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Following Royals on the Queen's Land and the Gold Coast

It remains to be seen what 2019 will bring, but 2018 was a right royal year for Queensland and the Gold Coast. Five English Royals headed for the eastern Australian state named for 19th Century British (and Australian) monarch, Queen Victoria. And, according to Gold Coast Family Car Rentals CEO Darryl Essington-Wilson, while five royal visits in one year might have been unusual, the state's ability to attract royalty has been evident in visits from various royal houses for many years.

While Queen Victoria never saw the state named after her, or even set foot in Australia, Elizabeth II, the current Queen and only reigning English monarch to have visited Australia, has done a lot to make up for those who didn't visit their subjects Down Under. Since her first tour in 1954, she has notched up a total of sixteen tours, with stops in all states (including Queensland) as well as the two territories. Most royals that have left their footprints in the Queensland capital, Brisbane, or, more rarely, on the Gold Coast, were part of the British royal line. However, Darryl points out that royals from other monarchies, including Denmark, Holland and Sweden, have also been drawn to Australia, and many of them to Queensland.

Places Royals Did, Could, or Should Visit Darryl says there are a number of places in the Sunshine State which provide memories fit for royals. These range from fairy-tale moments in rain forests, viewing beautiful coastlines, and taking in breath-taking scenery, to regal luxury in cities like Gold Coast City, with lots of other options in between. These include the Great Barrier Reef, the Outback, more than 1,000 national parks and a third of the Australian World Heritage sites. And those hiring his rental cars on the Gold Coast to follow in the royal footsteps, or create their own personalised "royal" tours, would be certain to remember these attractions forever.

The most recent royal visitors, Prince Harry and the Duchess of Sussex, picked the World Heritage site of Fraser Island as a destination when they toured a few months ago. Darryl says this unique area is a "must see" for every Australian and it should be high on the agenda for visitors from overseas.

The island offers the only rain forest in the world that grows in pure sand, as well as Lake McKenzie, considered sacred by the indigenous Butchulla people. There's also the chance to see some ocean royalty in the form of humpback whales on a boat trip similar to that undertaken by Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle. Whilst the best place to see the whales is in the Hervey Bay/Fraser Island area, Darryl reminded us that the next best place for whale sightings is his home town, the Gold Coast.

Earlier in 2018, the Gold Coast was the focus of the visit by Prince Harry's father and heir apparent to the English throne, Charles, Prince of Wales, and his wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. There to represent the queen and deliver her opening address at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, Prince Charles' emulated his mother in notching up his 16th trip to Australia to do so. Joining Prince Charles at the Games was his youngest brother, Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex. The third of the Windsor brothers, Prince Andrew, Duke of York, dropped by for a short visit to the Gold Coast during the build-up to the games in 2017, but did not attend the sporting event itself.

Other Royals Who Visited Australia Other Royal visitors over the years have included Danish Queen Margrethe II who visited in 1987, as well as her son Crown Prince Frederik and his Australian-born wife Crown Princess Mary, and their children. Crown Princess Mary has visited her hometown, Hobart, many times, but has also made stops in other areas such as the Gold Coast, when she and her children visited Mermaid Beach.

Princess Birgitta, sister of Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and wife of Prince Johann of Hohenzollern, visited Sydney for the 100th anniversary of the Swedish Australian Chamber of Commerce in 2011. On a similar tour two years ago, Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima visited the Queensland capital as well as Sydney, Canberra and Perth, in recognition of the emigration of about 160,000 Dutch nationals to Australia between 1947 and 1971.

Those looking for a gold carriage to take to the road in pursuit of kings, queens or princes, and enjoy the sort of places they would visit, may have a hard time finding one. However, those looking for royal treatment and the best value for money, can easily hire a Family Car Rentals vehicle that's guaranteed to be the best value for money on the Gold Coast by booking online with Car Hire Gold Coast or Gold Coast Airport Car Rental, or call + 61 7 5508 3333. Pick up and drop off at the Gold Coast Airport can be arranged.

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