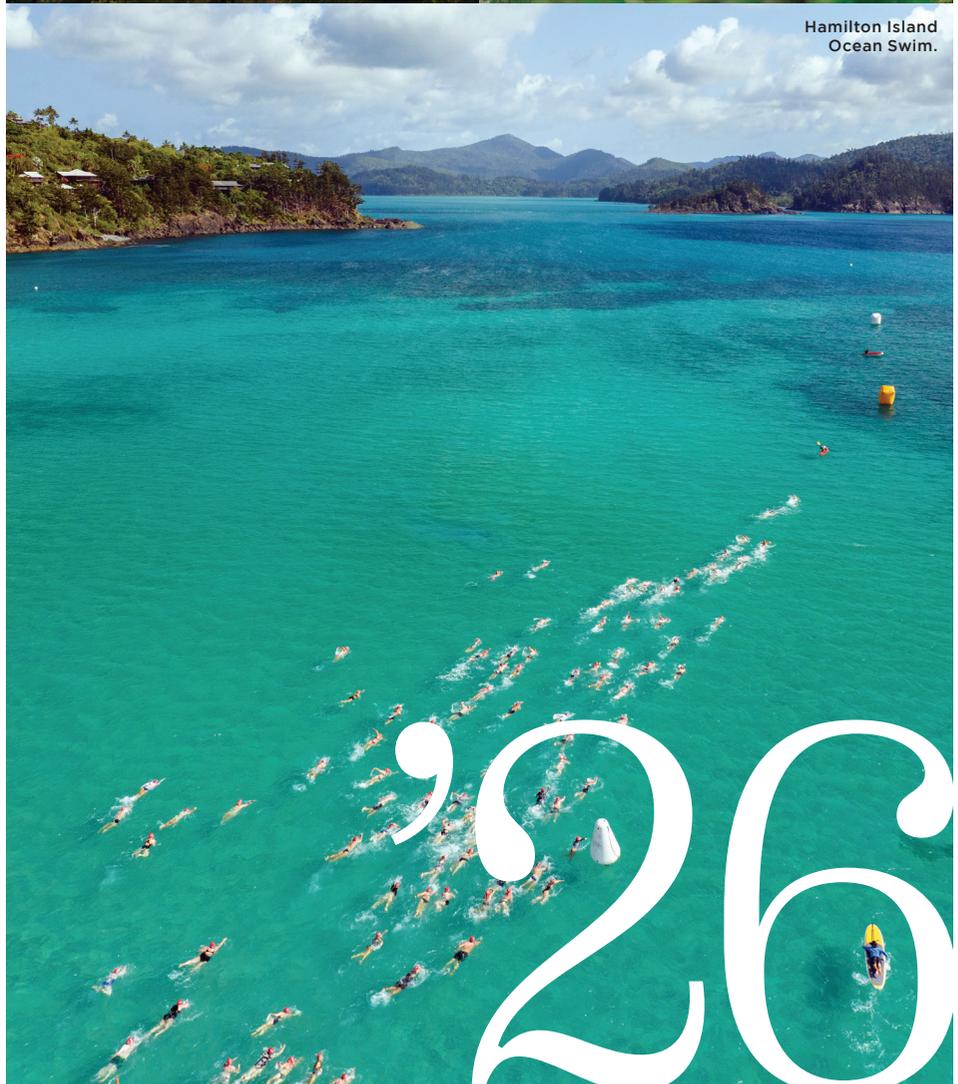
Pas de Deux in Paradise

This is a rare opportunity to experience The Australian Ballet under the stars at Pebble Beach, qualia. Pas de Deux in Paradise is an exclusive black-tie event that blends world-class performance, intimate artist discussions and fine dining in one of the most breathtaking settings in The Whitsundays. Hear from The Australian Ballet's artistic director David Hallberg and enjoy an intimate post-performance discussion with the company's unbelievably talented artists.

June 21

The Great Whitehaven Beach Run

An arc of blindingly white silica sand that was named the world's best beach by *Lonely Planet* in 2025 is the host site of The Great Whitehaven Beach Run. Competitors race along the sands of beautiful Whitehaven Beach at low tide in an event that is suitable for a range of abilities. Races include a half marathon, a five-kilometre course, 10-kilometre run, and a race just for children. Crossing the finishing line on this epic day out is an achievement to remember.



PHOTOGRAPHY: SALTY DINGO: TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND; HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY.



For the latest event information and more details, visit hamiltonisland.com.au/events

1984



Clockwise from top left: *Hitchhiker*, winner of the inaugural Hamilton Island Race Week in April 1984; the Oatley family's *Wild Oats XI* powered up in the 2019 trade winds; mighty maxi *Condor* competes in the second Race Week, 1985; TF10 foiling trimaran *Mad Max* in 2019.

2019



PHOTOGRAPHY: SANDY PEACOCK; SALTY DINGO.

Celebrating 40 years

This year, Hamilton Island Race Week celebrates four decades of bringing Australia's sailing community together in one of the world's most breathtaking settings. Lisa Ratcliff talks to the sailors and characters who are all part of the landmark event's rich and colourful history

Hammo", as it's affectionately known, is a week-long winter sailing series and part of a tradition of mostly southern state boats and crews migrating along Australia's east coast, either cruising north or hopping between feeder events, to join a strong Queensland contingent and a sprinkling of other state representatives in the glorious Whitsundays. In 1983, Melbourne sailor David "Chalky" Hutchen proposed the idea of Hamilton Island Race Week to the island's then owner, Keith Williams. The entrepreneur and former water skiing champion purchased Hamilton Island in the mid-1970s, developing it from scratch into a premier tourist destination, including a commercial airport, harbour and resort.

A legend in the making



"I'd been to Hamilton Island in my yacht *Banjo Paterson* and the harbour was being dredged," Hutchen says. "I could see the potential, so at dinner in Airlie Beach with Keith I put the idea to him, 'When you've finished dredging, it would be a good place to hold a regatta'. He asked what I meant, and I said, 'You get a whole lot of yachties and their mates, wives and kids and use the yacht racing as the nucleus of the event'. Keith's response was 'Well, get on with it'. "The next morning I sent Keith a white paper with my thoughts on what the event might look like, wondering if he was actually serious about the idea."

He was. Hutchen and his small but mighty team of regatta director Warwick Hoban and fellow Queensland-based ex-Melbournian Leon O'Donoghue started work. Ultimately they had to accept the island didn't have the infrastructure to host the predicted fleet of up to 60 boats in 1983, given that it and the marina were still under construction and the accommodation and eating options were so limited. They decided to reschedule the opening series for April 1984. When Hutchen went to the Queensland Yachting Association (now Yachting Queensland) to

Celebrating 40 years

register the event with the appropriate state authority, the president at the time was a Brisbane lawyer. "I told him what we were trying to do he looked at me and said, 'This is just a Keith Williams publicity stunt!'" Hutchen laughs. Lunch with the chief executive of the Australian Yachting Federation (now Australian Sailing) at the time smoothed things over. Not only did Hutchen's team organise logistics, they negotiated sponsorship with Castlemaine Perkins's XXXX beer and Ansett, produced and sold the merchandise, invited and looked after the media, ran the racing and heard the protests. The response to the inaugural Hamilton Island Race Week was beyond expectations: 93 yachts travelled to The Whitsundays, including Peter Briggs's *Hitchhiker*, the eventual IOR winner that was trucked across the country from Perth. *Hitchhiker* and Briggs recreated the journey for Race Week's 25th anniversary in 2008. "It was the regatta that Australia needed," Briggs reflected of the startup during that anniversary week, "a contest based out of a superb venue that was away from the major centres of sailing. It was neutral territory. Most importantly, it was an ideal location for some excellent racing – made even more exciting by the fact that we all had to learn very quickly about handling fast-flowing tides. The competition was first class from the outset." Also on the start sheet that first year was the eventual arbitrary handicap victor, Marcus Blackmore and his boat, *The Manly Ferry*. Blackmore's longstanding love of Hamilton Island will bring he and his *Hooligan* crew back this August to vie for a sixth divisional win. Other recognised yachts from the early years included *Apollo*, *Condor*, *Ragamuffin*, *Windward Passage*, *Too Impetuous* and *Inch by Winch*. Unfortunately, the weather for the debut series was not what anyone envisioned. The wet season lived up to its name: rain poured down for almost the entire week, with the series referred to lightheartedly as "Hamilton Island Rain Week" in the "Wetsundays". The harbourfront mardi gras party staged mid-week became the "muddy gras". For the first eight years Race Week was held in April, but the wet season's impact eventually took its toll and organisers rescheduled to August, a time of year that promised better weather and trade-wind sailing. Racing in T-shirts or shirtless in the subtropics at the end of the winter in the southern states and the series falling outside their summer pointscores brought sailors in droves. Sydney yachtswoman Julie Hodder's first of 21 Race Weeks was the inaugural event in April 1984, on Simon Green's *Thirlmere*. In 1985 she took a break from science teaching and joined as paid crew on Bob Bell's mighty maxi *Condor*, which would travel on from Hamilton Island to the UK for Cowes Week and the famed Fastnet Race. "In those days most females sailing on big boats – in fact probably little boats as well – only had cooking jobs," Hodder remembers.

"I was very excited to participate and my theory on getting on boats was to always make yourself available. So, the morning of the first race I made all the sandwiches and then cleaned the bottom of the boat. I was also the scuba diver.

"I was standing on the dock to wave them goodbye as I was told there was not a job for me on short races. Just as they were about to leave, the owner Bob Bell said, 'Jump on'. Of course I had my sailing kit right next to me ready to go." Hoban remembers a windless '85 – a regatta director's worst nightmare. "We were four days in and everyone was getting shirty. One day we were waiting off Catseye for hours and decided to have a motorboat circumnavigation of Hamilton Island scored using each boat's IOR handicap.

When the start gun went, everyone floored their throttle and charged off around the course in a huge cloud of black smoke. It broke the ice."

Resort fire of 1985

The morning after the close of racing in 1985, a spectacular fire destroyed the entire Polynesian-style main resort administration complex. "I thought someone had burnt the toast," said the laconic Bob Bell at the time, in the understatement of the week. He was eating breakfast in the Dolphin Room and above, a tunnel of fire was racing between the ceiling and the roof. "I had \$10,000 in cash and jewellery in a safety deposit box. The manager and I were on the floor, choking in the thick smoke, trying to find the





Clockwise from top: the devastating resort fire of 1985; the crew of *Thirlmere* at Race Week 1984, with Julie Hodder (second from left) attending for the first of 21 times; the crew of the *RP42 Black Diamond* on the water during the 2022 event; David Hutchen, the man who suggested to Keith Williams that Hamilton Island stage a major regatta, and Warwick Hoban, Race Week regatta director for 23 years.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SALTY DINGO; SANDY PEACOCK.

right key. The heat was incredible. A policeman screamed at us to get out fast; the place was about to cave in. I left the cash and ran," Bell said. Being in insurance, he knew that if he could take the box to the bank and they could count the layers, he could get his money back. Bell insisted on not disturbing the box, unlike others who accepted their burnt cash in a paper bag and got nothing back on insurance. Helping the island's firefighting brigade were hundreds of crew members waiting to fly from the island. They got the local fire engine going, hurled furniture into the pool, beat burning embers with wet towels and sprayed the burés' thatched roofs with garden hoses. For three island regulars – resident dolphins Dianna, Speedy and Buttons – the fire meant larger living quarters, as they were moved temporarily

into the guests' huge swimming pool. The debauchery of the first decade – the Whitehaven Beach Party, street parades, wet T-shirt competitions and general layday craziness – corresponded with a carefree time, when public liability was regarded a United States problem. Winner of the inaugural dinghy jousting event, Michael Spies, was also the event handicapper – for 28 years – and a longtime competitor. Along with *Apollo* crewmates Steve "Mothy" Jarvin and David "Curly" Stalker, they took out the first elimination series. The following year "Spiesy" needed stitches to the head, such was the exuberance of the layday contest where two rowers in each dinghy would position their jousting pole or windsurfer mast with padding at the end – to knock the opposition jousting in the water.

The "greasy pole" challenge, where opponents would come at each other from opposite ends of the pole, made slippery with detergent, and try to knock each other off with fenders is another Race Week classic from the archives.

"It was good fun, but pretty risky," Hoban admits. "We had all sorts of activities you couldn't get away with later on." In his write up of the 1986 HIRW, yachting journalist Robin Copeland wrote of the post-Whitehaven beach party: "The following morning, in the lost and found column of the media centre's huge refrigerator door, appeared the following forlorn message, 'Lost, one Thursday. Would anyone finding Suzie Archibald's Thursday please return it to her at the media centre as soon as possible. She began losing it early on Whitehaven Beach, and by the time she returned to Hamilton Island, it was nothing more than a blur. The day was of enormous sentimental value, so obviously a huge reward is offered.'" Media articles suggest UK supergroup Dire Straits was staying on the island in '86 and delivered a late evening impromptu performance at the dock, thanks to the well-connected Bob Muir of *Windward Passage* maxi fame. The early Race Weeks were jinxed by subtropical weather events. Severe tropical cyclone Aivu crossed the north Queensland coast on April 4, 1989, generating high winds and record April rainfall totals over large parts of the coast, including Hamilton Island, where Race Week was in full swing. "Luckily the eye didn't pass over the island, so all we had was a lot of wind and a lot of rain," Hoban remembers. "Racing was cancelled for two days and the remaining days were rescheduled, so in the end we had sufficient good racing to crown a worthy winner."

1990s

Getting right the mix of racing and fun is the regatta director's ongoing challenge and is never easy. The decade started with two Race Week laydays and six racing days, which evolved to become one layday and seven days of racing, along with a change in the handicap system. Handicapping in yacht racing allows boats of different sizes and designs to compete fairly against each other. The exception is a one-design fleet, where all boats are built identically. The International Offshore Rule (IOR) introduced in the 1960s was phasing out internationally by the 1980s and superseded in the early '90s by the International Measurement System (IMS), which became the Race Week handicap system in 1992. Well-known boats from this decade included *Morning Mist*, *Brindabella*, *Assassin*, *Atara*, *Quest*, *Terra Firma* and *Marchioness*. Onshore not much changed, other than the removal of the Whitehaven Beach party from the social program thanks to charter boats crammed with backpackers overrunning the event. But a good number of contemporary crews still spend their mid-series layday relaxing at the world-famous beach.



2000s

The decade opened with the International Rule Club (IRC) replacing IMS as the Race Week rating system in 2001. A new era of skinnier boats built from lightweight carbon fibre and with lighter and more powerful rigs gave them power-to-weight ratios that unleashed boat speeds new to the sport. Trade-wind sailing on the turquoise waters of the Whitsundays was suddenly turbocharged.

Years earlier, Keith Williams was still developing the island when Australian winemaker Bob Oatley happened to be cruising The Whitsundays and found himself sailing past Hamilton Island. "I didn't go ashore, but I could recognise the potential of the island," Oatley remarked. "It was the very early days of the development; they were building the airstrip and the harbour at the time, and there was a lot of activity going on. I remember saying 'What a great project that is', never thinking that one day I'd be the owner." Sandy Oatley, a sailor like his father, won the

2003 Hamilton Island Race Week grand prix division with his 58-foot Davidson called *Another Duchess*. In a surprise move, having sold Rosemount Estate, he and Bob sat down with the island team the next week to go over the financials. Another company was interested so the Oatleys had to move quickly. By Christmas their bid was accepted and in January 2004 their custodianship of the island began.

The arrival of the Oatleys and the sport's own evolution ushered in a new era for Race Week, as more women and families signed on to race and be part of destination regattas. The shenanigans of the 1980s and '90s transitioned to the arrival of early influencers and prestige brands offering Champagne lunches, fashion events and celebrity chef-hosted dinners. Iain Murray, America's Cup regatta director and 27-time Rolex Sydney Hobart yachtsman, (including four overall victories), sums up the maturation of Race Week. "It went from a pretty big boys' week away to a well-rounded family

event and opportunity to promote the island outside of sailing. The Oatleys shifted it from 'secret men's business' to being one of Australia's major regattas, if not the major."

Thanks to the passion of Race Week stalwart and longtime promotions manager Rob Mundle, one of the social-calendar mainstays, the Prix d' Elegance, has endured. The best excuse for an adult dress-up is the morning parade past a judging panel on the Yacht Club's Bommie Deck by race crews in costume aboard their decorated boat. Best themed and best presented yacht and crew are two Race Week trophies open to all. At the end of the 2006 regatta and after 23 years of service, Hoban retired as regatta director and Denis Thompson took the chair. Thompson continues to administer the annual event and once onsite, runs a team of 22 officials plus the racing across six days each August. Seeing happy sailors after a day's racing and the buzz of watching whales frolic near the racetrack are a couple of Thompson's many highlights.



Above from left: Race Week early years shenanigans included a Laser championship, dinghy jousting and the greasy pole challenge.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SANDY PEACOCK; SALTY DINGO; ANDREA FRANCOLINI.



Clockwise from top far left: *Crush* competes in 2018; *Zen*, *Matador* and *Hooligan* in close quarters in the TP52 division at Race Week 2024; Australia's Rio 2016 Olympic sailing medallists are feted at Race Week; perfect conditions for the 2019 event; the Shazam Prix D'Elegance superheroes of 2022; a XXXX beer-fuelled early years Whitehaven Beach Party included a boisterous tug-of-war.

"You never get sick of it. The number of whales in The Whitsundays since I started has increased and it's always a highlight."

Thompson is a man of the people and responsive to changes in the sport to accommodate as many boat types as possible. The event caters for trailable sports boats at just over six metres to 30-metre maxis such as *Wild Oats XI* and *Wild Thing 100*, straight-up racing machines such as the TP52s, cruising boats, cruiser-racers, one-design boats like the Cape 31s, and cruising and racing multihulls. Each year he pre-plans up to 40 options for short, medium and long courses around the islands, according to the tides. During the regatta, courses are selected each morning for all divisions – there were 13 different divisions in 2024 – based on the forecast winds. The plan is to keep everyone on the right side of the tidal gates and return them to the

harbour to meet up with partners, family and friends well before sunset.

In 1984, the long race was an arduous 250 nautical mile overnighter – two nights at sea for the smaller boats – around the Whitsunday islands. But it wasn't popular and over time it dropped back to 150 nautical miles for a couple of years, then 83. Now the Nautilus Marine Insurance Classic Long Race is 49 nautical miles. The Olympic gold- and silver-winning Australian sailing teams of London 2012 and Rio 2016 touched down during Race Week for their official homecoming. Seven Olympic medallists plus patrons visited in 2016 as part of their whirlwind return. The island hosted its own ticker-tape parade along Front Street, with local schoolchildren meeting their heroes. The subdued atmosphere in the media centre in 2013 acknowledged the passing of journalist

Ian "Stripey" Grant earlier that year. Stripey was dedicated to promoting the sport of sailing, covering Hamilton Island Race Week from its inception and always working hard to generate mainstream media coverage for the sport.

A harbour expansion made room for the record fleet of 252 in 2016, including giant multihulls. Multihull racing and cruising divisions were added back into the competition mix in 2013. Then Crown Prince (now King) Frederik of Denmark joined Race Week in 2017 at the helm of *NANOQ (Wild Oats X)*, chartered from the Oatley family. The talented yachtsman was surrounded by a bevy of sailing superstars, and went on to claim the top IRC Racing trophy. The most successful Race Week campaigner is owner/skipper Ray Roberts and his various boats with the *Hollywood* moniker. At least 10 divisional victories for Roberts and his winning *Team Hollywood* mean an annual uphill battle for others competing in the same division. Queensland yachting Mark Vickers, who helped move the resort dolphins to safety during the raging 1985 resort fire, holds the most Race Week caps, tallying at least 35 across 10 boats. Many have been alongside skipper Wayne Millar on his Murray 41 *Zoe*, a longstanding entry. Australian around-the-world and professional sailor Stacey Jackson is another familiar face – she has competed 14 times on well-known yachts including the dual Rolex Sydney Hobart overall winner *Alive*, the Oatley family's *Wild Oats X*, Peter Harburg's 100-footer *Black Jack* and Blackmore's TP52 *Hooligan*.

Jackson says Race Week offers "a truly unique racetrack. Beautiful, clear blue waters, islands with palm trees and whales breaching amongst the yacht racing. And you're based on a tropical holiday island where competitors and supporters stay and socialise before and after a day of racing". Only two Race Weeks didn't proceed – 2020 and 2021, due to the covid pandemic lockdowns.

The Oatley family's love of sailing and Hamilton Island took an already well-loved sailing series and turned it into a lifestyle phenomenon, combining world-class competition with a vibrant social calendar attracting sailors, families and VIPs. The 40th anniversary event is a tribute to the original visionaries and organisers who work year round to maintain its top standing on the southern hemisphere racing and social calendar. This rich history will be celebrated with a photographic exhibition at Hamilton Island Yacht Club from August 16 to 23, 2025, plus a range of commemorative T-shirts, one using the front cover design from the 1984 Notice of Race. Guests are encouraged to join the celebrations during Race Week. Head to the Yacht Club mid-morning to watch the starts from the upper deck. Front Street is where the party kicks off daily as the fleet returns, with live entertainment until late. Wishing everyone a safe and exciting 40th Hamilton Island Race Week.

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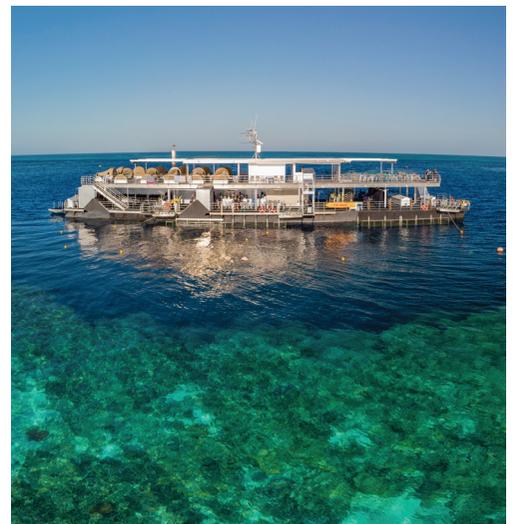
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Superstar chef Josh Niland plates up a caviar-accented dish of coral trout-bone noodles at his Sydney restaurant, Saint Peter.

THE CAVIAR EXPERIENCE

If there's one thing that many diners expect to see on the menu at the world's best restaurants, it's caviar. It's a demand not lost on Josh Niland, owner of acclaimed fine diner Saint Peter in Sydney's Paddington and the chef at the helm of Hamilton Island's new Catseye Pool Club. By Michael Harry.

There's always a certain expectation around the significance of the ingredients on the plate," Josh Niland tells *REEF*. "Sometimes caviar is the only thing that scratches the itch for the people paying \$300 a menu."

The Australian chef and author is known for his visionary handling of fish and its offal, gaining global recognition (and two James Beard awards) for his debut cookbook *The Whole Fish Cookbook*, and its sequels *Take One Fish*

and *Fish Butchery*. "I always refer to caviar as being the offal of fish, and anything to make the offal more luxurious or celebrated, the better," Niland says. "In saying that, the ethics behind how a fish is killed, and the intentionality behind where the rest of the product goes is an important part of the puzzle."

Niland thinks appreciating caviar is not unlike developing a taste for artisanal Japanese sushi. "You might eat sushi for the first time, and think, 'Yeah, this is nice'. But then you eat really good

sushi, and unfortunately it costs a fortune, but now you can't go back to just buying the stuff at the train station," he says, laughing. "The same goes for a lot of things in life, I suppose." When it came to finding the right caviar for Saint Peter, Niland was captivated by the German-based brand N25 Caviar. It breeds sturgeons on the high-altitude Tibetan plateau in China (at precisely 25° north latitude, hence its name). The caviar then travels to Germany, where it's aged in sub-zero temperatures and graded for its size, colour, texture, maturity, aroma, lucidity and roe uniformity. Only the best caviar makes it into the tin – less than 10 per cent of the original harvest. "I was genuinely impressed with how polished the whole brand is," says Niland. "And I was blown away by how good it tasted, the quality of the ingredients, and the ideas behind it." Niland is an official "friend of the brand" alongside other top chefs including Brett Graham of The Ledbury and Jeremy Chan of Ikoyi, both in London; Jason Atherton of Row on 45 in Dubai; and Ross Lusted of Woodcut in Sydney and Marmelo in Melbourne. Niland serves N25 Caviar at the end of Saint Peter's tasting menus, tying the bow on innovative meals which include his signature "Fish Butchery" charcuterie, salt and vinegar-spiked blue mackerel, and Corner Inlet calamari with yellowfin tuna 'nduja. The caviar serves as a knockout punch, as if to say, "If you weren't already impressed by what I can do, try this". A spoon of N25 Kaluga crowns an elegant canelé in the Sweets of the Sea box of petit fours. "It's served Bordeaux-style, crunchy on the

Niland, who has forged a global reputation for his original and committed approach to fish butchery, now also heads up Catseye Pool Club at The Sundays with his wife Julie.



Coral trout-bone noodles, bull kelp butter, oscietre caviar and chives.

outside, nice and custardy in the middle. We spray it with whisky and then put the kaluga caviar on top," Niland explains. "For a lot of diners it's a fun way of consuming something that they may never have had the opportunity to try. Or maybe they're saturated with caviar and they eat it all the time, but they try this one and it's significantly better than anything they've had before." Niland tested a range of caviars before settling on the N25 Kaluga Reserve, which is aged for six months. "I thought it tasted like foie gras and roast potatoes," he recalls. "It's a very broad, savoury, and buttery flavour – almost like brown butter – with that 'pop' of salinity you're looking for."

N25 Caviar's founder, Hermes Gehnen, recently visited Sydney for a series of dinners which featured another sweet-meets-savoury dessert: Valrhona chocolate tart with kaluga and crème fraîche. Niland points out that using salty caviar in a sweet dish has been done by many great chefs before him. "[Paris chef] Bruno Verjus has served a chocolate tart with caviar on top for a long time," he says. "When I was cooking with Heston [Blumenthal], he did a white chocolate caviar and cauliflower dish. [Paris pastry king] Pierre Hermé does caviar and chocolate macarons. So it's by no means new ... It's just good cooking and a parallel [of flavours] that works really well."

Caviar pairing by Darren Jahn

Caviar's natural salinity and high fat content delivers an ocean-washed briny richness and savoury umami notes that call for refreshing, well-chilled matches. Here, some of REEF's favourites.



From left, Saint Peter's raw yellowfin tuna and aged N25 Kaluga Caviar rice blini; Valrhona chocolate and murray cod-fat caramel tart with aged N25 Kaluga Caviar.

"I'm working on getting [caviar] on the menu so it may make an appearance. Watch this space."

There's also a confluence between Gehnen's process and vision for N25 caviar, and Niland's own approach to serving fish. "For example [we both say] you shouldn't wash it, and if you mature it, you'll lose moisture and promote fat to get more flavour," Niland explains. "It's about the intentional discipline of handling things well. We can age caviar, but not all caviar can be aged. [N25 Caviar] is quite careful about the procurement of the product and making sure that only the top minutiae of fish can produce this product so it can appear in the best kitchens of the world." The caviar "bump" – served as a single bite, often from the wrist – has seen the delicacy's popularity explode to become a staple in many high-end restaurants, from Entrecôte in Melbourne to Mimi's in Sydney, and beyond. "Caviar is such a status thing, but the idea of putting it onto your hand is actually to raise the temperature so you can experience its full breadth of flavour," Niland says. "Just like oysters, some people want to eat their caviar over ice, but it's probably one of the most foolish ways of putting your money in the bin. It's like buying a beautiful bottle of Burgundy and putting a big ice cube in it. Just detrimental to the overall experience." Niland, who works with his wife and business partner Julie, has recently expanded into the luxury hotel world, fronting a restaurant, Fysh, at The Singapore Edition, and opening Sydney's

The Grand National boutique hotel, also home to their award-winning restaurant Saint Peter. The pair helm the food and beverage offering at Hamilton Island's newest treasure, The Sundays, and its flagship restaurant, Catseye Pool Club. "Everywhere you look, it's just beautiful," Niland says of the island. "No matter where you are ... everything's perfect. So it's an incredibly special place to experience as a chef, especially from a restaurant that has a very open-plan view of everything." Catseye Pool Club focuses on premium family-style dining, and yes, there is more than fish on the menu. Guests can expect those classic Australian dishes that Niland himself grew up with – crumbed lamb cutlets, a delicious roast chook, a great cut of beef – served with Saint Peter polish. Niland says he's proud of what he's doing on Hamilton Island, bringing new skills – and flavours – to The Whitsundays. "It's the biggest thing I've personally ever done ... we're doing breakfast, lunch, dinner, the pool bar, room service, canapé parties, amenities, and all these different things. And it's got my name all over it." Caviar won't be available, at least for the time being. "I'm working on getting N25 on the menu for guests who have maybe just got engaged, or are celebrating an anniversary, and it can go to their room as room service," Niland reveals. "So, it may make an appearance. Watch this space."



Charles Heidsieck Blanc de Blancs NV Chardonnay-dominant Champagne, especially blanc de blanc styles produced exclusively from minerally fresh chardonnay, have a finesse and lightness that provides a great contrast to caviar's richness. Bubbles deliver a fantastic extra-flavour experience and I particularly enjoy Charles Heidsieck's bold example: vibrant, deep and generous, complex and delicate. The small component of barrel-aged wine contributing a lovely richness.



Ketel One Vodka In the long-held Russian tradition, vodka is the first choice of tittle for most caviar lovers – served well chilled and taken as a sip with each bite. Its icy purity prepares the senses for the next caviar hit. Each grain bursts in the mouth, and the flavours are elevated by the subtle nuances of Ketel One's crisp citrus zing. Even better served in martini form.



Joseph Drouhin Drouhin Vaudon Chablis 2022 Joseph Drouhin is a leading producer of chablis, the wines that are classically dry and minerally and whose acidity serves as a flavour enhancer akin to the bubbles of Champagne. The region's limestone soils, of marine origin, impart a unique flavour to chablis. I concur with winemaker Véronique Boss-Drouhin's observation that this vintage exhibits distinctive fresh citrus aromas and delightful mineral notes.



Larry Cherubino at his Riversdale Vineyard at Frankland River, Western Australia.

Man with a plan

Lauded winemaker Larry Cherubino is an industry powerhouse, releasing new wines while juggling multiple projects across a range of labels, writes Darren Jahn.

Larry Cherubino has had a hand in yet another impressive wine range – Whipbird – by the Oatley family, adding to the veritable cornucopia that reflects his winemaking finesse. Cherubino has become one of Australia's most important winemakers since launching his own label in 2004 and joining Bob Oatley's second wine venture, Oatley Wines, in 2007. He gave up a successful stint of corporate winemaking for Hardys and Houghton Wines, utilising his extensive network of West Australian grape growers and knowledge of those on the eastern seaboard to develop his own range with wife Edwina. At the same time

the winemaker was spearheading the cross-country regional wines of the Oatley portfolio. His own range, Cherubino Wines, shows tremendous consistency despite the enormous variety on offer, with his vines grown in parcels across Western Australia's Great Southern, Pemberton and Margaret River regions. There's a number of different, stylish labels, with standout examples of chardonnay, riesling, shiraz and cabernet sauvignon, as well as a host of fascinating alternative varieties such as arneis, fiano, nebbiolo and mencía. Travellers can taste the ranges at his welcoming Margaret River cellar doors, his nearby restaurant Masseria or back in Perth, at the sophisticated

Cherubino City Cellar wine bar in Subiaco. Hamilton Island guests will also find them on the island's wine lists and in the wine store. As if tending to more than 230 hectares of vines, managing a winery, two cellar doors, a restaurant, guest houses and city wine bar is not enough, Cherubino also heads up the winemaking of father-and-daughter team Sandy and Nicky Oatley. He oversees the pair's NSW winery and winemaking team to produce their award-winning wines, led by the Robert Oatley Signature Series, Finisterre and The Pennant labels. In the past twelve months, Nicky Oatley has worked with Cherubino to release two new ranges: Nicole Oatley Wines (NOW.) and

PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT CHERUBINO.

Whipbird. NOW. debuted at Hamilton Island Race Week 2024, with the unique chenin blanc from old Swan Valley vines. This year sees the launch of Whipbird, a contemporary set of wines including a pinot gris from Victoria's King Valley, chardonnay from Pemberton in Western Australia and a rosé from McLaren Vale, South Australia.

The new label references a whistle that has run through five generations of the family, from Bob Oatley's father through to Nicky's daughter Eva. The whistle is reminiscent of the distinctive call of Australia's native whiplbird.

"We've teamed up with chef Alanna Sapwell-Stone to present these new releases over a special dinner for Hamilton Island Race Week 2025" says Cherubino. "I was fortunate to be invited to show the NOW. chenin last year, along with my Cherubino chardonnay and two red wines from the Robert Oatley portfolio, with chef Danielle Alvarez.

"This year's dinner will revisit the oceanside dining experience, with a special menu paired to the new wines."

Cherubino is enjoying working in a multigenerational wine business, seeing parallels to his own operations. "I first worked with Bob



Respected winemaker Larry Cherubino works with the Oatley family on its new wine labels Whipbird and Nicole Oatley Wines.

Oatley, along with Sandy, and now Nicky has joined her dad and is driving some innovative new wines. Last year my eldest son Ilario worked his first vintage at our winery – Edwina and I hope to build a family wine company, too."

With three sons fast reaching wine-drinking age, their boys may gain some early hospitality experience in the Cherubino cellar door, restaurant or wine bar – not unlike Nicky Oatley, who worked in hotels, including the family's Hamilton Island, before joining the wine business.

Cherubino relishes working with the next generations as "they bring a fresh set of eyes to what is often an old-school industry", challenging him to constantly rethink what he takes to the market.

With his fierce attention to detail and focus on quality over quantity, more fascinating wines are almost certain to follow. Little wonder he was declared Outstanding Wine Producer at London's International Wine & Spirits Competition in 2023 – yet another trophy to add to his impressive swag of awards.

5

drops given the Cherubino treatment

by Darren Jahn



Whipbird Margaret River Chenin Blanc 2025

Cherubino responded to Nicky Oatley's love of chenin blanc by crafting this bright, delightfully fruit-driven wine from Margaret River vines. A juicy and delicious alternative to the ubiquitous sauvignon blanc.



Robert Oatley Signature Series Great Southern Riesling 2024

The Oatley's Signature range celebrates founder Bob Oatley. And while chardonnay was his favourite white variety, it is this crisp lemon-lime-accented riesling that frequently wins trophies in Australian wine shows.



Wild Oats Shiraz 2024

Wild Oats was Bob Oatley's nickname, famously becoming the name of his race-winning supermaxi and also now the family's popular table wines. This shiraz grown on family vineyards at Mudgee, NSW is full-flavoured, complex and easy drinking.



Cherubino Margaret River Chardonnay 2023

Chardonnay is Larry's signature variety and this is his signature range. It is wild yeast-fermented in barrel with just a smidgeon of malolactic fermentation allowed. A citrus-driven and stylishly oaked chardonnay of the highest calibre.



Nicole Oatley Wines Cabernet Franc 2023

It's somewhat rare to see solo bottlings of cabernet franc as invariably it is blended with its "bigger" cousin cabernet sauvignon. This is a super-drinkable, soft yet generously flavoured example.



a little island

HAMILTO

can do wonders

N ISLAND

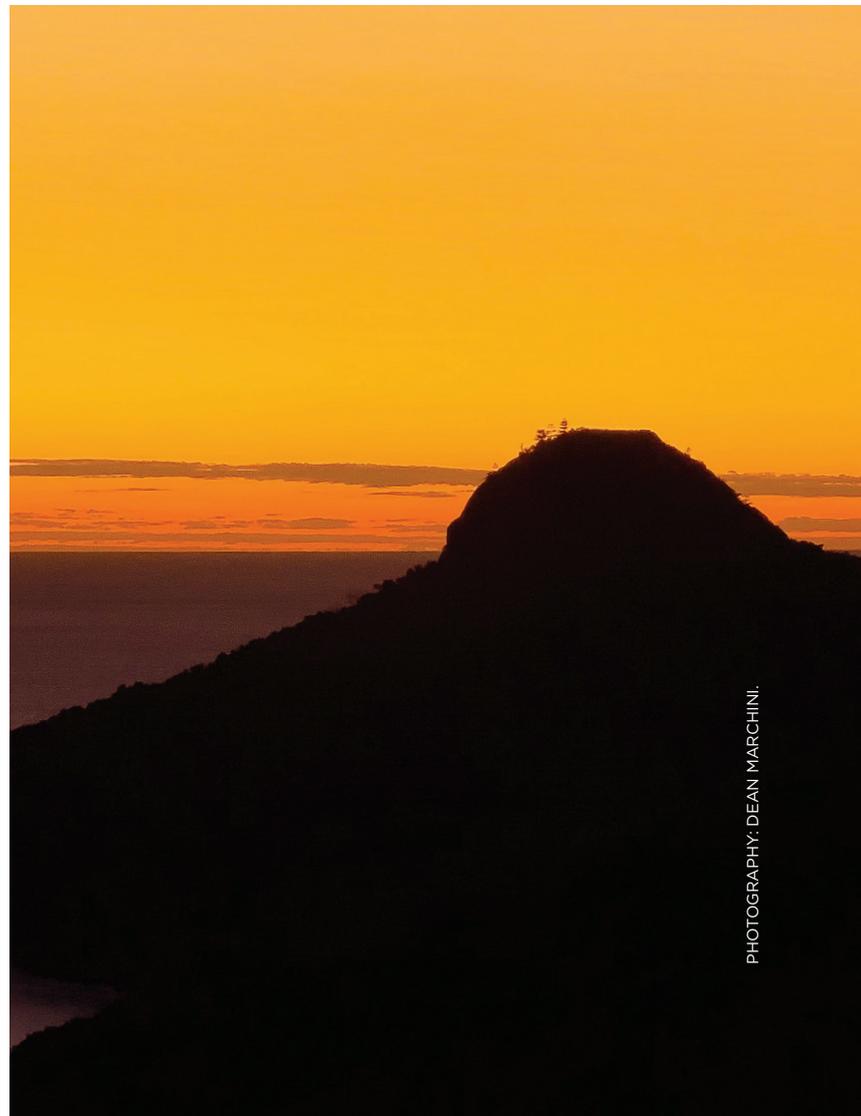
Experience

TAKING IT FROM *THE TOP*

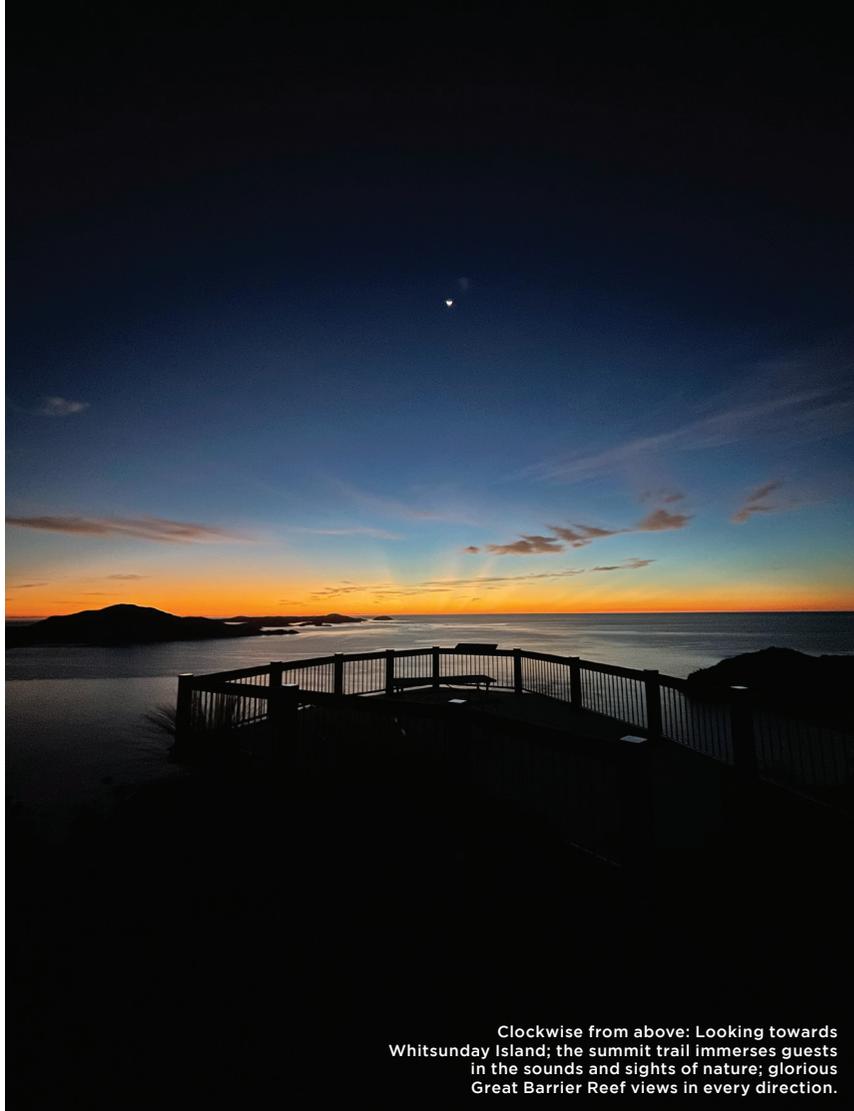
Walking Passage Peak is a quintessential Hamilton Island experience and one of its most rewarding. Dean Marchini – seasoned trail runner and island resident – does it every day. If you're yet to tackle it, do not be daunted: now is the time to try. It's a challenge worth accepting.



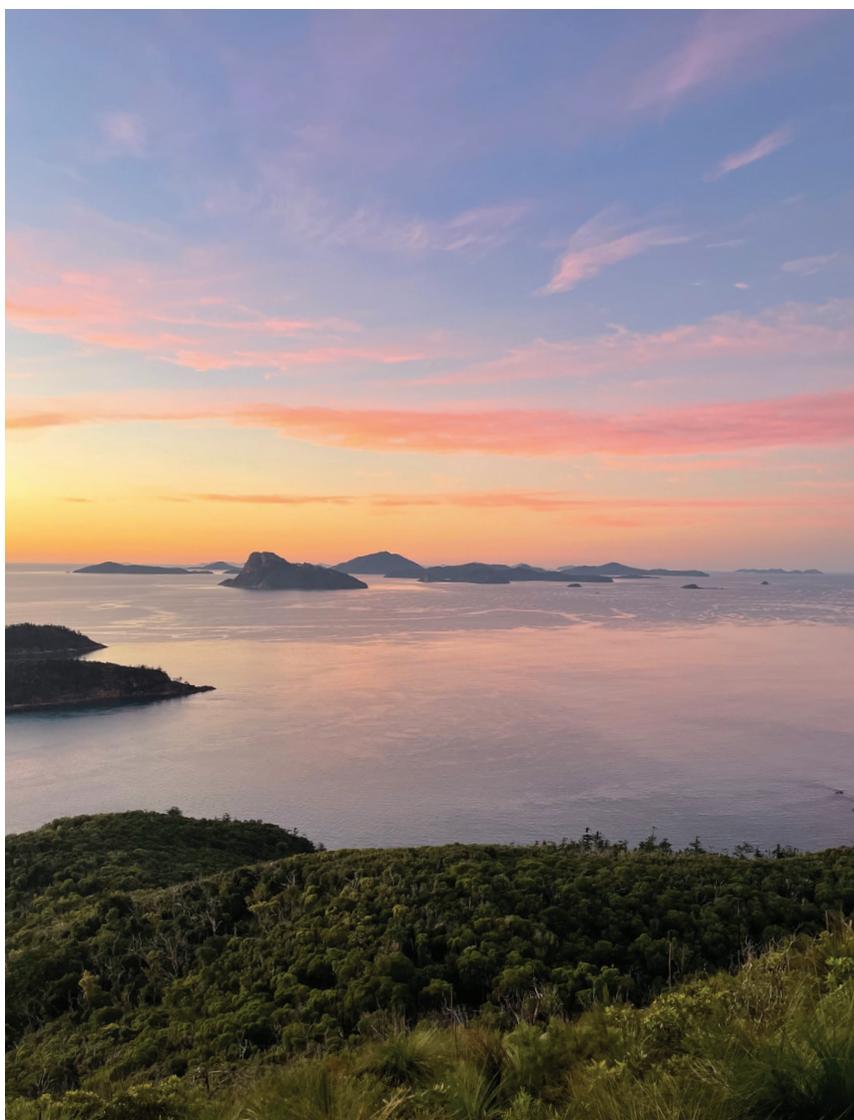
Clockwise from below: the Passage Peak viewing platform is designed to offer views in every direction; Dean Marchini at the summit on one of his daily climbs; sunrise at the peak is a magical, must-do experience.



PHOTOGRAPHY: DEAN MARCHINI.



Clockwise from above: Looking towards Whitsunday Island; the summit trail immerses guests in the sounds and sights of nature; glorious Great Barrier Reef views in every direction.



As the sun sets, Dean Marchini is to be found at the top of Passage Peak simply taking it all in. “This is the perfect time of day to de-stress and lose myself in total escapism and stillness. The view is different every time,” he says. It is a moment flush with the shades of deep amber, red, pink and purple that wash over the island during the sun’s nightly collapse into the Coral Sea. Marchini is the island’s social media manager and content producer and has lived on Hamilton Island for the past nine years. The former sailor with the Royal Australian Navy knows the “golden hour”, every inch of the walk to Passage Peak and the 25 kilometres of trails that wind across and around Hamilton Island. To the first-time visitor and faint of heart Passage Peak, rising to 232 metres above sea level, can seem daunting but once the initial stage is conquered “it’s a moderate climb”, Marchini advises. “The rewards are beautiful views across to Hill Inlet on Whitsunday Island and the spectacular 360-degree vantage point for taking in the Great Barrier Reef and the sounds of nature, the waves crashing down on Hideaway Bay.” The ascent to Passage Peak is a distance of 2.4 kilometres and takes approximately 45 minutes at a leisurely pace. All fitness levels can make the trek; the trail simply requires shoes with good grip, water, a hat, sunscreen and for guests to let someone back on the ground know that they are heading up to the summit. Passage Peak is a truly special hike. From its lofty vantage point so much can be seen, including dugongs, manta rays, sea eagles nesting on the peak and whales during the May to September migratory season. There are also deer and wallabies that Marchini says can sometimes be spotted on your journey to the peak. “And when you get to the top you can spend as much time as you like on the viewing platform, the sound of the ocean, the breeze ... it’s definitely meditative and I think it really creates a lasting memory of time well spent on the island.”

Experience

Clockwise from below: one of the icons of the trails is the big chair at South East Head; views from Passage Peak to Whitsunday Island; the ascent begins at Catseye Beach; Hamilton Island's network of trails is maintained by a dedicated environmental team.



"This is cardiovascular fitness you can't get from running a normal road."

And of course, as he cheekily adds, "it's all downhill on the way home!". Impressively, Marchini also runs the trail. "This is the kind of cardiovascular fitness you can't get from running a normal road. What takes away the pain are the views," he says. The trails on Hamilton Island are unique, carefully maintained and curated by a dedicated environmental team over many years. They are designed to cater for runners as well as walkers. "The team preserve, maintain and care for the trail network that is always growing and evolving – it's amazing to see what they achieve, whether adding new wooden or stone steps, pathways and new enhancements." The connection with nature is very real, he says. "In some parts you can still see where the tropical weather has shown its full force over the years, and how that actually helps with the rejuvenation process of the area, while witnessing those areas coming back even more beautifully than before." Marchini recommends two other Hamilton Island walks. The first is one that he calls "the loop", which is an extension of the Passage Peak trail. It also begins at Catseye Beach and covers 7.5 kilometres, taking about two hours to complete. On your descent from Passage Peak to Saddle Junction, the "loop" trail branches

off and heads left, following the gently sloping contours of the land all the way out to South East Head. "There's part of this trail where the dense eucalypts and Australian bush areas give way to pines and grassy tree areas with zero undergrowth. You can't help but wonder if you're even on the same island. It's spectacular to witness and so good for the soul." At South East Head, the big chair – one of the four "icons" of the Hamilton Island trails – awaits, as does the awe-inspiring view of the Lindeman islands. A rocky creek area further along the track takes the runoff from the higher areas of the island during the wet season, with sections of small rock waterfalls. "When you hear this sound on the trail, find time to sit on one of the flat rocks and gaze up through the trees and just listen," Marchini says. "When you do this walk, especially on your own, it's a chance to breathe freely." The path then winds further on to the unpatrolled Escape Beach and another of the island's icons – the hammock. At low tide the remains of an ancient indigenous fish trap can be seen. The trail eventually rounds back to Saddle Junction and Catseye Beach. Marchini's third favourite trail, Coral Cove, heads out to the southwesterly side of Hamilton Island and it is ideally done at high tide.

The trail begins at Saddle Junction and takes approximately 45 minutes. "It's a moderate walk down to Coral Cove, which is a hidden bay with beautiful blue water and sand." The big swing – another icon of the trails – is there and "everyone wants a picture. And you can swim at Coral Cove "but only at high tide. Again, this beach is unpatrolled but it is a great place to unwind after a day of adventuring through The Whitsundays," Marchini says. There is also an ATV tour to Coral Cove that can be booked through the Tour Desk. As someone who runs the trails every day, Marchini says part of the thrill of the experience is that it never gets old. "They never feel the same, whether it's the dry season or after rain; the smells, sounds and colours shift. It keeps each hike feeling new throughout the year. Being here is just good for the soul."

NOTE The trails are unstaffed and open from sunrise to sunset. The trails are rocky, with some of the steeper elevations equipped with black rubber mats to help with footing. Sturdy, enclosed footwear with good tread is required. There are no toilets or water filling points. We recommend not leaving the trails as the gympie-gympie stinging nettles are prevalent. View the trail maps on the Hamilton Island App.





PHOTOGRAPHY: DEAN MARCHINI.

Trail notes *by Dean Marchini*

- There are approximately 25 kilometres of trails criss-crossing Hamilton Island.
- Thirty three per cent of the island is developed, the rest is untouched and in its natural state. The trails are designed to work in harmony with nature.
- These are some of the most beautiful trails in Australia. One minute you're enjoying the resort facilities and within the same hour you can be on the other side of the island.
- The platform atop Passage Peak was built to allow guests to enjoy the most spectacular view of sunrise or sunset in The Whitsundays. I would personally say it's one of the most beautiful in Queensland, maybe even Australia.
- Passage Peak is the highest point on Hamilton Island, accessible only by foot.
- It is also the only place on Hamilton Island where you can get a glimpse of Hill Inlet across Whitsunday Island.
- I like to think about the trails in two major loops. The first is Hideaway Bay/ Passage Peak/South East Head. The second is Resort Lookout/Coral Cove. If you're after incredible panoramic views of the islands and nature, the Passage Peak/South East Head trail is the most appropriate. If you're after an incredible view looking down on the resort and to visit a beautiful little cove to escape the world, the Resort Lookout/ Coral Cove loop is the one for you.
- Saddle Junction is the main trail intersection, with connections to all areas of the island.
- A lesser-known point on the island is Middle Head. While not a prominent aspect, it does offer beautiful views across the top of South East Head to the Lindeman group of islands.
- The Indigenous fish traps at Escape Beach are definitely worth a visit.
- There's many a bench along the trails to sit back, enjoy and catch your breath while taking in the surrounding sights, scents and sounds.

Distances

- Catseye to Passage Peak – 2.4km, about 45 minutes to walk each way.
- Passage Peak/South East Head Loop – 7.5km, about 2 hours total to walk.
- Reef View Hotel to Coral Cove – 3km, about 45 minutes to walk each way.
- Reef View Hotel to Resort Lookout – 1.7km, about 30 minutes to walk each way

Elevation above sea level

- Passage Peak: 230 metres
- Resort Lookout: 180 metres
- South East Head: 50 metres

Hamilton Island icons

- The big chair at South East Head: a perfect spot to relax and enjoy the view.
- The big swing at Coral Cove – a great place to unwind after a day of adventuring through The Whitsundays.
- The hammock at Escape Beach – perfect for getting your dose of vitamin D in the shade, a million miles away from anything...
- The viewing platform at Passage Peak – a breathtaking position above the passage and perfect for catching the sunrise.
- The noughts and crosses board at Resort Lookout. It's not in an obvious location, so it's a good challenge to see if you can locate it.



Quiet time

Feeling overwhelmed? Then a “calmation” might help turn down the noise, as a relaxed Ute Junker explains.

It is a long way to travel for a meal, even one touted as New Zealand’s most memorable dining experience. But there is no shortage of people willing to tackle the five-hour journey by car – the final section on unsealed roads – from Auckland to eat at the 10-seater The Chef’s Table at Blue Duck Station. Mind you, that drive is just stage one of the experience. After arriving at Blue Duck Station, a 2800-hectare property and ecotourism venture in the centre of the North Island, diners clamber aboard all-terrain vehicles for stage two.

This two-hour station safari serves as an introduction to the local flora and fauna – including the endangered indigenous blue duck – as well as the regenerative practices used to preserve these magnificent landscapes. It is a memorable outing, with an optional kayak that is not to be missed. The easy 10-minute paddle through a small but dramatic canyon, surrounded by verdant forest, is an absolutely otherworldly experience.

By the time you reach the restaurant, it is late afternoon. The staff – all three of them – have the welcome drinks at the ready, but chances are you will be too busy staring at the view to savour your rose and damson spritz. Your position on this high plateau, referred to fondly as The Top of The World by station staff, is surrounded by a series of soaring mountain tops and the panorama is 360 degrees of stunning. That arrival is just one of a series of amazing moments at this off-grid restaurant, hand-built using reclaimed timbers. Naturally many of them revolve around the food itself. British-born chef Jack Cashmore delivers Michelin-worthy multi-course meals made mostly with ingredients grown or foraged on the station. That might include a baked horseradish custard topped with green pumpkin and glittering pearls of game jelly. Or a flavour bomb of a dish that teams dehydrated cherry tomatoes with a fennel-infused tomato broth and topped with a velvety bone marrow spooned over at the table.

The meal is exquisite and the atmosphere – with just 10 guests; the chefs working mere steps away from the table – is convivial. The experience doesn’t end with the petits fours, however. After dinner we retire to our respective cabins, each a short walk from the restaurant, and drift off to sleep in comfortable beds, only to find an extraordinary sight waiting for us when we wake.

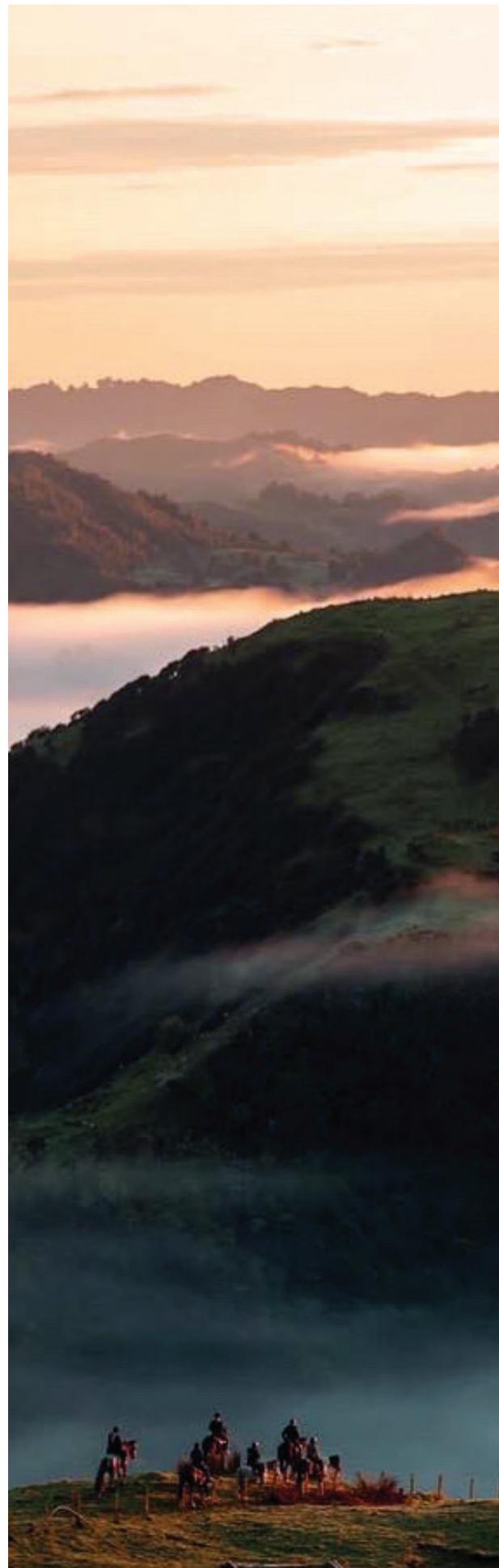
As the sky begins to lighten, that breathtaking view is once again thrown into focus. Only this morning, the valleys below are filled with fog. It feels as though we are floating above the clouds, on a different plane of existence, a serene place where the stresses of modern life can’t reach. The Chef’s Table at Blue Duck Station is not just an outstanding culinary experience; it is also a masterclass in helping guests to actually disconnect. Every stage of the journey, starting with the road trip and continuing with the safari and the welcome experience, serves to reinforce the idea that you have left the everyday behind. The lack of reception doesn’t hurt either. And more and more, that is exactly what travellers are seeking.

There is no one prescriptive pathway for creating what is now known as a “calmation” – a holiday that takes you away from the bustle of the everyday life, lets you slow down and disconnect. If there is one element common to most calmations, however, it is that sense of being immersed in the natural world.

Time in nature slows our heart rate and our breathing, clears our heads and makes us less likely to reach for our devices. At one of Bali’s most unusual getaways, they take the idea of connecting to nature literally. The luxury accommodation, with neither walls nor doors, is fully open to the elements.

Some will find the concept challenging but for open-minded travellers, a stay at Buahan, a Banyan Tree Escape, set deep in the jungle near Ubud, is utterly enchanting.

From the moment you wake up and pull open the curtains surrounding your king-sized bed to





PHOTOGRAPHY: PLATEAU PRODUCTIONS.

Dawn breaks at The Chef's Table restaurant at New Zealand's beautifully remote Blue Duck Station.



Havila Voyages cruises Norway's Coastal Express route between Bergen and Kirkenes.



The Northern Lights.



Open-air living at Buahan, a Banyan Tree Escape near Ubud in Bali.

gaze out across the lush jungle valley and deeply inhale the oxygen-saturated air, you will start to feel rejuvenated.

It isn't just the open-plan design that makes a stay here so grounding. The nature-first philosophy extends to the paths that wind their way through the resort. They have been left unpaved, so you have to watch your footing; at night they are unlit, so don't forget your torch (there is one supplied in your room) to light your way.

It is a deliberate choice, designed to gently push you towards being in the moment. Instead of walking along staring at your phone, you have to pay close attention to each step that you take, something that forces you to slow down and tune in to your surrounds.

Calmcations aren't confined to tropical climes. A trip along Norway's dramatic coastline may be one of the most chilled-out holidays you ever enjoy, especially if you travel with Havila Voyages along the Coastal Express route between Bergen in the country's south and Kirkenes in the north. This route provides a lifeline for some of the country's most far-flung

“Not once am I tempted to get out the phone and start scrolling. Why bother, when what's in front of me is so much more interesting?”

settlements, and the Norwegian government mandates that ships carry both passengers and cargo and follow a strict timetable. Havila Voyages has changed the nature of the experience by dialling up the luxury. You can feel it everywhere from the cabins – both stylish and spacious – to the elevated dining offering. (The small plates menu, designed to minimise food waste, is a nice touch). The single most impressive change, however, is one of the simplest: upping the size of the windows. That lets you drink in the jaw-dropping views no matter where you are on the ship, from the restaurant to the gym. This is particularly important in winter, which is also

when Norway is at its most beautiful.

I spend hours sitting in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows, mesmerised by the ever-changing view. We pass by narrow fjords and jagged mountain ranges, peaks which have been softly sprinkled with snow and others that seem to groan under the weight of piled-high ice. There are islands inhabited only by pencil-stemmed pine trees, and others where a handful of tiny red-painted houses are overshadowed by towering cliffs.

At first I feel a little guilty for simply sitting and staring, but I soon realise that I am feeling more relaxed than I have in ages. There is something utterly soothing about letting the power of nature wash over you. Although my body is at rest, my eyes are constantly active, registering the changes in the landscape, the shapes of clouds scudding overhead or the incredible clarity of the water in the small bays and coves by which we pass.

The ship has full-service wi-fi but not once am I tempted to get out the phone and start scrolling. Why bother, when what's in front of me is much more interesting?



Immersed in nature on the Great Barrier Reef.

Norway's summer, when the midnight sun shines brightly, is beautiful, but the winter scenery has a moody magnificence. The effect is intensified by the fact that the sun is only out for nine hours a day and – again thanks to that government-set schedule – many of the onshore activities take place in the dark.

There is a sense of magic in many of our nocturnal outings, including our early evening horse ride in the Lofoten Islands. We ride beneath a velvety sky in which stars glitter with a fierce splendour. The only sounds we hear are the wash of the waves against the shore and the clop of our horses' hooves on the snow-covered ground. It is spellbinding even before the Northern Lights start swirling above our heads, making us gasp in wonder.

Activities take place at all hours. One set of hardy passengers goes snowmobiling at two in the morning and raves about their moonlit adventure; many more show up for a midnight concert in a candlelit church. Turns out that being out and about when the rest of the world is asleep is quietly exhilarating.

You might think that Australians have less need of these switch-off getaways than others: even those of us who live in big cities generally have easy access to plenty of parks and beaches.

Yet there is a vast difference between an afternoon spent picnicking in the park and the joy that comes from really sinking into nature, exploring it in a dozen different ways. Take Hamilton Island. On this sun-drenched island, you are never too far away from a stretch of soft sand but there are so many other ways to enjoy the area's aquamarine waters. Hire a kayak and, as you paddle around the island, keep your eye out for friendly marine life, including turtles coming up for air.

Ready to head a little further afield? You can also hire a dinghy for a spot of island-hopping, stopping for a swim, a snorkel or a spot of fishing as the mood takes you.

Rather leave the work to someone else? There are plenty of boat charters available, from luxurious cruises to Whitehaven Beach to a cultural island discovery with Ngāro descendant Robbie Congoo, who interprets the landscape through the eyes of the area's Indigenous people. And let's not forget the thrill of spending a day snorkelling or diving the Great Barrier Reef.

Put those experiences together and not only will you get a true appreciation of the wonders of this fabulous corner of Australia, you will also find you have completely disconnected from your cares and are ready to head back to daily life feeling restored and refreshed. And isn't that what holidays are all about?

Sounds of nature

A playlist that hums with the sense of serenity.



1. *Lazy Calm* by Cocteau Twins
2. *Ebb Tide* by Houston & Dorsey
3. *To Be Alone With You* by Sufjan Stevens
4. *Constants Are Changing* by Boards of Canada
5. *Tree Smoke* by Kikagaku Moyo
6. *Untitled #6* by John Frusciante
7. *Objects* by Big Thief
8. *The Fear of Losing This* by Florist
9. *In the Kingdom* by Mazzy Star
10. *Noir* by AB001
11. *Surround* by Hiroshi Yoshimura
12. *symbol* by Adrienne Lenker
13. *Come And Play In The Milky Night* by Stereolab
14. *Chewmeup* by Rona Mac
15. *Lejos de Ti* by The Marias
16. *Le soleil est près de moi* by Air
17. *Dolphin* by Linda Perhaps
18. *Birds* by Electrelane
19. *Treefingers* by Radiohead
20. *Flatiron* by Suzanne Kraft

To listen, scan the Spotify code below.



Design

Tiarna Herczeg with pieces *When I make it to home*, *The land holds us*, *It's always been women*, *We still find a place to meet* and *When I sit and take it in* (all 2025), for her show, *Girl in the Clouds*, at Budapest's Apollo Gallery.



She rises

First Nations artist Tiarna Herczeg's compelling abstract works feature throughout new boutique hotel The Sundays. Here she talks to Jane Albert about heritage, finding herself and her evolving process.

It is fair to say that the past two years of Tiarna Herczeg's life haven't resembled those of most 26-year-olds. In the past 24 months the Yalanji – Kuku Nyungkul warra and Hungarian artist has celebrated her first international solo exhibition, travelling to Europe for the first time in the process; held multiple solo shows locally, and enjoyed a sell-out exhibition at the influential art fair Sydney Contemporary in 2023. She has just completed a major commission for the new boutique luxury hotel on Hamilton Island, The Sundays, for which she created not one but all the artworks. While the career path for many Australian artists is typically long and can be a tough slog, Herczeg's ascension has been swift and unconventional. The Sydneysider freely admits she makes it up as she goes along, albeit with a few key female mentors to guide her.

"I didn't realise being an artist could be a career because I had no one in my family who was an artist, and the artists I would see were in magazines or online and had a celebrity status that to me seemed so unattainable," Herczeg says. Although she has always enjoyed painting, life as a professional artist was never something Herczeg set out to achieve when she was a child growing up in western Sydney. She is proud of her dual cultural identities: Aboriginal on her maternal side – her family is Yalanji – Kuku Nyungkul warra from west of the Daintree in Far North Queensland – while her Hungarian father's family fled Europe for Sydney in 1949. Herczeg attended the local Aboriginal preschool and grew up among a large Indigenous community in the Mount Druitt area of Western Sydney, surrounded by her big, boisterous family of cousins and second cousins. This culturally rich childhood would later inspire both her art

and the way she views the world. Nevertheless, she says she regularly experienced racism when in public with her maternal family, a far cry from the anonymity she observed with her Hungarian relatives. "For one my family is black, so there's no denying that. People look at you all the time and treat you differently," she says. "Walking with my [maternal] nan people were often saying things." Nana Herczeg's family was smaller but time spent with them imbued Herczeg with a sense of belonging to that culture also, regularly sharing comforting meals of goulash, nokedli, soups, strudels and anything vaguely paprika-related. Herczeg's first few years after high school were spent studying for a double degree in law and arts with a social justice major at Macquarie University but the long commute from her home in the Blue Mountains was taxing and left no time to form proper friendships.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JACK ROCKCLIFFE; HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY.

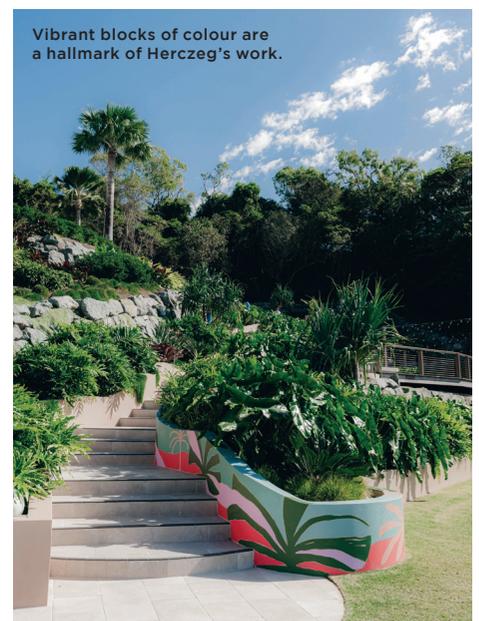


Herczeg at work on her now complete *Madja gives life / Rainforest gives life* (2025) mural on the walkway of The Sundays hotel.



When she was exposed to some deeply traumatic experiences in her personal life, she decided to leave law and ultimately moved to the National Art School in Darlinghurst. “I went through some pretty significant things, I was at rock bottom, it was overwhelming,” she says. “Then I heard about the National Art School and thought it sounded really interesting. After going through all the trauma I thought, ‘Why not just give this a go, what have I got to lose?’” That was in early 2020 and although she was only at university for 18 months before leaving on account of the pandemic, it proved a seminal time. “I just wanted to do what I loved and I definitely felt I was in the right place, I felt my mind was opening,” she says. During her course Herczeg had begun posting images of her artworks on Instagram and fairly quickly began to attract interest, initially from the general public keen to buy her work. It wasn’t

long before galleries began to reach out. Two years ago she was signed to Curatorial+Co, a gallery in Sydney’s Woolloomooloo. Her abstract artworks are typically large in scale and feature blocks of vibrant colour using loose brushstrokes of acrylic paint on canvas. Unusually, she rarely begins a new work with an idea or concept of what will eventuate. Rather she waits to see where inspiration takes her during her often day-long painting sessions in her Marrickville studio. “I’ve always used my art practice like a sense of meditation, I just allow myself to freely explore place – places I’ve visited or dreamt - and just let go and express myself.” Herczeg says her paintings depict themes of belonging, identity and home, inspired by her feeling of connection to land and place. “It’s incredibly rewarding being able to wake up every day and my goal for the day is just to push my ideas harder,” she says.



Vibrant blocks of colour are a hallmark of Herczeg’s work.



Herczeg's work features in rooms, public spaces and the restaurant of The Sundays.

"In the whole hotel it is just my artwork. It's like my own personal hotel! It's been a journey but it's also been super fun."



Herczeg's evocative *In summers cool* (2025) at Catseye Pool Club, the Josh Niland-helmed restaurant.

Herczeg recently returned from Budapest, where she oversaw the hang of her debut international exhibition, *Girl in the Clouds*, at the city's Apollo Gallery. It is an exhibition that very nearly didn't happen.

"They kept trying to reach out to me, but I ignored the emails because I thought it must be spam," Herczeg says. "Eventually they got in touch and said, 'We love your work and would love to have you here.'"

The gallery, drawn to the young artist's dual First Nations-Hungarian heritage, commissioned 25 new works for the vast space. They also invited Herczeg and her musician partner James to travel to Budapest for the opening. The exhibition ran for six weeks.

"It was the most incredible experience. I'd never been to Europe before so it was my first time, a crazy experience going to Hungary for the first time and also having an exhibition."

The Sundays project was a world away from the Apollo show and involved Herczeg being invited to paint eight original artworks that would be used around the new luxury hotel.

The Sundays, which is situated on the northern end of Catseye Beach, features 59 rooms designed in ocean and sand tones that reflect the tropical surrounds. It is also the location for the latest restaurant, Catseye Pool Club, from acclaimed culinary duo Josh and Julie Niland and in which Herczeg's work can also be seen.

The final piece of the puzzle was a mural immediately outside the hotel that Herczeg recently returned to paint, a rainforest inspired by the biodiverse Daintree. "In the whole hotel it is just my artwork – bedrooms, dining, reception – which is really crazy," Herczeg enthuses. "It's like my own personal hotel! It's been a journey, but it's also been super fun."

The momentum keeps going, with a solo show with Curatorial+Co held during the recent NAIDOC week followed by an upcoming group exhibition. After more than two years of back-to-back projects Herczeg is now hoping to stop and catch her breath, conscious that while she is loath to turn down opportunities, she is also cautious about burnout.

She plans to use the downtime to explore a new direction in her practice – sculpture and installation – which she hopes will give her more of a voice about the issues that matter: the environment, racism and her own diverse background. "I just want some time to dive into these ideas a bit further so I can elevate, grow a little bit in my practice," she says.

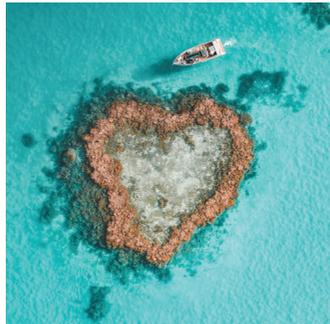
As a trailblazing member of both sides of the Herczeg family, her creative achievements must surely make her family proud? "I think so," Herczeg replies with a laugh. "It's been hard explaining how the art world works in terms of the financial side but they're getting it now, and they're fully on board."

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Above: Scotch & Soda hat, \$229.95; Zulu & Zephyr one-piece swimsuit, \$230, both from The Deckhouse.

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Postcards from paradise

Dear Instagram followers, having a wonderful time here on Hamilton Island ...



"Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays, Great Barrier Reef, is undoubtedly one of the most exquisite, beautiful & unforgettable spots on the planet. I will return every chance I get."
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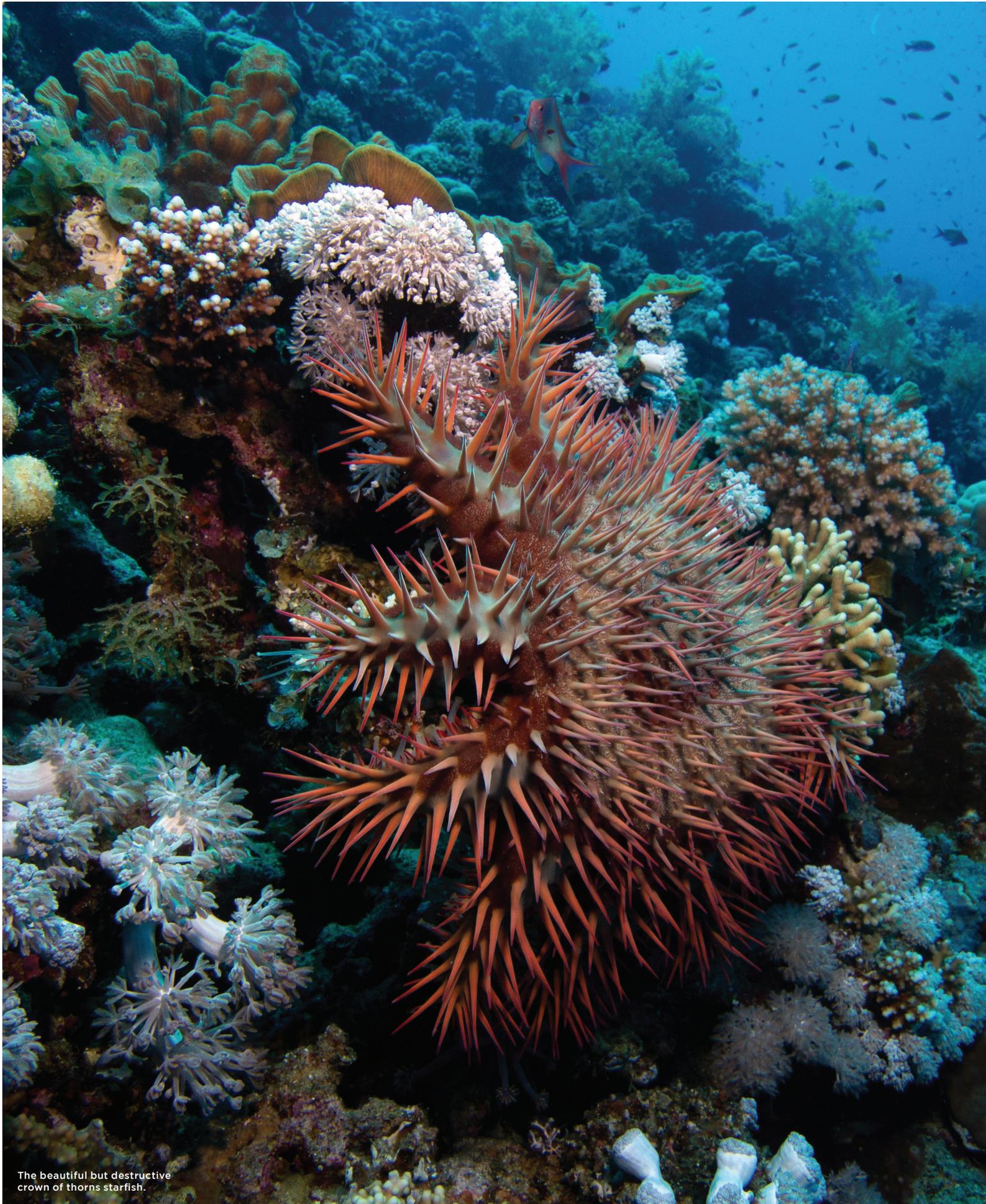
"Thank you to Hamilton Island for having us!!"
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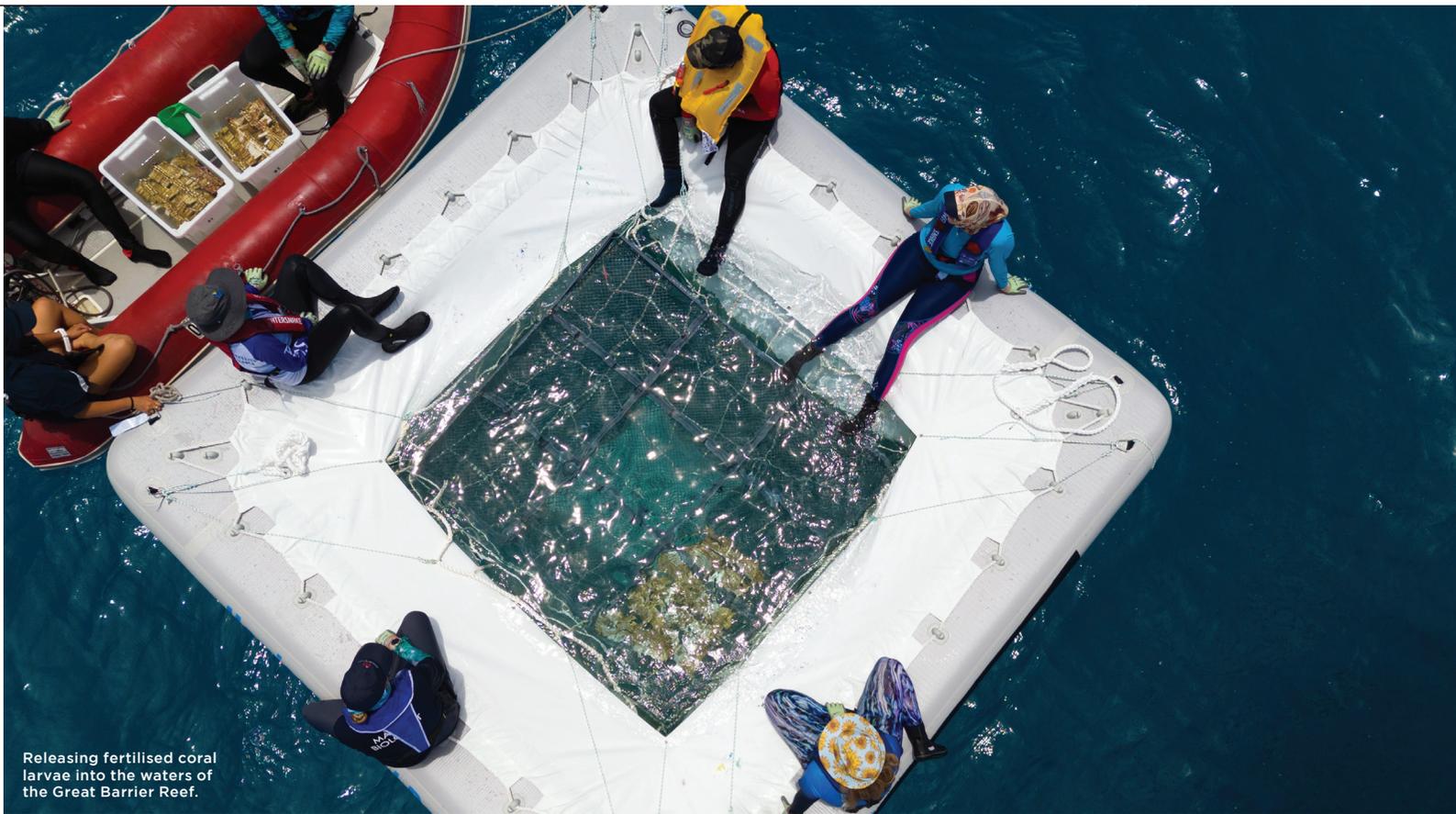
The beautiful but destructive crown of thorns starfish.

Secret life of *coral*

Scientists are racing against the clock to preserve and protect our most important marine ecosystem. Recent breakthroughs could be the lifeline our reefs so desperately need. *REEF* talks to Petra Lundgren about the latest research discoveries.

The crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) has an almost haunting beauty to it. But much like its biblical namesake, this beauty belies its destructive power. Just as the thorny crown brought pain and torment, this venomous creature inflicts suffering on the Great Barrier Reef, consuming vast swathes of coral and accelerating this natural wonder's decline. "In a normal, balanced ecosystem, they maintain species diversity by targeting the fastest-growing ones. But the first recorded outbreak on the Great Barrier Reef ... all of a sudden, there were so many crown-of-thorns starfish out here that they decimated a whole reef. They just ate everything and left complete destruction in their wake," says Dr Petra Lundgren, coral restoration lead for the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. According to the foundation, COTS can eat through 10 square metres of coral in one year. During an outbreak, when 15 or more are found in a one-hectare area, the starfish can strip a reef of 90 per cent of its living coral tissue. Dr Lundgren explains that the increased frequency of outbreaks is caused by the survival of more juvenile COTS as a result of increased nutrients in the water and the overfishing of its predators. "There's been a lot of money spent in monitoring much more closely for the start of outbreaks and then setting up teams to actively cull them," Dr Lundgren says, referring to the COTS Control Innovation Program (CCIP), a collaborative research partnership between the



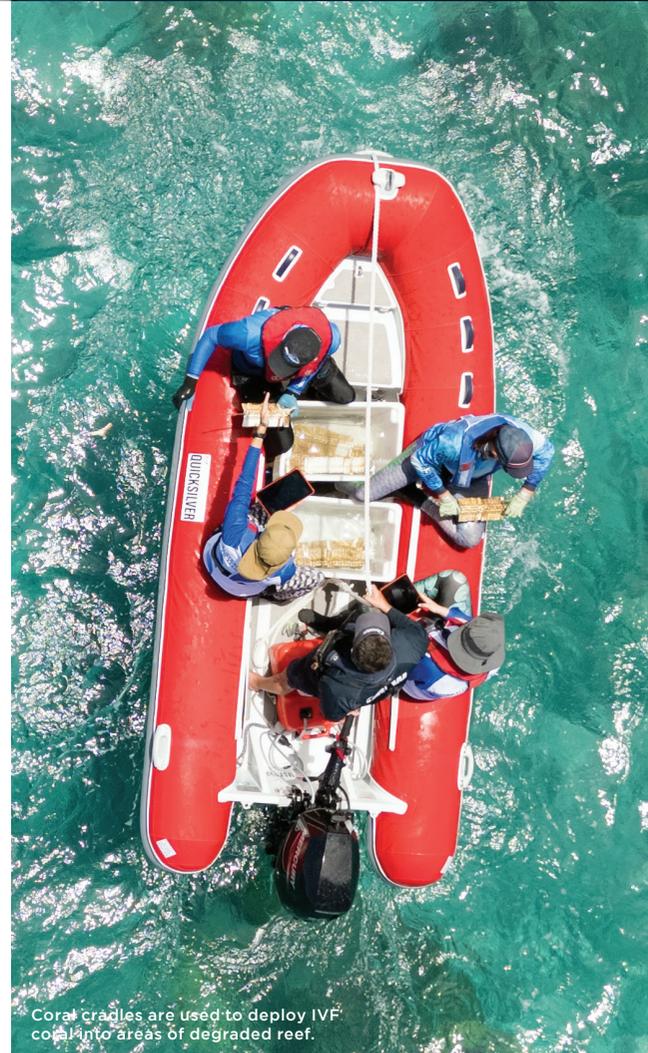


Releasing fertilised coral larvae into the waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

“The key is to make sure we breed corals that are more heat tolerant so that the propagates we’re putting out there can withstand increasing temperatures.”

foundation, Australian Institute of Marine Science, CSIRO, James Cook University and the University of Queensland. Culling starfish is done as part of the COTS Control Program, led by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Controlling outbreaks is still a mostly manual task, with divers injecting the starfish with a saline solution. However, new research undertaken through the CCIP has uncovered an important predator of the COTS: crabs. Researchers estimate that these decapods may consume more than five juvenile starfish per day. Dr Lundgren says this surprising discovery is not “going to solve the problem but it’s definitely something that we can add to the toolbox”. Understanding how reefs are connected is crucial not only for identifying potential COTS outbreaks but also for restoration efforts. “A small [number] of reefs contribute disproportionately to the health of other reefs. We’re getting better at saying, ‘This reef needs to be kept alive at all costs’. By being very targeted in where we do restoration, we give the reef a bit of a lifeline.” “One of the things that really needs to be

overcome is the manual labour of reef restoration, [such as] in relying on divers to plant one thing at a time. To be able to do it at scale, we needed to push past that and look into sexual propagation using coral larvae.” The closer the reefs are to each other, the better. “Corals have to be much closer than we thought to reproduce. As long as you have colonies left on the reef that are healthy, they will release egg and sperm bundles. We’re seeing the impacts of bleaching now, which reduces their capacity to reproduce because they spend a lot of energy being stressed by heat. The key is to make sure we breed corals that are more heat tolerant so that the propagates we’re putting out there can withstand increasing temperatures.” Recent breakthroughs in increasing thermal tolerance of juvenile corals are cause for optimism. The Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program (RRAP) has established that 68 per cent of coral species harbour cryptic genetic groups. “The interesting thing is the realisation that the genetic diversity of coral is enormous and so much larger than we thought. The bigger the genetic pool we



Coral cradles are used to deploy IVF coral into areas of degraded reef.



The Great Barrier Reef Foundation's coral restoration lead, Dr Petra Lundgren, says new research and reseeded programs deliver optimism for the reef's future.



The coral "cradle" helps resettle new corals once they are planted on the reef.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GREAT BARRIER REEF FOUNDATION

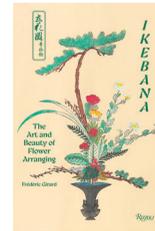
have to draw from, the more likely there is to be a genetic combination out there that will allow us to adapt to a change in temperature or a change in water quality," Dr Lundgren says.

This extensive testing is possible due to advances in cryopreservation. "It's something that has been used in conservation biology for eons. We have cryopreserved stores of all our plant species in the Arctic Circle. The idea of doing that wasn't new but to do it for marine invertebrates was very new. We started working with Taronga Zoo. It's getting to a point now where there is quite a repository of cryopreserved sperm. The good thing is that if we lose an enormous amount of a particular species, there's a back up. It also means that you can do breeding programs outside the natural spawning cycles of corals. You can work with crossbreeding throughout the year. We now have the

capacity to synchronise and control spawning in laboratory settings. That's quite an important advancement in technology." And, of course, nature finds a way to persevere. Recent findings from the RRAP show coral placement is more fluid than previously thought, with larvae using natural chemical signals to determine where to settle. Further, the Queensland University of Technology school of earth and atmospheric sciences has discovered that some species, such as mushroom coral, have the ability to "walk" across the ocean floor to settle in their ideal habitat. "There are some people who are convinced that the Great Barrier Reef is dead, based on what they have read, and it is not dead. There are still parts of it that are vibrant, that are very healthy," Dr Lundgren says. "I'm feeling optimistic in that I don't think we're going to lose our coral reefs. We can do enough to preserve them."

Growth mindset

The best new releases celebrating the power of nature, the joy of plants and small steps towards sustainability.



IKEBANA: THE ART AND BEAUTY OF FLOWER ARRANGING

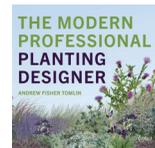
By Frédéric Girard (RIZZOLI)

This book features classical artworks from the 1600s, found in the Spencer Collection at the New York Public Library. It features detailed paintings of *rikka*, the oldest style of *kado*, (ikebana). Each image shows how ikebana balances flowers, branches and leaves in natural, harmonious ways.



PLANTING FOR A YEAR OF FLOWERS by Jane Moore (HARDIE GRANT)

Want flowers in the garden all year round? Expert gardener Jane Moore shows us how, with a beautifully illustrated guide to what to plant, when it flowers, and how to keep your garden full of colour and scent. Moore highlights 52 different blooms and also offers planting tips and perfect pairings.



THE MODERN PROFESSIONAL PLANTING DESIGNER

by Andrew Fisher Tomlin (RIZZOLI)

British designer Andrew Fisher Tomlin's focus is on boosting biodiversity, sustainability and reducing pollution. Here he breaks down modern planting techniques with step-by-step guides and photographs for creating greener spaces.



KOICHI TAKADA: NATURALIZING ARCHITECTURE.

Foreword by Béatrice Grenier, text by Philip Jodidio (RIZZOLI)

Sydney-based Japanese architect Koichi Takada connects nature with urban design, with recent eco-friendly projects including Melbourne's plant-covered Landmark by Lexus pavilion and Italy's climate-positive Sunflower House.

UP & GO

McDonnell competes in the Hamilton Island Triathlon in 2022.



Daniel McDonnell was working as an aviation firefighter on Hamilton Island when he fell in love with endurance sports.

For most endurance athletes, the journey to taking up racing features almost as many twists and turns as the courses themselves. Here, two Hamilton Island Endurance Series stalwarts share what inspired them to compete and what keeps them coming back for more.

A simple cure for boredom: that's what Daniel McDonnell was initially seeking when he started training for triathlons in late 2020. The then 23-year-old was stationed on Hamilton Island as an aviation firefighter, but the pace had him feeling restless. "Obviously the nature of that location is it's quiet. There are not many emergencies on Hammo. Everyone's having a good time, they're on holiday. So, I was sort of scratching my head, thinking 'I need to be doing something,'" he says. "We were providing first aid at the Hamilton Island Triathlon and we had our trucks stationed at each end of the airport runway. That first bike came past and I was like 'That's it.'"

"Being an aviation firey was conducive to pursuing my goals: really good work-life balance and really good with being able to train at work. They were a big supporter." Sharyn Sutton's fitness journey was more of a slow burn but was also born of carving out



PHOTOGRAPHY: HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY;
COURTESY: DANIEL McDONNELL

The athlete says there's no better place than Hamilton Island to run.

a mental escape from her work as a special education teacher.

“Teaching is a pretty hard gig, so when you walk or you run or you get on your bike or you swim, you can just be anywhere you want to be. You can either disassociate or it gives you clarity to think about things. If I’ve got a bit of an issue, I’ll think ‘I’m going to go for a walk’. By the time I’ve got back, I have some sort of resolution,” she says.

Sutton was content with being a “weekend warrior for sport” and never considered competing until a cancer diagnosis at the age of 50 shifted her perspective. “It was that light-bulb moment. I never thought I’d be that person because I’m usually very cynical. But it was sort of like ‘There’s so much to do out in the world’.” Through her local parkrun, Sutton met Steve Jackson, owner of Trail Trips and Events, who told her about the Hamilton Island Triathlon. “I thought ‘How cool to ride your bike on the airport runway?’. So I went over, took my mum on a holiday and I did it. It was really hard but it was the most amazing thing I had ever done,” she says.

After that first Hamilton Island Triathlon in 2021, Sutton has continued to compete in the Hamilton Island Endurance Series events, including the Great Whitehaven Beach Run and the Hamilton Island Ocean Swim, saying the “absolutely stunning” setting is a big motivator. “You’re swimming and you can see little stingrays in the sand. The water is so crystal-clear and beautiful. You almost forget that you are in a race.”

McDonnell echoes these sentiments. “There’s no better place for a trail run than Hammo. That trail system – that’s where I’d go every afternoon. I’d just go roll the trails for an hour to 90 minutes. I’d never take my earphones up there. I’d just detach and see all the different wildlife, a bit of the water. It’s engaging running. For me, personally, it’s the best type of running,” he says.

The decision to get back into endurance racing – which McDonnell had done for four years but quit in his teens – changed his life in several ways. Mere months after that day in 2020 when he watched on from his airport posting, he won the Hamilton Island Hilly Half Marathon. He then continued not only recording incredible times in events all over Queensland but also placing: second in the Hamilton Island Triathlon 2021; second in the Ironman 70.3 Cairns 2022 and so on. In mid-2023, shortly after winning Ironman events in Geelong and Cairns, McDonnell transitioned to the professional circuit. “I sort of got to the top end of age-group racing. I was starting to get a bit untested. So what’s the next step to get the most out of myself? Racing against professionals.” It was an unprecedented trajectory in such a short period, made even sweeter by meeting his



Sharyn Sutton's running journey started with the Hamilton Island Triathlon in 2021.

“Our love story started at the Hilly Half so it’s been special since then. We’ve always made an effort to get there”

partner Ella Appleby at an Endurance Series event in 2022. “We’re getting married in two months. Our love story started at the Hilly Half so it’s been special since then. We’ve always made an effort to get there.”

The couple now lives in Cairns where McDonnell balances training and aviation firefighting thanks to Appleby and her family’s support. “Her mum was a Commonwealth Games cyclist and her dad’s run for 50 years so I am always leaning on them for advice. Ella is extremely knowledgeable. She’s run her whole life,” he says. He and Appleby are skipping a honeymoon in favour of training for the Cairns Marathon and hope to make it back to Hamilton Island for the

triathlon in November. McDonnell still has big athletic goals – he names the Ironman World Championship in Hawaii, and the Boston and London marathons as bucket-list races – but admits his priorities have changed a little bit. Despite posting incredible times in the lead-up to his professional debut, McDonnell was plagued by health issues. “I contracted a bacteria usually present in contaminated water. This thing inhabited my stomach lining and was living in my microbiome, eating away at my stomach lining. This left me in an extremely compromised state and I couldn’t digest anything, even chicken, bananas, plain white rice ... all the basics. I literally couldn’t stomach,



The Hamilton Island Endurance Series Hilly Half Marathon 2025.

PHOTOGRAPHY: HAMILTON ISLAND PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY SHARYN SUTTON.

let alone getting in 80 to 90 grams of carbs an hour. It destroyed my mental health, my gut was hammered, I couldn't train." "I ended up going on triple therapy – three different courses of antibiotics. Going forward from the eradication of the H.Pylori, I could not stomach any single sports nutrition product on the market. Being in this compromised state, it really displayed that ... I don't know if they are the healthiest option for us." In 2024, he and Appleby launched Maple Movement, a line of maple syrup-based endurance-fuel products. "We're really trying to create a movement towards removing refined and harmful ingredients from sports nutrition. That's where my passion is really strongly at the moment. But it goes hand-in-hand – we travel to races and go to run clubs to hand out samples." The Gold Coast-based Sutton also sees podium finishes as a fringe benefit of training well.

"I actually don't train to perform well at an event, I train more for my head. I train because it makes me feel good" she says. And, it seems, the sense of community is a huge source of joy. "My neighbour and I walk five kilometres nearly every morning. And I belong to two fantastic clubs. One is Run Central and a triathlon club called Multisport GOLD. There's some unbelievable world-class athletes in there. We'll do track training on a Tuesday night and they treat you like you're one of them. It's such a fantastic network, they're so supportive." "I've been to 270 parkruns, 200 of them at Mudgeeraba. They're like your Saturday family. You go out for breakfast afterwards. When you say it out loud, it's a pretty bloody good life." *The Hamilton Island Endurance Series runs annually and spans four events from May to November. Hamilton Island parkrun is held every Saturday, leaving from Resort Drive at 7am.*

Listen up

These are the running podcasts giving us all the information, inspiration and motivation to make it to the finish line.



THE STRENGTH RUNNING PODCAST
Train smarter with insights from top coaches and professionals. Host Jason Fitzgerald, a 2:39 marathoner and USA Track & Field-certified coach, breaks down everything from injury prevention to race prep.



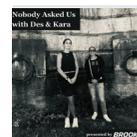
ALI ON THE RUN
Pick up the pace with US runner and former journalist Ali Feller. Personal struggles – Feller herself overcame breast cancer – life decisions and keeping a motivated mindset are all discussed on the show with fellow runners.



MARATHON TRAINING ACADEMY
The Marathon Training Academy Podcast is your guide to crushing the next marathon. Hosts Trevor and Angie Spencer empower everyday people via coaching programs, training hacks and their marathon deep dives.



INSIDE RUNNING PODCAST
This podcast is co-hosted by Australian marathon runners Bradley Threlfall (2:19 marathon), Julian Spence (2:14) and Bradley Croker (2:17) and is a great source of info for runners of all levels.



NOBODY ASKED US
Des Linden and Kara Goucher went from Olympic teammates to friends. Now they've teaming up for unfiltered chats including hot takes on the latest in running to personal stories from their pro careers.

Strokes of *genius*

Cameron Smith greets his longtime coach Grant Field after winning The Open Championship at St Andrews in Scotland, in 2022.





Champion golfer
Cameron Smith in action.

When Cameron Smith clinched golf's most prestigious honour – an Open Championship win – his longtime coach Grant Field was at pains to practise what he preaches: presence. By Matt Cleary

Grant Field is leaning against a sandstone column of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in the Kingdom of Fife in Scotland where golf has been played since decades before Christopher Columbus arrived in America in 1492.

Field's long-time protégé and friend, Cameron Smith, has just tapped in on the 18th hole of the Old Course at St Andrews, and signed off on a brilliant Sunday score of 64. And soon, it appears highly likely, he will win the 150th Open Championship, the oldest of golf's four "majors", at the course widely considered the "home of golf".

And, unless the people's champion, Rory McIlroy, can hole out from 50 metres away, Smith will soon become the "Champion golfer of the year". At the 150th Open Championship. At the Old Course at St Andrews. And Field cannot but help think to himself, "*Long way from Caloundra*".

When McIlroy doesn't conjure the miracle required, it is official: Cameron Smith of Wantima Country Club in Brisbane's north is the Open Champion for 2022. And, for Field, who for the previous 18 years has overseen the

progression of his star pupil and friend from spindly boy to world No.2, it is like one of those dreams when you know you're dreaming, and you can control it, and you're loving it. "It was just a surreal feeling," Field tells REEF. "It was one of those feelings when you know that it just doesn't get better. If you were writing a book about it, a piece of fiction about something incredible happening, it would be like that."

Tears flowed, hugs were exchanged among all at Team Smith and the 28-year-old accepted the famous claret jug on the 18th green. And Field did something that he teaches his students, including Smith, and his charges at the Australian Golf Performance Centre in Pelican Waters on the Sunshine Coast. Which was to stay present. Stay in the moment. Enjoy yourself.

"I really tried to take it in," Field says. "I was really aware of the moment. I tried to just almost breathe it all in and go, 'How about this?'. I mean, the storyline: it's the 150th Open. It's at the Old Course at St Andrews. And your mate's lifting that jug. Unbelievable. "Put it this way: Cam has more majors in him. But if it wasn't to happen again, I'm a happy

man. It was so cool to experience. ... We've had some pretty cool ones over the years." Smith and Field first met in 2004 when the 10-year-old from Wantima Country Club was invited to a high-performance coaching clinic run by Field in Caloundra. There were nine kids and three pros. Smith was put in Field's group by chance. Next year, it happened again. The pair got on. Later that year Smith's father, Des, asked Field if he would coach the boy. "And obviously I said yes," Field says. "He was 11 years old and we just got along well. I'd have been 28. We just got on, even then, when he was a young kid. We were friends. And 20 years later, here we are. It's been very cool."

Today, Field spends nearly a third of his year on the road as Smith continues his globe-trotting journey with the LIV Golf league.

There are also annual tilts at golf's four major championships, three in the United States and one in the UK, and a return to Australia to support the local tour including Australia's "majors", the Australian Open and PGA Championship of Australia.

When Field is not doing that, he's back at Pelican Waters, doing what he feels he was born to do. Teach.



The golfer and his coach have worked together for more than 20 years.

“A counsellor at school suggested I be a teacher,” he says. “During my traineeship, I was teaching guys. When I went ‘on tour’, which is what I felt was the normal thing, I was coaching my friends. I was out there trying to help the guys I was playing against. I thought, ‘I should be doing what I want to be doing, which is coaching.’”

By the age of 21 Field was a full-time coach. “I had a passion for it pretty early on,” he says. “I obviously still do. But my whole thing was I just like helping people. And it just happens to be golf that is my vehicle for doing that. “As much as I work with a lot of players, including the top guys like Cam, I like helping anybody who wants to learn. I get as much satisfaction out of keeping somebody in the game who’s thinking they might leave because of bad lessons. I think you can change people’s lives just by keeping them in the game.”

Field says that golf offers much more than the enjoyment of a well-struck shot. There’s a feeling of achievement through improvement. Fitness. There’s scenery, beauty, the air. Perhaps most importantly, though, golf can be a fillip for mental health. “I think we can underestimate the effect that golf has on a lot of people on the social side,” he says. “Not long ago we opened an indoor centre, and just seeing the amount of guys who come in here to enjoy a couple of hours with their mates ... From a mental health point of view and a social point of view, I think it’s so important to keep people playing the game. It does so much good for them.”

Sounds good for G. Field, too.

Hamilton Island Golf Club on Dent Island is a place to be in the moment, says Field.



Grant Field’s top tips for playing *Hamilton Island Golf Club*

With Rory McIlroy in the group behind him and chasing destiny, Cameron Smith made wonderful long putts over swales from off the 17th and 18th greens at the Old Course at St Andrews. With the 150th Open Championship on the line, he appeared nerveless, his silky touch making a clutch par on 17 and a brilliant birdie on 18. For we, the mug amateur golfer, it was otherworldly. Yet while we mightn’t have the talent of the 2022 Open champion, Smith’s coach, Grant Field, says we can learn from his protégé’s approach when standing on the first tee at Hamilton Island, friends watching,



judging, our nerves jangling. Field says to focus on the moment. On process not outcome.

"I think a lot of people get wrapped up in 'What happens' to play really well," Field says. "You can be nervous on the first tee because you're thinking about what might happen.

"I'm really big on playing the shot. Your focus needs to be on, for instance, trying to hit a little fade that starts down the left, rather than the shot and focus your attention on what you want to do, rather than all the other things that are."

One of Field's mottos is to focus attention on those things that are useful, not the ones that are useless. "Useful attention is focusing on the shot; useless attention is focusing on the situation. Do you want to make a par? Are there people watching you?

"You also don't need to beat yourself up if your attention wavers. It's normal to get distracted

by stuff. But you need to refocus on what's important right now."

Wind, too, can be a factor on the Hamilton Island golf course on Dent Island, and Field's tip, in part, is similar to the old "in the breeze, swing with ease" maxim.

"A lot of people think they just need to take the loft off the clubface when hitting into the wind. It's true you need to do that, but they can still create high speed by going at the ball too hard," Field says. "Yes, you want to reduce loft. But you also want to reduce spin, or friction, by swinging with less force."

Field says to reduce loft, take an extra club – or two. Also, set up with the ball back of centre in your stance. Don't get your weight too far "over" the ball and think of knocking it down.

"This can still spin the ball too much because there's still too much speed," he says.

"It's another of golf's counter-intuitive things:

swinging too hard will mean the ball doesn't travel as far. Moving your weight a little bit more forward will also help keeping the ball down in the wind."

And then, feeling the love and remembering to enjoy yourself – hey, you're playing on a course designed by Peter Thomson which takes advantage of the natural terrain and offers jaw-dropping views of The Whitsundays – Field suggests keeping your focus on balance.

"You still want to be rotating through the ball," he says. "A lot of people feel like they're going to drive the ball down rather than make a nice, balanced, smooth, three-quarter swing. [But] if you do it all, clubhead speed is going to come down, the ball flight is going to come down, and the ball will penetrate better through the wind." *The 18-hole, par 71 Hamilton Island Golf Club is located a short ferry ride away on neighbouring Dent Island. hamiltonislandgolfclub.com.au.*



Pieces of paradise

HIDDEN COVE 5

5A ACACIA DRIVE, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$2,375,000

2 2 1



This spectacular luxury apartment is situated within the beautiful Hidden Cove, one of the most recent developments on Hamilton Island. This meticulously designed two-bedroom apartment is finished to showcase luxurious style, with high-quality fixtures that impress in every detail. Simply put, it is exceptional. The expansive living area seamlessly integrates with a sleek, modern kitchen equipped with premium appliances, polished Caesarstone benchtops and elegant white cabinetry. Indoor living extends effortlessly to a generous balcony, perfect for enjoying the lifestyle this magnificent island has to offer. This exceptional holiday home is one that will keep guests returning year after year. Reap the rewards of its strong letting history, good returns and the future bookings already in place. But be sure to make time to also enjoy this beautiful piece of tropical paradise for yourself.

FEATURES INCLUDE:

- Views from both bedrooms and living area
- Master bedroom featuring balcony with views, an elegant en suite and walk-in robe
- Ducted airconditioning throughout
- Spacious entertainer's balcony
- Quality furnishings, fixtures and fittings
- Ceiling fans
- Buggy port at entry
- Large owner's storage room
- Buggy included in sale

PROPERTY SALES: CONTACT LIAM KEARNEY 0458 178 601 OR SCOTT BOWSHIRE 0428 306 031

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

PROPERTY SALES: 07 4948 9101 PERMANENT RENTALS: 07 4946 8028 HOLIDAY HOMES PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: 07 4946 8746

BLUEWATER VIEWS 3

2 BANKSIA COURT, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$899,000

2  2  1 

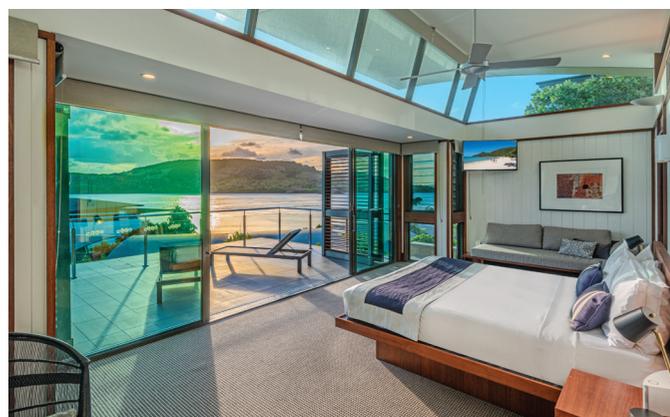
Step into island luxury with this beautifully refurbished, single-level apartment that will instantly feel like your new home away from home. This light-filled property boasts an impressive 151 square metres of living space, with two generously sized bedrooms – the master with its own en suite – an entertainer’s kitchen and a spacious open-plan living and dining area. Families and those seeking their own island retreat will love this apartment for its effortless indoor-outdoor flow. Bluewater Views 3 is being sold fully furnished, and there are stunning new furnishings throughout. Step out onto the expansive private deck and take in the Coral Sea views or head directly to the complex’s 25-metre pool and lush landscaped gardens via private exterior stairs. There is also a private and secure owner’s storage room, dedicated private parking and a buggy included in the sale.

**LA BELLA WATERS 3**

1 CORAL SEA AVENUE, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$1,850,000

3  3  1 

The quiet northern tip of the island is where you’ll find this elegant property, which commands breathtaking views over the crystal-clear waters of The Whitsundays. This home boasts meticulous design and flawless finishes, with premium fixtures and exceptional craftsmanship throughout. The expansive living area connects seamlessly to the sleek, contemporary kitchen equipped with top-of-the-line appliances, polished Caesarstone countertops and warm timber-accented cabinetry. Sliding glass doors open onto a spacious alfresco entertaining area with its own fenced grassed area. The inviting private space encourages everyone to relax and soak in the natural beauty and tranquillity of this remarkable island retreat.

**YACHT CLUB VILLA 25**

FRONT STREET, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$3,075,000

4  4  2 

The exclusive, gated Yacht Club Villas complex represents the pinnacle of island living and investment. It is conveniently located next to the prestigious Hamilton Island Marina and Yacht Club and surrounded by lush, well-maintained gardens and with access to the stunning shared pool. Yacht Club Villa 25 offers four spacious bedrooms and four stylish bathrooms spread over multiple levels, providing ample space for family, guests and entertaining. The open-plan living and dining area, combined with a chic, modern kitchen, creates an inviting space for relaxed living and effortless entertaining. A generous balcony extends from the main living area, offering panoramic ocean views and a prime position for taking in the island’s unforgettable sunsets.



PAVILLIONS 21

1 AIRPORT DRIVE, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$3,495,000

3 4 1

Welcome to this remarkable ground-floor residence encapsulating the very best of Hamilton Island life. This exceptional apartment comes with its own swimming pool, manicured gardens and 16-metre marina berth, making it an ideal retreat for boating enthusiasts or those seeking relaxed island luxury. The private heated pool surrounded by lush gardens provides a true sense of peaceful sanctuary. Inside, the design is contemporary and refined, with a Miele kitchen at the heart of the open-plan living and dining area. Large sliding doors create seamless indoor-outdoor flow for entertaining or relaxing in the tropical breezes. A dedicated media room and a flexible home office/optional fourth bedroom add versatility. There are three spacious bedrooms, each with its own elegant bathroom. The master suite opens directly to the patio, with breathtaking marina and Whitsundays views setting the scene for relaxed outdoor dining and an unrivalled view of the island's serene sunsets.

PINNACLE 6

1 BANKSIA COURT, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$1,100,000

2 2 1

Embrace the ease of this two-bedroom townhouse, designed for comfort and effortless island living. The spacious living and dining area is flooded with natural light from expansive windows that beautifully frame views of Whitsunday Passage. Step through the large sliding doors onto the generous balcony, perfect for entertaining and enjoying the spectacular sunsets. The master suite is a true retreat, featuring a luxurious private bathroom with double vanity and spa bath, a spacious walk-in wardrobe and a private balcony all underlining the sense of serenity. The second bedroom enjoys its own entry to the main bathroom, ensuring convenience and privacy for guests or family. A separate laundry with linen cupboard adds extra functionality to this thoughtfully designed space.



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KINGFISHER
6 MARINA DRIVE, HAMILTON ISLAND
OFFERS OVER \$3,000,000

4 3 2

This beautifully appointed holiday home is a rare gem, offering an unmatched combination of luxury, comfort and breathtaking vistas. Kingfisher is an excellent lifestyle investment, well positioned to capture panoramic views of Hamilton Island Marina and Whitsunday Passage. The four-bedroom property is designed with elegance and functionality in mind, boasting a spacious, modern kitchen that integrates seamlessly with the living and dining areas. Multiple outdoor entertaining spaces offer plenty of privacy and also make this three-level home perfect for entertaining, with the option to enjoy alfresco dining, relaxing by Kingfisher's beautiful private pool or simply enjoying the stunning island views. Two buggies are included in the sale.

HELICONIA GROVE 4
1 FLAMETREE GROVE, HAMILTON ISLAND
\$799,000

2 1 1

Step into island living with Heliconia Grove 4, a fully furnished, single-level apartment offering panoramic views across the marina, Dent Island and the sparkling Whitsunday Passage. The space is thoughtfully designed for comfort and relaxation, with an open-plan living and dining area flowing out to a large outdoor entertaining deck, ideal for soaking up the ambience of island living. With air conditioning and ceiling fans throughout, the apartment offers year-round comfort. It is just a short stroll to the marina, restaurants, retail precinct and conveniently close to the complex's shared pool. The apartment is ideally positioned for both personal getaways and as an investment option, with a solid holiday-letting performance.





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HAMILTON ISLAND
GREAT BARRIER REEF AUSTRALIA

BARRIER REEF HOUSE

5-NIGHT MINIMUM STAY

FROM: \$1920 PER NIGHT

MAXIMUM CAPACITY: 10 PEOPLE

4  5  2 

Barrier Reef House is a luxurious escape blessed with breathtaking views. This elevated executive-style holiday home enjoys sweeping outlooks over the Coral Sea and Hamilton Island Marina. There are four king-sized bedrooms, five bathrooms, multiple living areas and a private pool. Its fully equipped kitchen and beautifully appointed interior make this ideal for holidaymakers seeking space, style and a seamless blend of indoor-outdoor living.



CASUARINA COVE 11

3-NIGHT MINIMUM STAY

FROM: \$1040 PER NIGHT

MAXIMUM CAPACITY: 10 PEOPLE

4  2  1 

Step into relaxed island living at this beautifully renovated, four-bedroom villa set across two spacious levels. Casuarina Cove 11 combines comfort with convenience, just a short stroll from the vibrant Hamilton Island Marina, cafes and restaurants. Enjoy uninterrupted views across Dent Passage from the private deck, the perfect vantage point for taking in the island's spectacular sunsets. After a day of exploring, unwind in the complex's beautiful shared pool. This home is your gateway to the best of Hamilton Island and ideal for families or groups.

HOLIDAY RENTALS: CONTACT HAMILTON ISLAND HOLIDAYS 137 333 (02 9433 0444)

To view the full Hamilton Island Holiday Homes rental listings go to hamiltonislandholidayhomes.com.au

*RATES AND MINIMUM STAYS QUOTED ARE BASED ON LOW SEASON. OTHER RATES AND DURATIONS OF STAY APPLY, PLEASE ENQUIRE AT TIME OF BOOKING.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: CONTACT HAMILTON ISLAND HOLIDAY HOMES 07 4946 8746

All-inclusive property management service, including sales, housekeeping, valet, property management and buggy management.

Professional on-island property managers. Bonus inclusions for guests: Kids Eat Free at Sails and Pool Terrace Restaurant; plus complimentary non-motorised watersports.

LAGOON 203

3-NIGHT MINIMUM STAY
FROM: \$800 PER NIGHT
MAXIMUM CAPACITY: 4 PEOPLE



Wake up to incredible ocean views in this bright and airy top-floor apartment located just moments from Catseye Beach. Lagoon 203 offers two spacious bedrooms, two bathrooms and a large open-plan living area that flows onto a generous balcony with glorious views of the Coral Sea. Enjoy outdoor dining, sun lounges and a barbecue – the perfect place to soak up the tropical lifestyle. Lagoon 203 is located in a prime resort-side location, making it an excellent choice for couples or small families seeking convenience and comfort.



YACHT HARBOUR TOWER 7

4-NIGHT MINIMUM STAY
FROM: \$1600 PER NIGHT
MAXIMUM CAPACITY: 8 PEOPLE



Experience panoramic island views from every room in this exceptional whole-floor apartment. Yacht Harbour Tower 7 boasts 180-degree outlooks over both the marina and Catseye Beach, offering light-filled luxury in a central island location. Four bedrooms, four bathrooms and spacious open-plan living on a single level make this penthouse-style apartment an ideal holiday choice for larger families or groups. With designer finishes and seamless flow, this is island living at its finest.



THE EDGE 21

3-NIGHT MINIMUM STAY
FROM: \$990 PER NIGHT
MAXIMUM CAPACITY: 8 PEOPLE



The Edge 21 delivers a stylish and serene island getaway with sweeping ocean outlooks. This generously proportioned first-floor apartment includes three large bedrooms, with a luxurious parents' retreat and an expansive entertaining deck perfect for sunset drinks. Guests also enjoy access to one of the island's most beautiful pools – a spectacular infinity-edge oasis overlooking The Whitsundays. Relaxing, exploring ... whatever your holiday mode, The Edge 21 is a perfect island base.

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