

Luxury Resorts Articles

- Caribbean & Latin America
- United States and Canada
- Europe
- Asia & The Pacific
- Africa & The Middle East

- Travel Directory
- Advertiser Directory

Home / Asia & The Pacific / **Asia & The Pacific**



Photograph by John Braun

Hamilton Island's owners, Robert and Sandy Oatley, needed a place to entertain their friends.

Qualia, Hamilton Island, Australia
Smooth Sailing
By Dena Braun
05/01/2008

Hamilton Island's owners, Robert and Sandy Oatley, needed a place to entertain their friends. The father-and-son team had sold their winery, Rosemount Estate, to Australia's largest wine producer in 2001 for \$1.5 billion. Two years later, they purchased Hamilton and proceeded to invest millions to refit the island's existing family-friendly resorts. But Hamilton—and Australia at large—was still missing something of importance to the Oatleys and their jet-set friends: a true luxury resort. (Sandy has publicly decried the country's lack of high-caliber lodgings.) So in October, after a more than \$70 million investment, the Oatleys opened Qualia, a collection of private pavilions on 30 acres overlooking Whitsunday Island on the Great Barrier Reef.



A host of the Oatleys' acquaintances will arrive on Hamilton Island this August to compete for the South Pacific Cup (79-year-old Robert is a yacht-racing fanatic). Upon checking into Qualia, the yachtsmen will no doubt be pleased with their views of the Coral Sea, which is visible from nearly every vantage point at the resort. Like any Qualia guest, the competitors will have virtually free reign of Hamilton, with the ability to access facilities at the island's other hotels. Only Qualia guests, however, may pass through the tall stone gates that mark the entrance to the resort.



The Oatleys hired architect Chris Beckingham, who also designed the family's Hamilton Island home, to construct Qualia as a luxurious yet simple—and, thus, truly Australian—environment. Wide eaves and breezeways shaded by eucalyptus trees lead to one-bedroom pavilions detailed with artisanal woodwork and topped with corrugated iron roofs. Modern furnishings trimmed in Armagnac- and saffron-colored fabrics decorate the rooms and Qualia's two restaurants.

Robert and Sandy's work in the Whitsundays is by no means finished. By 2009, they plan to open a golf course on nearby Dent Island and an expanded marina and yacht club on Hamilton. In the meantime, the Oatleys have their sights set on August's South Pacific Cup, during which their *Wild Oats X* is a favorite to win.

SETTING: On the northern tip of Hamilton Island, part of Australia's Whitsunday Islands and the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef.

SLEEPING: The 33 Leeward Pavilions and 26 Windward Pavilions offer private plunge pools, while the two-bedroom Beach House has a swimming pool and guest quarters.

Photograph by John Braun.

DINING: Contemporary Australian cuisine from chef Stephane Rio at the Long Pavilion and in the more casual Pebble Beach restaurant.

DIVERSIONS: Kayaking, swimming, snorkeling, chartering a catamaran to nearby islands, and picnicking on nearby Henning Island. The owners plan to open a golf course on nearby Dent Island by 2009.

RATES: \$1,240–\$2,655

Contact:

Qualia, +61.2.9433.3349, www.qualia.com.au



Print Email

Order your copy today

Your guide to the most exclusive hotels and resorts