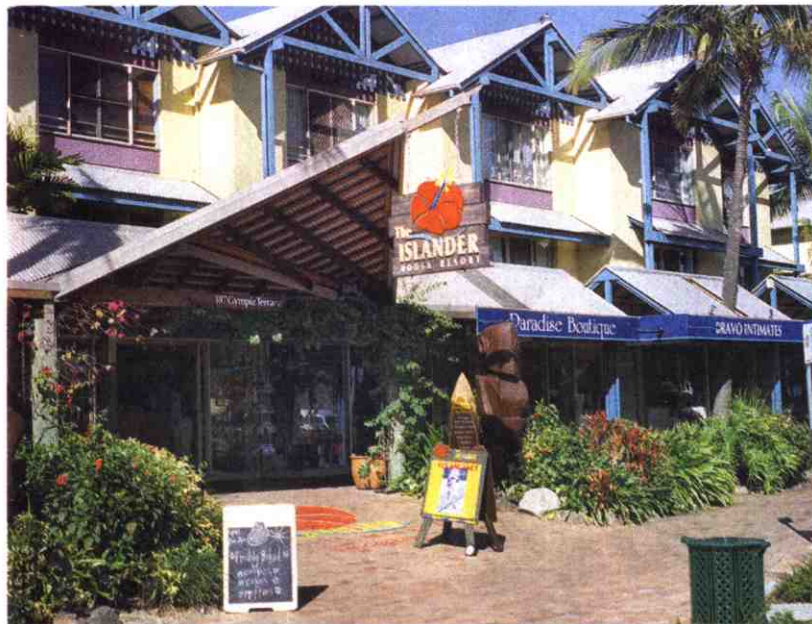


Finding a family deal at Noosa



Escape: Comfortable villas at the Islander Resort, Noosaville come at bargain rates

Pictures: Giulio Saggin

By LISA GILBY

Noosa is one of Queensland's more exclusive tourist destinations, known for its luxury resorts frequented by international celebrities.

But a holiday in the area does not have to be just for the rich and famous. There's plenty of mid-range accommodation, including the Islander Resort on Gympie Terrace at Noosaville.

Located on the Noosa River, the Islander Resort is an affordable family place with a selection of two and three-bedroom villas starting at \$135 a night.

Seven nights in a two-bedroom villa, which sleeps up to four, costs \$615 off-peak. That goes up to \$960 in the holiday season starting December 24.

A three-bedroom villa for up to six people costs \$155 a night and \$755 a week off-peak, and \$235 a night and \$1195 a week in the holiday season.

The resort is at least 10 years old, but the villa we stayed in was in good condition and looked out over the lagoon pool.

All villas in the resort are fully self-contained, with linen provided and a fully-equipped kitchen and laundry.

While villas have ceiling fans, not all have air-conditioning, so

if the summer heat is a problem, make sure you request one that is air-conditioned when booking.

The resort has extensive facilities including three swimming pools — one a large lagoon pool with a clubhouse and barbecues — and three heated spas, two tennis courts, gym and games room to keep the kids fully occupied.

No room service is available, but there are seven restaurants within the resort, most giving a five per cent discount to resort guests, and dozens more within walking distance.

I had lunch at Noosa Juices, located within the resort, which served reasonably priced healthy food including salads, sandwiches, coffee, cake and freshly squeezed juices.

Many licensed restaurants are within walking distance, including Fusions on Gympie Terrace, which is famous for its wood-fired pizzas and has an extensive menu and wine list.

We had starters, mains, dessert and a glass of wine for less than \$40 a head and everything was delicious.

But if you have had a long day at the beach and just want a night in, a supermarket, video store and bottle shop are also



Taking the plunge: Poolside pleasure and shady huts at the Islander Resort

just a short walk away for all your supplies.

Noosaville is only a five-minute drive from Hastings St and Noosa's Main Beach but the area has its own attractions if you don't want to spend half an hour looking for a park in Noosa Heads.

The Noosa River is a great swimming spot for kids and has plenty of picnic tables and barbecues along the shore.

If a visit to Hastings St is a must, you can catch a bus from right outside the resort to near-by Noosa Heads.

For something a little more

action-packed there is a wide variety of adventure activities on offer in Noosa.

The Oceanrider speed boat departs almost daily from the Noosa River, taking groups of daredevils through the mouth of the river in to Laguna Bay and around the Noosa National

Park, jumping waves along the way. On the Noosa North Shore, The Camel Company offers leisurely camel treks along the beach.

On Noosa's Main Beach surf schools run learner classes for kids during the school holidays and the Aussie Sea Kayaking

Company takes small groups on whole or half-day trips around the Noosa National Park.

A walk in the national park will take you through some great scenery at Tea Tree Bay and Hells Gates. Dolphins and whales can sometimes be spotted from the headlands.

Factfile

Getting there: Noosaville is about 90 minutes north of Brisbane. Fly Qantas to Maroochydore or Virgin Blue from October 17.

Information: Tourism Noosa on 1800 448833, or visit the tourist information kiosk on the roundabout at Hastings St for information on adventure activities and bookings.

Where to stay: The Islander Resort at Noosaville is rated 3.5 stars and a great alternative to the more upmarket accommodation on Hastings St. While the resort is not new, the facilities are great for families, the villas are clean and well-appointed, the staff are friendly and it is in an excellent location.

Details: (07) 5449 7022 or www.islandernoosa.com.au