

Angles

Angles - January, 2010

Southern Queensland

Cellar Door Pass for Granite Belt

The Granite Belt, Queensland's leading wine region located three hours' drive from Brisbane, has uncorked a new Cellar Door Pass for visitors seeking a VIP experience.

The Cellar Door Pass Granite Belt package uses smartcard technology to provide quick, cashless access to six of the Granite Belt's premier wineries, including Ballandean Estate, Symphony Hill Wines and Summit Estate Wines. The pass provides cardholders with six cellar door vouchers each providing one free bottle of wine plus a special cellar door experience including premium wine tastings and winery tours for two adults. The Granite Belt region is home to more than 50 wineries and cellar doors, and is renowned for its fresh, local produce including berries, apples and stone fruit. A wide range of accommodation is available, from stylish retreats to B&Bs and country cottages. Visit www.cellardoorpass.com.au and www.granitebeltwinecountry.com.au

Queensland Cities

Laruche Bar & Supperclub

Brisbane's newest after-five venue is the Laruche Bar & Supperclub, a stunning Art Nouveau-inspired venue.

Located at 680 Ann Street in inner-city Fortitude Valley, Laruche is a sensory delight that combines art, fine design and a European-style tapas menu. Spectacular glass fittings feature throughout the venue, inspired by the Art Nouveau period while custom-made wallpaper is another feature. The lounge bar is open from 5pm for late night dining from Wednesdays to Sundays and also caters for functions for up to 100 people. Facilities include a function area, a group dining table known as "the boardroom" plus an intimate upstairs bar, while entertainment is courtesy of some of Brisbane's best soul/lounge/funk DJs. Bookings are taken for a minimum of eight, although smaller groups are welcome www.laruche.com.au

Outback

Outback events in 2010

Temperatures start to cool in Queensland's Outback by April, which is when the region's colorful calendar of festivals kicks off.

One of the most popular is Julia Creek's Dirt & Dust Festival which returns for its 15th year from April 16 to 18, with highlights including a cow poo throwing and Australia's best butt competitions, a rodeo and Outback bog snorkelling race. Camels will be racing at the famous Boulia Camel Races on the third weekend of July, while Australia's biggest rodeo gets underway in Mount Isa from August 6

to 8. Thousands of visitors flock to the tiny Outback town of Birdsville for the annual Birdsville Races in early September, while other events feature quirky races involving goats, dunnies (toilets) and yabbies (small freshwater shellfish). www.adventureoutback.com.au

Nature and Wildlife

Cairns Wildlife Reserve

A little piece of Africa where you can dine with the kings of the jungle can be found in Tropical North Queensland.

The Cairns Wildlife Safari Reserve is a vast expanse which mirrors the African Savannah and is home to wildlife including lions, cheetahs, rhinos, tigers, pygmy hippos, spider monkeys and even a Syrian brown bear. The reserve offers two dining options – “breakfast and beasts” and “dine on the edge” where you can choose from eating breakfast or dinner among the largest pride of lions in Australasia. The “breakfast and beasts” package includes buffet breakfast and zoo entry while “dine on the edge” includes a gourmet dinner and first drink. Hotel pick-up and drop off ex-Cairns is available at an extra cost. The reserve is located 35 minutes’ drive west of Cairns and 9km from Kuranda. www.cairnswildlifesafarireserve.com.au/Breakfast_%26_Beasts.html

Journeys

City to Straddie tour

An exciting new package tour of Brisbane’s coastal Redlands region combines the diverse offerings of North Stradbroke Island with a visit to Australia’s first environmental centre for indigenous plants.

The City to Straddie Tour includes a half-day Straddie Kingfisher Tour including Brown Lake, pippy digging on Main Beach, the Gorge Walk, beach fishing and a barbecue lunch on Flinders Beach. The tour then returns to the mainland for a Bush Tucker Tour through the themed native botanical gardens at Redlands IndigiScapes Centre and afternoon tea in the open air Tea Gardens Café. The tour runs from 7.15am to 5.30pm and includes pick-up and drop-off from hotels in the Brisbane CBD, morning and afternoon tea, a barbecue lunch and ferry transfers.

www.straddiekingfishertours.com.au

Islands of the Great Barrier Reef

Long Island, Whitsundays

One of the most beautiful islands in the Whitsundays, Long Island offers three resorts that cater to all tastes and budgets.

They all share the same idyllic location - the island is a national park with 20km of walking tracks leading to beautiful secluded beaches and dense bush areas. Relax under the palm trees on the white coral sand beach or spend the day waterskiing, parasailing, island hopping, cruising, playing tennis or bush walking. For the ultimate eco escape, Paradise Bay Eco Escape is located at the southern end of the island and accessible by helicopter only. It caters for a maximum of 16 guests with a private yacht available exclusively for guests. www.paradisebay.com.au Peppers Palm Bay is an intimate and secluded resort ideal for a romantic escape or honeymoon. Accommodation is available in 24 secluded bures, cabins and bungalows scattered along the beachfront.

<http://www.peppers.com.au/palm-bay/> A lower priced alternative is available at Long Island

Resort, a three-and-a-half star resort with 160 rooms. Its facilities include restaurants, swimming pools, tennis courts, kids club (four-14 years), activities, bars and nightly entertainment.

www.longislandresort.com.au

Food, Wine & Lifestyle

Bunyip Bike Tours

Bunyip Bike Tours are bringing a touch of Europe to the Gold Coast with the first bike tour of its kind around Tamborine Mountain.

Imagine bike riding through vineyards, sampling local wines and enjoying morning tea under a shady tree. Owner Cody Francis guides the bike tours around a 10km circuit of the mountain, with a visit to a local vineyard, picturesque waterfall and to the underground Glow Worm caves.

Participants learn about the region's wine making, and enjoy a tasting direct from the cellar door during their leisurely exploration of some of the Gold Coast's finest natural wonders. The tour includes morning tea. www.bunyipbiketours.com.au

Coastal Lifestyle

Spyder bike tours

Spyder Rider Australia is causing Gold Coast visitors to look twice as its stylish, and unusual, three-wheeled motorbikes zoom past.

The Gold Coast is the only place in the world people can ride a Can Am Spyder Roadster Motorbike. The unusual looking set of wheels offers riders and passengers the speed and thrills of a motorbike with the safety and stability of a car including traction control, stability control and power steering. The half-day 'You-Ryde' tag along and 'We-Ryde' pillion passenger tours visit places including Springbrook, Mount Tamborine and Surfers Paradise. A valid motorcycle licence and a minimum age of 23 years is required for the You-Ride tour and both include gear hire (helmet, jacket and gloves), morning or afternoon tea, fuel, insurance and guide/s. Thrill Rydes are also available. The Spyder can accelerate faster than a Porsche 911. The Spyderys are also available for private hire for up to five days. www.spyderryder.com.au

Aboriginal Experience

Riverlife Mirrabooka

Brisbane-based Riverlife Mirrabooka has won the Queensland Tourism Award for best indigenous operator for the second consecutive year.

Riverlife Mirrabooka offers guests the opportunity to meet the local Brisbane Aboriginal tribe and share in rich Aboriginal culture presented by the Yuggera Aboriginal dancers in the natural bushland of inner-city Kangaroo Point. They offer the opportunity to experience contemporary Aboriginal culture by witnessing and participating in traditional song and dance passed down over many generations, learning primitive fire starting techniques, playing Aboriginal musical instruments (such as didgeridoos) and listening to educational talks that offer an insight into Aboriginal life and history of Australia's ancient land. Other traditional activities such as boomerang throwing, message stick painting, face painting, clap stick painting and traditional food tasting may be included in the Aboriginal experience. Riverlife Mirrabooka offers a choice between indigenous experiences on Thursdays from noon to 1pm, or Saturday evenings from 7pm to 8.30pm, including a barbecue and

drinks. They are located in the Naval Stores, Lower River Terrace, Kangaroo Point.
www.riverlife.com.au/aboriginal-experiences/