

# LINEBURNER

VOLUME 250 PRICELESS

*FISHING TROPICAL FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND*

SEP 21

Features  
Hope Island Wonder  
Local Charter Reports  
Best of the Bush in FNQ  
**OUR 250th Edition**

TAIRE



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Dragon Lady Charters



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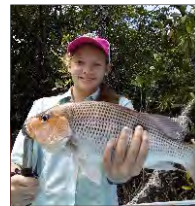
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Contact Us if you'd like to  
Contribute - Most Welcome

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**Front Cover:**  
**Saltaire Charters got into the monster Gt's whilst camping and fishing at the famous Hope Island group in FNQ**



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# Hope Brings on Fortune

By Damian Collete - Saltaire Charters



If you are ever going to do a bonafide mates trip involving camping and fishing, then this is the ultimate escape you could possibly accomplish. For the 8th year running now these guys come up from the Brisbane region and spend 7 days fishing and camping on the Great Barrier Reef. It is typically the same guys each year with a few fresh faces. This time around there were 8 clients so with our Saltaire boat we also acquired the services of the 43ft Bounty Hunter vessel as well.

The destination is always Hope Island approximately 2hrs north of Port Douglas by water. It is a magical little sand cay island with foliage, circumferenced by seemingly untouched golden sands and a stunning reef lagoon for safe anchorage. The views of the Daintree Rainforest to the west are breathtaking offering the most spectacular sunsets. Being a National Park the guys pre-book the limited spots available to stay on the island for camping. There is a bit of logistical work in the preparation but between us and our seasoned clients we have perfected the experience of the trip over quite a few years. The boys love the concept of sleeping on a deserted tropical island they have all to themselves.

The first part of the trip is arriving and setting everything up on the island for the week. The beauty of the deep lagoon is you can literally pull up within a couple of metres of the beach which makes off

loading gear really easy with a chain gang behind you. It's a team effort and this process over time has become very efficient leaving ample time to get into the fishing early into the program.

This year we had a mixed run with the weather starting out brilliantly before the strong south easterly winds blew up. The beauty of Hope Island there are plenty of outstanding reefs to fish close by, the campsite is very well protected on the west side of the island and the fishing from off the beach is also exciting. Right in front of the campsite is the constant and biggest gathering of hardy head live bait you could imagine and there's always big pelagics patrolling the shallows including big Gt's. So overall the weather is not a major issue with plenty of great options available. There is snorkelling and spear fishing opportunities within the lagoon but I don't necessarily encourage it with the wooded west Hope Island only a mile away which does inhabit crocs. Lazing in the shallows during the day is fine but don't recommend swimming after dark.

Now each day was a different adventure opting for different styles of fishing going to different reef systems. We did the whole program from popper fishing to light tackle to reef fishing. It all depended on what the boys wanted to accomplish on any given day. With these waters literally untouched they were bound for great angling. ▶



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**Hope Island cont..**

We'll start with Gt popper fishing, it went gang busters with a lot of fish around the 20kg range. On those initial calmer days it was a real focus because it was easy to spot the bait schools on the surface on the edges of the reef. There were dozens of spectacular hook-ups on the surface and consequent epic battles then to be won. Also there were also a few big, hard hitting red bass to deal with during these efforts and they are nothing to sneeze at either. We never tire of this fishing even though it can wear out the boys fairly quickly, but they love it. During the calmer weather and early mornings, even during the blow we took advantage of the reef fishing. To be honest this was exceptional with trophy large mouth nannygai and red emperor on the go. In such an isolated and remote area they were more often than not ranging between 7-10kg from both species. Until you get to experience this first hand you can't fathom how good it is. When you start to throw in the likes of big coral trout, small mouth nannygai and cobia, amongst many others it is as good as it gets. In between reefs we always were trolling lures and the spanish mackerel count was quite generous with a lot of fish around the 10kg range with the best getting to around the 12-14kg size.




We fished from the boats on most days solidly for around 6hrs with the remainder spent on the island walking, popper fishing from the beach catching Gt's and generally chilling out after catching an incredible amount of fish on the reef. It is such a relaxing location which is all yours to enjoy. Now a big part of a camping trip is the evening meal around the camp fire. As crew we didn't have to worry about this aspect as the boys revel in the area and love to show off. Amazing roasts, BBQ's to fish done a dozen different ways, it was a feast on every occasion. Always with a coldie in hand and watching the sunset around a campfire it probably is the highlight of the day. The stories and laughter that accompany the evening meal are everything that brings a trip together. Another successful trip was completed and as per usual they boys are booked back in next year. Call Heff on 0409610869 if you want to experience this very affordable exotic trip which simply can't disappoint. ■




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## The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

The first two weeks of September saw us sitting around like stunned mullets as the weather was a bit indifferent but more to the point there was literally no tourists in town. This latest closure of borders equated into a very sorry state of affair, not for only the marine industry but as a town as a whole. In all my 35yrs of being here I've never seen anything like it. Maybe in a February or March, but never in a major peak time. It is scary stuff and I suspect the last tipping point for many businesses reliant on tourism for their trade.

With the approach of school holidays we started to see some reprieve but we were running with no profit return. It wasn't till the last week or so that we saw any normality. We saw a trickle of the SA trade and the rest were pure Queenslander's prepared to move within the state. The Premier's recent announcement to not allow any border crossing from the southern states despite an 80% double dose vaccination rate from anyone will be the nail in the coffin for many of her local constituents. This will include many from here unfortunately. Already one household name within our own industry has allegedly closed its doors for 2021 and beyond. Even though we are all in the boat, this is very sad. Anyway all we can do is hang on and hope for a change of tune.

Now the fishing has been typically what you would expect at this time of year, so quite productive overall. We've seen the trout come up into the shallows and they will spawn this first reef closure at the start of October. The females have already gone into lock jaw but it has been the males that have been on the chew. They have been accumulating in solid numbers in anticipation to contribute their seed to the circle of life on the reef. They have been of decent size and quite plump around the girth.



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The nannygai have slowed a touch with numbers caught and seem to be surrounded by shark activity. Once this occurs there's no point bothering and you move onto greener pastures.

We've had some belter days on the mackerel float with up to half a dozen per trip ranging from 10-14kg. A lot of them had roe in their belly and they will spawn as well very soon. Unlike the trout, the mackerel males and females seem to feed aggressively all within the same school despite their up-comings. These fish a divided up amongst the punters even if part of not catching them.

Other than this the sweetlip, spangled emperor, reef mangrove jack, trevally, stripeys and moses perch have topped up our catches quite comfortably. The month ahead will be much the same I suspect with the female trout having a real crack following the spawning days based around the new moon.

The weather pattern has seemed to have turned the corner having seen probably the windiest August and start to September I can remember. We'll take advantage of the current weather and the rare numbers of people that have made the journey up here prior to the reef closure due to begin on the 3rd of October for five days.

I might just pack the 4WD and go and do a bit of camping for a change up and go see some places I haven't seen in years.

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## Best of the Bush in FNQ

By Heff



From a Port Douglas / Cairns perspective we are within range of some of the best genuine outback country for fishing and camping within Australia. For those that follow us from down south, it may seem a decent drive to access the couple of places I'm about to mention. However to us being in a massive state, we call it just around the corner.

First off the cuff my good mate, 'Sharky' Shane Down just re-visited the mighty Mitchell River. A 2hr drive from the driveway at home to setting up camp. He books an exclusive site with no one else within 'cooee' via the Hurricane Station north of Mt Carbine. The site he books is totally 4WD country with vehicle, camper trailer and tinnie on top. The actual part of the river is at the very beginnings of this incredible fresh water system at this point of its journey. Starting at the very back of the Great Dividing Range on the east coast it winds itself to the salt Gulf of Carpentaria. In the wet season, from it countless tributaries along the way it pours the highest volume of water into the sea in the entire country. Where Sharky bases himself, the river is a decent body of water with a few miles to explore before the next level of the river. Lined with mellaluecca trees, sandy banks, incredible flora and fauna it is an outback paradise. Shane goes and chases the sooty grunter in the boat casting small lures and poppers with great success. More importantly he sets his crab pots in various places catching red claw and the exotic fresh water prawn called the Cherabin. Just have a look at a few of the Cherabin he landed recently as an indication - 'Elbow Slappers'. If you've never had one, imagine your favourite crustacean and then these guys will match it. Other than this Sharky is right into his photography with ample opportunity in this part of the world. On this last trip he caught a fresh water croc away from the water on the land chasing down a cane toad of all things and having it for dinner. The Mitchell River is a very special place just around the corner for us.

Undoubtedly Lakefield National Park is the fishing mecca for barra on the east coast. Approximately 5-6hrs drive it is worth the effort. Having the biggest flood plains running into it, this holds some of the best barra fishing in Australia. The camping is equally amazing with so much landscape to take in. Last month our writer Jake Collete wrote a piece in the last edition expanding on fishing it in cooler weather. Well with more unfortunate down time from the charter industry back in Port he recently re-visited again with friends, but this time with a boat in tow. This time they did some lure and soft

plastic fishing but with less favourable results being on a different section of river. With crab pots in place they reverted to catching cherabin to around 6-8 inches in size. Placed under a float using a nice big hook they were cast in amongst the heavy timber lining the banks. He said over two days the nailed around 30 barra and commented it was a very relaxing and exciting way of catching a barra. With eyes always set on the float, even with an occasional beer in hand, you wait for it to disappear. Count to three and then you hook in to some explosive action. He did say within a few weeks of fishing the area the crocs are considerably more active, so take heed. Once again pre-booking is required to the allocated campsites throughout this massive area and is done through via the National Parks forum.

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# On the Daintree Charters

By Jamie Beitzel - The Local Huckleberry Finn



The start of September saw me doing the final touches to my vessel having gone through a vigorous maintenance program. By the time I finished the old girl was looking as fresh as a daisy if I don't mind saying. The down turn of tourists at this point gave me no excuse not to do what I wanted in a thorough frame of mind.

By the second week of the month we started to see a trickle of punters wanting to join us. The weather outside along the coast wasn't too kind so we became a popular option in the calm waters. We didn't disappoint with our fishing efforts tapping into our local supply of quality fingermark 50cm plus and also some high quality javelin fish around the 60cm range which is a big fish for these species.

Fishing the tides with some run in the water was key to our success. The really slack tides were likely to see less action. As the month churned away the trips increased but not to the level we'd expect at this time of year. It was notably quieter even during the beginning of the school holidays. I'm hoping the QLD population can sustain our trips moving forward.

Just going back a touch I did have a few memorable charters with the best one including a hot bite where we caught 9 fingermark off one of my secret spots. The clients kept one fish and they were happy to return the rest. Now these weren't your average river fish, more like the big boys of the water. 60cm was the average and fishing in tight water with snags everywhere, it was a extremely exciting and challenging. These fish at this size

don't muck around, it is lock up and pull hard and wind like mad sort of stuff. I was lucky enough to have capable anglers on board to achieve what we did.

As we do on any given trip we move around fishing different spots and the quality of grunter or javelin fish we nailed even impressed myself. They fight well often been caught in more open water and you can ease the drag off to give the thrill of on extended and exciting battle. The end result is a classic silver fish which in my opinion are one of the best on the plate to come from our river.

On the barra and mangrove jack side we only saw a few this past month, the main reason being the fingermark were thick and more eager amongst the snags. The way the fingermark were acting they stood little chance when they were this size. These guys however will show their muscle and the coming month is their prime time to hit back.

Other than this we caught some handy golden trevally in our journeys as well as the usual suspects such as shovel nose ray, river trevally and some good sized bream. There were a few crocs to spot on our travels but will be harder to find as the weather warms up quickly. I know where they hang out but will have to have my eagle eyes on as we cruise the river banks.

As mentioned we pray to tick over the books moving forward and for those of you fortunate to join us are in for a treat whilst the weather is good and the rains are abated. See you on the Daintree or nearby soon..... ■



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# Locally Port Douglas

## Top 6 Ranking

Dated 23rd September By Google Business - Fishing Port Douglas  
Our 428 photos posted got 20,242 total views in the last month



## Reel Cooking with Mick Hart Summer Time Mackerel



### Ingredients

4 x 150g Mackerel fillets  
2 tbs light soy sauce  
2 tbs caster sugar  
250g noodles your preference  
200g green beans, trimmed  
2 oranges, peeled, thinly sliced into rounds  
1 green chilli, thinly sliced  
1 tbs toasted black or white sesame seeds  
CITRUS DRESSING  
2 Asian (red) eschalots, thinly sliced  
1/4 cup grapefruit juice  
1 tbs finely grated ginger  
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange and 1 lime



### Method

Combine soy sauce and sugar in a shallow dish. Add raw mackerel and gently toss to coat. Set aside. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. Cook noodles according to packet instructions, adding beans for the last 3 minutes of cooking time. Drain and rinse under cold water. Set aside. Heat a non-stick frypan over medium heat. Add the mackerel and cook, turning halfway, for 5-6 minutes or until golden and just cooked through. For the dressing, place all ingredients in a bowl and mix to combine. Divide beans and noodles among serving bowls. Top with mackerel, orange slices, chilli and sesame seeds. Spoon over dressing and serve immediately.

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