



“Images of the Gold Coast as no more than a playground for surfers and partying high school pupils are increasingly anachronistic

have been delivered on budget and ahead of time. Ticketing is under way, with briefs on sale from as little as \$10 (£6). Indeed 80 per cent of tickets will cost \$80 (£45) or less and they are available online.

Beyond the venues themselves investment has forged into other seemingly disparate areas such as culture. Work, for example, started on the Gold Coast Cultural Precinct (goldcoastculturalprecinct.info) in 2015, a 15-year project that is already seeing a 16.9 hectare cultural site emerge in the heart of the city with a massive outdoor arena at its core.

There are a flurry of new restaurants and bars across the Gold Coast too.

The Kitchens at Robina Town Centre is very Gold Coast. Small producers and food stalls from the hinterland have been encouraged to set up in a purpose-built bright, airy extension to this massive

Travel notes

Getting there
Etihad Airways (etihad.com) has return flights to Brisbane from Edinburgh from around £930.

Other information
Tickets for the 2018 Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast are available from gc2018.com/tickets.

shopping mall. Young families chow on grilled Moreton Bay Bugs alongside the young generation of hipsters sipping coffee made from small-batch beans.

The development around the Commonwealth Games is as much about reinventing as it is about creating the new. One icon that is back from slumber is the Islander Resort, scene of legendary parties in the 1960s. It’s symbolic of the new Gold Coast. It has been rebranded as The Island, a 150-room boutique hotel with hip Scandi decor and a rooftop bar.

Emma Cairns, who works at the hotel, sees its emergence seguing into the rebirth of the Gold Coast.

“What we’ve done here is build on what is happening all over the Gold Coast in the run-up to 2018. I’ve lived here all my life, but only recently have I really started to think of my home as a proper city.”

CHECKOUT



Z HOTELS AT GLOUCESTER PLACE LONDON

STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

Occupying several Georgian townhouses in an area of Marylebone that’s being gently revitalised, Z’s latest London opening is the budget chain’s finest offering. Rooms are split between several buildings, with the best housed in the so-called Z Club. It’s akin to a members club, with all the trimmings included and a more intimate atmosphere.

SLEEPING MATTERS

Twenty rooms are stacked across several floors in the Z Club with shapes and sizes dictated by the layout of the period building. King and Junior Suite rooms are much larger than the standard Z class.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Breakfast – a mixture of bacon rolls, grains, fresh fruit and artisan breads – is served buffet-style in a kitchen that doubles as a low-key reception area. Diners can share communal tables or perch in a patio.

Throughout the day, snacks include afternoon tea, a chocolate selection and Z’s signature cheese and wine platter. A help-yourself fridge is always stacked with soft drinks and beers, and early-evening staff can whip up cocktails.

NICE TOUCH

From fresh slabs of honeycomb to handmade cheeses, the food on offer punches way above the room rate, and varies depending on the season. Repeat Z customers can also apply to become members and receive a 7.5 per cent discount on future bookings.

ABOUT THE AREA

The hotel is a 10-minute walk from Baker Street Tube station, with easy links to the West End. Madame Tussauds and Regent’s Park are close by, along with several boutiques and cool restaurants on roads off Marylebone High Street.

Rooms from £110 per night, including breakfast, snacks and alcoholic and soft drinks. Visit thezhotels.com/gloucesterplace

BY SARAH MARSHALL