

Today

SEASONAL DELICIOUSNESS

SSS Strawberries launches
fresh new season of goodness

CLEAR DIRECTION

Rick's at Bargara's success
sees venue growth

FUTURE PLANNING

BALLANTINE LAW PROVIDES STRAIGHT
FORWARD GUIDANCE FOR CLIENTS

LIFESTYLE HEALTH RETAIL PROFESSIONAL DINING ACCOMMODATION

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WELCOME

PROFESSIONAL TOUCH MAKES
all the difference

BY ANGELA NORVAL

When it comes to so many areas, especially the law, there is no question that it is always best to speak with a professional.

Thankfully in areas such as the law, finance or even health, these professionals have worked hard and taken considerable study to ensure that they have all the facts that you want for your individual needs and remain up to date with changes in the industry.

These professionals respect that you can

not afford to be left questioning your outcome and through this edition of Today Magazine we seek to highlight some local businesses who are truly standing out in their area of expertise time and time again.

It is always pleasing to have this calibre of service and knowledge available right on your doorstep in regional areas, meaning you don't have to travel for consultations or in health aspects checkups or adjustments.

Enjoy this edition of Today Magazine and getting a taste of some of the region's stand out businesses and their professional teams.



Angela Norval, Today editor.

Content

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RECIPES

Why You Need Buccal in Your Life - 25 Reasons to Book That Appointment

It's the treatment that has women whispering, "What have you done with your skin?"—and no, it's not a facelift or filler. It's Buccal Massage, and if you haven't experienced it yet, here are 25 reasons you absolutely should.

Buccal is a deeply therapeutic facial massage technique that works from the inside out—literally. Fingers gently glide inside the mouth (gloved, of course) to sculpt facial muscles, release tension, and lift from within.

At Vanish, we specialise in working with mature women who want more than a quick fix—they want care, connection, and results that feel natural.

Your skin tells your story. Let's help you love every chapter.

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3. Reduces puffiness
4. Increases circulation
5. Boosts lymphatic drainage
6. Relieves jaw tension
7. Aids TMJ discomfort
8. Improves skin tone
9. Stimulates collagen production
10. Reduces fluid retention
11. Detoxifies the skin
12. Gives your face a "post-holiday" glow
13. Minimises fine lines
14. Releases emotional stress stored in the face
15. Encourages natural lift
16. Brings symmetry back to the face
17. Boosts product absorption
18. Encourages mindful relaxation
19. Combines beautifully with holistic and clinical facials
20. Enhances confidence without injectables
21. Improves circulation to lips and cheeks
22. Is 100% non-invasive
23. Aligns with ageing gracefully—not hiding your age
24. Supports skin from within
25. Leaves you looking radiant, rested and lifted



☎ 07 4326 4090

📍 51b Woongarra Street, Bundaberg, Central QLD 4670

🌐 www.vanishskin.com.au



Deni-Marie Exarhakos, Taysha Milne, Amelia Ballantine, Wendy Brillante and Samantha Mienart. (Elka Scherer: 479537)

COMMITMENT TO CARE *for Ballantine Law team*

BY ANGELA NORVAL

Since being established in October 2023, the small, boutique law firm Ballantine Law is already making a positive mark on the region.

Ballantine Law practices in a variety of different aspects of the law includes Wills and Estates including Estate planning and Estate administration, Conveyancing of residential property and retirement villages.

Principal Lawyer Amelia Ballantine said that working with the team of women that currently are part of Ballantine Law was both a privilege and an honour.

“Being an all-female team gives us an edge over our competitors as we appeal to a certain particular client.

“Whilst primarily focusing on our client’s needs, we are also able to create a satisfying culture within the firm and giving the flexibility to working mums.

“We have grown in our size, workload and focus on the community.

“We have also moved into our new “forever home” at 5 Maryborough Street and I’m excited to see where the year of 2025 takes us.”

Given its broad range of specialities, Ballantine Law is pleased to have a strong team

who are committed to their clients individual needs.

AMELIA BALLANTINE,
Principal
Lawyer LLB

Amelia was 15 years old when she first decided she wanted to practice law, sharing that in all honesty the television show Law and Order had a big influence on her decision.

Given that she loved to not only read, but also enjoyed a friendly debate and had a strong interest in the law, this was an inevitable career for Amelia.

Amelia said it was very surreal to be able to say she owns Ballantine Law.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today without the support of my family and also the absolute dedication, loyalty and support from my staff,” she said.

“They are a fantastic group of ladies who continuously strive for the best versions of

themselves in both their work and personal lives.

“I take pride in being able to offer a flexible work-life balance to my staff where they can take the day off to watch their kids’ school or sporting activities if need be.”

One area that continues to not only be important to Amelia but also enjoyable, is being able to support the local community.

Ballantine Law has been very fortunate to be able to sponsor many local events, such as the Bundaberg Women’s Business Networking EmpowerHer Market Festival supporting other women in business and the Life Flight Soiree helping to raise funds for retrieval medicine with critical care doctors onboard.

Amelia said the growth of Ballantine Law has flourished over the last 18 months owing to their core values of trust, respect, efficiency and excellence.

“These values are exhibited within the office between staff members as well as to our clients and the broader community.

“We are looking forward to exploring the next chapter of Ballantine Law in our new building and hopefully employing one more solicitor to join our team in the near future.”



BALLANTINE LAW

SAM MIENERT, Paralegal and Office Manager

For Sam Miernert working in law allows her to support people during some of their most challenging moments in their life. She has always been drawn to making sense of things, finding clarity, and offering support where it matters most.

Sam admitted that while law can be overwhelming for a lot of people, that personally she finds fulfilment in being able to support and guide people through their tough times and make a real, tangible difference.

"I find it really rewarding about being part of a team that genuinely cares – not just about the work, but about the people we're helping and each other," she said.

"I take pride in the behind-the-scenes detail that ensures every case runs smoothly.

"It's the little wins, the team spirit, and the sense of purpose that keeps me going."

Sam appreciates that Ballantine Law genuinely fosters a culture of respect and inclusivity.

"As a woman and mother, I feel deeply supported in both my professional and personal roles.

"There's a strong understanding that work-life balance is essential, and that support allows me to show up as my best self for our clients and my family.

"Watching the firm grow has been kind of like watching a friend hit their stride – exciting and emotional all at once.

"I've poured a lot of myself into this place, and it means the world to see that effort reflected in where we're heading.

"I'm proud to have contributed to that growth by being consistent, collaborative, and client-focused.

"I've seen firsthand how small contributions ripple outward in big ways.

"I'm so proud of Amelia and what she has achieved and being part of this journey with her is something I truly value."

DENI-MARIE EXARHAKOS, Conveyancer

It has been continuing a



generation of interest and skill for Deni-Marie Exarhakos who as a conveyancer for Ballantine Law is following in her mother's footsteps.

Deni-Marie said it was the way her mother spoke about her role that made her curious about what it could be like practicing law.

"Then when I started high school and saw they offered a legal studies class I immediately put down my interest for the class and have really enjoyed it since then," she said.

"I love that every matter is completely different than the next."

Deni-Marie is very clear in what she finds most satisfying in regards to her role at Ballantine Law.

"When I prepare all the documents that need to be signed by our clients and I sit in on the appointment and watch everything go smoothly, that is satisfying.

"I continue to appreciate the energy of the Ballantine Law office, which is unlike anywhere I've worked before, it's such a welcoming feeling.

"I have found that even being new to the law work field, I was welcomed with open arms.

"Me being the baby of the office I can't relate to the others when it comes to being a mother but it's definitely inspiring seeing all the girls building their careers as well as being really great mums.

"Although I haven't been a part of the team for very long, it has been very inspiring hearing Amelia's story and how she built her own business and how all the woman play an integral part of that."

WENDY BRILLANTE, Senior Associate Solicitor

It is quite remarkable to note that Wendy Brillante's interest in the law stems from the fact that not only her great grandfather and grandfather, but also aunts and uncles have all served in the Queensland Police force.

Wendy said based on their experience, her aunts and uncles in particular encouraged her to pursue a career advising people in relation to the law, rather than enforcing the law.

"I can honestly say that through my career I have found it incredibly satisfying to help my clients understand the law and how it is applied and assisting her clients with all their legal



requirements in a friendly and efficient manner," she said.

"Our firm encourages, accommodates, and supports our full involvement in our children's school and sporting events and family events.

"Amelia also encourages and supports our own personal development and involvement in educational events and community events that focus on developing and improving not only our career and business skills, but also our personal skills."

While Wendy initially accepted a position as Senior Associate Solicitor with Ballantine Law to cover the maternity leave period of another lawyer, before then staying on to cover a further maternity leave period of Principal Lawyer, Amelia Ballantine, the firm is happy that Wendy has now been a Senior Lawyer with Ballantine Law and an integral part of the firm for over five years.

Wendy is very personable and enjoys a chat which is ideal in her profession and having deep roots in the Bundaberg and Childers community, she enjoys the connections she makes and the assistance she gives to a wide variety of community members.

TAYSHA MILNE, Legal Assistant

It was a chance meeting through their children with Principal Amelia, that initially attracted Taysha Milne to working within the law.

Taysha said Amelia inspired her tremendously as a hard-working mother, pushing her to want more for herself.

"Hearing her talk of her work and how much passion she had, made me want to be a part of this team," she said.

For Taysha when it comes to her everyday role, it is the initial chat that tends to be her favourite part.

"Getting to know our clients on a personal level and building a close rapport with them and supporting them from start to finish as the first point of contact and the friendly face that greets you is something I continue to be proud of."

Ballantine Law – a team that provides straightforward guidance to their clients with an honest dedication and love of their role.



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CREATE OPTICAL LOOK FOR *professional focus*

The Optical Superstore Bundaberg's Karen and Andy Christiansen strive for excellence in eye care for each and every one of their patients and customers.

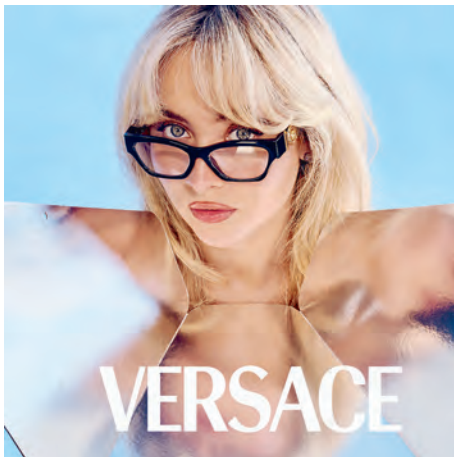
With over 20 local employees and five optometrists on staff they are able to provide up-to-date advice on all eye health and vision matters.

They also stock a full range of frames to suit all budgets to a large range of non-script sunglasses.

Karen said choosing glasses was both a practical decision and a personal expression.

"People often choose frames based on a variety of factors including; face shape, comfort, lifestyle needs, colour matching, budget and brand preference," she said.

"At the Optical Superstore Bundaberg we have a huge range of frames which allows our customers to express their individuality - glasses can be an extension of identity, not just a visual aid."



Versace VE3367 - \$398.



Jimmy Choo JC3032 - \$502.



Emporio Armani EA3262 - \$235.



Dolce & Gabbana DG3419 - \$446.



Prada PR B01 - \$518.



Tiffany and Co TF2254 - \$545.



Prada PR B11 - \$549.

LIVELIFE CONTINUES TO *embrace technology*

BY STEPHEN THOMPSON,
LIVELIFE PHARMACY OWNER

At LiveLife Pharmacy Kepnock, we've always believed that the heart of pharmacy is people, not just pills.

That's why I'm proud to share a major milestone for our team and our community: the installation of our new BD Rowa dispensing robot, a state-of-the-art investment that marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for healthcare in Bundaberg.

This robotic technology will hold and manage more than 15,000 units of medication, improving the speed, accuracy, and safety of our dispensing process.

But more importantly, it frees up something even more valuable: our pharmacists' time.

With the robot managing the behind-the-scenes workload, our team can focus more on what matters most, connecting with patients, having meaningful conversations, and delivering personalised care.

It means more time for services like our sleep apnoea consultations, and our newest offering, pharmacist prescribing of the oral contraceptive pill, both of which require time, attention, and care.

This upgrade is more than just a technical improvement. It's a significant financial investment in our region's healthcare future and a clear sign that we're here to stay.

We're committed to growing our service offering and continuing to build strong relationships with our customers, something that saw us proudly voted the 2024 Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce People's Choice Award winners.

Beyond the benefits to patients, this innovation also helps us attract healthcare talent to the region.

Pharmacists and students alike are drawn to modern, forward-thinking workplaces, and we're excited to be part of Bundaberg's appeal as a place to live and practice.

To celebrate this milestone, the entire community joined us on Sunday 26 May for our official reopening event.

We were joined by our local Member for Burnett, Stephen Bennett, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and the first 100 customers through



LiveLife Pharmacy Kepnock owner and pharmacist Stephen Thompson is impressed to showcase new machinery that will mean more interaction with customers. (Elka Scherer: 478883)



Where the machine organises and stores medications. (478883)



The process is much easier via the medication dispenser. (478883)

the door will receive a goody bag as our way of saying thank you.

This robot isn't replacing the human side of pharmacy, it's enhancing it.

It allows us to do what we do best, be your local pharmacy, focused on care, connection, and community.

We can't wait to show you what's next.



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HEARING AIDS

come in all shapes, sizes

Hearing aids can come in a lot of different shapes and sizes and the advertising always shows the little “invisible” completely in the canal devices.

However, these aren't always the best option from a performance standpoint. Here are some points to consider.

RIC/BTE devices which go over the ear and have a small wire or plastic tube and a plastic dome, which sits comfortably in the ear, are the most commonly fitted device.

They are a sealed unit so they have less issues with moisture and they can fit dual microphones on each unit providing better directionality and performance in background noise.

These may be rechargeable or disposable button batteries.

Many companies will have models available for sale but they do require a professional to program them to your hearing levels and preferences.

Every brand has its own APP on both Apple and Android to give you more control. Please note not all phones are compatible and its best

to check with your Audiologist prior to getting a new phone.

Starkey's Custom devices feature In the canal rechargeable, completely in the canal, and Invisible in the canal generally require the Audiologist to take a mould of your ear.

Some brands do have instant fit solutions.

What the advertising doesn't generally explain is that as you go to devices smaller than the in the canal, compromises on performance have to be made to make the devices so tiny.

For example they may not have blue tooth functionality or be rechargeable, and the size means that there is less room for dual microphones which can affect their performance in noise. They also may not be able to fit some very severe hearing losses.

Your audiologist will be able to give you expert advice on all of this.

A number of hearing aid accessories are also available such as remote controls (if you don't have a smart phone), TV streamers, and mini mics which for example can be clipped on a partner's shirt in tricky environments like front to back seat car communication.

All models will be programmable and optimally a yearly hearing and adjustment appointment will make sure you are getting the best performance possible.

The Starkey Edge AI comes in three levels of technology to suit your budget and hearing needs. Higher levels of technology have better noise reduction and allow the microphones to zoom in to a narrow beam. Lower level devices still have great sound quality but are more limited in how they can zoom in on single speakers and reduce unwanted background noise.

Bundaberg Hearing Aids and Tinnitus Treatment Clinic, clinical audiologist Dylan Deinert will ask some questions about your hobbies, lifestyle and listening environments find the best solution for you.

Bundaberg Hearing Aids and Tinnitus Treatment Clinic do not charge for hearing aid demonstrations but no copy of the hearing test is able to be provided.

Audiologist Dylan personally wears these devices to manage a mild hearing loss and tinnitus so you know you are in good hands.



Starkey Edge AI on special until the end of July.
Up to \$1500 off our normal prices. Additional subsidies available for eligible pensioners and veterans through the Hearing Services Program.

Private Health fund extras may also apply.

Water, Sweat and Dust Proof IP 68 Rated

AI Powered with up to 80 million automatic adjustments per hour

Longest rechargeable battery life on the market - up to 42 hours

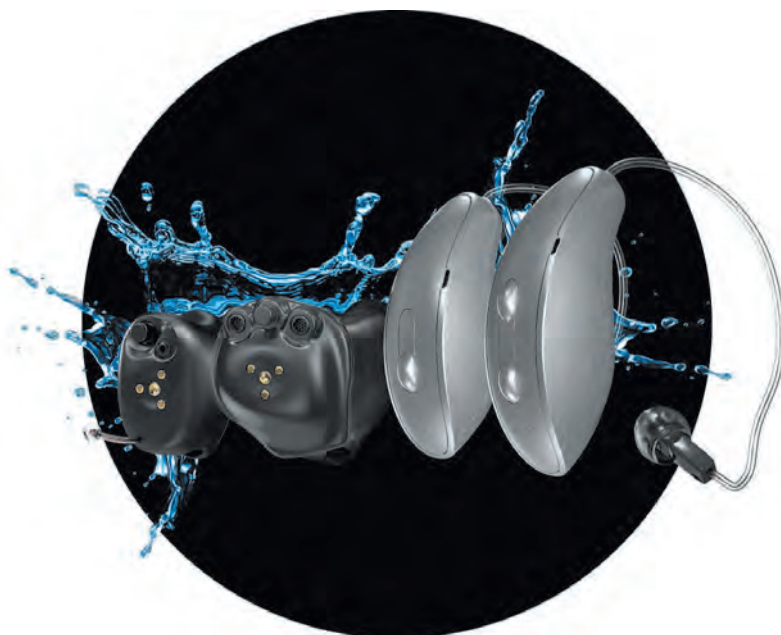
Available in both in the ear and behind the ear rechargeable models

Smaller non rechargeable models available

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FAMILY SHOWCASES COMMITMENT TO *community*

BY ANGELA NORVAL

Two semi-trailers loaded with farm equipment and personal belongings set off on a long journey—spanning approximately 4,600 kilometres and over 55 hours of continuous driving—crossing the border from Western Australia to Bundaberg more than 19 years ago, the Dang family continue to showcase a journey that is more than strawberries or products, it's about community, resilience and creating something lasting.

Although needless to say, representing both SSS Strawberries and Gina's Table, the family has continued to stand out, most recently earning the Gamechanger Award at the Hive Awards for Gina's Table and also the Golden Hive for leadership, innovation and commitment to reducing food waste through value-added processing.

Many a resident of the region and also regular visitors know that the Dang family business SSS Strawberries is all about growing and innovating to provide better value products and services.

The Dang family provides a unique balance between their own cultural heritage, combined with their ability to embrace and work hard to provide some exceptionally tasty options direct from the earth of local fields.

While the name says it all, The Strawberry Shop has an incredible range of delicious strawberry options whether decadently dipped in chocolate or fresh from the farm, but it also has a cafe section which is the ideal place to relax with family and friends, seven days a week.

Within the cafe section, customers can try refreshing barista coffee daily from the well known and embraced Reef brand with a delicious dessert option on the side, with open undercover seating available in this farm fresh relaxed atmosphere.

SSS Strawberries and Gina's Table CEO Gina Dang said 2025 marks a significant milestone – the 19th anniversary of SSS Strawberries.

"This momentous occasion is an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come while setting ambitious goals for the future," she said.

"One of our primary objectives is to expand



Lilly Dang, Gina Dang and Sophie Kim celebrate the start of the strawberry season. (Elka Scherer: 479820)



Lilly and Gina Dang encourage people to visit the Strawberry Shop. (479820)



The Gina's Table range is continuing to grow. (479820)

the reach of Gina's Table, both domestically and internationally.

"We aim to share the flavours of Bundaberg with a global audience, showcasing not only the quality of our products but also the story behind them.

"For 2025, we aim to expand Gina's Table's reach, introduce new product lines, and further refine our sustainability practices.

"Our focus is on creating meaningful

connections with consumers through honest, high-quality Australian-made foods—while continuing to innovate, reduce waste, and champion local farming communities.

"It's not just about strawberries or business success; it's about creating something lasting—something that future generations can be proud of and so at Gina's Table our mission is to create a world where every meal is a celebration of sustainability, every farmer stands tall, and every plate tells a story of hope."



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Come for the berries, stay for the treats!



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sss-strawberries.com.au

RICK'S JUST KEEPS ON *bringing the quality*

BY ANGELA NORVAL

There is something about hospitality and owning a local restaurant that continues to appeal to Rick's at Bargara owners Rick and Trish Johnstone.

When you speak to Rick, it is obvious that he gets genuine joy from being able to provide that level of comfort that his customers deserve, whether they are locals or visiting from other areas.

Rick, Trish and their team remain a welcome faces for those visiting Bargara, but now he has taken it a step further.

Now operating in his ninth year, Rick's at Bargara has been able to provide a new option for those who are looking for a more enclosed dining option, having expanded into the venue beside his main restaurant that overlooks the Bargara Esplanade. Rick said the expansion was simply about being able to provide his customers with the welcome option of inside dining, letting them enjoy a delicious meal at Rick's whatever the weather.

"The room is air conditioned for summer and heated for winter and is also ideal for group bookings, bookings which have already started coming in for this Christmas," he said.

"We appreciate that some of our customers enjoy the outside feel and views of the ocean while they are enjoying live music on a weekend, but we wanted to be able to cater for everyone with inside dining that is airconditioned and heated."

As both a local and a business owner, Rick has welcomed the feedback of regular customers who have been extremely positive about the new area, considering it a great idea, especially when wanting to have a special event.

Rick said many regulars had commented on just how good it looked in the inside section of Rick's at Bargara and that they found the black furniture a great new look.

"We want people to enjoy their visit to Rick's at Bargara wherever they sit and going away thinking just how impressive and friendly the service was and provided by genuine staff, and the quality of the food for both fresh, variety and value for money.

"Rick's at Bargara is something Trish and I are incredibly proud of and look forward to it just getting better and better."



Katy Brown and Sharvani Ghiggoli ready to enjoy a delicious meal served by Rick Johnstone in the new indoor section of Rick's at Bargara. (Elka Scherer: 479932)



It is quality indoor and out at Rick's at Bargara. (479932)



Rick's at Bargara owner Rick Johnstone is proud to offer variety to his customers. (479932)



It is freshness, flavour and value at Rick's. (479932)

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Vanish Skin and Body Clinic owner Megan O'Donnell said the Carbon Laser Facial also referred to as the Red Carpet Facial, will give your skin an instant youthful radiance.

"At Vanish Skin and Laser, this is our go-to treatment to deliver complexion perfection, fast," she said.

"Stimulating Hyaluron to support collagen synthesis, the treatment will plump up and tighten your skin.

"The carbon peel smooths the skin, and the 1064 laser annihilates the skin's surface dust and debris, eliminating impurities such as blackheads and surface congestion."

6 REASONS WHY YOU WILL LOVE THE CARBON LASER FACIAL:

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- Removes Dead Skin Cells.



The Carbon Laser Facial helps create a youthful look. (Supplied)

WHAT IS *Body Contouring?*

Body contouring, or body sculpting, is a clinical procedure that aims to reshape an area of the body.

It involves procedures to:

- Get rid of extra skin.
- Eliminate excess fat.
- Reshape or contour the area.

Vanish Skin and Body Clinic owner Megan O'Donnell said body contouring does not usually help you lose weight. Instead, it helps shape the body and address specific areas where weight loss isn't effective or after significant weight loss results in extra skin.

"Body contouring, or body sculpting, is a clinical procedure that aims to reshape an area of the body," she said.

"Vanish can get rid of extra skin, eliminate excess fat and reshape or contour the area.

"Unlike liposuction or other surgical procedures, Body Contouring treatments require no downtime.

"In fact, many clients can opt to undergo a treatment and then get immediately back to work or whatever their day has thrown at them."

Compared to traditional surgical procedures, Body Contouring is quick. In addition, you can see results in just a little as two weeks from the first treatment.

"One of the best parts of Body Contouring treatments is that they're painless.

"Traditional surgical procedures come with a lot of pain, necessary medication, and recovery time.



Body contouring aims to reshape an area of the body. (Supplied)

"With Body Contouring, treatments are painless, drug-free, and come with zero downtime.

"Targeted Treatment. you can get fat cavitation treatments on virtually any part of your body

including the face. body shaping targets the specified area without affecting surrounding tissue, so you can focus on specific trouble areas."

For more information visit the website vanishskin.com.au or phone 4326 4090.



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The macadamias have just the right amount of crispy edge to make this a mouth-watering midweek meal.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup macadamia pieces
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- ¼ cup loosely packed parsley leaves
- 1 egg lightly whisked
- 4 pieces of white fleshed fish such as snapper, about 180g each
- 1-2 tbsp macadamia oil for cooking
- Simple lemon butter sauce
- 40 g butter
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine the macadamias, flour, parsley and salt and pepper to taste in the bowl of a food processor and process until the mixture resembles a coarse crumb. Place in a large shallow bowl. Place the whisked egg in a separate shallow bowl. Dip each fish fillet in the egg followed by the crumb mixture, coating the fish entirely. Place on a plate and allow to stand for 15 minutes to help the crumb mixture set.
- Heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium high heat. Add the fish and cook for



Fresh and delicious is this macadamia nut crusted fish. (Supplied)

3-4 minutes on one side before turning and repeating for the remaining side. Adjust heat, if necessary, to avoid overcooking the crust. To test if the fish is ready, place a fork in the thickest part of one piece of fish and see if the fish flakes easily.

- For the simple lemon butter sauce, melt the

butter in a small saucepan and add the lemon juice and season with salt to taste. Whisk to combine and pour over fish pieces to serve.

NOTES

Serving suggestion: Serve with a green summery herb salad with finely sliced fennel, capers and lemon wedges.

FAIRY FLOSS *delight*

RECIPE COURTESY OF THE MIXOLOGY OF BUNDABERG BREWED DRINKS

INGREDIENTS

- 40ml Vodka
- 100ml Bundaberg Pink Grapefruit Brew
- Cubed Ice
- Honey or Sugar Syrup
- Persian Fairy Floss (garnish)
- Rainbow Sprinkles (garnish)
- Byron Bay Cookie (garnish)
- Edible Gold Leaf (optional).

STEPS:

SHAKE

Step 1

Add Vodka and Bundaberg Pink Grapefruit Brew into a shaker with some cubed ice. Shake until shaker is cold to touch.

COMBINE

Step 2

Sprinkle a few teaspoons of rainbow sprinkles over the surface of a small plate. Cover the



Fairy Floss Delight is a fun drink for a party with friends. (Supplied)

outside rim of your cocktail glass in honey or sugar syrup and then dip it into the rainbow sprinkles so that the entire rim is covered.

POUR

Step 3

Pour shaker contents into the glass and garnish with Persian Fairy Floss on top.

ENJOY

Step 4 (optional)

For extra sweetness, add a chunk of your favourite Byron Bay cookie over the rim... just like you would a lemon wedge. For a bit of sparkle you can cover the cookie in edible gold leaf as well.

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