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APR 22

*Cover: Coral Trout
Dragon Lady Charters*





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Fishing Port Douglas News



with Heff

It certainly has been an interesting last month with plenty of tourists making the visit to our seaside village in the Far Nth. It was the much needed circuit breaker for a lot of businesses. Word on the street is that accommodations are heavily booked for the rest of the year. Just as a barometer reading the long standing and iconic Sheraton Mirage is at over 90% occupancy as it stands for the remainder of 2022. For anglers and tourists in general there are quite a few boxes you need to tick for your holiday, well before arriving. Desired accommodation is foremost, car rental if required, pre-bookings at your favourite restaurants is also a big one. Then you need to consider getting yourself into the system for the many, many activities on offer including your preference in fishing charters. Those that leave all the above to last minute are unfortunately left stranded and often disappointed.

The seasons have changed for sure as we saw cooler days, indifferent and challenging winds for boating, but the fishing turned it on both inshore and offshore as you'll read from the best charter boats in the region. Barra, coral trout, nannygai and emperor all come to mind in particular.

Recently I was invited to the Palmerville Station with associates to see the viability of establishing an exclusive charter guide aspect for the property. It has been recently re-opened to public access following an extensive police investigation to missing persons. Located only a couple of hours away from Port Douglas on the way to Cooktown it

was an interesting experience. With multiple land locked dams stocked with barra and red claw, access to limestone sections of the Palmer River itself and ancient Aboriginal paintings and burial grounds it has the potential to be a true Australian outback experience. With it's already established reputation as a gold fossicking mecca in place, it is a location that will attract a lot of people. We are working in with the owner with a plan which may take a year or two to come to absolute fruition. With very extensive plans to accommodate all types of travellers world wide from high end accommodation / campers, bar & grill restaurant and Indigenous Cultural Centre we'll keep the dialogue open. It is genuinely a place that fulfills all the senses and will only improve in time. It has been a privilege to be approached by the owner and set up a professional and exclusive angling opportunity. I'll keep you posted.





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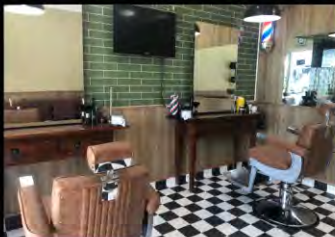
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Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



What a difference a few weeks can make in our neck of the woods when fishing the Daintree River. What was becoming a difficult place to fish at times with hot days and very high water temperatures on the cards, a good bit of rain and more moderate air temperatures have turned the tables in our favour. A good flushing with some bigger tides around the moon also contributed to our fortunes in recent times.

High on the agenda of most anglers in my experience is the opportunity to land a barramundi. Well I'm pleased to say I've done pretty well in this area of late catching quite a few of these sort after species. Obviously the change in climate brought them back into activity and my favourite haunts were able to produce them mostly around the 65-72cm mark. We don't traditionally get the bigger variety much more above this so for us it was a great return. Using predominantly live bait as the choice of weapon I was able to get these guys quite interested on the right part of the



tide. They were the proper salt water variety with that tinge of yellow in the tail which is an indicator they are from the good part of the system. They are also 200% better to eat on the plate. Some clients took their fish straight from the boat up to the Daintree Village up the road where they enjoyed beer battered barra and chips for lunch which I have a pre-arrangement with should the occasion arise. It is a nice addition to my business no matter what the species that they take there to be cooked fresh on the spot.

Other than this I've had a huge run on other species which have entertained my clients. There's a heap of trevally in the river at the moment including the standard mid sized giant trevally but also some really solid golden trevally. It is all relevant to the sized gear you are working with. Lighter gear is a whole heap of fun and anyone from a child, to a new beginner and to the experienced angler will just have a ball with these hard fighting fish. They are a very addictive species to catch and normally there's quite a few around when they turn up, mostly on the incoming tides.

Extra bonus fish along the way have included some nice fingermark, a run of mid sized queenfish and some quality grunter with a line out across from the main channel on the flats along the edges.

I'm expecting the month of May to remain to remain very similar whilst we have premium water temperatures. It's a joy to hit the water and almost have immediate results when the line hits the water. I know where I have to be at very specific times to get the best results. Bookings are very solid next month so best to call ASAP to enjoy a wonderful experience on the Daintree.



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Dragon Lady Charters

with Steve Adamson



Well we are alive and kicking again after a two month lay off installing a new engine which got the commission tick of approval earlier in the month just in time for the Easter trade period. It was touch and go there for a bit but we got the job done thank goodness. I was starting to see the mud at the bottom of the bank account after of a very expensive exercise. Touchwood I'm confident we should not see any issues for quite awhile now with a brandspanking new engine.

Now you probably will want to know how the fishing has been. We've been put through the riggers with a variety of shared and private charters with varying fishing capabilities. To be upfront it is has been honestly better than expected with the fish sometimes quite suicidal. With the seasons changing and a consistent 15-20 knot wind to contend with on most days I was a bit suspect. However we churned away recording some quite impressive results.

At the forefront was the coral and bar cheek trout which we sourced tucked up in behind the reefs for mainly comfort ability to deal with the wind factor. They were very much on the chew ranging from 4-6kg and truly a great result. Day after day they came to the game and surprised me a bit. In saying this we did concentrate in a general area for a bit longer than what I had hoped to do. We prefer to explore different pastures as a preference so we don't over extend our stay in the one place.

These trout were backed up with a variety of other quality species including average sized large mouth nannygai, long nosed



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emperor, cattle dog cod, speckle scale seaperch and some thumping gold spot trevally. The stand out fish however were a couple of well seasoned red emperor which always draw a cheer from the crowd when someone lands one of these onto the deck. Surprisingly we didn't even see a nibble on the mackerel float but their run is still coming up in future weeks.

Our new shark deterrent devices are due to rock up any day soon and is part of our commitment to researching shark depredation in conjunction with the government. Ultimately it is to see if they can improve loss of fish stocks to shark activity. If they can it will only improve our business as well.

Moving ahead bookings are remaining solid, the only battle is determining the erratic weather pattern that is playing around with our endeavours. After such an extended run for months of calm, flat seas this is not surprising at this time of year that we were due for a bit of a challenge. It's good to see the town a lot busier even for this time and we hope for busy times ahead.

Great to be back to normality I must say.....

Saltaire Charters



with Craig Newbold

It proved to be a bit of a Jekyll & Hyde type of month for us as the weather pattern certainly dictated terms. With record numbers of booking for April we probably achieved 66% of charters. The first part of the month we managed just fine but following Easter the weather kicked in for the worse and we cancelled multiple charters much to our disappointment and also our clients. There wasn't much we could do with consecutive days of strong wind warnings and a good old fashioned downpour of rain. It was suspected all along that it would be a late wet season having gone through a few months prior of next to nothing.

The seasons most definitely have changed and this is a positive thing for our efforts on the outer reef. The days we ran we found the fishing to be quite co-operative especially for bottom species such as nannygai and coral trout. There were a few emperor about and in tow with these were the ever hard fighting chinaman fish which can pull an arm out of its socket. Being a protected species they have to be released but they give a fight that the angler will never forget.

Our light tackle efforts rallied up a few spanish mackerel but they will only improve with the currents due to come from the south very shortly. We did get an ideal day to explore the shelf on one particular trip and it was pleasing to snag a few yellowfin tuna. They weren't massive but still

a nice catch to take home for sashimi. It was a pleasant surprise to see them still around for this time of year. They tend to finish up sometime in February so this was a bonus for us.

When the currents do shift it is probably one of the best times to fish the reef as all and sundry turn the light switch on. With the aid of some calm weather we are expecting some big days in the fish department in the coming month.

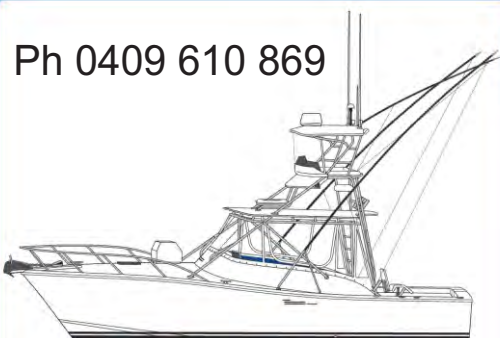
With a lot of wind to contend with lately Gt popper fishing wasn't really an option for us in recent times. We really need calm conditions to spot the bait on top of the reef to achieve the desired results.

Other than this we spent a lot of time in the water snorkeling on private reefs and is a big hit with families doing a combination trip. When you factor the cost of doing a separate fishing day and then another snorkel trip the price is almost identical. The concept of killing two birds with the one stone all in a day and having the boat to yourselves is a very appealing choice nowadays with punters.

For us the up and coming weather is our biggest factor with bookings still quite healthy in the next few weeks. We really hope for a bit of a break because the fishing should change to a new level and we can offer a few more options.



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Top 6 Ranking

Dated 20th April By Google Business - Fishing Port Douglas
Our 606 photos posted got 43,287 total views in the last month



Reel Cooking with Heff

Fresh Cheeky Coral Trout



Ingredients

4 fillets of Bar Cheek Coral Trout
2 medium roma tomatoes, seeded, chopped finely
1/4 cup (40g) kalamata olives, pitted, sliced thinly
2 tablespoon drained baby capers, rinsed, drained
2 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/3 cup (80ml) lemon juice
1/3 cup (80ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 cup (100g) fine semolina
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill
60 gram butter, chopped
pan-fried zucchini batons, to serve
steamed broccolini, to serve



Method

To make the salsa: combine the tomato, olives, capers, parsley, juice and oil in a small bowl.
Combine the semolina and dill in a wide bowl and season with sea salt and ground white pepper. Toss the fish in the semolina; transfer to a plate.
Heat a large non-stick frying pan and add the butter. When the butter has melted and is beginning to froth, add the fillets in batches. Pan-fry for about 2 minutes on each side or until just cooked through. Cooking time will depend on the thickness of the fish.
Transfer fish to 4 warm plates and spoon over the tomato olive salsa. Serve with pan-fried zucchini batons and steamed broccolini.



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