

Queensland

GAY AND LESBIAN VISITOR'S GUIDE™



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Welcome to the Queensland Gay & Lesbian Visitor's Guide. Inside you'll find heaps of useful information on where to stay, what to do, nightlife, and community events. Queensland's attractions are many. The Great Barrier Reef has to be seen to be believed, Noosa rates as one of Australia's fave gay destinations, and Fraser Island is a beautifully unpolished gem. Three pieces of advice: be mindful of the sun; bring a hat and sunscreen; and swim with care. Now, enjoy your visit ... and start making plans for a speedy return.

— Dominic O'Grady, Editor

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Our group of seven set off early one Sunday morning for a week of therapy sailing the tranquil, turquoise waters of the Whitsundays, along the Great Barrier Reef. Three of us were sailors, the other four had once been on a boat.

Now it's fair enough to think that cramming seven people who don't know each other very well onto a floating lump of plastic for a week would be enough to push them to the brink of war. But in our case, you'd be wrong.

Sail away

If you're a sailor, think pleasant breezes with beautiful anchorages and short legs between each stop. If the breeze is not really your thing, then think heaps of gin and tonics, and snorkelling on the reef.

There are more than 100 tropical islands and islets in the Whitsundays, most of them uninhabited. That means it's worth doing some planning before you arrive, and it's worth having a few different options in case anchorages are full or the breeze is blowing from the 'wrong' direction.

Luxury lunch

The bible for the area is *100 Magic Miles of the Great Barrier Reef*, and although you'll get one on your charter yacht, it's worth reading a copy before you leave home. It's packed full of essential information, from channel depths and recommended anchorages, to whether you'll need to dress up for lunch at any of the resorts.

We chartered with Sunsail – just one of several operators in the Whitsundays – and opted for the full provisioning service, which included everything from hamburgers to lobster. There's a BBQ on the back of all the charter boats and, of course, full cooking facilities downstairs.

Now sailing is not everyone's cup of tea. My idea of a classy yacht with all the creature comforts is my partner's idea

of a glorified caravan afloat, just a lot more expensive. But even the most dedicated landlubber will be moved by the sheer beauty of the Whitsundays, and experiencing them from a boat is definitely the way to go.

Seven days was barely enough to get a taste of what was on offer, but a visit to Whitehaven Beach on Whitsunday Island is a must. It was apparently voted one of the world's top three beaches with its incredible five-kilometre stretch of pure white silica sand.

Whale watching

The Whitsundays are renowned for their superb coral formations and marine life. Turtles and mantarays are plentiful, and you'll catch sight of whales if you're there at the right time of year. We had the thrill of sailing near two of them as we headed south from the northernmost (and exclusive) Hayman Island one

afternoon. If you're lucky enough to cross their path, just keep your distance and be moved at the wonder of their magnificence.

If all the nature gets too much for you, then you've always got the option of visiting one of the resorts on the islands.

Coral Sea Resort has absolute ocean frontage on the Whitsunday coast, and has worked hard to position itself as a gay-friendly resort with all the trimmings.

Your charter company can usually organise reservations for you as part of the daily radio check-ins.

But chances are that once you're afloat, you'll want to just stay out there messing about in boats!

– Derek Hand



6 Tropical North



Tropical holidays conjure for most of us images of palm trees, coconuts, and loud shirts. But there are tough questions that go with the territory: Mango Daiquiri or Singapore Sling? Breakfast at noon or one?

Three simple words – Tropical North Queensland – turn the dream into reality. The atmosphere in this part of Queensland is languid and often downright erotic.

Throw in hordes of holidaying homos, add some great restaurants and cafes, and you've got something pretty close to queer heaven.

Snorkel the Reef

Many visitors are happy to spend their days pool-side. But if you want to do something energetic, the magnificent Great Barrier Reef is but a short boat ride away. Snorkelling above this natural wonder is a truly amazing experience. So is exploring the Daintree Rainforest and nearby Cape Tribulation. There's an astonishing array of

gay owned or gay friendly establishments throughout Tropical North Queensland.

Liberty Resort is one of the new kids on the block, promising tropical luxury in the rainforests of Kuranda, inland from Cairns.

Flop and drop

For a beach-side holiday, you can't go past **Turtle Cove**. It's a friendly gay resort tucked away on the coast north of Cairns, with it's own private beach and pool, restaurant and bar, and rooms with a view over the Coral Sea. Here you can do nothing but flop and drop, or enjoy day excursions to the reef or rainforest.

Cairns and beyond

Cairns and nearby Holloways Beach boasts a well established



7 Queensland

gay network, including a couple of bars, a couple of gay-owned cafes, and loads of friendly locals. Bed and breakfast aficionados should consider the luxurious gay B&B, **boyz on the beach**, at Kewarra Beach. In Cairns, the long-running gay hotel **18-24 James** boasts everything a boy could want, while mainstream operators such as the **Radisson Plaza Cairns** are keen to make all guests feel welcome.

There's one small drawback with Cairns. It doesn't have a beach as such ... more an expanse of mudflats. So when booking accommodation, be

sure to book something with a pool.

The far north town of Port Douglas is well worth visiting. It's a low key kinda place, with a few good restaurants, a good selection of self-contained accommodation including **The Boathouse**, a fab gay resort called **Pink Flamingo**, and a fashionable but unpretentious following. It's also handy to Cape Tribulation and the Daintree Rainforest.

Swim with care

Like anywhere in the tropical north, check first with a lifeguard or knowledgeable local before you enter the ocean.

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Sunshine Coast



The Sunshine Coast, especially Noosa, is one of Australia's favourite "gay recovery" destinations, favoured by those recovering from the excesses of Sydney and Melbourne's summer party season.

With its fantastically consistent, sun-drenched, sub-tropical climate and lush vegetation, Noosa offers a laidback ambience and a relaxed welcome.

Where to stay

There are plenty of resort options to choose from along Noosa's main strip, Hasting Street, as well as self contained rental accommodation from the likes of **Richardson & Wrench**. Another good bet for accommodation is nearby Peregian Beach, home to a number of gay-owned resorts and B&Bs including **Horizons at Peregian**. Not far from Peregian Beach are the self-contained cottages offered by **Lake Weyba**.

Ride the waves

For gay men, the surf beach at Alexandria Bay – reached by a beautiful 45-minute nature walk

through the Noosa National Park – is probably Noosa's leading attraction. Although public nudity is still illegal in Queensland, an all-over tan seems to be the norm rather than the exception at this secluded spot. But BYO water and supplies; there are no shops at the end of the hike.

For those keen to explore the surrounding countryside, bicycles, cars and mini-mokes can be hired from local operators on Noosa Drive (near Hastings Street).

Visit the Hinterland

Randomly punctuated by enormous termite-like mountains, the surrounding sugar cane country is lush and beautiful, and, if you're getting low on spell-boxes and polychromatic candles, the Saturday craft markets at the

township of Eumundi are only 20 kilometres away.

Boats can also be chartered for river and reef fishing and mud-crab catching. The information booth on Hastings Street has all the brochures and details you will need.

Dine Out

Food-wise, Noosa is as well served as any inner-urban centre. While Noosa Junction specialises in the cheap-and-cheerful take-out end of the market – everything from Hungry Jack's to good quality Asian noodle bars – Hastings Street is geared more towards a quality sit-down experience and has dozens of

cafés and restaurants to choose from.

Day after day, however, I found myself gravitating back to Season, a relaxed but professionally accomplished restaurant with its back to Hastings Street and a terrace facing the bay.

I would happily eat their grilled scallops with broad beans, truffle oil and a Jerusalem artichoke puree every summer's day for the rest of my life.

A few miles away, the tiny township of Sunshine Beach has a row of casual, sun-drenched and noticeably gay-friendly eateries.

– Max McLean



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Fraser Island is not the place to go if you're after a gay Club Med. The nightlife is minimal and there is no gay beach officially or otherwise. But if you want a relaxing holiday with an ecological bent, this is the place for you.

Situated off the coast of southern Queensland, Fraser Island is the world's largest sand island and something of an ecological miracle, covered in World Heritage-listed bush and rainforest. The island is also home to **Kingfisher Bay Resort**, reached by a 40-minute ferry trip from Hervey Bay, which is an easy two and a half hour drive north of Noosa.

Chinese lanterns

The resort villas are extremely comfortable and private. Illuminated at night, they look like Chinese lanterns scattered through the otherwise dark bush. Ours had two storeys, two bedrooms, a well appointed kitchen and laundry, and a sizeable bathroom and lounge. Best of all is the spa on the



balcony and the constant birdsong.

Get on the bus

I'm not normally a fan of coach tours but I strongly recommend taking the day-long guided tour of the island, on a four-wheel drive coach, which costs around \$100. This tour will give you a good sense of what the island has to offer, so you can explore at your leisure later in your own rented four-wheel drive. Our driver/guide was an unexpectedly good raconteur: laconic and erudite in equal measure, he held forth on everything from the metaphysics of ecosystems to recipes for bunya seed pancakes. If this man gets his own TV nature program – or even a chat show – I won't be surprised.

Seventy-Five Mile Beach

After a bone-shaking lurch through dense and hilly bush we cut a swathe down the Seventy-Five Mile Beach, a spectacular, straight stretch of surf beach which is also, incidentally, the island's main highway. Here, we stop at the wreck of the Maheno, an old tanker, and swim in the clear waters of nearby Eli Creek. The beach is also a landing field for light planes which offer short flights over the island for around \$50.

Marine cruising

It is only from above that I get a sense of just how large the island is. Large numbers of sharks are apparently also visible in the surf at certain times of the year, but we didn't see any. During August to October the resort also offers marine cruises to search for dolphin, dugong, turtles and humpback whales.

Rainforest walk

Later in the day we are dropped off for a 45-minute walk through rainforest in the island's

interior and afterwards stop for a swim at Lake McKenzie, a magnificent, large inland lake in the middle of the bush. With its crystal clear water, dazzling white sand and pristine bush this spot was, for me, the high point of the tour.

– Max McLean

2004 Queensland Diary Dates



January 25, Brisbane
Pride Sunset Party
www.pridebrisbane.org.au

March, Brisbane
Brisbane Queer Film Fest
www.brisbanepowerhouse.org

May, Port Douglas
Port Douglas Village Carnival
www.pddt.com.au

June 12, Brisbane
Brisbane Pride Rally, March and Fair Day
www.pridebrisbane.org.au

November, Brisbane
Brisbane Sleaze Ball
www.sleazeball.com.au

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ALL SEASONS

Coralia

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Snap judgments about a city are easy: talk to a couple of cabbies (taxi drivers have an uncanny knack of reflecting a city's ethos) and flick through the local queer media. Within minutes you can tell whether the town has something going for it and whether you'll enjoy the ride.

Brisbane passes the test on both counts. Its taxi drivers are invariably up for a chat, and the city boasts a couple of gay and lesbian newspapers chock full of promise. A quick scan of **Queensland Pride** newspaper reveals a bit of politics, a bit of sport, news about the Brisbane Lesbian and Gay Pride Choir's fifth birthday celebration, advance warning of a gathering of bears at the **Wickham Hotel**, and an invitation to join an '80s revival "student formal" organised by the QUT Student Guild's queer department.

Local legends

But wait, there's more. Queensland Positive People and Brisbane Pride are co-hosting a cabaret at the Trinity Church Hall, local legend Tamara Tonite features in a profile celebrating

her seven years on public TV station Briz-31, and long-time "world famous" showgirl Trixie Laumonte is struttin' her stuff at the **Cockatoo Club** in Fortitude Valley. Yep, this joint is jumping. Brisbane has something for everyone. Along with its queer culture, the city boasts a burgeoning food and wine scene which delivers great restaurants and cafes without the big city attitude.

Award winner

To cap it off, the **Gay Australia Guide** recently awarded Brisbane's Wet Spa and Sauna a gong for "best gentlemen's club".

According to this esteemed journal (published by the very same crew who bring you this Queensland guide), Wet is drenched in class and sex.

March with Pride

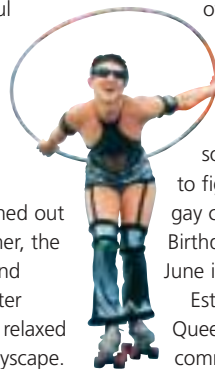
The Brisbane Lesbian and Gay Pride Festival offers an array of entertainment, arts, dance parties and community get-togethers in a colourful setting each June. Brisbane winters are mercifully mild. While the direct sun, heat and humidity can make Brisbane and its inhabitants seem washed out at the height of summer, the cooler temperatures and angled light of its winter creates a much richer, relaxed and more colourful cityscape.

The Brisbane Lesbian and Gay Pride Festival began in 1990, five months prior to the decriminalisation of

homosexuality in November of that year. The first festival proved controversial for a state waking from an unprecedented period of conservative rule.

The cultural climate had been homophobic enough to ensure many moved south. But others stayed to fight and to create a local gay culture: the Queen's Birthday Arts Ball held each June is a glittering example.

Established in 1960, the Queen's Ball (as it is more commonly known) is claimed as the longest continuously-run gay event in the world. Part dance party, part costume ball, part community



Brisbane Pride Festival 2004



Rally, March & Fair Day Saturday 12 June.



Festival 1-30 June. See Events on-line at www.pridebrisbane.org.au
A CELEBRATION OF GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER CULTURE.

awards ceremony, the Queen's Ball holds a special place in the hearts of many locals and attracts visitors from interstate and overseas.

Visitors can expect a busy calendar of events during the Pride season, including art exhibitions, community forums, gay-themed theatrical productions, and the ever-popular Pride dance party. The undisputed centrepiece of the festival is the rally, march and fair day. It makes no claim to compete with the glitz of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, but this cavalcade of queers has its own charms.

The march ends at Musgrave Park, where an afternoon of fair day fun attracts a large number



and wide variety of queer Queenslanders. Variety and diversity also guide the Fair Day entertainment, which includes local LGBT performers singing everything from blues and folk to alternative rock. It's a great reminder that there's more to gay than disco.

— *Iain Clacher,*
Editor, Queensland Pride

The perfect travel partner



With a fantastic range of gay and lesbian accommodation options, and a year-round schedule of parties, festivals and social events, there's a lot you'll need to know to make the most of your visit to Queensland.

As soon as you arrive, pick up a copy of Queensland Pride for all the freshest and latest info you'll need to make your Queensland holiday the best you've ever experienced.

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Ever Surprising





If you think the Gold Coast looks strange at ground level, you should see it from the air. It all looks postcard-perfect. Skyscraper hotels wash up against an endless stretch of sand and sea.

Canals branch out in every direction, as if water frontage is some kind of groovy new fad that everyone wants to follow. Looking closer, however, you can see that even this hasn't satisfied the watery desires of the locals: most of them have installed their own swimming pools.

Parties and picnics

Even with the natural charms of the beach at arm's reach, it all happens poolside on the Gold Coast. Parties, picnics, barbecues, cruising: the pool backdrops them all. The pool may be a recurrent theme of Gold Coast life, but much else is in a state of flux. Many Australian lesbians and gay men probably remember Surfers Paradise as a glitzy, and faintly garish, family holiday destination, but the region's image is wildly, and unexpectedly, diverse.

Fun for all

From its daggy old reputation as a family destination, to the wild excesses of Schoolies Week, the sumptuous exclusivity of Palazzo Versace and the region's new pitch for the gay and lesbian travel dollar, the Gold Coast is clearly not what it was.

While the region is not likely to mount an overnight challenge to Noosa or Cairns for the title of most gay- and lesbian-friendly holiday hotspot, the Gold Coast does turn on its own unique brand of fun.

Faster, higher

Four big theme parks, located slightly inland, scream good times in the most old-fashioned, fairy-floss and-vomit sense of that phrase. A day spent at one of these establishments – Sea World, Dreamworld, Warner Brothers Movieworld and

Wet'n'Wild Waterworld – is an all-too-rare opportunity for you to reconnect with your inner child and scare seven flavours of shit out of it. That sounds crass, but the sheer gut-mangling fear of a ride like Dreamworld's Tower of Terror has to be experienced to be truly believed. Sitting inside a bullet-shaped capsule, you go from zero to 160 kilometres an hour in the space of a few seconds, before hurtling straight up a tower some 38 storeys high. And when you get to the top, you're there hardly long enough to open your eyes before you're going down again – backwards, and just as

quick. Scream if you want to go faster, I dare you.

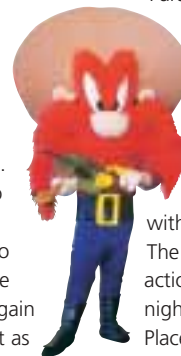
Gay life

One of the newer entrants in the already crowded accommodation market is Palazzo Versace, while the rainbow flags proudly fly at the **Concorde Hotel**, right in the pumping heart of Surfer's Paradise. It offers full hotel

facilities, great seafood dining and views that you can never quite tire of.

Maldives Resort is just a step away from Main Beach, and offers self-contained units with balconies and views.

The epicentre of homo-disco action in the Gold Coast is MP's nightclub (short for Meeting Place). Tourist mixes with local in



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galta

this fun and friendly venue. The regular drag shows are on a par with what you'd expect in a capital city, and the dancefloor features a few raised areas for you to indulge your podium-dancing fantasies.

Action stations

On the Gold Coast you can either do nothing, or everything. Whole days can be chewed up by simply sunning yourself on the beach or pool. But if you'd like a little more pace, try a visit to the wineries in the Canungra region. Tambourine Mountain is another lovely spot, perfect for an afternoon tea and an aimless stroll through the craft galleries and gift shops. The air's nice, too.

But if you are looking for action on your recovery plan, the region can certainly dish it up. Bungee jumping, casinos, suburb-sized shopping malls, virtual reality experiences, helicopter tours, nature walks, parasailing, hang-gliding, whale watching, markets, restaurants, bars ... it's all there. You're not likely to get swamped by other lesbians and gay men while holidaying on the Gold Coast – sometimes that's a charm in itself – but you will get a friendly welcome. This is a region that is truly devoted to perfecting the tourist experience. Try it on for size.

– David Mills



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Accommodation

18-24 James, Cairns

Long-standing gay hotel with pool, gym and sauna.
www.18-24james.com.au

Accor, Queensland

Gay friendly hotel chain with properties throughout Queensland.
www.accor.com.au

Bush House, Gold Coast

Exclusive gay B&B, inland from Burleigh Heads.
www.bushhouse.net

Boyz on the Beach, Cairns

Handsome gay-owned B&B for gay men.
www.boyzonthebeach.com.au

Concorde Hotel, Gold Coast

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www.concorde.net

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www.horizons-peregian.com/gay

Kingfisher Bay Resort, Fraser Island

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www.gay.kingfisherbay.com

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www.lakeweyba cottages.com

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Liberty Resort, Cairns

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www.libertyresort.com.au

Maldives Resort, Gold Coast

Private holiday units with balcony, a step away from Main Beach.
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Novotel, Palm Cove

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Qbeds

The online accommodation directory for gay and lesbian Australia. Properties throughout Queensland, as well as Sydney and rest of Australia. Look before you book. www.qbeds.com

Radisson Plaza Hotel, Cairns

On the waterfront, five star relaxation, gay friendly environment. www.radisson.com/cairns.au

Reflections of Port Douglas
Luxury accommodation, walk to beach and shops. www.reflectionsofport.com.au

Richardson & Wrench, Noosa
Holiday rental accommodation, choice of locations. www.rwnoosa.com.au

Rimini, Noosaville
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The Boathouse

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Turtle Cove, Cairns

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Bars and Social Clubs

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Bodyline Spa & Sauna, Brisbane
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Cockatoo Club, Brisbane
Sundays at the Beat Megaclub
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Crush, Sunshine Coast
Monthly at the Sands Tavern in Maroochydore
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Fraser Coast Diversity, Maryborough
Monthly at the Criterion Hotel
Ph: 0422 397 707

GPO Hotel, Brisbane
740 Ann St
Ph 07 32521322

The Meeting Place, Surfers Paradise
26 Orchid Avenue
Ph: 0755262337

Sportsman Hotel, Brisbane
130 Leichhardt St, open daily
Ph: 07 3831 2892

Hotel Wickham, Brisbane
308 Wickham St, open daily
Ph: 07 38521303

Community

Brisbane Pride
Community gay and lesbian festival and street parade. www.brisbanepride.org.au

Dykes On Mykes
News, music and chat. Wednesdays on 4ZZZ fm 102.1 www.queerradio.org

Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association
Lesbianline: 07 3891 7388
Gayline: 07 3891 7377 www.glwa.org.au

Police Gay/Lesbian Liaison Officers
0419 768 732 www.police.qld.gov.au/pr/program/lgbt/

Queensland AIDS Council
HIV information and support. www.quac.org.au

Stonewall Medical Centre
Gay and lesbian health service. Ph: 07 3857 1222

Team Brisbane
Lesbian and gay sports. Ph: 07 3207 1746

Media

Gay Australia Guide
Australia's gay and lesbian travel magazine. Published quarterly, distributed nationally. www.gayaustralia.com.au

Pink Guide to Cairns
Regional gay and lesbian guide to Cairns and Tropical North Queensland. www.pinkguide.info

Pink Maps
Gay and lesbian maps of Brisbane and other Australian cities. www.pinkmaps.com

Qnews
Brisbane-based gay and lesbian newspaper. www.qnews.com.au

Queensland Pride
Long standing gay and lesbian newspaper for Queensland and northern New South Wales. Ph: 07 3846 2633

Tourism

Gay and Lesbian Tourism Australia (GALTA)
Community body representing gay and lesbian tourism operators. www.galta.com.au

International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA)
Gay and lesbian travel body, representing Australian and international operators. www.iglta.org

Tourism Queensland
Government tourism body offers information on all aspects of Queensland travel. www.queenslandholidays.com.au

www.qbeds.com

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