

The Pink Poodle, swimming pavilions and Miami Ice

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Introduction

The 3 km of golden beach that lap the shores of Surfers Paradise have become synonymous with urban beaches worldwide. Its name was invented, in a stroke of marketing genius, by Jim Cavill who proposed the name 'Surfers Paradise' and pipped the previous preferred title of 'Sea Glint' for this beachside hideaway. Jim Cavill also built the first hotel in Surfers Paradise, in 1933, and subsequently his Surfers Paradise Zoo. However, it was not until the late 1950s and through the 1960s that the ribbon development of the Gold Coast increased rapidly. Many motels, guesthouses and holiday homes were built during this period, an era of expansion that substantially shaped today's Gold Coast. While some of the original buildings remain (e.g. bathing pavilions, original motels and the high-rise building, Kinkabool), many have been demolished. For example, many of the post-war Gold Coast motels (motor-hotels) have been demolished. The best known of these, the Pink Poodle, became synonymous with the Gold Coast's racy and colourful image and was especially popular with honeymooners. It even inspired a novel by Matthew Condon, *A Night at the Pink Poodle*. Its publisher, Random House Books, promoted it as: 'Glitz and glamour, greed and sleaze, fall and redemption. It's all happening on the Gold Coast'. In 2002, Tor Hundloe published *What was the Commissioner doing at the Pink Pussycat?* Hundloe, in his role as the Commissioner of the Industry Commission, was holding public hearings into the future of the Australian tourism industry when he inadvertently referred to the Pink Poodle as the Pink Pussycat. It did not go unnoticed by the media – the hearings were being held in Kings Cross, a well-known Sydney suburb (Hundloe 2002).

The Pink Poodle Motel was opened in 1967 and demolished in 2004. In its place stands the 15-storey Mantra Wings Hotel with the original neon sign from the Pink Poodle attached to the building. The hotel's bar and restaurant carry the name 'Pink Poodle'. In 2010, the Gold Coast City Council moved to have the neon sign listed on its Heritage Register as a celebration of what made the Gold Coast unique (Stolz 2010). A modern motel in the area also incorporates the historic name – the Best Western Pink Poodle Motel.

Another iconic building of the Gold Coast, Miami Ice, was never placed on the local Heritage Register because the owner declined the offer. It was constructed by joining two Australian Army sheds together in 1944 to provide ice during the Second World War (1939–1945) when large numbers of troops, both Australian and American, were stationed