



A PACK OF PCOS descended on Tropical North Queensland to get the low down on everything for events.

There's nothing like taking the time to travel to a destination to get its true flavour. And this is what happened in late 2009 at Palm Cove between a host of venues, operators and PCOs from around Australia.

Rendezvousing at The Sebel Reef House & Spa Palm Cove, our group of 31 PCOs and media from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, refreshed with a tropical lunch before being inspired by O2 Speakers' Chris Helder.

For those who were yet to experience the Novotel Rockford Palm Cove, it was lucky the events team were waiting with stretch hummers to take us for a rock-star ride and site inspection. For one lucky PCO, we're talking to you Sally Goodchild, there was a helicopter joyride up for grabs! As Sally hovered above we schlumed it back to our hotels in the stretch hummers, (just one ride and you become a diva) while stunned tourists looked on waiting for someone famous to roll out. Unfortunately there is no graceful way to get out of a stretch hummer. No wonder Britney gets herself into all sorts of trouble... The group was divided amongst a host of high end accommodation dotted along Palm Cove's esplanade to regroup before the official welcome ceremony at the spectacular Angsana Resort & Spa. The tropical rain set in but this didn't dampen our spirits!

As our second day dawned in sunny tropical north Queensland, some bright sparks started the day with a dawn yoga session on the beach, while others reclined with eggs Benedict watching the waves crash on Palm Cove's sunny stretch of sand. Soon enough, we were all ready and raring for a day of meetings with local venues and operators. Our group was split in two, half met in the delightfully air-conditioned meeting space at the spectacular Sea Temple Resort & Spa and the others at the spacious Grand Mercure Rockford Esplanade, before we switched after lunch.

Before long the sun was setting and we were back on the coach and bound for Paradise

Palms Resort. After a quick site inspection of its brand new well-appointed apartments, we toasted with some bubbles by the pool while snacking on smoked salmon and tequila oyster shooters. We then followed a candle-lit path for dinner in a marquee on the beautiful golf green.

The next day half the group ventured into the rainforest with Skyrail and the other half for a day out on the reef. Looking at the gloomy sky with some trepidation on the boat ride out to the Great Barrier Reef, the clouds parted for the group to enjoy a sunny day of snorkelling. The group on the rainforest tour weren't as lucky to beat the rain, but this didn't stop the ladies from hitting the shops in Kuranda. Peppers Beach Club and Spa hosted the group for the official farewell function, where we dined on a range of delicious local fare.

Our last day had rolled around quite quickly and our final stop before the airport was Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. After a delicious breakfast, we got an insiders look at bush tucker and a quick tour of the property.

Post-touring, also known as more feasting...

For those lucky enough to stay on for the post-touring, a few days of great experiences and sunshine awaited us. The drive to Port Douglas from Palm Cove is a spectacular one, and images of the picturesque shoreline often grace postcards. We headed straight to Macrossan Street for a quick coffee and had time to stretch our legs. We should have done a beach marathon in this time though to make room for the food extravaganza that was about to grace our plates!

Our next stop was to check out the amazing Sea Temple Resort & Spa Port Douglas. This property is simply hypnotic. The first thing guests see upon arriving through the lobby is the amazing pool and its adjoining swim out apartments... is this not where dreams come true?

Hungry again after another site inspection at Rydges Sabaya it was time to dine before dropping and rolling to The Australian Muster Experience for some outback hospitality. Before too long we were at the Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas, where DOSM Marian McLeod, had huge pineapple shaped cocktails in our hands for our walk around the property.

Soon after we were refreshed and ready for an evening of extravagance. All we knew was there was going to be food, lots of it. Our first stop was a new experience for me, the Sugar Wharf in the heart of Port Douglas just off Macrossan Street. Our evening was hosted by Port Douglas Catering & Events who are renowned for amazing functions. Pure white curtains were blowing in the wind and opening to reveal white glowing lanterns bobbing on string above beautifully set tables stretched along the wharf's boardwalk. If we weren't wowed enough by the sheer spectacle, the food made my legs go weak! Imagine if you can, mild green chillies stuffed with a barramundi mousse and lightly fried tempura-style, and scallops that were to die for!

I'll be honest, I ate too much. This stop was meant to be just for canapés.... I went too far. Nevertheless I didn't let it get me down, I did some stretches and was ready to gorge once more at Flames of the Forest. The food seemed to keep appearing non-stop from between a gap in the rainforest, where the chefs were working their magic. And the sumptuous platters splayed out on the long table as far as the eye could see. Seafood? You got it! Amazing local produce? Coming right up! All I was wondering was, why the hell didn't I just wear my stretchy pants! Thank you to Great Barrier Reef & Business Events Cairns for hosting yet another spectacular Sell TNQ. Watch this space for Sell TNQ 2010.

