

A DRAGON SISTERS JUNKET

By

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I love the word 'junket'. It smacks of the jolly, the frivolous, the slightly naughty and the definitely enjoyable. So it won't surprise you to hear that I leapt at the chance to join a recent Dragon Sisters junket, otherwise known as a Dragon Sisters Mini Break. I am happy to report that the experience met my expectations of what any self-respecting junket ought to be. (Per the dictionary 'junket' refers to a curdled milk dish – not at all my experience, or feast or picnic – closer, but not quite the full monty of what I got ...)

This particular jolly took place in Brisbane, not a million miles from my abode, though there were those who flew in from inter-state to avail themselves of a top Girls Weekend. Not wishing to re-mortgage my house in order to stump up for CBD parking fees, I clattered into town in leisurely fashion aboard Queensland Rail, who neatly deposited me at Central Station well ahead of the Friday afternoon exodus. A master-stroke of logistical genius enabled me to exit the station and within ten paces, find myself at the entrance of the Sofitel Hotel, into whose cool and salubrious foyer I was transported by a series of leg-sparing escalators. As I checked in I congratulated myself on having escaped all familial obligations for a whole weekend. Granted, there were one or two ankle-biters in evidence, but they weren't mine – hooray!! In any case, they seemed to be cowed into a quiescent state by the tranquil civilized atmosphere, enhanced by the tinkling of lounge music and the muted clinking of crystal. Leaving this soporific ambience, I glided elevator-wards and up to my high-rise hushed eyrie.

My room, being free of toys to trip over, clothes to fold and other domestic paraphernalia, was utterly delightful. The spotless bathroom contained rather nice little Roger & Gallet toiletries and I was giddy at the thought that when I'd messed it all up, the miraculous room servicing fairies would come and magic it back to this immaculate state. Realizing that several shopping hours remained of this fine Friday, I hastily abandoned my spic n span bolt-hole in favour of the Queen Street Mall, a less than ten minute trot away. There I potted serenely, trying on armfuls of clothes, without the benefit of a squeaky small voice exclaiming "Mummy, that is a very fat dress!!", or, of little mitts abruptly twitching aside the fitting room curtain to demonstrate to the world that Big Knickers are not a thing of fiction a la Bridget Jones. It was some time since my last retail therapy and I was astonished to find how outrageously manufacturers are now skimping on dress sizes. Not wanting to dwell long on the subject, I partook of some fortifying coffee and cheesecake at one of the Mall cafes, smugly observing those still suited and booted scooting busily about their business – such bliss!

Having managed to procure a sole purchase of a miniscule skirt the size of a bandaid, fit for one of pipe-cleaner proportions (fortunately I had just such a rellie for whom said article was destined), I made a bee-line back to the Sofitel, intent on a Nanna nap. There, I espied from my window, an inviting pool flanked by comfy sun loungers most suited for a kip. I noticed there were two old biddies stretched out on striped towels and figured there might as well be three. In the pool, I bobbed around like a tea bag, had a dunk in the jacuzzi and reclined in the breezy sunshine much in the manner of a somnolent sea mammal (except this one sipped daquiries).

Following a freshen-up in the sanctity of room 1811, I went in search of my fellow Dragon Sisters for Happy Hour, and a very happy crew they proved to be. We quaffed bubbles and scooped nibbles, then floated down to prolongue the quaffing and scoffing at the hotel's Interactive Dining Experience (read: buffet). Through a very fabulous buffet – mounds of crab, smoked salmon, oysters, prawns, a host of scrumptious hot dishes and delectable deserts. Good food, good wine and good new-found friends – I was certainly feeling very – well, good!

Saturday morning I woke feeling as fit as a flea, thanks to the precautionary Milanta! That, and the succeeding eight hours blissful slumber, unimpaired by short persons wriggling into my bed (no I don't mean Tom Cruise), leaving me teetering on the edge of the mattress the night long. I met up by pre-arrangement with a like-minded Dragon Sister, bent on hitting the Eagle Street markets with unseemly haste. There we meandered amongst the stalls and buskers, had lunch over-looking the glittering Brisbane river and treated ourselves to eclectic shoes, Indian throws and ethnic jewellery – every last bargain we hunted down! I'm happy to say that the shoe makers have not gone the way of the stingy dress sizes – funny that isn't it?!

A sedate put up the river on one of the frequent City Cats and we were ready to repeat the performance at the Southbank markets. Finally, laden down like pioneering pack mules and braying for our nose bags, we met up with the Dragon Sister posse at Ahmet's Turkish Restaurant. Another evening of feasting and frivolity in true junket style, heightened with the aid of some rousing Turkish music and an energetic belly dancer. We were invited to shimmy our stuff, though I was more intent on the spicy lamb pide, others were moved to join in with scant regard to our guffawing. Never let it be said that Dragon Sisters are above some good natured buffoonery!

Sunday we made our fond farewells, exchanging hugs and email addresses. But not before I'd indulged in a final loll about pool-side, with an order of fresh-brewed coffee and pastry brought right to my sun lounger – wringing every last moment of **Me Time** out of the delightful weekend. Heaven!!