



# A Picture Paradise Luxury Escape

Imogen Rose takes you on a luxurious journey north, to the Gold Coast, where she shows you how to find warmth, style and comfort as the months begin to cool.

**T**he Gold Coast remains one of Australia's premier luxury destinations. And when the climate begins to cool and one is reminded that Australia still experiences cold weather, there is something inviting, invigorating, even intoxicating, about the ocean. It's the ideal time to snuggle-up indoors with a beautiful water view and to listen to the rumble of the sea from the leisure of your hotel room. Thus, why not allow the siren's enchanting, ancient call, the refreshing, uplifting smell of the salty air from lands afar, transporting the promise of new and endless possibilities to rejuvenate the senses and diminish the stress and strains of the everyday.

This is the ideal time for a luxury winter escape! In fact, autumn and winter provide some of the best opportunities to enjoy the Coast and a perfect way to escape the winter blues. These are the seasons during which the crowds are down and the atmosphere changes from hot and hectic, to cool and calm, especially, when one is there to indulge.

When embarking upon any luxury holiday the right choice of accommodation is

critical. Yet not all luxury hotels share the same definition, or interpretation, of luxury. Similarly, not all stars are equal.

However, the Sofitel Broadbeach is a luxury hotel where brand, image and actuality are in happy alignment. As a global brand, the Sofitel is centrally and internationally controlled from Paris. Dotted around the world, their hotels embrace the relevant locale whilst retaining a distinctly French flair. It's no surprise then that the standard of à la carte cuisine and French inspired patisseries is exceptional. As an individual hotel, it demonstrates a similar centralisation of control wherein management is actively committed to providing guests with the ultimate luxury experience. It's a smoothly and efficiently run enterprise where guests will find staff in all areas welcoming and responsive to their needs and requests.

The Sofitel Broadbeach occupies an ideal location. It's but a short stroll to the beach and offers convenient access to a broad range of cafes, restaurants, health spa and leisure activities. There is also a complimentary shuttle bus service to nearby Pacific Fair. In 2016, the shopping powerhouse completed a \$670 million

redevelopment and with more designer labels than anywhere else in the state, it has acquired a reputation as a must for anyone seeking luxury brands and haute couture, including Givenchy, Tiffany and Co., Hermes, Gucci, Prada, Rolex, Max Mara and Louis Vuitton.

Following a long day's shopping, one can further indulge in lunch or dinner at Bar 81 where the menu is fresh, inventive and succulent. The bread, butter and pastries are certainly reminiscent of the Sofitel's Gallic homage. The barramundi is tender, and expertly cooked with a bouillabaisse sauce that creates a delightful, yet balanced piquancy. The truffle butter is delicious enough to be savoured on its own while the crème brûlée is laden with a heavenly heaviness under the sumptuous shield of a burnt-caramel, golden brocade. Head Pastry Chef, Melanie Day, conveys a genuine enthusiasm for creating original, yet traditional French inspired Pastries and deserts, demonstrating expertise and passion.

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Sofitel Broadbeach



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- whilst contemplating something a little more active for the following day. The Luxury Ocean View Room is a room dedicated to the sea with a compact design that maximises location and allows the natural beauty to dominate one's outlook. One can almost hear the mellifluous tones of Charles Trenet's *La mer*.

Among the greatest attractions of the Gold Coast is the communion of sea and land, the extraordinary harmony that exists between the raw beauty of the coastline and the rich tranquillity of nearby rainforest areas. This is particularly obvious at Burleigh Heads National Park, a haven nestled within the heart of the city.

Visitors can immerse themselves within eucalypt forest, pandanus groves, grasslands, rainforest and mangrove forest terrain. It's home to an extraordinary variety of striking native flora and fauna. Indeed, standing in the forest, buoyed by the smell of eucalypt, under the delicate, floating butterflies and spectacular, soaring birds, one may gaze across a blue abyss thankful for the apparently seamless yoking of two distinct natural worlds within the reality of modernity. Moreover,

the stunning ocean views allow the opportunity to witness whales in migration as they journey north.

The whale watching season at the Gold Coast begins as early as May - with frequency of sightings increasing in June. It continues through to November. There is a majesty to these mammals that can only really be understood or felt, by bearing witness to them in their natural habitat. It's worth noting that whales and dolphins have even been spotted from the Hotel. Thus, be prepared for the possibility of such a thrilling experience. Of course, the closer you are, the more obvious the gracious power, the awe-inspiring presence and the glory of these masters of the sea. For a more exclusive experience, there are many small or private whale watching tours available.

The Gold Coast has enjoyed, and endured, a range of images over the decades but it continues to shine for its white, golden and tanned sandy beaches that stretch some 52 km. It's also home to some of the most popular and revered surfing breaks in the world. Certainly, one finds a concatenation of stunning vantage points from which to admire the magnificence of the coastline.

There is also a wonderful sailing culture, the atmosphere of which may be enjoyed at the Southport Yacht Club. Relax in the club's Waterfront Restaurant over drinks or coffee with friends amidst the tranquillity of its peaceful environment and the gentle bobbing of the sailboats. One may even decide to spend a day learning to sail.

It's easy to immerse oneself at the Gold Coast in the morphing depths of blue or the marbled shades of navy, azure, topaz and aqua.

As one beholds the beautiful beyond from one's balcony, with no end in sight to the vast Pacific Ocean, or any manner of determining the beginning of the horizon, one will appreciate the privileged pampering and picturesque paradise of a Gold Coast luxury escape!

## ABOUT /

**Imogen A. Rose**

Imogen A. Rose is a writer and producer based in Brisbane. She works across a broad spectrum of genres and is a Director of Rose Media.

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