



northern explorer

Following in Captain Cook's footsteps can lead you to your own adventure on the Discovery Coast. **Jessica Reid** plays explorer

If someone's on a wave coming towards you don't try to stop them, just get out of their way and abandon ship!" laughs Luke from 1770 Liquid Adventures.

"Thanks Luke, but that information might have been helpful before we left the beach!" I splutter, after nearly colliding with a fellow kayaker.

I'm in the surf at Town of 1770 trying my hand at surf kayaking, and it seems some of my companions have not yet mastered the skill of steering while riding a wave.

Thankfully, we were only in waist deep water and the 'waves' were more like small ripples, so I did survive to tell the tale! And while there were a couple more near-misses during the two-hour guided tour, the pride and exhilaration you feel when catching a wave quickly override the memories of any earlier mishaps.

Owner of 1770 Liquid Adventures, Luke Wuiske is a sea-changer who swapped his hectic city lifestyle in New South Wales for the laidback coastal charm of Agnes Water and the Town of 1770, situated midway between Gladstone and Bundaberg.

Liquid Adventures hires kayaks right off the beach and also runs a number of different tours around the Town of 1770 waterways and headland.

'Ocean Adventure' is Luke's most popular tour and includes surf kayaking, swimming on secluded beaches, spotting dolphins and other marine life while kayaking around the headland and, of course, learning a bit about

the region's interesting history. For example, naming a place Town of 1770 might seem unusual but, as Luke explained, it's fitting when that town is the place Lieutenant James Cook landed on 24 May, 1770 (and the second place he landed in Australia after Botany Bay).

Touted by some as Noosa's fast-growing younger cousin, holiday resorts and luxury beach houses are rapidly popping up next to the area's longstanding motels and backpacker hostels. While you can still pitch a tent right by the beach, or settle into a lovely cabin with water or bush views, operators such as 1770 Beach Accommodation can also point you in the direction of some stunning beach houses.

One, the aptly-named Coral View is situated a five minute drive from the heart of Agnes

Water, one of only seven luxury holiday houses set within a secluded private estate. The architect-designed home features four bedrooms, all with ensuites, and there are sweeping 180 degree views of the Coral Sea from the spacious deck which spans the full width of the house. No wonder the private beach below is called Honeymoon Bay. The estate also includes a common area including a 30 metre swimming pool, tennis court, cabana, barbeque and change rooms.

Guests can cook their own food or from pre-prepared meal hampers in the fully-equipped gourmet kitchen, or a personal in-house chef can be arranged. Or you could try the new menu at the recently-renovated Agnes Water Tavern, or pop into The Tree to watch one of the area's spectacular sunsets over a drink and a casual meal.

Another great sunset-viewing vantage point is onboard a bright pink amphibious LARC vessel with 1770 Environmental Tours. On the one hour sunset tour, the LARC traverses easily into the water, over sand banks and across long stretches of secluded beaches in the Eurimbula National Park, and most days the tour comes complete with a spectacular sunset where the sky transforms into a brilliant palette of pink, purple and red hues. Or, a full day LARC tour includes a ride to Bustard Head Lightstation, and a fun afternoon of tobogganing down the caramel-coloured sand dunes of Middle Island.

There are also reef trips out to the nearby Lady Musgrave Island, guided tours around town on mini 'choppers' and scooters, reef surfing and fishing trips, and 4WD tours through the surrounding National Parks. If you follow in Captain Cook's footsteps today, you'll find plenty more to explore on the Discovery Coast.

How to get there

The Town of 1770 and Agnes Water are a five and a half hour drive from Brisbane, or 90 minutes from Gladstone. Fly or travel on the Tilt Train to Gladstone, then hire a car. For more details see www.gladstoneregion.info; www.1770beachaccommodation.com.au; www.1770liquidadventurers.com.au and www.1770larctours.com.au.