

**50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

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The vans driving businesses  
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THE MERCEDES-BENZ  
GOLD COAST MAGAZINE

**GC**

*50th Anniversary*

WINTER 2017

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# WELCOME



**T**his issue of Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast celebrates the dealership's 50-year anniversary and offers a glimpse into its history from the early days at Isle of Capri to today's modern centre at Robina.

In those 50 years, the business has sold thousands of vehicles and Mercedes-Benz has grown exponentially as a brand – today it is stronger than it has ever been.

This special feature tells four stories, starting with Russell Ebeling, who has become a bit of a legend in Mercedes-Benz circles, and the story of how he has been reunited with a 1971 280 SE that was originally bought on the Gold Coast.

We also talk to long-time customer Rob White, and current workshop manager Mark Scott, who has been employed at Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast for 29 of its 50 years, and was hired by Russell – how the world turns.

And, you can also find out a bit about myself in the feature as well. It is an incredible achievement for the business to reach the 50-year milestone, and it is worth remembering that the Gold Coast was only declared a city less than 10 years before Grand Motors was founded.

The business today is extraordinarily stable, so there is no reason it won't be around for another 50 years, and even more.

In our secondary feature, the MBGC team toured around the city to talk to three business people who rely on Mercedes-Benz vans to support their businesses. They are from three very different industries but have one thing in common, that the reliability and service of their van is essential, and Mercedes-Benz delivers.

There is plenty more to read, including a profile on the owners of Solace Restaurant & Bar at Paradise Point, which recently celebrated its first birthday, and an interview with Mari Bray, who makes beautiful ceramics inspired by her childhood in Brazil.

So I leave you to enjoy the winter 2017 issue of Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast Magazine, but don't complain about the cold, because being from Parramatta, I know what real cold is like. Enjoy the latest edition!

**Robin Mainali**

*Dealer Principal  
Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast*



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# MARQUING A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

50 years of Mercedes-Benz on the Gold Coast

WRITER James Perkins



There was a time on the Gold Coast when there was no Mercedes-Benz dealership, but it was the year Johnny Farnham had his first hit, Sadie the Cleaning Lady, while the Beatles released their seminal album Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band – it was the Summer of Love, and in the Australian summer, Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared at sea.

Amidst all this, a young entrepreneur named Evan O'Donnell opened Grand Motors on the Gold Coast, across the Road from the Grand Hotel.

The Gold Coast had only been announced as a 'city' eight years earlier and Surfers Paradise's first high rise, Kinkabool, was still a shiny example of modern architecture.

As the city has grown, Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast has grown with it. From that small showroom to the expansive Robina centre that exists today; from straight six engines without a trace of a computer, to the highly integrated engines of today.

Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast has found four stories that piece together the history of the dealership, from its early stages, to now.



# TIMELINE



**1967**

Evan O'Donnell's Grand Motors is established opposite the Grand Hotel, Labrador.



**1971**

Dealership moves to Isle of Capri



**1976**

Dealership moves to Nind Street



**2002**

Mercedes-Benz dealership moves to Ferry Road



**2007**

Mercedes-Benz dealership moves to Robina



**2017**

Brand new corporate identity revealed

# RUSSELL EBELING

How a 1971 280 SE came home to the Gold Coast



## EVAN O'DONNELL

Evan O'Donnell founded Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast – or Grand Motors – opposite the Grand Hotel in 1967.

The entrepreneurial car salesman saw an opportunity with both Toyota and Mercedes-Benz as people began to forget grievances against Japan and Germany in the years after World War II.

Long-time Grand Motors workshop manager Russell Ebeling remembers his former employer Evan O'Donnell as a 'pioneering motor entrepreneur' who got a good opportunity with Toyota when it was trying to crack the Australian market.

The addition of the Mercedes-Benz brand took the business to another level and brought clients such as Gold Coast luminaries Max Christmas and Bruce Small through the door.

"Isle of Capri was a wealthy area and Evan really couldn't go wrong there," Russell says.

The rest is history, as they say.

Current workshop manager Mark Scott remembers Evan as an 'old school' dealer principal who would say hello to each one of his staff when he arrived at the dealership – "that was his style".

"Back then it was a family-oriented business and various members of Evan's family would work in roles across the dealership."

When Russell Ebeling was manager of the Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast workshop, he would hire a plane with some friends for flying holidays deep into the outback.

"I was a pilot and with a few mates and some tools, I would fly out to the remote areas of the state and drop in on some Mercedes-Benz clients while I was out there," he says.

"The people used to love that."

Indeed they did. Russell struck up years-long relationships with his former outback clients that have continued to this day.

Late last year, he got a call. It was from the Lindsay family: owners of Arrabury station on the South Australian border.

"Remember the old 1971 280 SE you used to service? We were about to bury it in a paddock, but thought you might like it."

Russell wanted to save the car from a dusty grave, but didn't know how he would get it back to the Gold Coast.

"Can you get to Toowoomba? It's already on a train; arriving tomorrow."

The car had been sitting in the paddock since the mid '90s, but after a good clean and a bit of tinkering, the fuel-injected 2.8L six cylinder engine started first time.

"Their neighbours said they were crazy for getting a fuel-injected engine out into the desert," Russell said as the car idled in his Tallai carport.

"People had been having such problems with them out there at that time and were only getting six months life out of their engines.

"However, this car started first time after lying in a paddock for 20 years."

Russell gained a real attachment to the car, having flown out to service it for many years, and plans to keep it as is. "It is a really special car – it belongs in a museum".

It is in incredible condition, considering the tough 136,000 miles it has travelled since it was bought from Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast around 1971.

The only major damage to the bodywork is a large dent on the passenger side, caused when it collided with an emu many years ago.





“This car, if it went into town, would have to drive along 400 kilometres of dirt, and most four-wheel-drives you see today would not last as long as this has,” says Russell.

After beginning his career at Grand Motors at Nind Street in 1977, Russell rose to workshop manager by the time he left the business in the mid-90s.

He is the type of mechanic who misses the days when engineers designed cars with

slide rules, without as much influence from the accountant.

After leaving Grand Motors, Russell made a career out of fixing classic cars for clients such as long-time Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast customer Rob White.

“There is nothing Russell doesn’t know about classic Mercedes-Benz cars,” says Rob.

Russell has had a lasting impact on the Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast workshop – he hired the current workshop chief Mark Scott.

Mark remembers a method that Russell showed him for identifying a fault in central locking that he still uses today.

“I still use that same methodology to this day for similar problems. Russell’s methodology on how to solve problems transcends models and years, and you can apply it no matter what brand you are working on, or what model.

“And now I am showing others what he taught me.”

# ROB WHITE

## A 30-year Mercedes-Benz love affair



Rob White bought his first Mercedes-Benz in 1985 – a 1981 280 E from Reg Bevesen at Grand Motors at the Isle of Capri – and with that purchase began a decades-long infatuation with the Marque.

“Since 1985, I have only had Mercs,” he says. “Once you have had a Merc, it is very hard to get out of them.”

He has owned a dozen Mercedes-Benz since that time, but it is his current pride and joy, a 1968, 280 SL Pagoda, that elicits a special glint in the retired anaesthetist’s eye.

“It is a beautiful car and it continues along the same line as the original SL, the first of which was the Gullwing in 1954 and which became soft tops from the mid-to-late 50s,” he says of the vehicle he bought from a fellow Queensland enthusiast.

The masterpiece of a car still gets regular runs around the Gold Coast, despite its escalating value, but Rob’s daily drive is a 1995 SL 500 and it is parked outside Crema Main Beach as we sip coffees.

Rob has been on the Gold Coast since 1978, where he moved from Sydney to work and raise his family. He established a strong relationship with Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast over the years.

Rob remembers the name of each of the salespeople that sold him the vehicles as he lists of the models he has acquired over the years.

In 1988 he bought a 1976 450 SL from Phillip Ray, at the Nind Street dealership.

Two years later, he switched to a 1987 300 E from Ian Miller, and then went back to Miller for to a 1986 300 SE in 1992.

That same year, he bought a 520 SL 1989 model from Ray Grace at Nambour – the last of those models left in Queensland at the time.

He bought Mercedes-Benz wagons in 1995 and 1997: a 1987 230 TE and a 1989 300 TE. “I have always driven SLs and my wife has always driven station wagons,” Rob explains.

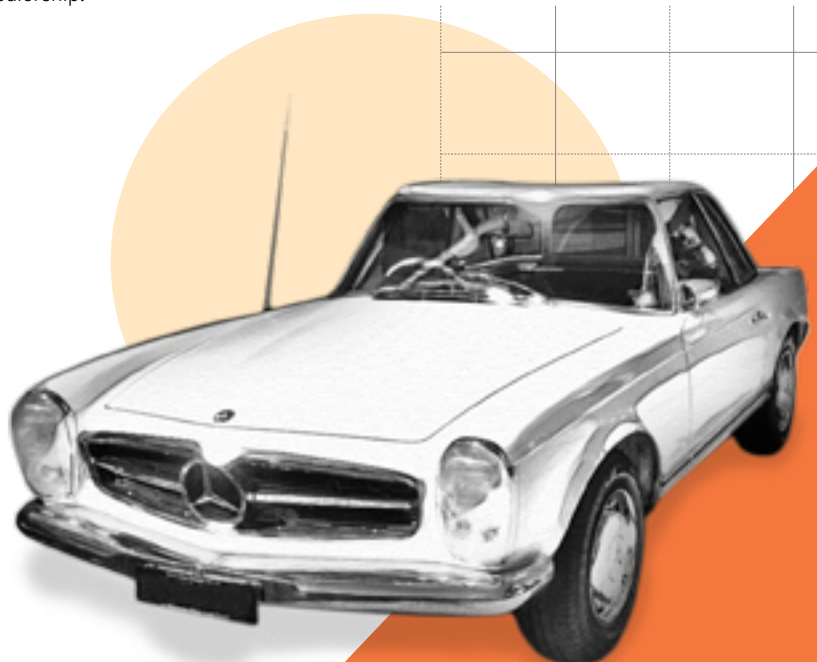
In 2001, Rob bought the 1995 SL 500 from Damien Hardigan at Nind Street followed in 2004 by a 2002 E 320 from the new Ferry Road dealership.

Rob also bought a 1995 E 320 in a private sale in 2003.

In 2014, he bought a 250 CDI 2014 demonstrator model.

Of all the staff Rob has interacted with over the years, he particularly remembers Damien Hartigan (he rents a car space off Damien’s mother to this day) and Russell Ebeling.

He and retired eye surgeon Darryl Gregor, became good friends with Russell over the years. “We were always wondering what would happen if Russell got hit by a bus: we wouldn’t know what to do with out our cars,” says Rob with a smile.







**ROBIN MAINALI**

A bright future

Even as Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast looks back 50 years, Dealer Principal Robin Mainali is looking ahead.

And the future looks bright; the Mercedes-Benz brand is perhaps the strongest it has been in Australia.

“We have doubled our market share in the past three years on the back of a business philosophy which focuses on great customer experience and the strength and synergy of the business and brand philosophies,” says Robin.

Having worked for Mercedes-Benz for 14 years, previously with Mercedes-

Benz Gold Coast’s sister dealership at Parramatta, Robin has seen that growth first-hand and is determined to ensure it continues on the Gold Coast, where he arrived in 2014.

“My goal is to ensure Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast is a benchmark Mercedes-Benz dealership in the country with a customer offering and experience that is second to none,” he says.

“I am very grateful to the Gold Coast community, and the customers who have supported Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast for the past 50 years – they are the reason for everything we do.”



**MARK SCOTT**

The changing life of the mechanic

Workshop manager Mark Scott has been with Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast for 29 years, having started as a car washer, and now heads a department with 18 technicians and four apprentices.

There have been incredible changes at not just the Gold Coast dealership, but at Mercedes-Benz as a whole, in that time, and Mark, who was given his apprenticeship by Russell Ebeling (see previous story) is happy to reminisce.

“When I first started with Mercedes-Benz in the mid-80s there was a small product range – around 12 variants – and the company now has around about 100 variants across its vehicles,” he says.

The specialist tools cupboard has grown from a small box containing a multimeter and oscilloscope to the size of a wall, and essentially every tool is a specialist tool.

Servicing is highly data and software focused – the number of electronic control modules in the cars has increased from three to 60.

“The technology has moved along in a big way,” Mark says. “And the professionalism has gone up 10-fold.”





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# FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP: WHAT IT IS AND WHY YOU NEED IT

WRITER James Marshall, MWM Advisory Director



Leadership comes in many forms, and in today's risky and uncertain economic environment, financial leadership is essential in building a strategic and resilient business.

As a result, the role of the chief financial officer has evolved from simply maintaining the core accounting function of the business to one of strategic advisor to the CEO.

Small to medium sized businesses may not have the luxury of a CFO, but this does not mean that their accountant cannot fulfill this role, or that they cannot engage an outside consultant.

The philosophy of the financial leadership evolution is the capability for data analysis and compliance work to be a source of competitive advantage for a business, rather than simply being an essential use of resources.

## How do you know if your financial leadership is lacking?

- It feels like your business is always playing catch up;
- You are not anticipating, or planning for future changes in the economic, technological or regulatory environment;
- Your business lacks a clear statement as to how its finance function will evolve;
- There is little capacity for your senior finance people to contribute to strategic and tactical planning;
- And your business focuses obsessively on financial control.

With financial leadership, your business will have the resilience to adapt to change, and the ability to transform as it chases continuous improvement.

## AN EYE FOR TECHNOLOGY



Digital processes create huge amounts of data in modern business, and understanding how to handle, analyse and gain insights into this valuable resource is a key aspect of financial leadership.

This really is the finance function's bread and butter, and the value-add is its ability to share the insights gained from this data with other departments within the business.

Considering the rise of data analytics, it is important to note that the Australian Tax Office also has access to eye-watering amounts of data, and it is learning how to use it.

Data matching is a key pillar of its auditing strategy and as time goes on, the tax office's technology will grow smarter and find more discrepancies. The ATO is able to match data from its own vast troves with that contained on the electoral roll, in property transactions and bank accounts.

That's why it is vital financial leaders are not only champions of traditional accounting practices, but are champions of new technology that is compliant, efficient and transparent.

Great chief financial officers can leverage compliance work to a competitive advantage by being ready ahead of time and finding innovative ways to meet compliance demands.

But before the finance function of a business can take on a leadership role, its house must be in order. Processes for collecting and analysing data should be efficient, reliable and comprehensive.

## THE REAR VIEW SHOULD NOT BE YOUR ONLY VIEW

The upshot of an on-point finance department is that it has the capability not only to look at the present and past, but also the future, and that is the key to financial leadership.

Perception based on data and insight can reinforce a business against shocks and identify new opportunities. For example, can current products be tweaked to better serve the needs of customers, while also improving the bottom line?

The point is that businesses that move forward with a clear vision of potential challenges can avoid reactive, instinctive responses to challenges.

So, accountants need to look up from their spreadsheets and compliance work, shelve the abacus, change their perception as the 'no' person of the business, and become the business partner of the CEO – a move from financial gatekeeper to strategic adviser.

Financial leaders improve the use of information, they invest in increasing technical skills of staff, and ensure that the resources

are at hand to maintain the financial function are up-to-date and best in class.

This all can seem out of reach of small to medium businesses, but that is not the case. Chief financial officers are not just for ASX-listed companies.

Pursuing financial leadership within a business can start with investing in your current bookkeeping and accounting staff, and scheduling a single day coaching session for your entire team.

It's also important to speak to your accountant about what services they have available to help you implement financial leadership within your business.

At MWM Advisory, we've created the 'CFO for a Day' service, which allows businesses to access the benefits of strong financial leadership and advice, without the commitment and price tag of a full-time CFO.

The service allows you to gain a better understanding of your business numbers so you can improve your profits, cash flow and financial position.

Financial leadership is an investment that has positive returns: your staff will be happier, your business more resilient, and will be capable of navigating a growth phase.



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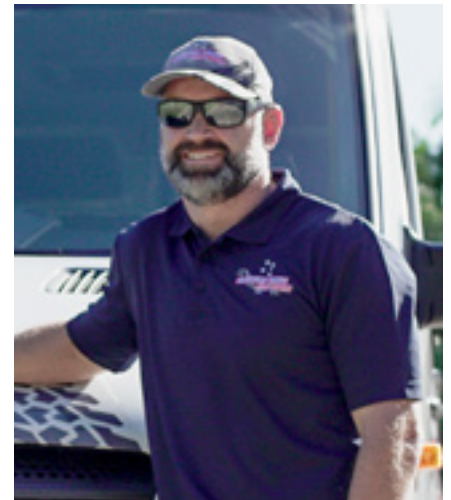




# THE VANS THAT CAN

Off-road, fine food and photography: The stories of three Gold Coast businesses powered by Mercedes-Benz vans. They're the workhorse of the brand, but they still carry the prestige and quality of the Marque. These entrepreneurs wouldn't be without them.

WRITER James Perkins PHOTOGRAPHY Jayden Hoskin







# LINCOLN WILLIAMS, FOTOMEDIA

“I can pull the key out and boast that it's a Merc; they don't need to know it's a van, right?”

**A** typical day as Fotomedia's creative director for Lincoln Williams is by no means scripted.

“It can be very spontaneous and fun working with our 12 Fotomedians,” explains Lincoln.

“The type of work we do is very diverse – one day we could be filming a TV commercial and the next we may be photographing a celebrity, or meeting a bunch of business leaders.”

Fotomedia is a boutique creative agency with studios in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast that has been involved in campaigns for the Gold Coast Titans, Queensland Museum, the 2018 Commonwealth Games, and many more.

A long wheelbase Mercedes-Benz Vito is the oldest vehicle in the company's fleet, and it has proven its worth many times over.

“The van's been bush bashing in the mine fields of Central Queensland, not that I recommend that – but it has,” says Lincoln.

“And it is just as smooth on the M1 as the day we got it.”

“The funny thing is that if I am at a bar with friends, I can pull the key out and boast that I have a Merc: they don't need to know it is a van, right?”

In all seriousness, Lincoln says, “for what we do – transporting our camera and lighting equipment – a van is essential”.

“It gives us great access with the three doors and if you feel the need, you can fit out the

space to suit. The height and length are the most pivotal reasons why I would never go back to a smaller vehicle.”

Lincoln has two decades experience in photography, film and television industries. In a previous life he worked on films at the Village Roadshow studios on the Gold Coast, as well as all of Australia's major television networks, where he mostly filmed sports and drama.

He got his start on the Australian soap opera Paradise Beach back in 1991 and lists Pitch Black, starring Vin Diesel as his most memorable film project.

“It was actually a great film, and I don't know if many people realise it was shot here on the Gold Coast,” he says.

Lincoln spoke to MBGC from Papua New Guinea, where the Fotomedia crew regularly travels, and which Lincoln describes as ‘the land of spontaneity’, to do work for telecommunication companies, beer brewers, and the country's Prime Minister, among others.

“This place is so cool once you get amongst the villages,” he says.

“It's a great place, and if I could say one thing about PNG, it would be that it is not as dangerous as everyone makes out; the people are great, and it is only if you want to act like a fool they will bring you into line... in most cases.”







## TRENT MORGAN, PROGRESSIVE CATERING

Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast is one of our clients, and we had an opportunity to test the van and I found that it is second to none when it comes to driving

**F**or Progressive Catering founder Trent Morgan, every day brings a new challenge in a new location.

He could be setting up in a home kitchen, or high in a city high rise, or cooking for 150 people at a wedding.

“Different menus, different venues – every day is something different,” he says.

“One week we could be in Byron Bay in a private house, the next we could be on the 53rd floor of an office building.”

This diversity of clients and experience is one of the reasons why Trent decided eight years ago to satisfy an entrepreneurial urge and start his own business.

He certainly had the cooking chops to pull it off. Trent is a graduate of the California School of Culinary Arts and worked under Wolfgang Puck at the 73rd Academy Awards Governor’s Ball, and at the Patina Group.

He then moved to London where he spent a year cheffing at the Hemple Hotel, Bayswater, which was a favourite of celebrities (until it was knocked down in 2013), including Michael Jackson, who famously hired the entire hotel for a stay in 2006.

After a couple of stints on cruise ships, Trent returned to the Gold Coast – where he began his career under Darren Glasgow – and worked in restaurants, but had ‘the want’ to do catering.

“It was actually my wife who gave me a kick up the bum and said, ‘get cracking or you are just going to sit there and keep wondering’,” he says.

“So I did, and we found a niche market here on the Gold Coast.”

“There weren’t many high-end caterers in the region and that is where we stepped in.”

The eight-year-old business caters for medium to high-end clientele – mostly corporates, but also weddings and private events.

The business has built up a strong reputation between Byron Bay and Brisbane, particularly for its cocktail food, canapés and modern Australian cuisine.

Of course, Trent needs a good van to transport his food and equipment around to the various locations, and the Mercedes-Benz Vito is his vehicle of choice.

“It is a great car to drive, and it is a very safe car to drive,” says Trent. “Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast is one of our clients, and we had an opportunity to test the van and I found that it is second to none when it comes to driving.

“There is also the image and appearance for our clients – they are hiring us as a high-end caterer, so this is a great way to achieve that look.”

Trent has also started a new venture within Progressive Catering, called iLunch, which delivers lunches to on-the-go workers throughout the Gold Coast.



## DARRAN WALLACE, SOUTHERN CROSS 4WD TOURS

With Mercedes-Benz having the prestige that it does,  
it goes very well with what we offer

**A**s we arrive at the undulating dirt track that will take us towards the Gold Coast Hinterland, Darran Wallace, owner of Southern Cross 4WD Tours, smiles and says, “this is about the time people will ask, ‘when do we get into the 4WD?’”

There is no need to change cars, because the 16-seat Mercedes-Benz C516 Sprinter Darran is driving is the four-wheel drive.

After pressing a button to lock the axle, we make our way up the side of the hill, craning

our necks looking for koalas in the eucalypts lining the track.

“It can go everywhere we want it to go,” explains Darran of the bus. “The tracks aren’t that extreme, but there are drop offs, and if you give good commentary, you can have peoples’ blood pressure up without putting them in any danger.”

Darran tells some stories about having busloads of international tourists squealing on a perfectly safe road.

“It’s like going on stage when you become a tour guide: you have to switch on your personality and be that person.”

Mercedes-Benz vans are the bedrock of the Southern Cross 4WD Tours business – there are six in Darran’s fleet, which he and his staff use to take small, personalised group tours into the Byron Bay and Gold Coast hinterlands.

“When my wife and I bought the business in 2005, we bought it with two 14-seater vehicles





and now we have six Mercedes-Benz and a Landcruiser," he says.

What does he like about the Mercedes-Benz?

"It's a turnkey thing for us: we can put an order in and get a vehicle delivered in 4-6 months that we know can do the job."

"It is beneficial being able to have the whole car serviced locally at one place, and all I have to worry about is the interior fit out.

"With Mercedes-Benz having the prestige that it does, it goes very well with what we offer."

Darran is a keen off-road and camping enthusiast and says he saw the business as an opportunity to turn what he loves into his lifestyle.

"I saw this business for sale at a local newsagent and thought, 'this will be easy' – I could 4WD all day and travel around Australia and do lots of cool stuff, but I learned very quickly it was nothing like that," he says.

While it hasn't been easy, – "it is not a case of 'print a brochure and they will come'" – Darran has made it a success.

The main tour is an all-inclusive day that includes hotel pickup and drop off, expert commentary and experiences at private venues such as a 500-acre cattle property, as well as guided walks.

Darran says, "We pick the best areas to visit and ensure our guests don't have to wait for anything."

"We have guides with different areas of expertise – myself and 4WDing, and others who know birds, and plants – and we will try and match groups up with the best guide, depending on what they are interested in."

For locals, the beauty of the Gold Coast hinterland is no secret, but Darran says it comes as a surprise for interstate and international tourists.

"We are not known as a destination that has rainforests and waterfalls; we are known as a destination that has theme parks and beaches."

"It doesn't matter if they are international or not, when they come here they say, 'wow, I didn't know this was here.'"

On our short trip up the mountain, the sun shines through the branches of the eucalypts and there are green shoots spouting up from the foliage following the heavy rains from ex-tropical cyclone Debbie, and there is a spectacular view across the city of the Gold Coast to the Pacific Ocean.

"I love the bush," says Darran. "I have since I was in Cubs. When I was 21 a good friend of mine took me camping and 4WDing on the beach and ever since then it has been my hobby.

"And when you go camping, there's no phone reception, so I turn my mobile phone off and no one can say anything about it," he laughs.

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2010 Mercedes-Benz C 63 AMG

\$66,900.00 Drive Away

\$50,000 - \$100,000



Km 79,243. Four-door and five-seat sedan in Calcite White with black leather interior. Stock number L10659

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- Keyless start
  - Electric sliding glass sunroof
  - Comand navigation with voice activation
  - Electric front seats with memory
  - Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
  - One-year roadside assistance
- Many more features to list.



2015 Mercedes-Benz C 250

\$64,900.00 Drive Away

\$50,000 - \$100,000



Km 16,145. Four-door and five-seat sedan in Cavansite Blue with black leather interior. Stock number L10662

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- 19-inch alloy wheels
- Panoramic glass sunroof
- Heads-up display
- LED intelligent headlamps
- Comand navigation system with voice activation
- Electric front seats with memory and heating
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty

Many more features to list.





2012 Mercedes-Benz ML 350

\$64,900.00 Drive Away

\$50,000 - \$100,000



Km 40,126. Five-door and five-seat wagon in Tenorite Grey with black leather interior. Stock number L10660

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- 20-inch alloy wheels
- Keyless entry and start
- Electric tailgate
- Electric tilting
- Sliding panoramic glass sunroof
- Rear seat entertainment
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty

Many more features to list.

\$50,000 - \$100,000



2013 Mercedes-Benz E 250

\$56,900.00 Drive Away



Km 41,798. Four-door and five-seat sedan Obsidian Black with black leather interior. Stock number L10730

#### FEATURES INCLUDE

- AMG styling package
- 19-inch multi-spoke AMG alloy wheels
- Panoramic glass sunroof
- LED headlights
- Harman/Kardon surround sound
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
- Two-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.





2012 Mercedes-Benz ML 250

\$54,900.00 Drive Away

\$50,000 - \$100,000



Km 94,528. Five-door and four-seat wagon in Calcite White with black leather interior. Stock number L10747

#### FEATURES INCLUDE

- AMG styling package
- 21-inch AMG twin-spoke alloy wheels
- Keyless entry and start
- Automatic tailgate
- Electric tilting
- Sliding glass sunroof
- Electric memory front seats
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
- Two-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.

\$50,000 - \$100,000



2013 Mercedes-Benz E 250

\$54,900.00 Drive Away



Km 95,029. Two-door and four-seat coupe in Polar White with black leather interior. Stock number L10666

#### FEATURES INCLUDE

- AMG styling
- 19-inch diamond cut alloy wheels
- Panoramic glass sunroof
- Harman/Kardon surround sound
- Electric memory front seats with heating
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
- One-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.





2012 Mercedes-Benz ML 250

\$52,900.00 Drive Away

\$50,000 - \$100,000



Km 52,553. Five-door and five-seat wagon in Palladium Silver with black leather interior. Stock number L10651

#### FEATURES INCLUDE

- 19-inch alloy wheels
  - Front and rear parking sensors
  - Dual zone climate control
  - Economical turbo-diesel engine
  - Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
  - One-year roadside assistance
- Many more features to list.

\$50,000 - \$100,000



## 2015 Mercedes-Benz CLA 200

\$52,900.00 Drive Away



Km 20,193. Four-door and five-seat coupe in Polar Silver with black interior. Stock number L10617

### FEATURES INCLUDE

- AMG styling package
- 18-inch gloss black alloy wheels
- Comand navigation
- Climate control air-conditioning
- Parking assist – graphical display
- One-year certified pre-owned warranty

Many more features to list.





2014 Mercedes-Benz C 200

\$49,900.00 Drive Away



Km 30,760. Four-door and five-seat sedan in Palladium Silver with black interior. Stock number L10688

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- Panoramic glass sunroof
- Intelligent LED headlamps
- Electric seats
- Comand navigation with voice activation
- Burmester surround sound system
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
- Two-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.

\$25,000 - \$50,000



2015 Mercedes-Benz B 200

\$44,900.00 Drive Away



Km 7,864. Five-door and five-seat hatchback in Cirrus White with black interior. Stock number L10754

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- Electric memory front seats with heating
- Panoramic glass sunroof
- Comand navigation with voice activation
- Reverse camera
- Blind spot assist
- Keyless start
- Front and rear parking sensors
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
- Two-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.

\$25,000 - \$50,000





2012 Mercedes-Benz E 250

\$44,900.00 Drive Away



Km 70,011. Four-door and five-seat sedan in Obsidian Black with black leather interior. Stock number L10736

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- Panoramic glass sunroof
- Bi-Xenon headlamps
- Harman/Kardon surround sound
- Electric seats
- 17-inch alloy wheels
- Two-year certified pre-owned warranty
- Two-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.

\$25,000 - \$50,000



2015 Mercedes-Benz B 200

\$39,900.00 Drive Away



Km 13,441. Five-door and five-seat hatchback in Polar Silver with black interior. Stock number L10724

**FEATURES INCLUDE**

- Blind spot assist
- Becker navigation
- Active park assist
- Bluetooth with audio streaming
- Fixed LED headlamps
- Daytime running lights
- Keyless start
- One-year certified pre-owned warranty
- One-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.

\$25,000 - \$50,000





2006 Mercedes-Benz SLK 350

\$29,900.00 Drive Away



Km 50,290. Two-door and two-seat roadster in Obsidian Black with black leather interior. Stock number L10664

FEATURES INCLUDE

- 17-inch alloy wheels
- Comand navigation
- Electric hardtop roof
- Electric memory front seats
- One-year certified pre-owned warranty
- One-year roadside assistance

Many more features to list.

\$25,000 - \$50,000



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# MARI'S MORINGAS

How a Gold Coast artist rediscovered her childhood through pottery

WRITER James Perkins PHOTOGRAPHER Estela Bonato



“I also love to go to antique shops and find some really old ceramic transfer, it gives me a one-of-a-kind feel for my pieces.”

Currently, the Tallebudgera-based artist’s favourite piece is her Yemanja moringa, inspired by Brazil’s Queen of the Ocean. Each is painted blue and, “I hand carved all over to represent her hair, the ocean and the waves.”

In addition to the fine artwork on each piece, Mari will include words such as gratitude, joy, love, and balance, as inspiration.

There is a school of thought that words printed on water vessels can imbue the liquid within with that very quality.

At the least, the sight of a stunning ceramic on the bedside table, filled with cool water and a positive message, will make each morning a little brighter.

Mari always had a creative streak and it was natural that she pursued a career that would allow her an outlet.

After completing a Bachelor of Visual Arts, she worked in advertising surrounded by creative people, but yearned to create something herself. She travelled extensively, before settling in Australia in 2002.

It was 12 years later that she took that pottery class, and the years quickly fell away.

**T**hree years ago, Mari Bray took her first pottery class, and it changed her life.

“I was instantly taken back to my childhood,” she says of the lesson in 2014, when her hands began to shape the clay.

“Creativity is part of my culture; some of my earliest memories are creating artistic pieces with my mother in the family home in Brazil.”

It may have been an adult awakening to ceramics, but those childhood memories from her upbringing in Brazil have inspired her art in this new medium.

Recollections of sipping water from her mother’s ‘moringa’ and her father’s work in

their family garden are the things that shine through in her work.

In fact, the moringa – a two-piece water vessel designed for the bedside table – is her signature piece, each of which is decorated with hand-painted images of native flora and fauna.

“Each moringa is one-of-a-kind and adorned with flowers and birds,” says Mari. And despite the Brazilian influence, “the most popular designs include local Australian flowers such as the wattle, blue gum, gum blossom, and waratah.”

“My images are a mix of hand painted, screen print and ceramic transfer designed by me or sourced across Australia and overseas.

Shop Mari Bray's collection at  
[www.etsy.com/au/shop/maribray](https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/maribray)



## THE BAIANA COLLECTION

Mari Bray's latest collection is called Baiana and is created in tribute to the Bahia people of northeast Brazil.

The capital of Bahia is Salvador, which was founded by the Portuguese in 1549 as the first capital of Brazil, and is a cultural heart of the modern country.

"They represent a cultural Brazilian heritage with their dresses, turbans, earrings, bracelets, and trays selling traditional Afro Brazilian dishes and especially with their positive and vibrant way of living and natural happiness," Mari says.

The collection consists of tall vases, two 22cm plate designs, a tall cake plate and two trinket dishes.



“My images are a mix of hand painted, screen print and ceramic transfer designed by me or sourced across Australia and overseas”







# FINDING SOLACE IN PARADISE POINT

Two friends realise their restaurant dream after meeting  
15 years earlier in the United Kingdom

WRITER James Perkins PHOTOGRAPHY Thomas Ng

**T**here was something missing at Paradise Point before Grant Loxton and Dave Thomas established Solace Bar & Restaurant one year ago.

Tucked away on the bank of the Coomera River at the pointy end of Paradise Point, Solace has a laid-back sophistication that is typical of the Gold Coast's hospitality renaissance.

"We wanted to give people here something different – something cool, something relaxed, something modern, with good wines and good food," explains Dave.

Grant adds, "There is a limited offering of quality fresh produce up this end of the coast, so it is nice to be able to put that together."

It fills the gap in the offering around Paradise Point, something that Grant had been keenly aware of after living in the area for more than 20 years.

Solace is a passion project for the long-time friends, who have forged successful careers in the construction industry.

They met 15 years ago working the bar scene in the UK resort and university town of Bournemouth, and it was the experience of their youths in hospitality that kept surfacing in the backs of their minds even after all these years.

It inspired them to get back into the restaurant business.

"It is nice to put all the fun things we were doing when we were younger together and do it for ourselves," says Dave, who spent eight years working in the UK, and gave Grant a job in Bournemouth on the recommendation of his brother.

The pair clearly had a great experience – Grant met his wife Amy in Bournemouth – and that manifests in the experience of Solace.

"We have put all those thoughts, feelings and memories into our own place, and seeing it working with people having a good time and our staff enjoying themselves – it is a bit of a kick, actually," says Dave.

The site, at the end of Marina Promenade, picked itself – "we knew that it had the waterside feel that we were looking for," says Grant.

The restaurant's timber finish rolls out onto the sprawling undercover deck area that looks out over the water and across to Coomera Island. Offsetting the timber is a synthetic grass wall feature, which adds to the sophisticated, yet casual environment.

The concept was brought to life by Chobani, a Hong Kong-based designer whom Dave met while working on Steve Wynn's latest casino in Macau.

She hails from Paradise Point, so immediately understood the context of the site and what would appeal to the locals within the area.

"Despite being based in Macau, she knew the location, the outlook, the local area and the clientele," says Dave.

"Grant and I wanted a modern look that blended with the waterside feel. Chobani was able to pull it together really well," said Dave of the four-week design process.

Solace has caught the attention of Gold Coast developers and there have already been offers for Grant and Dave to take their brand to a second location, and it is something the pair is willing to explore.

"Solace has definitely given us a taste for the restaurant business and we are excited by the opportunities that we have for the future," says Grant.

Dave adds: "We are waiting for the right time and the right venue – we want all the stars to align. They haven't aligned yet, but we're confident that they will."

“We have put all those thoughts, feelings and memories into our own place, and seeing it working with people having a good time and our staff enjoying themselves – it is a bit of a kick, actually”

## THE FOOD

When Solace launched, it had the services of head chef Chris McLeay, who is a good friend of the restaurant’s owners.

“He had a lot of good ideas; he is an internationally trained chef who has cooked all over the world,” says Grant. “He helped us establish the menu and assisted us for the first six months to get the restaurant running how we wanted it to.”

McLeay passed the tongs onto Bevan Groves, an award-winning chef who hails from Tasmania, who is now delivering on the ‘simple food done well’ ethos with a team of seven chefs.

The dinner menu includes a sous vide lemon thyme chicken breast, moisture infused pork cutlet and slow cooked lamb rump, plus rib and eye fillet steak options.

There is an extensive tapas menu and a mouth-watering lunch menu that includes crispy skin salmon and a roasted vegetable and semi sun dried tomato salad.

“We wanted to keep with the modern Australian feel, but with a better offering of fresh food than what is already available around here,” explains Dave.







## THE WINE

Dave is preparing Solace's second wine menu, a "hard, but fun" process that takes time. He dedicated three months to the original menu, which he put together whilst in Macau.

"I wanted something a little bit different from the mainstream; not something that you see when you go to the wine store. A little bit off the market, a little bit up-and-coming – award-winning wines, but really palatable wines that make you want

to come back for another bottle or glass after you taste it," he says.

With such a broad concept Dave is content to give the wine menu room to move.

"Despite the advice of some that have said 'you should narrow it down,' I think we do well to provide a broad spectrum of wines from all around the world."

Recently, Dave received a compliment from a wine supplier that took him by surprise. "He

commented that he thought the wine menus that we have developed are among the better wine menus he has seen on the coast.

"When we first opened, the initial wine menu was thought of as being a little flamboyant and reaching for the stars. People thought we might have been getting ahead of ourselves, but it worked out very well, and our extensive wine menu has been well received by our customers."

# NUEVO HABANA

Hip and vibrant city retains its old charm

WRITER Bruce Nelson PHOTOGRAPHY Robyn Spratt







**W**hen former US president Barak Obama announced his administration's intention to re-establish relations with Cuba in 2014, the tourism industry went into meltdown.

While it was relatively easy to enter the 'trophy' destination from almost any other country, the relaxation from the US signalled what many thought would be a rush to travel to the enigmatic island nation.

If this was the kindling to start the fire, then Fidel Castro's death last November literally poured fuel on the idea.

"14 things to do in Cuba before it changes forever" a headline from London's The Telegraph suggested, "Cuba after Castro: How much change, and how quickly?" asked NBC News, and "Cuba is changing rapidly" Germany's international broadcaster Deutsche Welle reported at the time.

But don't panic, the truth is Cuba, like any living, breathing and dynamic population, has always been changing, however the fundamental zeitgeist that people come in droves to experience is still the same and won't be changing anytime soon.

If you're a fan of the images of crumbling architecture (think a mix of Baroque, neo-Classicism, eclecticism, art nouveau, art deco et. al.), classic cars, colourful musicians and cigar chomping locals then you're never too late to visit Cuba.

**O**ne of the most exciting developments in the country's capital, Havana, is a somewhat quiet cultural revolution, with a hip young vanguard of locals and adopted entrepreneurs leading the charge.

We're not talking taking over TV stations or establishing a new world order (that'll come next year when Raul Castro relinquishes control of the Communist party), but a movement aimed at raising the bar in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

For a first-timer to Havana (the Spanish name is Habana) you can easily get swept up in the well-worn tourist trails, including daiquiris at Hemingway's old haunt El Floridada, walking the pedestrian friendly Obispo, or sipping a mojito at one of the hundreds of bars in the labyrinth of laneways and streets in La Habana Vieja (the oldest part of town and a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Or you could dig a little deeper and find some promising gems serving up some of the country's best cocktails, creating cutting edge art and handicrafts, and providing charming accommodation choices.



**W**hile Havana will turn 500 in a couple of years and a new (and hopefully younger) leader will be installed in 2018, it's the new generation that will define the city's future.

Take sister paladares (privately run restaurants) O'Reilly 304 and 303 (El Del Frente), opposite each other and run by hip Havana brothers José Carlos and Julio Imperatori.

While the ground level 304 has already made a splash on the local culinary and bar scene with one of the best ceviches in town, El Del Frente has a spacious rooftop terrace where you can sit for a drink and cigar, or enjoy the menu looking out on Old Havana's historic architecture.

Ask for the passionfruit Mojito, served in a mason jar, which once sampled makes all other Mojitos pale in comparison. Even their Pina Colada, an addictive tropical, coconut, cream and rum drink, easily passes as a desert just as much as a cocktail.

Both venues are consistently busy but worth a visit if you can get in, with indie music playing comfortably in the background and décor befitting a Brooklyn loft with industrial light shades, painted white brick walls and even a James Gandolfini artwork.

While the two are a sign of things to come in Havana, they still sit comfortably alongside the more traditional tourist bars and cafes that tout cheaper drinks and bar-crawling troubadours.

**E**xploring Havana is best done with a street map and no particular plan in place to best discover the city's newest hidden treasures.

Founded by the Spanish in 1519, La Habana Vieja is a veritable web of narrow cobblestone streets, large European-style plazas and an endless array of majestic colonial buildings.

While you can easily get dragged into one of the many t-shirt and souvenir shops, look a bit harder and you might be surprised by what the city has to offer.

On San Ignacio, between O'Reilly and Empedrado, is a showcase for the city's craft and designer movement, Piscalabis.

The small store promotes local artist's ceramics, soft furnishings, jewellery, art pieces and handicrafts.

It also has its own café serving authentic Cuban coffee, uniquely prepared according to a variety of traditional recipes, as well as juices and tropical fruit shakes and snacks.

If you're looking for a keepsake from the city that trumps a Che Guevara t-shirt then this is the place to go.

Old Havana can throw up surprises around every corner you turn, from gritty street art on walls to museums and galleries and magnificent foyers in century-old buildings that you'd miss if you didn't bother to look inside a non-descript door.

It can also produce experiences so bespoke you'll wonder why you didn't come sooner.

Take the historic perfumery, scent laboratory and museum Habana 1791 for example, housed in an 18th-century mansion on Mercaderes and where scents are made onsite.

The shop provides 12 different fragrances that have been rescued from old colonial Cuban times, but also creates custom made perfumes to suit your favourite smell or mood.

Complete with a striking collection of vintage perfume making equipment, you can also take home your very own fragrance in a locally made ceramic bottle, just make sure the cork stopper is sealed well.







## CANADA TO CUBA

---



For first time travellers to a hectic and eclectic city such as Havana, there's nothing better than the best insider information in your mother tongue.

Canadian born Brian Park provides the perfect launching pad for rookies to the country's capital from his Havana Dreams boutique hotel.

As developer and owner, Brian has built a strong following since opening his doors in August 2016 by recommending the best bars, restaurants and sights to his guests.

Havana Dreams offers six beautiful period rooms, all with ensuites, and features such as soaring four-plus metre ceilings, a rooftop terrace and a central location in the heart of Old Havana.

"I first travelled to Cuba 15 years ago to Camaguey City and Playa Santa Lucia for a package vacation to get away from the cold Canadian winter and to experience the hot tropical weather," says Brian.

"Over many years of returning to Cuba I noticed laws that no one ever thought would change start to change, such as locals being able to travel more freely and able to open private businesses.

"About six years ago I started to apply for permanent residency as I knew tourism between Cuba and the USA would eventually open up, and you need to be a resident to purchase property or run a business."

Brian says the architecture of the city is one of his favourite things, and of course the ubiquitous Cuban cigars. On the flip side, he says the bureaucracy and ever-present long lines to get anything done, including a visit to the bank or supermarket drive him crazy.

"Our plans are to continue to grow and develop our hotel including utilising the rooftop much more," Brian says.

"We are now doing salsa and boxing lessons there and are expanding our small garden to grow cilantro, tomatoes and other vegetables to use in our food that we cook at Havana Dreams.

"I am also looking to expand to Playa del Este (a beach approximately 25 kilometres outside of Havana) to have a Havana Dreams destination right on the beach."

For more information or to enquire about bookings visit [www.havana-dreams.com](http://www.havana-dreams.com) or call Brian directly on +5358470660 (but remember the 14 hour time difference). You can also follow the hotel on its Instagram page @havanadreamsbnb.











# THE TRUE COLOURS OF VIOLET GRAY

The jewellery that's good for the soul

PHOTOGRAPHY Tegan McVey | MODEL Montana Lower

**V**IOLET Gray creator Alexandra Olsen describes her approach to jewellery as conscious creating.

Each of her Chakra-inspired pieces encourages the wearer to think a little deeper about themselves and their interactions with the world.

"We intentionally instill a message so that our customers can use the jewellery to connect with themselves, how they want to feel and the ways in which they desire to show up," says Alexandra.

"By doing this, each wearer can be reminded of their personal nuances that they strive to embody."

The emotional connection that Alexandra fosters between the customer, product and brand is an opportunity to increase the value and the lifetime of her pieces.

"There is a depth to what we do, I am not just another person selling fashion jewellery for aesthetic purposes," she says.

This approach is evident in Alexandra's engagement with her customers, which goes beyond social media and into real life events, such as her community Women's Circles and Blessing Ceremonies.

As Alexandra says, "Our core business is connection – our one-on-one relationship with our customers."

This customer focus has driven a high level of support for Alexandra personally, and this is results in understanding when she takes a break from the business, as she did earlier this year.

The break allowed Alexandra to rebrand and refocus following her sister Frances's exit from the business. It marked the five-year anniversary of Violet Gray, an idea that Alexandra carried during her travels across the world before the brand was born in 2012 in Ubud, Bali.

"I wanted to reestablish the brand in a more conscious way," says Alexandra of the break,

which involved travelling for product development to ensure the Violet Gray offerings evolve in the most conscious way possible.

"Whenever I create, I intentionally strive to connect with my suppliers in real life to form a relationship," she says – an approach that provides the platform of trust her business needs to thrive.

"Our focus this year is traceability and sustainability – understanding the impact on the communities that we take from and how Violet Gray can give back.

Alexandra describes a yearning amongst consumers for ethically sourced products. "People want to know where their produce comes from and how many hands has it been through."

The care and passion Alexandra invests in her brand means those hands hold onto her jewellery tight and cherish it.

To see more of Violet Gray, visit [www.violetgraydesign.com](http://www.violetgraydesign.com)



**THIS PAGE**

Complete Chakra Kit / 9kt Solid Gold (\$744)

**OPPOSITE PAGE**

(Clockwise)

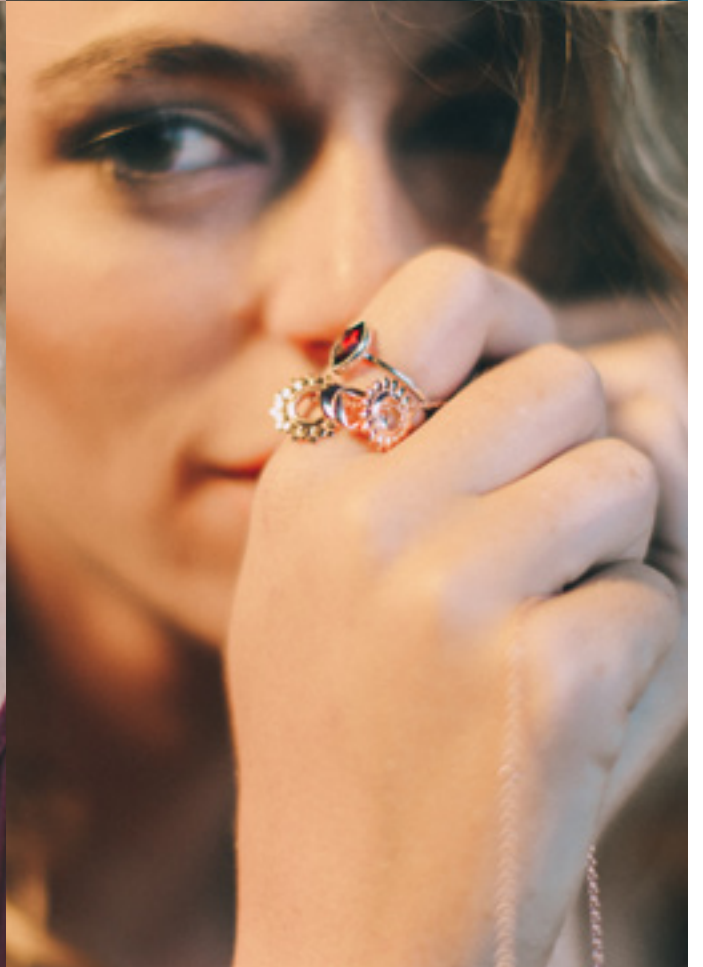
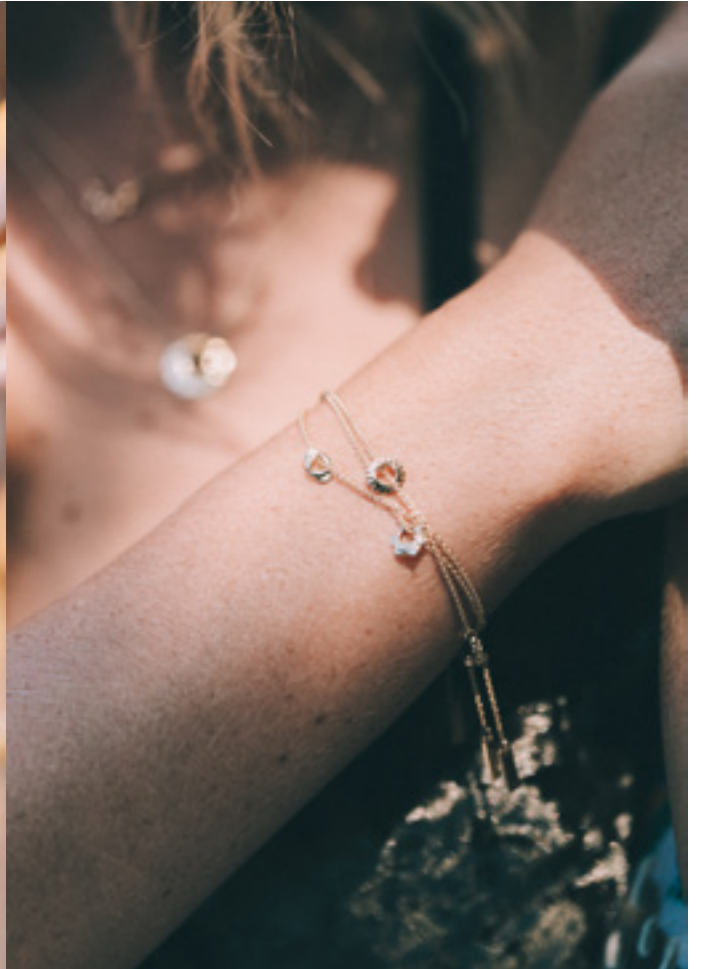
Complete Chakra Kit / Rose Gold (\$344)

Mixed Chakra bracelets / 9kt Solid Gold (\$179 each)

Mixed Chakra charms / Rose Gold (\$49 each) | Garnet Ring / (Releasing soon)

Heart Chakra necklace / Rose Gold (\$99) | Solar Plexus Chakra necklace / Rose Gold (\$99) | 'I Am Open' necklace / 9kt Solid Gold (\$289)







# MERCEDES-BENZ GOLD COAST MERCEDES TROPHY GOLF DAY

The Gold Coast playoff for the Mercedes Trophy, an exclusive series of invitational golf tournaments held around the world, saw our most enthusiastic group of Mercedes-Benz owners yet tee off for a tilt at the national final.

A spectacular autumn day on The Pines course at the Sanctuary Cove Golf and Country Club gave up three lucky winners, who will now vie for a place in the global playoff in Germany.

Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast ambassador Shelley Craft presented winners Danny Horne (1st place), James Phelan (runner up) and Pete Crossley (2nd runner up) with their trophies.

Each year, more than 65,000 players from more than 60 countries enter the Mercedes Trophy in local and national events.

Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast dealer principal Robin Mainali says the tournament has been running since 1989 and is a great way for Mercedes-Benz owners to socialise and be in the running for the major prize.







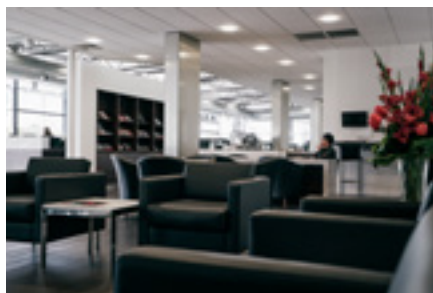
## NEW E-CLASS COUPÉ ARRIVES

It is being called beautiful intelligence. Simply breathtaking. The all new E-Class Coupé has arrived, and it is turning heads.

It seamlessly combines stunning coupé design with new levels of automotive intelligence that are inherent in the E-Class family.

The elegant four-seat coupé features uninterrupted views due to frameless doors and the absence of the continuous B-Pillar.

It provides unrivalled performance while sensors and assistance systems in the ensure safety on every journey.



## FAST SERVICE LAUNCHED

Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast has launched a new Fast Service guarantee, which mandates a set timeframe for A Service and B Service visits.

For the first time, an A Service has been set at an hour, and a B Service at 90 minutes.

Whereas in the past a car service would involve dropping the vehicle off in the morning and picking it up that afternoon, customers can now wait in the knowledge their car will be ready at an agreed time.

While waiting, clients can take advantage of all the in-house facilities, such as Wi-Fi, a comfortable lounge area, the all new business centre and TVs.

Customers can also add a wheel alignment (30 minutes) or a complimentary car wash (30 minutes) to all Fast Service bookings.

The cost of the service is dependent on the model, and Fast Service is not available for vans.

## MAXWELLBEAU BRINGS FOYER TO LIFE WITH NEW BUSINESS CENTRE AND CAFE

If you've noticed something different at Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast, then you're not mistaken.

The whole dealership has undergone a major refurbishment, and we have built a new business area to provide an even more comfortable experience for our customers.

Burleigh Heads based commercial fitout and project management company, MaxwellBeau, have designed and purpose built the spaces

with-custom made Queensland furniture utilising touches of stone, white and chrome features to provide a stylish finish.

The new business centre concept creates a separated section providing a space to check emails, recharge phones or laptops and have a meeting in an uninterrupted and private area.

We're thrilled with the result and couldn't be prouder to support a local business for the work.

A glimpse into Mercedes-Benz marketing of yesteryear, an era of long copy, masterful commercial artistry and press advertising with panache. Curated by the team at MBGC.



**A**s the W25 races past the Mercedes Velo in this classic Jupp Wiertz watercolour – the car and driver almost melting under the speed – the woman riding shotgun in the Velo returns the gaze of the viewer.

She is riding in the most technologically advanced invention of her time, but the moment is fleeting, and the W25 has left her behind.

The 1936 advertisement for Mercedes-Benz celebrates 50 years of the German brand, and this year Mercedes-Benz Gold Coast is celebrating the same milestone.

The speed of the W25 represents the pace of the brand's engineering development from one of its earliest vehicles to the engineering

marvel of the W25 50 years later, and that has only continued.

The juxtaposition of the two vehicles is important – the Velo took part in the world's first automobile race in 1894, between Paris and Rouen, while the W25 was part of the first wave of the iconic Silver Arrow racecars.





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COMMERCIAL FITOUT & REFURBISHMENT SPECIALISTS

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# Driving the Gold Coast for 50 years 1967 to 2017.

Mercedes-Benz  
The best or nothing.

