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Coast with most

This stretch of seaside has a host of charming locations to explore - and nothing is too far away, writes **David Riccio**

DADS' creche! Wives, leave your husbands here . . . while you shop. The sandwich-board sign positioned at the entrance to the Montville Pub suddenly brought new meaning to the concept of retail therapy.

Sweaty from the summer heat blanketing the Sunshine Coast mountain ranges, the quirky invitation to wash down an ale, as Mum and bub trawled the old town, was duly accepted.

The village charm of Montville, with its old mill water-wheel, fudge and chocolate-makers, restaurants, tea-rooms and cafes feels a world away from the salt and sand of Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The calm behind the coast, Montville is 40 minutes from the waves of Maroochydore, Mooloolaba and Alexandra Headland. This is the beauty of the Queensland coast - there are plenty of opportunities to explore, and nothing is too far away.

For six days during December we had



ESSENTIALS

Getting there

The Sunshine Coast is about 100km north of Brisbane.



Staying there

The writer stayed at Sorrento on the Pacific, 8 Mariner Walk, Alexandra Headland. Call 1800 800 999 or visit sorrentomooloolaba.com.au. Rates start at \$250 per night for a one-bedroom apartment.

Seeing there

There are beaches, Australia Zoo, Underwater World and the markets. Visit tourismsunshinecoast.com.au

- The writer travelled with the assistance of Tourism Queensland.



a terrific family holiday. A Yin and Yang getaway of relaxation and discovery. A holiday that incorporated the picturesque Blackall Mountains, world-famous Australia Zoo in Beerwah, Underwater World in Mooloolaba and the bargain markets of Eumundi.

A five-star apartment at Mooloolaba's Sorrento on the Pacific was our base, with our spacious, open-plan penthouse boasting views from Mooloolaba to Noosa. We were just metres from the beach, but also had access to the property's private lap and plunge pools.

Mooloolaba has undergone a series of facelifts over the past decade and continuing street works and development along the beach front has brought a Noosa-like feel to the cafe-dominated strip. However, the popular and family-friendly Mooloolaba Surf Club remains the area's major drawcard.

Underwater World is on the edge of Mooloolaba Wharf.

Among the most popular attractions on the Sunshine Coast is Australia Zoo, the spiritual home of the late Steve

Irwin.

And sandwiched between Caloundra to the south and Noosa to the north, are the beaches of Mooloolaba, Alexandra Headland and Maroochydore. Barbecues are clean, and showers and playground equipment are well positioned.

The 30km coast road from Mooloolaba to Noosa, passing through classy Coolum and the soon-to-boom Peregrine Beach, offers classic point and open beach breaks.

Caravan and camping grounds dot the sandy coast road.

Noosa's famous headland, fronting the main beach of Laguna Bay, is home to the world's most popular long board festival each March.

The newly refurbished Noosa Surf Club, with its veranda positioned over the sand, is the viewing platform of choice for hundreds of onlookers. We buy fish and chips, devouring them on the veranda as we soak up that marvellous vista.

SMORGASBORD: The delights of Australia Zoo (below) are not far from the beach at Mooloolaba; or try Noosa Surf Club's fish and chips (bottom).
Pictures: Megan Slade