



A magnetic new destination

Pristine coral islands all to yourself.

That's what you get when you charter a bareboat from Magnetic Island Rent-a-Yacht and sail the Palm Island group in North Queensland, according to a spokesperson for the company, which has just received a permit for its bareboats to visit the group.

"These rich and varied islands boast 300 days of sunshine per year and a cruising area protected by a chain of lush tropical islands," she said, adding that it had taken the company more than a year to obtain a permit and few, if any bareboats, had visited the islands before.

"These islands are very lightly visited, so remain pristine and completely uncrowded. Visiting sailors can expect to have most bays and islands to themselves. Weeks can go by without a single human footprint being left on some beaches. It is the ideal private holiday. The Palm Group is the realisation of that dream image of the deserted tropical island."

Charterers depart from Townsville's Breakwater Marina, which the company spokeswoman described as "truly one of the most picturesque marina locations in Queensland".

"From here you can island hop all the way north, starting at Magnetic Island. 'Maggie' has a permanent population of 2500 people and offers a variety of activities, bush walks, resorts, restaurants, supermarkets and fabulous swimming



Orpheus Island ... one of the lovely islands in the Palm Group.

beaches.

"Carrying on northwards the Palm Island chain just south of Hinchinbrook Island beckons you. This is made up of over 12 islands, only two of which are permanently inhabited. This island chain delights its visitors with crystal-clear waters and soft, sandy swimming beaches. Lush rainforest, gorgeous beaches, Aboriginal culture, spectacular coral reefs and fascinating historic ruins would have to make this one of Australia's most exciting sailing holiday destinations."

She said the Palm Group was renowned

for its unspoiled fringing reefs and also offered fantastic diving and snorkelling opportunities.

"Orpheus Island hosts a five-star resort and a marine research station that welcomes visitors.

"Throughout the cruising area the bird life is prolific and there are regular sightings of turtles, dolphins, whales, sea eagles and dugong."

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