

Make no mis-steak – our tourist spots are top



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AS HERVEY Bay strives to promote itself nationwide as a top tourism destination, so are two local businesses. And they have both had success.

Annesley Haus at Scarness and Drivers Dog Bar and Grill at Urangan are state finalists in two separate competitions.

The owners of Annesley Haus, John and Kristine Herron, were flattered when their Leslie Street holiday home ranked highly in the pet friendly category in the third annual TakeABreak.com.au Best Places to Stay Awards.

The couple opened the home only two years ago but already it is popular with young families with pets. It is only 200 metres to Scarness Beach, where people can take their dogs off leash between 4pm and 8am. There is also a park and bicycle track at the end of the quiet cul-de-sac and the main tourist area is only a short walk along the Esplanade.

The home also features a court yard with barbecue area, Balinese garden with frangipani trees, three bedrooms, a bathroom and an indoor spa.

TakeABreak research showed a huge increase in travellers wanting to take their pets away with them and Annesley Haus caters for that. TakeABreak.com.au is Australia's only independent boutique accommodation travel site. Its awards recognise outstanding service across 18 categories including beach, eco, luxury, romantic and group accommodation.

For the first time the competi-



The owners of Annesley Haus, Kristine and John Herron, hope to take out a state award in the TakeABreak.com.au Best Places to Stay award.

Photo: KARLEILA THOMAS

tion allowed guests to rate online where they stayed. Properties that were given four stars or higher out of five were short-listed and judged by a TakeABreak team. Annesley Haus will now compete against other pet friendly accommodation across Queensland with the state winners announced at the end of the month. The national winners in each category will be named in November.

As Annesley Haus represents Hervey Bay in accommodation, Drivers Dog showcases the city's talented chefs.

Drivers Dog has been awarded the best steakhouse for the Sun-

shine Coast and Wide Bay by Restaurant and Catering Queensland.

Owned by chef Simon Mackay and his wife, Sharon, the restaurant is one of five steakhouses that have been given an award of excellence.

The state winner will be announced at an awards dinner in Brisbane on Monday.

Simon said he was "pretty excited" about the awards, which he has been entering since 2006, the year Drivers Dog came second in Queensland. This year the couple is up against tough competition including Cha Cha Char Wine Bar

and Grill in Brisbane and Moo Moo the Wine Bar and Grill on the Gold Coast.

But Simon is in with a good chance; he has been a chef for 26 years, 16 of which he has specialised in steaks. He opened Drivers Dog with Sharon nearly three years ago simply because he likes cooking good steak.

Restaurant owners nominated themselves for the awards and were judged by a mystery diner across a four-month period.

If Drivers Dog is awarded the top steakhouse in Queensland it will compete in the nationals in Brisbane in October.