



# Doggie day care

Relax, this Coolum holiday home even caters for the family pet, writes **Kylie Lang**

**W**e couldn't bear to leave behind our newest family member, what with her being so young and, well, adorable, so the hunt began for pet-friendly holiday accommodation that didn't conjure up images of stained carpet, dirty walls, chewed rugs and smelly sofas.

Trawling the internet produced a small but mixed bag of options. Up Coolum way, it came down to a caravan park in Peregian or a four-bedroom home, 50m from Yaroomba Beach, on the main drag of David Low Way. With its thatched roof spa area, heated pool, opulent marble tiled floors and bathrooms, massive kitchen and two plasma screens, the house won convincingly.

Owner Matt Hall, who met us at the property, spent a year transforming what was a nondescript '80s-style two-storey home into a Balinese-inspired retreat, complete with hand-carved timber doors, bamboo and Buddha statues. Marble tiles he said you'd pay \$200 per square metre for in Australia, he picked up in Indonesia for \$16. The striking stone bath he'd priced here at \$7000 he brought back for \$300.

Matt and his partner Yolanda, a hairdresser, intended to live in the home themselves but found the short-term rental market lucrative enough to allow them to begin work on a second property nearby.

We were grateful for the chance to cocoon ourselves

away. With the plasma fixed on the World Cup, chilled wine in the fridge, FIFA games on the Xbox 360, a bubbling spa heated to 40C, books, board games, DVDs and three days of rain, it was the ideal getaway.

Switched off from the real world, our jaws dropped en route to grab an ice cream when we heard Julia Gillard telling us why she needed to become our new PM. "Good grief, Mum, where have we *been?*" my 10 year old exclaimed. The simple answer: on holidays.

We didn't use the barbecue on this visit, we didn't eat out at the recommended Thai restaurant or pizza joint, and we didn't play tennis at the Hyatt Regency Coolum (which Matt was happy to arrange, given he's an instructor there), but we did drive half an hour to a rain-soaked Noosa one day only to turn around and head home, agreed that we'd rather be snuggled up on the sofa, with the puppy at our feet, a mug of hot chocolate in our hands, and Cristiano Ronaldo on the TV.

Oh, and the sun shone briefly on the last day so we managed a walk on the beach, safe in the knowledge that our baby girl was happy at home, chewing on her toys and lazing on the deck.

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**RUNNING FREE ...** the beach is a quick jaunt from this Balinese-style house, complete with hot tub and all the creature comforts