

Post



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Bye-Bye, Brisbane - April 22, 2025

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SUMMARY

We left Brisbane headed by plane to Hamilton Island, still in the state of Queensland but almost 600 miles away. We stayed in a different hotel than T & D so we parted company upon arrival. We had a beautiful view from room, 9 floors up with a big balcony overlooking Catseye Beach. After lunch we met back up for a short stroll to the marina, the island's hub of activity. It being beer o'clock for the guys we stopped at the Marina Tavern for beverages. Back on our balcony (and due to our late dinner reservation) we indulged in wine and cheese and admired the view. - Karen

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DETAIL

Another day and another change of venue. This time we're saying Bye to Brisbane and Hello to Hamilton Island. It's not a very big island but it's big enough to land a 737. Flying in, we see islands and palm trees and boats, but no runway, until the last possible second.

The airport looks like any in the Caribbean. It's just a 30 second taxi from where the plane lands to the very small terminal. We get off the plane and walk down stairs. Everyone walks along the edge of the tarmac to the small, low terminal. Everybody's here for the same reason, the sunshine, the water, the relaxation. The economy must be 100% tourism.

Around the outside of the baggage claim area are booths and desks for the various hotels and resorts on the island. We find ours and identify ourselves. We'll be in bus four with driver Adrian. The bus holds maybe 10 or 12 people and it's hauling a small u-haul type trailer in the back for our bags.

At our hotel, everybody does the same thing, hurry to get in line. Thankfully, our room is ready, so we just take the elevator up to the eighth floor (nine, counting the American way). It's a little bit funny, each elevator has it's own air conditioner trying desperately to keep the elevator somewhat cool. It's a glass elevator so you're looking out at the beautiful beach and water. It also means the sun has no problem coming in and making the elevator into a greenhouse.

Our room is large with two queen size beds, two closets, two sinks. We quickly divide up space. The view is amazing. Our hotel is a ways back from beach but we have a great view of it and the water and islands beyond. Between our hotel and the beach is the fancy single-story resort where Tricia and Don are staying.

We're starving so the two of us split two salads and popcorn chicken for lunch. It's surprisingly good and tasty. I'm continually amazed by the produce (in the restaurants). Before we sit down we're warned about the cockatoos who have figured out that the easiest way to get food is stealing it off tables. It's a big problem and there are quite a few signs imploring you not to feed the birds.

As we walk over to Tricia and Don's place we see virtually no cars. We're told there are really none on the island. Everybody's driving an electric golf cart. Nice and quiet. The only problem? Pedestrians do NOT have right of way. Vehicles pretty much always have priority (and they know it).

Tricia and Don's room is very nice, of course. They walk out their sliding glass door to the beach and to the left of that to a very good looking pool. Most pools are for anyone's use (regardless of hotel) but due to the size of the pool where T & D are staying they have to limit only to guests.

We walk the quarter mile or so (up a steep hill and down the back side) to the other side of the island, where the marina is. This is most of the business district. Here you find the grocery store and lots of the restaurants and shops are. We stop for a beer, of course, and chat with the waitress. We inquire as to activities on Anzac Day. Turns out she's from New Zealand, not Australia. Not surprising. Yes, New Zealand also celebrates Anzac Day as does Australia. No, alcohol isn't served until after 1 PM. I'm sure that's big on the mind of bar workers, since they get to sleep in.

There are a number of nice restaurants on the island, and lots of more informal "quick bite" type places. The restaurants require reservations and we're told that they fill up quickly, especially right around Easter weekend. There are lots of families here.

The sun sets at 5:30 and it starts to get dark quickly. We pop into the IGA grocery (the only food store on the island) to check it out. It closes at seven and lots of people are there checking out what picked-over food they have left. We attribute this to it being Easter weekend. We buy cheese and crackers and head for home.

We relax for a bit in our separate hotels and eventually get together in our room for wine, cheese and crackers on our balcony. At dinner at Manta Ray, we're seated outside, looking out at the big, dark marina. All the boats are just bobbing in the water. Our waiter, David, looks like he's from the Middle East, but he's actually from Sydney (though we guess his family hasn't been here long).

It's a semi-fancy restaurant, mostly small plates. We order quite a few and agree: it's all very good and we finish everything.

I choose to walk back to the hotel, while Tricia, Don and Karen wait for the shuttle bus. It runs every 10 minutes, but who knows when it was here last. As I get back to the hotel, the bus is just now heading out in the direction of the rest of the group. Upon their return, I hear of their adventures. Two old, dear friends (of each other, not us) meet up after a long time apart. They spent the evening drinking and catching up. Apparently they did a lot of drinking and thus are quite drunk (and quite friendly). Lots of conversations as everybody waits for the bus.

Eventually Karen arrives home and we get ready for bed. Tomorrow's another day: we'll pick up a rental golf cart and explore the (not very big) island.

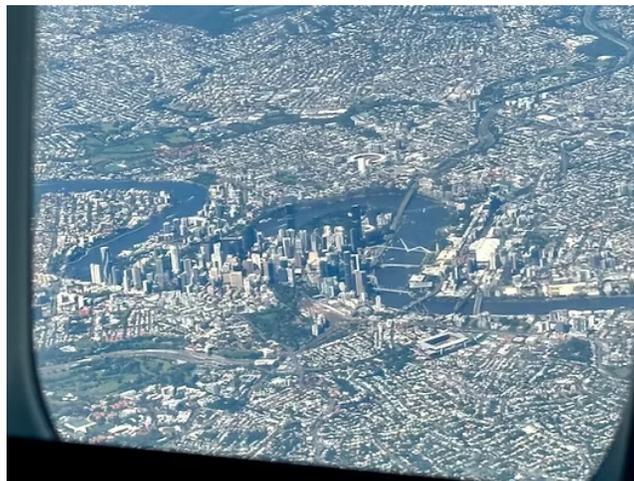
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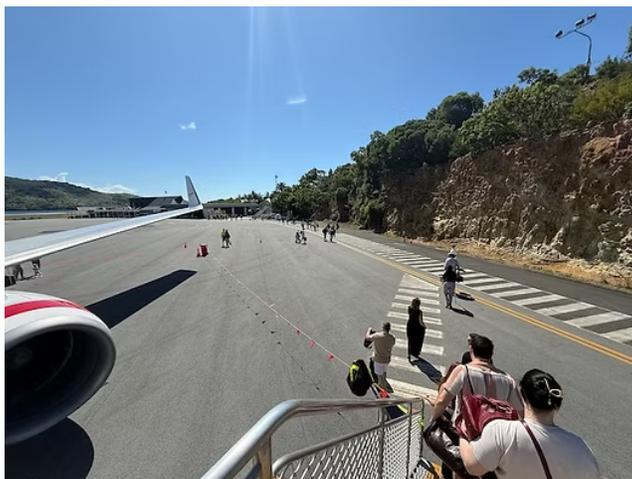
Waiting for our Uber, Karen and Tricia take one last look at the cool casino building/hotel down the street. It's pretty cool.



At the airport we can see that a train from downtown would have been possible. Great for quality of life.



The plane's route gives us a good view of the CBD where we were staying. You can see the bridges, the green areas, and the river, snaking through town.



Deplaning in Hamilton Island. We could see where they'd carved into the cliff to make room for the parking space for our plane. The low airport terminal is almost invisible in the distance, it's so small.



Our room, on the other hand, is pretty big. We can handle this for a few days.



And the view from our 8th floor balcony is pretty nice, too. That's Cat's Eye Beach where vacationers like to play.



Time for lunch at the hotel restaurant (quite good) and a quick check on the pool. Yes there are a few kids but the pool's so big we think we will be able to ignore them.



Walking the marina and business district with Tricia and Don. It's not very big. It's didn't take very long.



Showing Tricia and Don our view. Trying to get oriented.



Walking around we start seeing wallabies a lot. They're the local equivalent of the squirrel, I guess. They really appreciate the planting and maintaining of the grass.



Cockatoos, on the other hand, prefer a hand out, preferably with a fry or chip in it. They're wild but a real nuisance. We're really not supposed to feed any bird (or any wildlife).



The pool and grounds at Tricia and Don's hotel (between our hotel and the beach) are beautiful.

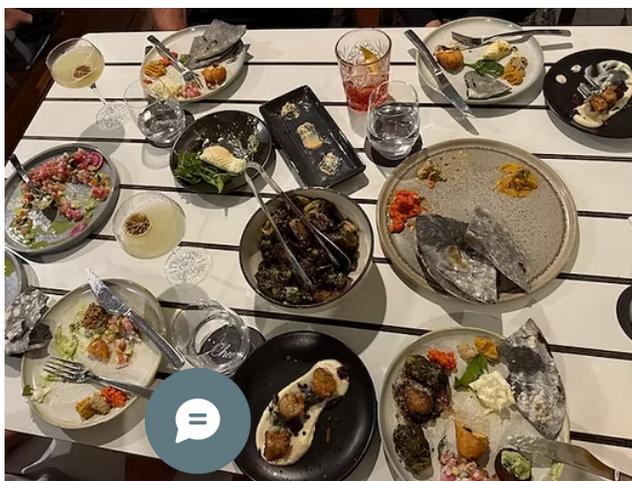


Time for wine and cheese on our balcony. After sun sets it gets dark quickly.

FARNSNIENTE



Even though it's dark the view's still interesting. We gazed up at the sky, too, looking for the Southern Cross.



Dinner (tapas) was great. We emptied every dish.

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