

Amazing to think that despite the oft criticised glitz and glamour of the Gold Coast, just a few miles offshore is one of the main migratory 'highways' for the whales heading north to the Whitsundays in winter, before returning each year in November and December. Being able to travel to see them so close-in to shore, is one of the privileges of living in this part of the world. .



Whales, Fun & Family Days

For a Brisbane family well equipped with a refurbished Haines Hunter 773, and a desire to see the whales migrating north first hand, a near perfect day provided the long awaited opportunity to share this very special experience with friends and their own children. Days like this are very precious, and never forgotten. Rebecca and Matthew Lawrence report.

Having recently watched "Moby Dick" on TV for the first time and observing that it didn't end well for old Ahab and his crew, you can imagine that it was with a certain amount of trepidation that I agreed to Matt's plan of getting up close and personal with whales in our own Haines 773.

It is fair to say that I am a fair weather sailor and whilst I appreciate that boating offers an excellent opportunity to spend 'quality' time

together as a family, I have a very healthy respect for the water and all that swims in it.

Nevertheless, having grown up in the UK where boating mainly involves somewhat questionable weather, a lot of gin and the odd outing to the Isle of Wight, the draw of seeing the magnificent creatures so intimately was enough to get me up and out of the house extraordinarily early for a non-school day!

We have sailed enough with our

children, Inigo, a boy aged six and a four year old girl, Mili, who can only be described as a princess, to know that the success of the trip was in the planning.

Matt had spent the previous week glued to various websites including BOM and Seabreeze as he knew that I have learnt the hard way that the kids and I have a 5-10 knot tolerance level.

He tried, of course, to persuade me that you need "a little chop" to get the whales to surface and

Classic shot of a breaching humpback - our thanks to Tourism Queensland for this fine shot of a spectacular moment in the life of these gentle leviathans.



Here's a pic we've published before when regular contributor Neil Dunstan had a very close encounter of the humpback kind, with a very big whale coming over to say g'day to the mortified guys whilst they were bottom fishing. "I can tell you, he hadn't read any of the rules about staying off 100 metres from fishing boats - 'coz he came over to a very scary 100 millimetres!"

