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Harper's BAZAAR

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ESCAPE

Island GIRLS

Yasmin Le Bon is charmed by Hamilton Island; plus exotic Zanzibar; the romantic Seychelles; lounging on Lizard; privacy in Phuket; and soul searching on Samui

Model Yasmin Le Bon wearing Little Joe Woman, at Qualia, Hamilton Island, Queensland.



Yasmin Le Bon in Little Joe Woman (worn throughout), at Qualia, Hamilton Island, Queensland.

MODEL CITIZEN

QUALIA, HAMILTON ISLAND

After stunning Sydney with her turn on the runway at Little Joe Woman during Australian fashion week, enduring British supermodel Yasmin Le Bon headed for an appropriately glamorous getaway. Her destination of choice? The elegant Qualia, at Hamilton Island.

"I've already been having the best time ever with Gail and Joe [Elliott and Coffey, of Little Joe Woman] — the three musketeers — at work, rest and play on my first trip to Sydney, so when Gail says we're going to Qualia on Hamilton Island, I expect it to be right near the city. Note to self: always do your homework. I feel like the most embarrassing kind of tourist on the plane when I quiz Gail why the airline magazine keeps going on about the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef. Blimey!

"You have to remember I was brought up watching all these outrageous wildlife documentaries about the Great Barrier Reef, and now I'm on my way there. I really don't know what to expect,

but I'm an easygoing kind of girl so I'm rather pleasantly surprised by the very personal and affable welcome.

"We're whisked away to what has to be one of the most luxurious places I've ever visited. Qualia is cool and understated, but not intimidating. The staff are really warm, and it all feels like a family affair, which of course it is.

"I instantly fall in love with my pad. The bathroom is so fabulous, I have to stop myself from calling my husband and inadvertently making him jealous. You're given your own little electric buggy for the duration of your stay, which you have to plug in and recharge every evening. We spend the first afternoon by the pool, a very slick, Zen-like affair next to the sea. It's odd, because I know there are other people staying here, but you hardly ever see anyone; it must be some secret trick that only a certain select group of hoteliers know about.

"The food at both of the restaurants is excellent; just the right blend of healthy

and flavoursome. And thank god, because I have to remind myself that I have a shoot to do the next day, so I retire early to bed ... well, as early as I can bring myself to. Gail, Joe and I can really talk. I mean, we've had so much to catch up on.

"I have the most wonderful sleep. This is not guaranteed in any hotel, but I sleep unbelievably well on the beautiful bed. After breakfast I make my way to the pool: I just have to get as much swimming and lounging in as possible. However, I'm still not ready to brave the sea — stories of the irukandji jellyfish are making me take my mortality more seriously. The thing is, we English are obsessed with the poisonous and deadly things that live in Australia, but foolhardy I am not.

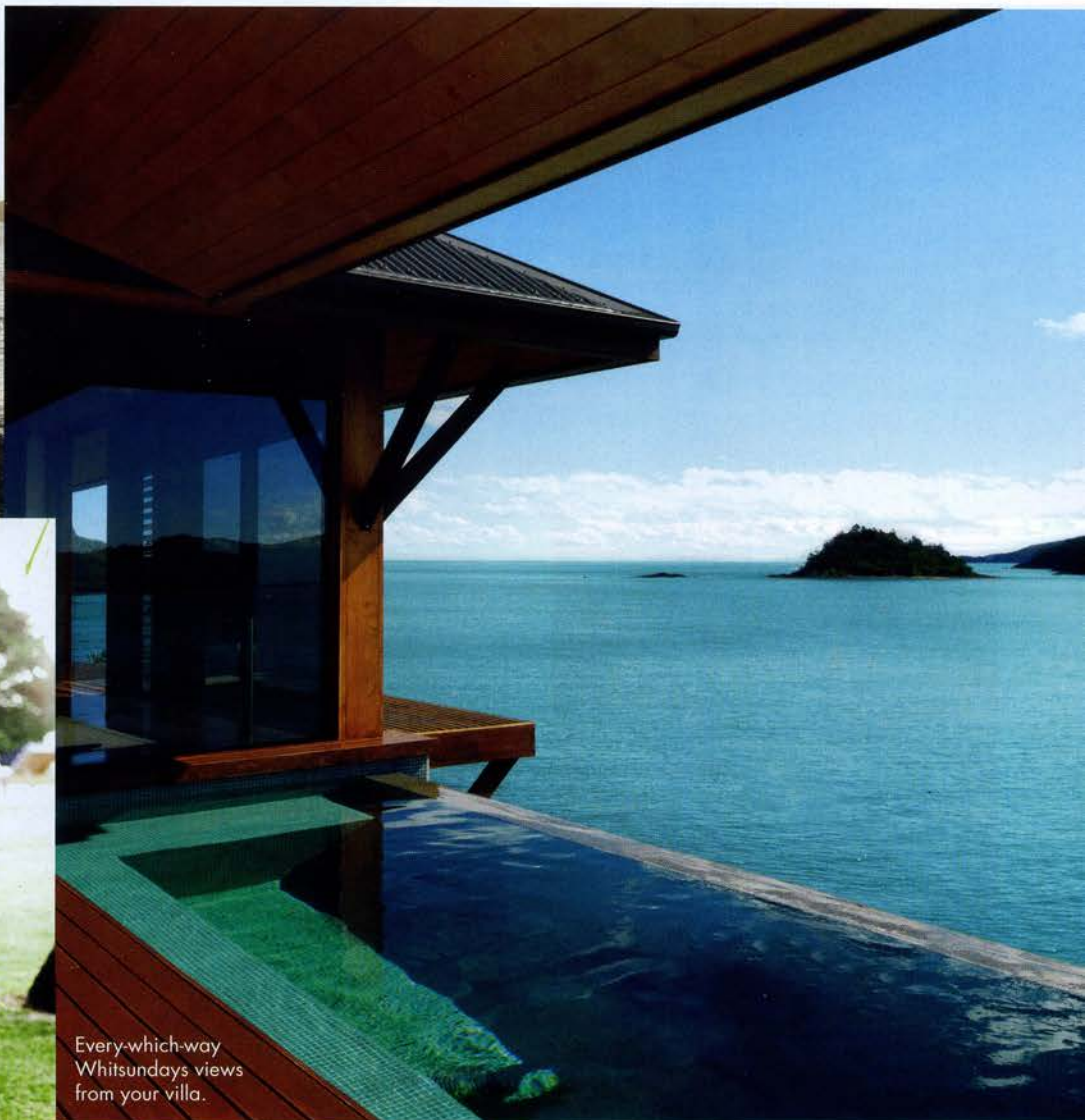
"Before the shoot, I head off to the health spa for a pedicure. I have absolutely no idea why I bother to get my feet done before shoots; you never actually see my feet but, the one time I don't, you can be sure they will be featured. It's not cheap, but Spa Qualia is simply gorgeous; I could very happily just stay here, but the fashion crew are



Sail away ... on a catamaran.



Le Bon in model mode.



Every-which-way Whitsundays views from your villa.

ready for me, so I vow to come back the next day for a massage.

"I spend the afternoon flouncing around in Little Joe Woman clothes. Gail, being the mother hen that she is, is quietly checking on everything. It feels so great to be wearing her clothes on a shoot. I'm very, very proud of both Gail and Joe, and I keep leaving hints as to what I would like from the new collection.

"The weather comes in that evening as we all head out to one of the restaurants for dinner. This, I believe, is a bonus, as copious amounts of wine are consumed and we wouldn't be in the appropriate state to manoeuvre our buggies. The hotel totally takes care of you. I suppose it's so small that you can't slip through the net, as it were.

"Gail and I, of course, are determined to get some rays the next day. Both of us feel a little pasty — never a good look for either of us, as we tend towards a green colour if we get too pale!

"Of course, we are on a tropical island, so right on cue, as we stretch out on the sun loungers, the heavens really open. Wow, I can't believe how much rain comes down, so we're forced to wait it out. Luckily, good things come to those who wait ... like lunch.

"The afternoon sees Gail and me deciding to brave the waters off the island. Joe decides he's going to captain a little catamaran; we'll be the moveable ballast. The funniest part is getting the stinger suits on. We all look like long, skinny Teletubbies. I'm surprised we don't fall off the boat with laughter. I mean, I've seen some wacky looks in

my time, but Gail in the stinger suit has to take the cake.

"As this is our last day, I decide that I need to dry out my twinkly Missoni bikini on the terrace. As I approach the railing, I see a cockatoo heading directly

for me. Guarding my treasure, I scurry inside for cover, as another cockatoo bandit zooms in. We're cheek to cheek against the glass. Before my trip Down Under, I never expected to be mugged by giant birds.

"I'm sure I will come here again. Qualia really is a special place. Exclusive, yes, but not at all pretentious.

"Back to reality now. Actually my whole trip to Australia has been magical. I can't believe it's taken me so long to come and see my friends and their life here, but now I know I'll be back. Watch out Gail and Joe."

— Yasmin Le Bon

www.qualia.com.au

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