

After being dished up a dinner of snapper with fattoush salad and duck with baba ganoush by a charming, white-aproned waitress at Harvest restaurant, we wandered up the road to a convenience store for breakfast supplies. There we were served by a laid-back guy who looked like an extra from *Point Break*. These encounters, a couple of hundred metres apart, sum up Coolum Beach. Development has crept in with smart new apartments and accommodation and a smattering of eateries and shops to match, but the relaxed vibe that's always been a hallmark of the Sunshine Coast town lives on.

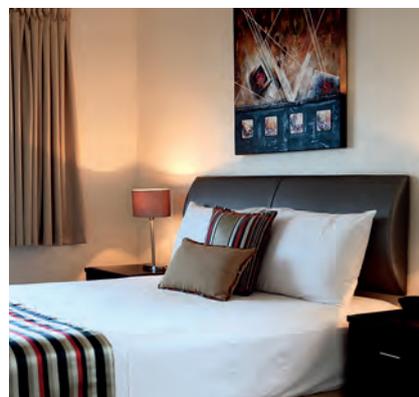
Our digs at Coolum at the Beach at the northern end of town encompassed all the mod cons, comfort-driven furniture and facilities you'd expect to find at a quality two-year-old establishment. It is a large complex – 95 configurations including 14 villas plus one, two and three-bedroom apartments – but lush landscaping ensures a sense of privacy.

We were in a tri-level villa, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms on the central floor, spa and sunlounges on the roof and the living area below. A large kitchen separated lounge and dining areas, which flowed onto a terrace with a barbecue, table and chairs and a view through vegetation to the main pool. Furnishings were vaguely Asian-influenced with dark timber and red accents, the kitchen was well-equipped, the flat-screen televisions (downstairs and in the main bedroom, *pictured below*) had Austar and the apartment was air-conditioned.

There was plenty of room to spread out and the villa was the kind of place where you could easily spend a longer holiday. The main attractions outside were the resort's four pools – the large central one complete with kiosk, changing rooms and sunbeds – a toddler pool a little further away, a lap pool down the back and a plunge pool closest to the road.

The beach is on the other side of David Low Way, which means crossing a relatively busy road to get to the surf – but that's a small problem that applies to almost all of the accommodation in Coolum.

As well as Harvest, there's an array of restaurants in town including Indian, Thai, the Surf Club and various cafes, though we chose to stay in on the second



night of our visit. After levering ourselves out of the pool we tottered off for a twilight walk on the beach – at this end of town it's tree-fringed and quieter. Safe in the knowledge we'd communed with the outdoors and taken in the views from the sand north to Noosa and south to Mooloolaba, we were soon back inside with the air-conditioning beating back the humidity and a complimentary platter from the fridge demanding to be eaten.

the deal

PH (07) 5412 2050
WEBLINK www.coolumbeachaccommodation.com.au

RATES One-bedroom apartments from \$129 per night, villas from \$270 pn (min. 2-night stay). A special until June 24 (excluding April 21-26) offers five nights for the price of four, seven for the price of five and ten for the cost of seven.

THE VERDICT

A spacious retreat.