

CAPTAIN DUNCAN SMITH'S SUGGESTED 10 DAY GREAT BARRIER REEF CRUISING ITINERARY

day 1

Embark Seafaris at Cairns Marlin Marina towards noon. Cruise north for 35 miles along the coastline to Low Isles, the first of the Marine State Parks, for a late lunch and a chance to snorkel with the resident turtles in the shallows of the fringing reef. After a walk on the beach or exploring the nature trail to the island's lighthouse, enjoy canapés and sundowners overlooking the Tableland Mountains in the distance. Dinner tonight is a simple but elegant affair and a chance to discuss the adventures of the week ahead.

day 2

Breakfast underway to Opal Reef for the first of many opportunities to experience the "outer" Great Barrier Reef. Due to the protective zoning, like many of its neighbours, Opal Reef is teeming with fantastic colourful sea life. An alfresco lunch can be followed by a full afternoon of fishing from Seafaris' comfortable 28ft custom sportsfisher "Blakey", launched 007 style from the main aft deck. Later, a dip in the yacht's jacuzzi spa, allows you to unwind prior to a fun and entertaining evening meal at any one of the three dining areas on board. The outer reef affords great protection from the Coral Sea as you enjoy a peaceful night's rest at anchor.

day 3

Awake to being surrounded only by natural reef and the sounds of the sea. After an early departure and a scenic cruise along the inside of the Barrier Reef, arrive at the beginning of the Ribbon Reefs. Enjoy a spectacular dive at "Steve's Bommie" with the chance to visit an isolated pinnacle, frequented by large schools of pelagic fish and superb hard and soft corals. For snorkellers, the numerous large coral heads within the lagoon offer the excitement of swimming with a tremendous variety of colourful tropical fish. Later, try hand-feeding fish from the yacht's hydraulic platform, which can be gently lowered into the water. In the afternoon, prepare for a dive at Ribbon Reef No. 5, known as "Andy's Postcard" and home to an abundance of underwater life. During certain times of the year, this stretch of coast is visited by migrating minke whales, which will swim right up to the yacht's stern and normally allow guests to join them in the water for a firsthand experience. After dinner, venture on deck for the opportunity to appreciate the southern sky and the chance to star gaze at the constellations.

day 4

An early arrival at Pixie's Pinnacle, renowned for its vibrant coloured marine life and exceptional visibility. Lunch is at anchor in Dynamite Pass and the afternoon can be spent snorkelling at the world class Cod Hole site, which is world famous for its large numbers of huge potato cod. Then a sunset cruise to Lizard Island to anchor in picturesque Watson's Bay for the night. Dinner is a feast from the Teppanyaki grill on the aft deck, followed by the entertainment of the illuminated underwater lights attracting huge grouper and schools of trevally off the stern all night.

day 5

An early morning swim in the crystal clear waters of Lizard Island followed by a shore excursion to climb Cook's Lookout. Alternatively, follow the State Park nature walk across the island to "Blue Lagoon" - a beautiful setting for a picnic lunch and a chance to explore one of the island's 16 beaches. The clam gardens in the sheltered bay offer superb snorkelling within metres of the yacht for all guests to enjoy. In the afternoon, an offshore fishing expedition, beach volleyball or possibly a dive at "snakepit" for the more adventurous. A short scenic helicopter ride offers an aerial appreciation of the panoramic colours of the reef. Music &

cocktails on the bridge deck as the sun sets uninterrupted over the coastline in the west. After dinner, a late evening departure for a 75 mile journey northwest, passing the Howick Group of islands to arrive for sunrise at Stanley Island in the Flinders Group.

day 6

Stokes Bay affords a comfortable anchorage and the opportunity to explore flora and fauna and Aboriginal cave paintings ashore at the National Park. You may be lucky enough to spot a crocodile or two on a nearby beach, although the coast can be safely explored by kayak as well. Cruise to Bathurst Head in Princess Charlotte Bay for lunch, beachcombing and some barramundi fishing up the Normanby River. Ladies might like this opportunity to enjoy a massage aboard in the privacy of the gymnasium, scented with aromatherapy candles, music and oils from the local region. Others could try their luck snagging a couple of mud crabs, to enjoy a wonderful "reef and beef" feast at the Teppanyaki grill later that evening.

day 7

An early departure with breakfast underway while enjoying the sun and scenery before arriving late morning at Cooktown, a quaint country town and the site of Captain Cook's landing. An expert guide can take guests on a "safari" back out to one of the Ribbon Reefs and share his extensive knowledge of the region, whilst diving for crayfish or trolling for large billfish. After rejoining Seafaris, indulge in watersports or enjoy champagne with friends in comfort and style, whilst the crew discreetly decorate the yacht for a theme night, with costumes and entertainment worthy of a Hollywood blockbuster!

day 8

Enjoy a healthy breakfast with a variety of fresh tropical fruit before cruising to Escape Reef, a delightful anchorage that is ideal for a variety of activities, including spectacular fishing, so dinner promises to be a real seafood feast! After an active day, just relax and play one of the many family games onboard or unwind with a movie either on satellite TV or a DVD in the comfort of your stateroom.

day 9

Start with an early morning swim in the turquoise shallows and why not sample breakfast ashore on the picturesque and remote Mackay Sand Cay? Then either take a private tour of the world heritage listed rainforest at the Daintree National Park or continue to anchor off fashionable Port Douglas. Enjoy lunch at one of the outstanding restaurants and indulge in some boutique shopping. Invigorate your senses at Port Douglas' fantastic day spa, before rejoining Seafaris for a sheltered late afternoon coastal cruise to the private Double Island retreat.

day 10

A chance to sleep in this morning with a late brunch and then a tender ride across to the trendy northern beach suburb of Palm Cove for a stroll along the boardwalk and some window shopping. Enjoy lunch at anchor and a last afternoon of relaxation, before Seafaris heads along the coastline bound for Cairns Marlin Marina, signalling the end to a memorable and unique charter experience.

day 11

Prepare to bid farewell to Seafaris and depart for Cairns International Airport.

