

coastbeat

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ISSUE 03 / WINTER 18
GREAT LAKES TO BYRON BAY



FUR SEALS
THEIR COASTAL COMEBACK

FLOW HIVE
TAKING THE WORLD BY SWARM

RISING SURF STAR
CARLY SHANAHAN

BELLINGEN BEATS
BELLO WINTER MUSIC FESTIVAL

CROKER OARS
FROM OXLEY TO OLYMPIANS

THE PULSE OF THE COAST



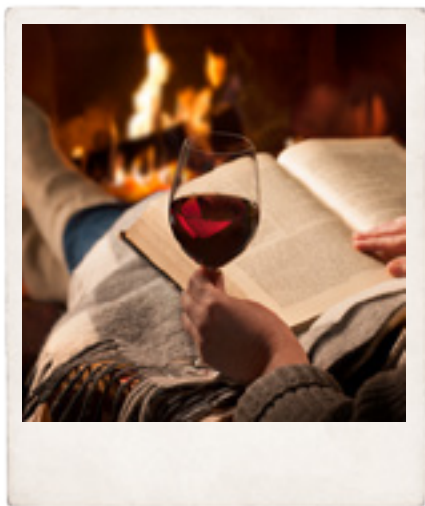
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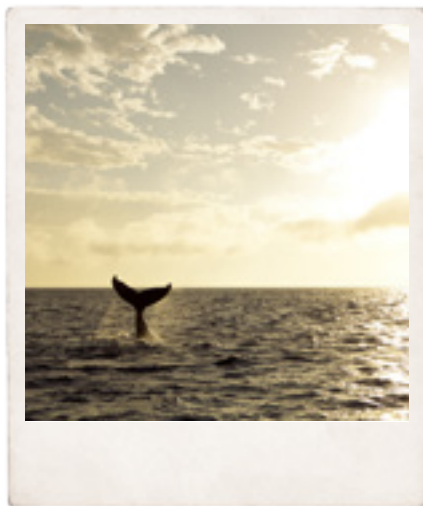
Winter Warmers

1.



Snuggle up by the fire with a hot chocolate or a fine red wine

2.



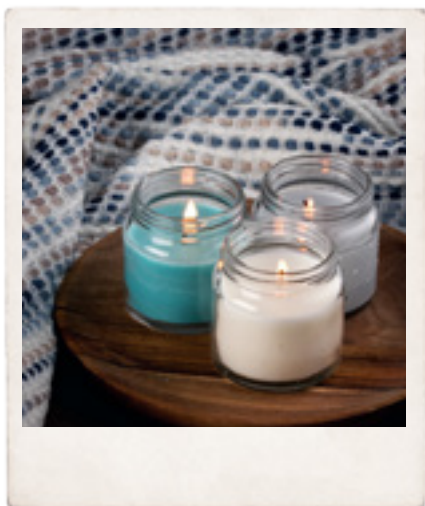
Headland perching to observe the humpbacks heading north

3.



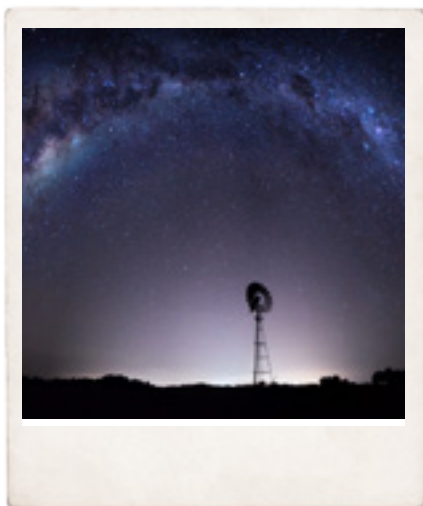
Time to put the sandals and thongs away, it's boot season – be it Uggs or your best in leather

4.



Fragrant candles and long soaks in a hot bath

5.



Star Gaze. The night sky is often at its best and brightest when the weather cools

6.



Deserted beaches and hinterland exploration

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Welcome



Surfer, Emerald Beach. Image courtesy of ST Images

A word from John

As I write this, the wheel turns, tomorrow it's winter and the 3rd edition of Cb goes to print.

I hope you've enjoyed the stories we've uncovered about people doing great things on the north coast. In this, our winter edition, I particularly like the articles about the incredibly innovative father and son team from Flow Hive (I have two Flow Hives myself), Solum Farms and their Soil School and Madeline and her journey as an apprentice mechanic in what would normally be considered a man's world.

The end of May and the beginning of June heralds the start of the great migration of humpbacks up the east coast. Over 20 years ago, Gowings set up the Gowings Whale Trust to raise money to promote awareness of these great animals, to aid their recovery from near extinction and to fund research into improving the sustainability of the marine environment. Find out more about the trust and how to support it on p64.

I would like to acknowledge Destination Coffs Coast as our second foundation partner of Coastbeat. With tourism such an important contributor to the growth and character of the Coffs Coast, Destination Coffs Coast are dedicated to promoting the region through the #createyourparadise campaign and we're so pleased to be working together.

Thanks to all of the team who helped bring you the Winter edition.

For the Coast,

JG

A word from Yvette

A warm welcome to our Winter issue and thank you for such wonderful feedback on our Autumn magazine.

We're delighted to bring you stories of fascinating and inspirational people from our region and to showcase some of our most beautiful places. And of course, we love that locals are telling these stories and capturing the accompanying images too.

We also have great website content and encourage you to join the Coastbeat online community at www.coastbeat.com.au Grab the great subscription offer in this issue for the chance to win a \$250 gift voucher from Kathmandu.

In these pages, we talk to a family creating oars for Olympians, another on the move around the country, head to Bello for some tunes, go camping and white-water rafting, learn about passionate advocates for marine conservation, discover creatives in Bowraville, spend a day in the gorgeous beachside town of Yamba and hear from talented artisans, agriculturalists and adventurers.

So, grab your cuppa or vino and step into the coast with us...

Yvette

If you know someone on the coast with an inspiring story, please touch base so we can share it with the Cb community - hello@coastbeat.com.au

Cover Image of an Australian Fur Seal by ST Images.

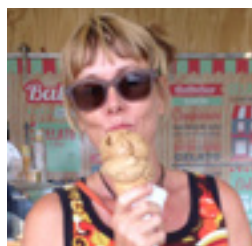
Cb Winter Issue Team



Kirk Owers

Writer & Photographer

Kirk is a widely travelled writer/photographer who is yet to find a better beach town than Pacific Palms. On Croker Oars, he says, "It's inspiring to see a speciality manufacturer achieve international success while staying in a regional area."



Zacharey Jane

Writer

Zac says, "This edition I have had the pleasure of writing about some extraordinary people. Even more than their amazing achievements, it is their passion and commitment that I find so inspiring."



Ali Hiddlestone

Writer

Ali loves winter on the coast - crisp mornings, warm sunshine and whales rumbling in the surf. In this edition, she gained fascinating insight into Bowraville's secret art world with husband and wife duo, Margrit and Claude and mural designer, Nelli Gallop.



Brendan Ray

Photographer

Woolgoolga based photographer, Brendan, particularly enjoyed the shoot with rising surf star, Carly Shanahan. "Carly was a joy to be around. Despite having been in a surf comp all day, she couldn't wait to get back into the ocean straight after the shoot."



Sam Clarke

Photographer

Sam loved shooting the Flow Hive story. He says, "What an amazing journey for Stuart and his son, Cedar. Their dedication to the bees is fascinating. By the end of the afternoon, I started to understand how important these creatures are to the balance of life around us."



Kue Hall

Writer

Coffs Coast local Kue loves meeting new people and discovering their stories. She finds it an ultimate bonus to then share these stories with Coastbeat readers. This issue she was super inspired by Louise Hardman, a former high school science teacher winning the fight against plastic pollution.

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Contributing Writers in addition to those above

Melissa Beit, Georgie Bull, Kevin Smith

Photographers in addition to those above

Debrah Novak, Elize Strydom, Rob Wright

Advertising, Sponsorship + Press Enquiries olivia@gowings.com

Submission Enquiries Yvette Harper, Editor / Content Manager
yvette@gowings.com

Coastbeat Magazine is published by Gowings Media, a division of Gowing Bros. Limited
Suite 21, Jones Bay Wharf, 26-32 Pirrama Road Pyrmont NSW 2009 Australia T +61 2 9264 6321

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Taking the world by swarm

The story of Flow Hives

You might think that beekeeping is a practice about as far removed from internet sensations and hi-tech innovation as you can get. Think again. Coastbeat meets with the father and son team who have taken beekeeping into the 21st century.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Sam Clarke



L to R: Cedar and Stuart Anderson



Flow Hives' ground-breaking invention represents the first major change to honey farming since 1851, the first non-invasive way to harvest honey and the most successful crowdfunding project to date, all from a kitchen table in northern NSW.

I met with the inventors behind Flow, father and son Stuart and Cedar Anderson, at their Newrybar base and discovered, apart from more bees than I have ever seen before, a family company thriving on connection, community and of course, honey.

"I feel incredibly lucky to have been given this opportunity to work so closely with my son," says Stuart as we return to the shade of their veranda after an

afternoon spent with the bees. "I love the connection that we have formed through creating Flow Hives."

Connection is the key word in this story. Bees communicate through connection, exchanging pheromones as a part of their constant activity and through their intricate dances. Community connection supported Stuart and Cedar when they realised that the phenomenal response to Flow Hives crowdfunding meant they needed help. Now it is connection with bee keepers across the world, establishing the first successful global bee keeping company, that is the marker of Flow Hives.

But it all began with family.

>>

Stuart: My dad kept bees. I suppose that's where I first became interested.

Cedar: My dad keeps bees too!

Stuart: [laughs] Yes! And Cedar has a son...

Cedar: And his dad keeps bees!

Cb: So, will your son be a bee keeper?

Cedar: I hope so. And my daughter. Extended family are all involved: we're lucky to have a lot of talented people in our family. In three years we've gone from the two of us to 45 people.

Flow Hives started, as many innovations do, with a problem. Cedar had been managing 30 hives as a commercial venture. He loved bee keeping but found the work unnecessarily taxing and the stress to the bees disturbing.

Cedar: It was such a pain to harvest honey the conventional way. I'd work all weekend, hot and sweaty, covered in stings, make a huge mess and be paying myself about five dollars an hour. Even worse, it was impossible to pull apart a beehive without squashing bees. I just thought that there had to be a better way so I said to Dad, how about we do something really different and tap the honey directly from the hives?

After 10 years of experimentation, it was connection that held the key. Cedar describes their eureka moment when Stuart held up his hands, making the shape of a honeycomb cell, fingertips to fingertips, thumb to thumb. Then he dropped one hand a fraction lower, making a crack between his

thumbs that, transferred to a honeycomb cell, represented a channel for honey to flow through.

But how to make real their idea? For Coastbeat readers who don't already know, Flow Hives is renowned as the most successful crowdfunding attempt in the world, ever. Within minutes of launching their project online they received millions of expressions of interest.

Again, connection was everything.

Cb: How did you do the crowdfunding?

Cedar: I thought, why not make a compelling video, showing how we got the honey out of the hive without disturbing the bees. Luckily my sister was into film production. We roped in a few key friends who —

Stuart: Understood social media better than us! [laughs]

Cedar: They put together the Facebook page that got us up to 1000 likes with generic bee content, so we had something to launch. We uploaded the video and got a million views in 30 hours. Life has never been the same since!

Stuart: I was thinking 'who are all these people?' I mean, I'm used to the population of Lismore, but a million? Where did they all come from?

Cb: You went global and viral?

Cedar: Instantly. It was share, share, share, share and a week later there were 70,000 people who had contacted us, wanting to know more.



Stuart: But we still didn't know if that meant people would actually pledge, because who'd want a bee hive, you know? [laughs]

Cb: And then many, many people pledged?

Cedar: They did. We thought our target market would be existing bee keepers. What we didn't realise is that we were creating a new market: about half of our 50,000 orders are to brand new beekeepers.

Cb: You're creating beekeepers?

Stuart: Yes, and we're very proud of that.

But there was a pause, says Stuart, an ethical pause to assess the impact of their invention.

Stuart: We had to consider if this was a good idea for bees, for the bee keepers, for the world. The best thing, I thought, was that if more people could keep bees then more people would understand our interdependence with myriad flora and fauna.

Cb: Now Flow is established globally, how has the reaction been from the professional bee keepers?

Stuart: Very, very wary.

Cedar: And mixed. Although we do have some professionals using our Flow Hives, many are sitting and waiting.

Stuart: The crowdfunding exploded us onto the scene. We were completely unheard of in the bee keeping world and suddenly there we were, worldwide with a brand-new invention. So, we did get backlash from some bee keepers. And some were genuine concerns, that we shared.

Cb: What were your concerns?

Stuart: We had to question if some people were buying these hives in the initial rush, like getting a kitten at Christmas? We were very concerned and that's part of the reason our website is so comprehensive, in terms of information to encourage bee keepers to learn the craft of caring for bees properly.

Cb: Have you found the 'kitten at Christmas' attitude?

Stuart: No, it's been the opposite, with people saying, "I've done two bee courses and joined a bee club but I think I'll do just one more course before I get my bees."

Cedar: People make direct contact with us, hungry for learning and information. You'll get a lot more good bee keepers from what we've done, which we need. There were something like 200,000 bee keepers in the USA 40 years ago, but the numbers have halved; it's a concern that new generations aren't taking up the art of bee keeping. So, for Flow Hives to be increasing that number significantly, with over 50,000 orders currently, we feel very proud.

Cb: I imagine that with getting all this information online you've learned a lot about bee keeping, too?

Cedar: Yes. And the more you learn about bee keeping the more you understand that there is so much more to learn.

Flow sent their honey to be tested at Queensland University. The researchers reported a higher flavour of freshness and floral notes in the Flow honey, compared with a semi-commercial honey.

Cedar: We get a lot of info back from the world about different ways, so we are always learning. There's a lovely global conversation that's sprung up around our invention. And around that grows a community where people are talking bees from a global perspective. With that comes every single opinion there is. They say that for every two bee keepers you get five opinions!

Stuart: Beekeepers are a wild and wonderful bunch!

Cb: Why the Northern Rivers?

Stuart: It's our home. A lot of people, myself included, moved to this area because they wanted something different. That means that this area is innovative, populated by people who are willing to take risks, who have pride in difference and therefore have that kind of energy. It's no surprise that Flow came out of that.

Flow Hives are strengthening their connection with community by bringing in the technology to keep manufacturing locally, as demand for their hives grows. Stuart and Cedar have re-designed their hive to include 14 improvements and made a limited release breeder box, using off-cuts to reduce waste.

Bee-autiful!

Find out more information about Flow Hives at:

www.honeyflow.com.au

"Flow Hives is renowned as the most successful crowdfunding attempt in the world, ever."





The Woods family at Cradle Mountain, Tasmania

The Gypsy Life

We meet the Woods family from Sapphire Beach who packed up their home in early 2016 for a life on the road. Their travels have taken them to jaw-dropping locations around Australia and as photographers, Tom and Sherrin have documented it all beautifully along the way.

Words by Yvette Harper

Images courtesy of ST Images



Tom and Sherrin Woods appreciate that they're a little unusual in their preference for being joined at the hip, even after the better part of 25 years together. I catch up with them both over the phone from their current base of Coolum Beach and despite knowing that the focus of our chat is their adventurous lifestyle, Tom still pipes up with, "You could turn this into a love story if you want."

Perhaps it's that self-containment as a couple and as a family that makes their unconventional existence work so well.

"We have a lot of friends with great relationships who, by their own admission, need that separation from one another from time to time and we totally understand that – it's almost the norm but we're a little different in that we're better together and want to experience everything together," says Tom.

Tom and Sherrin's connectedness also helps explain why, even when visiting some of the most impressive surf locations around the world, Tom was left feeling somewhat empty.

"I was getting opportunities to shoot in Indonesia and The Maldives, but I wasn't sharing these amazing places with the people I really wanted to and that left me feeling a bit

hollow. I knew I was lucky to get these cool photography gigs in destinations that felt like paradise, but I'd be counting down the days to get back to Sherrin and the kids."

The 'kids' are Delta (14) and Billy (10) and they too are thriving as nomads.

Let's rewind a bit though to when Coffs Coast was home. Sapphire Beach on the northern beaches had been their base for about 15 years – long before kids entered the picture. And Tom and Sherrin were practically kids themselves (not long out of their teens) when they left their hometown of Adelaide to travel around Australia.

They fell hard for the north coast of NSW and decided that between the climate and the waves, Coffs was a perfect fit. As budding photographers, they also felt it was the ideal location to pursue their goals of turning professional. With the beach at their doorstep and World Heritage national parks close at hand, they were spoilt for choice photographically.

But despite developing careers and establishing a home studio that allowed plenty of family time, surf photography can be a solitary pursuit as Tom discovered and it was time to change tack. Travel, photography and family. How best to combine it all?

>>

A few years ago, ST Images (you guessed it, short for 'Sherrin' and 'Tom') cleverly created a niche market for themselves in holiday park photography. In the latter part of 2015, the Woods family photographed 23 parks between Newcastle and the Gold Coast. They would make a long weekend of the job, returning home between shoots. ST Images were building a strong portfolio in a specialised field.

Tom then thought, 'Wouldn't it be cool if we could go to all of these places not just as a holiday but as a lifestyle?' And in early 2016, with a few months of work lined up with the BIG4 group, the family decided to take the show on the road.

Of course, it hasn't all been smooth sailing. While Delta and Billy were thrilled by the adventure, having been inspired by the journals their parents kept from their travels, establishing a school routine through distance education took a few months. Sherrin also had to adjust to the role of teacher.

These days though, Sherrin says Delta and Billy's education is soaring and is complemented by their many day-to-day experiences away from the books like visiting museums and galleries or going bushwalking or to see a waterfall.

Sherrin says, "I think doing different things every day and having different things around you just heightens your awareness. Travel gives you the opportunity to live in the moment and be really present."

Both kids have a tremendous appreciation of the natural world. Tom describes Billy as a wildlife fanatic and says Delta is like a little mermaid. And it's easy to be inspired when days are spent snorkelling with manta rays or seeing dugongs.

For Sherrin, "Our week on Lady Elliot Island was one of the most incredible experiences of our lives. We'd spend the days snorkelling near manta rays, turtles and reef sharks and the kids would learn about living plastic free, island survival and desalination. Or they'd chat to marine biologists on the island about all the beautiful creatures we were seeing."

For Tom, Shark Bay in the north-west of WA is another unbelievable destination. "I flew over it and discovered the most amazing colours and scenery – the likes of which I've never seen before. The landscape is insane. The region offered such mind blowing photography. That was where I saw my first dugong. Billy particularly loved the thorny devils there. What was remarkable was how diverse the Western Australian coastline is and so very different from the east coast too."

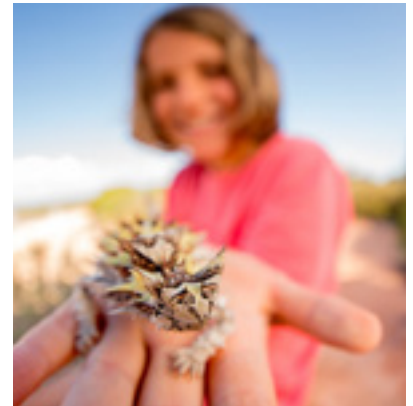
Tom and Sherrin work as they go and of course, they've spent countless nights in holiday park cabins. But when asked about the downsides of being away from home or being on the move so much of the time, they struggle to come up with an answer. "We do meet people along the way who say they really miss their community, but I think we're unique in that for us, family is enough."



Shark Bay, Western Australia



Delta at Wallaman Falls, Far North Queensland



Billy with a thorny devil



Tom at Lady Elliot Island

I have one final question for them, sure to create some discussion between the pair.

So, of the two of you, who is the better photographer?

They both laugh and Tom answers, "Actually we're different and the best results are collaborative. I don't know how to fly a drone and Sherrin is getting some epic aerals. When it comes to wide angle shots like surf photography and landscapes, they're probably my strengths ...and —" (Sherrin interjects) "I'm best with a macro lens."

Ever harmonious...

Given that the initial plan was just a few months on the road, the couple are surprised at how long they've been away. Work has been steady and in between jobs, the family explore. Sherrin acknowledges that there may come a time

soon when the kids simply want to stay put but for now, everyone is making the most of it.

She adds, "This time is really valuable and it's beautiful that we can share it as a family. Not all families get the time they want before their kids go out into the world."

And when that time comes, and Delta and Billy set off to make their mark, somehow, I don't quite see them settling into office jobs...

To watch a short video of their travel highlights, read their blog or see their photography, go to:

www.stimages.com.au

You can also find the Woods family on Instagram @stimages



Carly Shanahan – Rising Surf Star

It was a beautiful morning in Woolli the day Carly Shanahan caught her first wave. Just six years old, a tiny thing out in the deep blue of her family's favourite break but even then, she says, she knew that surfing was going to be her life.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Brendan Ray



Carly with her mum, Mel

We all had dreams like that when we were kids. A poll cast among the Coastbeat team garnered one Olympic swimmer, two movie stars and a fireman...sigh, so predictable. But fast forward eight years in Carly Shanahan's life and it's a very different outcome: she has just won another NSW North Coast Regional title and has her sparkling blue, somewhat mischievous eyes set on the July State Finals, a competition she has aced for two years running.

"My age-group is Under 16 and the standard is high, so I feel pretty happy to be qualifying for State: I've made the state team for the last two years," says Carly.

She also has her sights set on the Pro Junior competition which prepares younger surfers for the WSL Championship Tour. This year, Carly made the semi-finals in one Pro Junior event and the quarter finals in another.

"I'm pretty positive about this year: it's great experience for

next year when I feel I'll be in with a chance," she says.

Apart from the thrill of success, this is important for sponsorship. As Carly spends every weekend away at a surf competition somewhere in Australia, sponsorship is really important to help towards the expenses that this entails.

Carly is sponsored by Billabong, bcu and Zombie Treads and her boards are shaped by Shaun Cansdell. Credit to them all for supporting such a young female surfer.

Support is one of the elements that sets dreamers apart from achievers. When I compliment Carly on her success, she is quick to point out that she could not have succeeded without the support of her mother Mel, father Kevin and her three siblings.

"I couldn't do it without them," she says. "But they don't think of me as a champion surfer when there are dishes to be done!"

"My age-group is Under 16 and the standard is high, so I feel pretty happy to be qualifying for State: I've made the state team for the last two years."

>>

The whole family surf and her father was her first coach. As well as surfing before school every morning, Kevin augmented Carly's technique with training on a skateboard. Kevin still works with her, alongside trainer Lee Winkler and fitness trainer Brett Caller.

Carly's day starts at 6am with strength and fitness training at her home gym. Then a surf until lunchtime. After lunch it's time for schoolwork and then back to the beach for an afternoon surf.

She is aiming for the World Surf League Championship Tour, starting with the Pro-Junior and she is well on her way. In 2017, Carly qualified for three Pro Junior events out of the five on offer and had one semi-final finish, again, as the youngest surfer in the water.

Carly interrupts my questions at this point to make sure I note down the "massive support" she receives from the Coffs Harbour Board Riders. And her grandparents, who are very important to her.

"I look after all my own social media, mostly because my grandparents follow me, and they like to know what I'm up to," she says, laughing.

The conversation segues naturally to role models and heroes.

"Oh, there are so many great female surfers," Carly says. "Sally Fitzgibbons, Tyler Wright, Stephanie Gilmore, Layne Beachley, Wendy Botha and Felicity Palmateer. There's a lot of respect for women on the circuit. In the last five years the gender gap has been closing fast."

I asked her about the reaction she gets outside competitions from regular surfers when they see a young girl lining up out the back.

"I don't let them intimidate me but sometimes you have to be assertive. After they see that I know what I'm doing they treat me like anyone else. Every break is different and often it's not sexism, it's just a really crowded break! I train with some elite male surfers and they know that the girls surf really well."

But what about school, friends and a social life?

"I have so many friends on the circuit. We're rivals in the water but once we're out of the surf, everyone



hugs and congratulates each other. One of my best friends is Tahlia Marsh who's a BMX champion; we both understand the lifestyle and what it takes. And I've got some great friends from home. This year we hung out at Bluesfest together which was so cool, spending the time catching up with each other. School's good too – Mum home schools me and I do short courses in anything that interests me. I've been getting into film and video editing recently."

Carly hopes one day to win a world title – that's where she's heading. And after pro-surfing?

"I've been making some short videos about surfing. When I was little there weren't as many great surf movies for girls, so I'd really like to do that."

Watch out Witzig and McCoy - you might have competition.

Find Carly on Instagram

@carlyjazzshanahan



Image courtesy of WSL



The Gladstone Hub

A Hidden Gem of the Macleay Valley

We chat to Sarah Duffy, who took an old house, painted it red and invited makers and artists to share the space - creating a thriving community hub.

Words by Georgie Bull



The Gladstone Hub. Image courtesy of James Duffy

When Sarah Duffy left England at the age of 25 to embark on a three-year backpacking adventure, she was not to know that her travels would end in a tiny Australian village called Gladstone.

That was 22 years ago, and Sarah has clearly made her mark on the Macleay Valley town as a forward-thinking fashionista and mastermind of the The Gladstone Hub, a space that is shared by 12 small businesses including popular café, Steam & Cedar.

As a Macleay Valley local I've been to Gladstone, but this is the first time I've had a good look around The Hub. From the get-go, I love the laid-back market vibe and the fact that all the store owners seem to be friends with one another. The building, an old house, has retained all its rooms and each is inhabited by a different business. The large front room houses displays by a variety of local artists, fashion designers, jewellery makers and homeware merchants.

As I venture along the side of the building, I find a fair-trade store with beautiful baskets and enjoy a long chat with Bernie, a shamanic practitioner who also makes her own candles. Around the back of the building, overlooking the grassy backyard, is Whole & Happy, a bulk wholefoods store committed to plastic-free packaging: further in lies a fascinating photography studio.

For Sarah, this homely house of treasures is the manifestation of a long-held dream. "My passion for developing The Hub comes from the fact that my family is here, and I want to be part of making this area as great as it can be," she says. "I dreamed of building something like the business hubs I saw in London. The thrilling part of it is that this idea is actually working!"



Sarah Duffy. Image courtesy of Sharon Lamb from Scherezade Photography



Dan and Beth from Steam & Cedar. Image courtesy of Sharon Lamb

Sarah's creative endeavours began at the same time her backpacking adventures ended. Planning to go cotton picking, she made a detour to visit her aunt in Kempsey and a few days later, met the man she would eventually marry.

"I was only planning on staying a week but then I met Thomas," she laughs. "I had my bags packed to leave and he said, 'Why don't you stay?' So I did."

The couple were living in Gladstone when Sarah opened her clothing boutique, Hammond & Harwood, in the original village butchery. When the building that is now The Hub came up for sale, Sarah moved to make room for a bigger store.

"My mother owned a big fashion store in London and she used to send me all her seconds, so we had some amazing merchandise in the shop," she says. "At the time we had some really unique jewellery and clothing but when the big labels started bringing out the same stuff, we weren't different any more. I knew it was time for a change and I wanted to share this space with other creators." And so, The Hub was born.

What shines through as I walk through the rooms is how much the various store owners enjoy collaborating. Steam & Cedar sells bliss balls made by Lauren from Whole & Happy, while photographer Sharon provides beautifully styled pictures of the café's food.

Dan and Beth are the new owners of Steam & Cedar, a hole-in-the-wall café nestled in a tiny building adjacent to the main hub. Outside, patrons lounge on comfy chairs with bare feet on the grass, enjoying the sunshine. An innovator at heart, Dan has invented his own artisan coffees infused with a variety of spices (the lemon myrtle and pepper was surprisingly delicious!). Steam & Cedar are fiercely dedicated to using local produce and you can almost taste the Macleay Valley soil in their freshly made seasonal lunch platters (hint: get in quick to try the pumpkin soup and spinach pie before the seasonal menu changes). The café mulches all waste, returning coffee cups and cardboard plates to Beth and Dan's own vegetable garden.

Across the lawn lies Sarah's latest project, 'The Barn', which has been renovated to become an information point where visitors can find out about local attractions, activities and upcoming events.

It's mid-afternoon by the time I drag myself away from The Hub and, still on a high, I find myself briefly entertaining the thought of moving our family to Gladstone. Sarah knows the feeling well.

"This town has an incredible pull," she says. "It draws in the best people – that's why the whole village, not just The Hub, is full of amazing and creative people. It's a very special place."

- If you've got room in your belly after visiting Steam & Cedar, drop into the Old Lodge, which also has beautiful gifts and art or the Old Bank Café
- Don't miss the Macleay Valley Community Art Gallery, which has an ever-changing list of exhibitions from talented local artists
- Explore boutiques Unforgettable4Evermore, Mokea and the Organised Chaos Emporium
- Enjoy views of the river and regular live music at the Gladstone Heritage Hotel

You can find out more about The Hub

on Facebook - The Gladstone Hub and on Instagram @thegladstonehub



Mokea. Image by Cain Pascoe

Out of The Blue

It's early morning at the Coffs Harbour Marina and the first glimpses of morning sun kiss the ocean as local fishing boats crawl back to the harbour after a long night. A refreshing chill is in the salty air as resident seagulls guard their domain in hungry anticipation.



For Mike Davey from Jetty Dive, this is 'magic hour'. He heads out into the deeper waters that have been his playground for more than 20 years. Mike knows the ocean landscape intimately and navigates his vessel past Muttonbird Island and into the blue of the Solitary Islands Marine Park. He cuts the outboard motor and waits. Silence. Solitude.

Soon, the quiet is broken by the familiar blow of a lone humpback whale porpoising nearby. Casting an eye on the horizon of the pristine Pacific Ocean, Mike sees the tell-tale sprays of migratory whales as they signal their arrival to the Coffs Coast, en route to North Queensland.

Mornings prove to be prime time for viewing these inquisitive giants; the rising sun shimmering against their massive form as they breach and dive in an aquatic-acrobatic show.

Experiencing this display in person is one of the most profound of all wildlife experiences and the Coffs Coast is fast becoming a renowned destination for world-class interaction with whales.

From May to October, humpback whales habitually turn on a show of spectacular surfacing behaviours; from slapping their fins and tails, to spyhopping and breaching. Occasionally, they are accompanied by their rarer relatives, Southern Right, Sperm and Minke whales, creating a once in a lifetime experience for keen-eyed whale watchers.

After extensive research, planning and pioneering, Mike and the team from Jetty Dive are now offering an interactive whale experience, unique to the Coffs Coast in NSW.

Jetty Dive's 'Swim with the Humpback Whales Tour' is a non-intrusive experience which respects the natural migratory passage of the whales and ensures that their well-being is a priority.

And it appears that our fascination is reciprocal. "If we feel the whales are curious enough to see us, we position the boat at the distance required by regulations and allow the snorkelers to enter the water. Whether or not you see the whales in the water is entirely up to these beautiful mammals," says Mike.

For the less intrepid whale watcher who prefers to stay dry, several professional whale watching tours run daily from Coffs Harbour during the season. Local operators have an ardent appreciation of the whales and their marine environment and are dedicated to protecting both.

The beauty of the Coffs Coast during whale watching season is the many natural viewing platforms – those stunning, vast headlands which allow people to watch the whales frolic at sea or in protected inlets.

"You could be walking up Muttonbird Island for those spectacular 360 degree panoramic views of beach and rainforest when you'll suddenly glimpse the dorsal fins of a pod of whales cruising by," says Mike.

He adds, "Sometimes the number of whales we see makes the ocean look like a humpback highway as they make their journey from Antarctica to warmer waters to breed and give birth, before returning for summer feeding."

As a seasoned whale watcher, he offers a final word of advice to all those seeking whales out from land or sea; "Whales have a way of connecting us to nature. When you watch a whale leaping from the pristine waters of the Coffs Coast and slowly spiral in joy, remember to put down the camera for just a moment and immerse yourself in this truly transformative experience."

For further information on whales and watching experiences, visit www.coffscost.com



Did you know?

Breaching usually begins with two or three beats of the tail before the humpback whale leaps out of the water, rolls in the air with its huge pectoral fins outstretched like wings and finally crashing back into the ocean, creating a spectacular splash.

Best viewing locations on the Coffs Coast

Boambee Headland and Boambee Beach

Sawtell Headland and Bongil Bongil National Park

Muttonbird Island Nature Reserve - adjacent to the Coffs Harbour Marina

Moonee Beach Nature Reserve and Look At Me Now Headland - near Emerald Beach

Woolgoolga Headland

Ararawarra Headland

Coffs Coast Whale Watching Tour Operators

Cougar Cat 12 - www.cougarcat12.com.au

Pacific Explorer - www.pacificexplorer.com.au

Jetty Dive - jettydive.com.au

Jetty Dive also offers guests the opportunity to swim with humpback whales.

Words and images courtesy of coffscoast.com



coffscoast.com

Bellingen • Coffs Harbour

#createyourparadise

A Celebration of Success The Regional Tourism Awards

The North Coast Coast Regional Tourism Awards, hosted by the Coffs Coast in July 2018.



Previous Regional Tourism Award winner, Forest Sky Pier at Sealy Lookout, Orara East State Forest

Across NSW, the tourism industry is a major contributor to local economies. In fact, on the Coffs Coast alone, the tourism and hospitality industries account for more than 12% of jobs. For many young people, these sectors are where they commence their working life.

On July 25 the most important annual event on the North Coast tourism industry's calendar, The Regional Tourism Awards, will be hosted by Destination Coffs Coast. The event will be held at Opal Cove Resort in Coffs Harbour.

The awards acknowledge excellence in tourism for the region with nominations coming from The Great Lakes in the south to the Tweed Coast in the north.

Winners of the Regional Tourism Awards become automatic finalists in the NSW State Tourism Awards and if successful at that level, go onto the National Tourism Awards.

As well as celebrating the success of the award winners, a full day of inspiring and interesting speakers has been planned. The Tourism Symposium will be held at Pacific Bay Resort, followed by the awards later in the evening.

This event is a fantastic opportunity for tourism organisations and individuals to gain insight into the industry, network with other businesses and workshop ideas for promoting tourism within the region.

The day-long Symposium and Awards evening are not-to-be-missed opportunities. Everyone involved in tourism and related businesses on the North Coast is encouraged to attend.

For all bookings and to see the full program, go to www.coffsc Coast.com.au/regional-tourism-awards



Lyndall and Mel from The Cheesemaking Workshop are excited to enter the 2018 awards.

In Season this Winter

The Winter Harvest Calendar is brought to you by Coffs Coast Harvest



From the daily seafood catch to the local farmer's harvest, here's your guide to fresh, local food available on the Coffs Coast.

Season timing indicated in brackets

Fruit				
Avocado (early)	Davidson Plum (early-mid)	Lemons	Mandarin	Pear
Banana	Grapefruit	Limes	Orange	Tomato
Blueberries	Kiwifruit (early)	Macadamia	Passionfruit (early)	
Herbs				
Basil	Coriander	Ginger	Mint	Spring Onion
Chilli	Dill	Lemongrass	Oregano	Thyme
Chives	Garlic	Lemon Myrtle	Parsley	
Vegetables				
Beetroot	Celery	Leek	Peas	Spinach
Bok Choy	Choko (early)	Lettuce	Potato	Sweet Potato (late)
Broccoli	Choy Sum	Mushroom	Radish	Tat Soi
Cabbage	Cucumber	Okra	Rhubarb (late)	Turnip (mid-late)
Carrot	Gourds (early)	Onion	Rocket	Watercress
Cauliflower	Kale	Parsnip (mid-late)	Silverbeet	Wombok
Seafood				
Albacore Tuna (late)	Cuttlefish	Lobster (mid-late)	Octopus	Whitebait
Blue Eye Trevalla (early)	Grunner	Mackerel - spanish (early)	Snapper	Whiting
Bonito (mid-late)	Kingfish	Mackerel - spotted (early)	Spanner crab	
Bream	King Prawns	Mud Crab (early)	Teraglin (mid-late)	
Bullseye	Leather Jackets (mid-late)	Mulloway (mid-late)	Tiger Prawns (late season)	



Madeline Moore

Grease Monkey

Interview with Yvette Harper Photography by Brendan Ray

Cb: Hi Madeline. Tell me a little about yourself...

I'm 22 years old and I live on the Coffs Coast. I moved here from Sydney when I was eight. I'm the eldest of four children and I'm a mechanic by trade. I'm currently a 4th year which is the final year of my apprenticeship with Knudsen Automotive in Toormina.

Cb: When did you realise you had a passion for cars and how did you go about making this your career?

It's funny, I've never really been into the V8s, followed much motorsport or engaged in anything competitively so it's surprising I got into this.

It was a bit of an accident really. I bought an older BMW when I was 17, changed a brake light and from then on, I spent any moment I could hanging out with friends and doing things to cars late into the night. I did a prevocational course in Automotive and it all fell nicely into place from there.

I've stumbled upon my dream job and that's something some people spend a lifetime trying to achieve. I feel very privileged to be doing what I love.

Cb: What are some of the challenges you've faced as a female in a male-dominated industry?

I wouldn't say I've faced many challenges as a female in a male dominated industry. I think sometimes it can be a harder transition for the males than it is for me. I've spent my whole life around more men than women because I like the straight-forward approach.

I've been accepted as a tradie because I am a tradie. I act and think like one. Yes, I'm female but I'd rather be having a beer with the boys or doing something car related than getting my nails done.

Cb: What advice would you give to other young women considering becoming a mechanic or tradie in general?

Just have a go. In my first year I learnt that a 'pocket full of dreams and a can-do attitude' goes a long way. The only person standing in your way is you. If I can make it happen, with the anxiety disorders I have, then I'm sure you can too. Nothing has been simply handed to me.

If you want it to happen, make it happen and someone will see your determination. The necessary prerequisites are important too. I went to TAFE and did work experience to make sure it was something I wanted to pursue.

Cb: Have you had good mentors along the way?

I've had many wonderful mentors. My current mentors are John Knudsen and Max Pugh at Knudsen Automotive. I am a product of all of my mentors though. I've learnt something

from everyone I've worked closely with.

My TAFE teachers, Dave and Paul, have been there through thick and thin with me and have definitely been the strongest constants throughout my apprenticeship. They know how much they mean to me and I can't thank them enough for getting me to where I am today.

Cb: What kind of reaction do you get from people when they learn what you do for a living?

People are surprised that I do what I do but I've become kind of numb to that reaction now. I've considered telling people I work at Big W, just so they don't ask me about the noise in their car!

My biggest frustration is when people find out that I'm a mechanic and they instantly tell me they don't trust their mechanic. It's simple – if you don't trust your mechanic, find one you feel you can trust. Find one who will be honest with you and take the time to explain things and answer your questions. It's the same as finding the right doctor. Find someone you feel comfortable with.

Cb: What do you love most about life on the north coast?

I love that I can get away from reality here. You can escape the crowds and be in the middle of nowhere within half an hour.

Cb: How do you best like to spend time away from work?

When I'm not tinkering on a car, I enjoy camping and exploring with my friends.

Cb: I hear you have a passion for drift racing.

Yes. I really enjoy drift racing but I'm not really one for the competitive side so, at this stage, I'm more of a spectator in that world.

Cb: What other experiences are high on your wish list?

I toyed with the idea of travel but at the moment I'm too much of a workaholic to think about that. I'm genuinely happy with where I am right now - learning and going to work five days a week. That for me is a pretty happy life.

I would love to have my own business one day but also have the choice to leave someone else in charge at times, for a few weeks, so I could travel. Longer-term, more travel in Australia really interests me.

Cb: Is there a motto you try to live by?

I guess the motto I live by is: 'keep on keeping on'. You just might have to go around a few corners before you get there but there will always be something good around the next bend in the road.

Thank you, Madeline.

Whales and Wanderlust

Coastbeat chats to Forster's Gabby Hunter who's never happier than when she's on or in the water. Gabby also shares with us her favourite wildlife encounters around the world.

Words by Yvette Harper & Gabby Hunter

Wildlife Images from Gabby Hunter

She may be a qualified Speech Pathologist and hasn't dismissed the idea of returning to uni to study medicine, but Gabby Hunter is perfectly content working in the family business - Dive Forster at Fisherman's Wharf. What's more, in addition to exploring local waterways, work allows her to venture further afield and experience all that Planet Ocean has to offer.

It makes perfect sense that Gabby's so passionate about the ocean and its creatures - after all, she's the product of a romance that blossomed some 30 years ago when her mum came to do a dive course at her father's dive centre. And Gabby's been diving into the deep as long as she can remember: first as a swimmer and snorkeler and now as a trained PADI Rescue Diver.

So, what is the great appeal of the ocean for Gabby? "I feel more at home swimming than I do when I'm on land. I feel completely at peace in the ocean, especially when I dive as there is a beautiful sense of weightlessness."

As wonderful as she feels beneath the surface, Gabby's got it covered above it too. She is a Grade 1 Coxswain (also known as a Commercial Vessel Master) and, as far as she's aware, the only female of the 20 or so qualified coxswains in the region. "I'm very proud of what I do and am used to raised eyebrows when I introduce myself as the ship's captain. I also know that the guys at Bunnings mean well when they ask if I need help tying a certain knot." Needless to say, after years and years on boats, Gabby's got knot-tying all sorted.

A typical morning in summer (overseas trips are scheduled during our winter months) might involve taking guests to swim with dolphins followed by a dive charter. Gabby says that every dive is a new experience. "Just yesterday, I had the most spectacular dive with about 25-30 grey nurse sharks surrounding me."

For Gabby, the Great Lakes region presents the best of both worlds. "We're so lucky here. Beyond the beautiful coastal areas where you'll find some of the best beaches



Image by Kirk Owers

I've ever seen, there is the gorgeous hinterland region which has unbelievable waterfalls, stunning rural properties and excellent vistas, especially up in the Manning."

Although Gabby says Forster is home and always will be, foreign exploration beckons (especially when it involves getting wet) and with that in mind, here are Gabby's suggestions for those experiences we should all try before we kick the bucket.

And, her key selection criteria? "It may be ridiculously corny, but I kept thinking of that quote, 'life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.'"



1. Humpback Whales - Tonga

Humpbacks can be seen in many spots around the globe, but you can only swim with them in a few locations worldwide. And I believe Tonga to be the pick of the bunch.

These beautiful creatures have given me, hands down, the best interaction I have experienced with a wild animal, ever.

Female humpbacks grow up to 18 metres long and can weigh up to 40 tonnes. To have a creature the size of a school bus slowly approach you with her brand new, two-week-old

calf perched on her nose is humbling, to say the least.

I'm blessed to have travelled to Vava'u, Tonga to swim with these incredible mammals several times. I still vividly recall my first trip at the age of 16. The whales were so aware and careful of us in the water. The calf gently swam around our group, making eye contact with us and mimicking our movements and all the while her mum slept peacefully below us. The calf would occasionally swim back to mum for a drink of milk and to rub her soft belly over mum's nose. It reminded me of when we kiss our own mum on the cheek.



2. Africa – The Big Five

The Big Five are found in Sub-Saharan Africa including, but not limited to, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

No animal list would be complete without the 'Big Five' in Africa. My dad, Ron Hunter, has been travelling to Africa with groups for 10 years or so now. Next May, I will venture to the Eastern Cape of South Africa to see the 'Big Five'; African Elephant, Black Rhinoceros, Cape Buffalo, African Lion and the elusive, African Leopard.

3. The Whale Sharks of Cenderawasih Bay

Cenderawasih Bay is in one of the most remote areas of Indonesia. This bay is to the north of the mainland of West Papua (where Papua New Guinea meets Indonesia). Access is difficult and only a couple of Liveaboard Dive Boats travel to the area. It is a special charter to a place where you're unlikely to see another boat for miles, besides those of traditional Papuan fishermen.

There are around 30 whale sharks in the bay who cluster around traditional Papuan fishing platforms anchored to the seabed. The whale sharks gather around the platforms in the hope for scraps and small fish – it's an 'all you can eat' buffet for them. The visibility is unbelievable, and, in my opinion, this unique experience offers the best whale shark encounter anywhere on Planet Ocean.



4. The East Coast of Australia – Our beloved Grey Nurse Shark

I was six years old when I first saw these sharks whilst snorkelling at Latitude Rock, off the Cape Hawke Headland (just south of Forster). I feel blessed to dive with them regularly.

They're critically endangered and despite their fierce appearance, are placid and non-threatening - except to fish of course! They aggregate at the same spots in the ocean

so they're a very reliable shark to dive with. They cruise up and down the sea floor scratching their bellies and flirting with each other all day.

And at dawn and dusk, they feed on small baitfish and other snack-sized sea critters.

It's both exhilarating and mesmerizing to dive with these sharks – you end up transfixed and in awe as they swim calmly by you. Plus, they aggregate all up and down our coast. Forster has a year-round population.



5. Giant Pacific Manta Rays – The Maldives, Thailand and Revillagigedo Archipelago

Think of a giant eagle crossed with a whale and mixed with a wide-mouthed shark. That's a Manta Ray. They have a long tail that looks very similar to a sting ray, but it isn't barbed and can't sting. Their wingspan, edge to edge, can get up to five metres and they can weigh up to 1.5 tonnes.

Manta rays are filter feeders – they use their strangely shaped mouths to scoop plankton up. They're one of the most inquisitive animals I've come across.

I first saw one of these majestic gentle animals in The Maldives and was lucky enough to see several during a dive in Thailand earlier this year. In November, I will travel to Mexico's Revillagigedo Archipelago to dive with them again.

6. Sea Lions – The Sea of Cortez, Mexico

Sea lions are like the puppy dogs of the sea - playful, cheeky and sometimes, up to no good. The sea lions of Mexico will play shell games with you. Pick up a light-coloured shell and toss it away from you while SCUBA diving and the sea lion will pick it up and bring it right back. It must be seen to be believed!



There are so many places to visit for incredible wildlife encounters which makes narrowing it down almost impossible. Other amazing wildlife experiences I would recommend are the Great White Sharks in Guadalupe, Mexico. It's cage diving just below the surface and offers such a unique opportunity to view the ocean's apex predator. Polar Bears and the Northern Lights in the Arctic is another important one for the list and in the next few years I plan

on a sailing expedition to experience this. At the end of the voyage, I will free dive between the tectonic plates of Europe and America.

Gabby works for Dive Forster at Fisherman's Wharf and Quest Tours.

Quest Tours conduct many of the wildlife experiences detailed above.

Seals take a shine to the Mid North Coast

Why do we have a seal on the front cover of this issue? There's no denying that they're one of Earth's most amazing creatures - they're cute and inquisitive with plenty of personality but why are they taking centre stage? Read on to find out...

Words by Ali Hiddlestone



Australian Fur Seal, Image courtesy of ST Images

While our marine mammal friends are usually only seen on the south coast, the word on the grapevine is that they're starting to love the north coast as much as we do, with increasing numbers migrating to our shores.

According to local expert and Dolphin Marine Magic Veterinarian, Dr Duan March, seal numbers on the east coast are increasing and this is largely due to an expansion in the numbers and range of the New Zealand fur seal, also known as the long-nosed fur seal.

"These animals disperse over a greater range following weaning and we commonly see them on the mid-north-coast during winter," says Dr March.

"They generally appear between May and September and during this period we will head out and assess up to 20 of them. They are typically juvenile long-nosed fur seals that have recently weaned from their mums."

It seems our furry friends are not only travelling up the coast – they're visiting from abroad. "We ran some genetics on them last season and it indicated that whilst some arrive on our beaches following a migration up the coast, others are actually coming over from New Zealand," says Dr March.

While the seals are generally left to their own devices, Dr March said in some cases where they're injured or malnourished, they'll come into care with us for a month or so before being released.

There are two types of fur seals in Australia – the Australian fur seal and the long-nosed fur seal – and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are responsible for the conservation and management of these species. The conservation status of both species in NSW is listed as vulnerable.

Our friend on the magazine's front cover is an Australian fur seal and while their northern-most breeding colony is at Montague Island on the south coast, there have been recent sightings around Seal Rocks.

The small coastal town was indeed named after the Australian fur seal, however, breeding sadly no longer occurs there and there have been no sightings since around the 1970s. That is, up until now.

"With a bit of luck, we might see the renewal of a breeding colony there soon," says Dr March.



Dr Duan March (in hat) providing fluids for a Long-nosed fur seal

According to Senior Marine Scientist, Dr David Harasti from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), seals have been observed hauling out at Seal Rocks over the past three years with up to 20 seals recorded on Big Seal Rock in 2017. It's not known, however, whether these seals are the Australian fur seal or the long-nosed fur seal.

Since being heavily hunted for commercial sealing from around the 1800s to well into the 1900s, Australian fur seal numbers have never really returned to what they were, with numbers estimated to be less than two-thirds of the pre-harvest numbers, according to Dr March.

Thankfully, the population is increasing. The biggest threat to this particular species is being out-competed by the long-nosed fur seal. "We have seen some hybridisation occur between these two species so perhaps in the future this will become more common – if you can't beat them, join them!" says Dr March.

And what of seals for the future? Dr March has high hopes.

"I think we will see increased numbers of long-nosed fur seals colonising these areas. Hopefully the Australian fur seal can keep up."

Just a word of advice, if you happen to see one in your travels, Dr March recommends appreciating them from a 30-metre distance. They may be cute, but just like humans; they too have their cranky days.



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Adventures Abroad, Fine Food, Flowers and More

In the second part of our 'Full Circle' series, Coastbeat caught up with Coffs Harbour local - turned international marketing guru – turned local café owner and florist, Kristi Mulhall.

Words by Ali Hiddlestone



Kristi has tested beer in Prague, sipped on the finest wines from the vineyards of France and watched a world-champion Spanish jamon slicer work his magic. And it was all in a day's work.

The Coffs Harbour local spent five years living abroad, basing herself in the UK but spending much of her time travelling around Europe – all in the name of work.

Sounds like a dream, right? For Kristi, it was. After growing up in Coffs, the ambitious teen was chomping at the bit to explore what the world had to offer. "I couldn't wait to see what was out there. I used to sit on the beach and imagine what was on the other side of that horizon," she says.

"I hadn't travelled anywhere by the time I was 17. I'd never been overseas, I'd never been away so I was beyond excited to explore."

Following high school, Kristi moved to Newcastle for university before heading to Sydney to begin her career. Five years later, with her sister already set up in London, she made the move overseas. It was in the UK that her career really took off.

Kristi's first job was with a large off-licence wine brand which had her developing entire wine ranges and subsequent brands. "I developed new labels, ranges, brands and packaging which often involved frequent trips to German beer breweries and French vineyards – it was such a great job," she says.

Following this, Kristi worked for well-known UK supermarket

chain, Sainsbury's, working alongside the one and only, Jamie Oliver. "I worked with their healthy food range, writing programs for Jamie and doing trend analysis on the market."

After five years living and travelling abroad, Kristi returned home to continue her phenomenal career back in Sydney. As the brand manager for Jacob's Creek, Kristi found herself rubbing shoulders with the best in the fine food business, not to mention some of the world's most famous tennis stars. How? She managed the company's sponsorship of the Australian Open – four years running.

"I often worked with Pat Rafter and Wally Masur. I remember clearly, it was my fourth tournament and I was down underneath Rod Laver Arena with Pat Rafter on the way to a press conference. Pat Cash decided to stop and have a chat and then Serena Williams walked past. It was just surreal," Kristi says.

"I have always loved tennis – and wine – and I remember thinking, this job just ticks every box. However, I also remember the moment being a bit of a reality check. I probably had the best job you could ever have in marketing, but I wasn't feeling fulfilled. I wasn't happy."

Despite these amazing roles, diverse experiences and seemingly, having everything she'd ever dreamt of, Kristi realised it wasn't enough. The only place she felt she could truly be happy was several hours north, in her hometown of Coffs Harbour.

From that 17-year-old busting to get out of there, Kristi had well and truly made her mark in the big, wide world, before coming full circle to start a new chapter of her life, at home.

"I sat down and decided to have a little think about what I really wanted to do. I wrote down all the things I love most in the world and discovered that most of my answers centred around fine food!"

Kristi adds, "I thought I would open up a restaurant and then I said to my mum, 'I don't know how I'm going to go without all the beautiful cheese, fresh bread, fresh flowers and wonderful coffee that I'm used to getting in Sydney'. I then had this 'aha' moment and realised there wasn't anything offering that in Coffs Harbour"

From this lightbulb moment, Kristi started Pansabella – originating from a nickname her grandfather had for her mother, 'Pansy', and 'bella' – meaning beauty, a link to Kristi's experiences in Italy.

"I wouldn't have Pansabella without the family. Mum comes in regularly to help, my pop delivers the flowers and my husband sets up the furniture every morning – it's wonderful," she says.

Eight years on, Pansabella has transformed from a small shop with a gourmet deli range, fresh flowers and takeaway food and coffee to a thriving café, staffed with an entire team who keep the wheels turning. "My head chef, manager and florist

are all so talented at their jobs, as are the rest of my team. I feel so lucky to have such great people to work with," says Kristi.

While her life and focus is now all in Coffs Harbour, Kristi has managed to find a way of bringing her experiences from abroad back home. "What I experienced overseas has shaped what I'm doing now in every possible way. Everything I learnt about fine food, cheese, cured meats – that education has been invaluable," she says.

"I think sometimes you have to travel the world to realise how amazing Coffs Harbour is. It's not until you've been to all those places that you can come back and think, oh my goodness, wow."

While Kristi never expected to return to the coast, she says it has been her best decision yet. Family drew her back here and now she and her husband have two young children of their own.

"It was passion and love for my family that brought me back but if you end up doing something you really love and that you're passionate about, like I am, there's just nothing better."

Pansabella is located at Coffs Central Shopping Centre.

Find them on Facebook – Pansabella Food and Flowers





Bellingen. Image courtesy of Sooz Myhill of Illuminating Photography



Justin Townes Earle



Honey and Knives

The Beat Lives On in Bello

Coastbeat gets the inside scoop from 'I Love Bello Shire' about Bellinghen's upcoming winter music festival which will take place in the picturesque hinterland town in July.

Since the inaugural Bello Winter Music in 2015, locals and visitors alike have eagerly awaited the annual event which brings together a heart-warming selection of acts. The great buzz and vibrancy of the festival warms up one of the coldest months of the year for the town.

Words and images courtesy of I Love Bello Shire

The announcement of this year's musical line-up has everyone excited. Local artisans have begun creating the decorations which will adorn the town and local musicians who will play alongside national and international acts, are finalising their musical sets. Everyone is getting ready for the festival which will take place from July 12-15.

Situated midway between Brisbane and Sydney and just 30 minutes inland from Coffs Harbour, Bellinghen sits in spectacular countryside on the banks of the Bellinger River. The wonderful combination of Bellinghen's main street village atmosphere, rich architectural heritage, rural charm, bohemian style and thriving cosmopolitan culture and cafe society, proves simply captivating.

But it's Bellinghen's creative bent and green persuasion for which the town is most renown. This makes it a perfect fit for a music festival that gathers an eclectic mix of musical genres together with comedians, storytellers and a sustainability-focused program of timetabled workshops called Bello-Leaf.

Bello Winter Music organisers utilise the existing infrastructure in the town which reflects their consciousness around sustainability and community. Every building or business in the town centre with available floor space is transformed into a humming musical venue, adding to the inclusive vibe of this popular event.

As is only fitting, the Bello Winter Music patron is Bellinghen-raised, internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Jack Carty. "To come back and be Patron of the festival just feels like coming home," says Jack.

"I think the community aspect of Bello Winter Music and that it happens in the town as opposed to being a separate thing on its own site, means the town really gets behind it and the local people and businesses get behind it. My old town really is a beautiful spot," he adds.

Fresh from a massive run of UK and Australian album launch shows, Jack Carty has joined forces with best friend, former Papa vs. Pretty bassist, Gus Gardiner to bring their brand-new collaborative album 'HOSPITAL HILL' to Bello Winter Music this year.

"Every building or business in the town centre with available floor space is transformed into a humming musical venue"



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The album, released earlier this month, has been described as 'sweeping, intricate, moving and beautiful' and was written for guitar, vocal and string quartet, and recorded live in complete takes over two days in a Sydney studio. Of special significance to Bello locals, the title track 'Hospital Hill' refers to the hill we all look at, perched above the township of Bellingen.

Bello Winter Music is able to draw great talent: local, national and international headline performers. Justin Townes Earle will be performing at this year's festival.

Justin has established a reputation as a singular leading light in the Americana music community. Having already released seven critically acclaimed albums, his lyrics have been described as 'fearless and personally charged.'

Zimbabwean born songstress, Thando will be a show opener on Thursday 12th July. Heralded as a commanding performer, her ability to tell a story takes her audience on a journey of reflection and self-love. Thando will be joined on opening night by the inimitable collaboration of Australian greats, Deborah Conway and Willy Zygyier.

Darwin's Caiti Baker has created a sultry world of hip-hop laced soul that she will share with this year's audiences. Caiti writes songs about what she knows and feels and has managed to

"Bello Winter Music is able to draw great talent; local, national and international headline performers."

meld a plethora of genres together to form a unique sound.

The uncompromising, award-winning international artist, Zee Gachette with her trio, Z-Star Trinity will also be gracing Bello's shores. Their high-energy modern blues, psyche rock, folk 'n' funk is legendary.

Gunganbuwala is a local singing and rhythm group that has come from the friendship of Indigenous language teache, Michael Jarrett (Micklo) and musician, Luke Rhodes (Luka) and their interest in combining the teaching of language and music.

Gunganbuwala is now more than 20 performers strong. They write songs using Gumbaynggirr language, translate songs from English and other languages into Gumbaynggirr and perform new and traditional Gumbaynggirr songs.

"I would say it's definitely a melding of cultures and ideas with several layers of meaning and message" says Luka.

"Our songs are about the things we care for. Respect for nature and the Earth, honouring ancient wisdom and caring about each other. The group came about through wanting to learn and honour this ancient and beautiful language so in a sense, that is a strong part of the message as well."



Deborah Conway and Willy Zygyier



Caiti Baker



Jack Carty



Honey and Knives was the first band to play on the first night of the inaugural festival and will be back this year to showcase their recently released album, 'Who Are You'. This Bello-based five-piece folk band manages to marry many musical genres. As their name suggests, they deliver the sweetest of harmonies with a raw energy and honesty.

"We really stretched out in this album. Some songs are very stripped back and fragile while others are pretty aggressive," says singer-songwriter Toke Brunnekeef.

"There's a lot of warmth and humour on the album. It's all very sincerely written and performed."

Honey and Knives will also be performing new, as yet unreleased material. "We've swapped the instrumentation around for some of this new material. Hopefully there's room to move on stage so we can bust a groove without busting our arses!"

The two-piece folk-blues band Tyler Nakoa also find inspiration in Bellinghen. "Just living in this valley provides fodder. I'm putting myself in the way of beauty a few times a day," says Tyler. Tyler and Holly Mae are both passionate about social justice and the environment, a message reflected in their lyrics. "Not all battles can be effectively communicated through songs but for some it's the best medium to get the word out."

Bello Winter Music is an intensely packed weekend of great music, free entertainment in the streets and parks, wonderful food, community, workshops, seminars and an enormous amount of fun.

The small town of Bellinghen opens its doors and doesn't disappoint.

For more information and ticket inquiries go to:

www.bellowintermusic.com

For any visit to Bellinghen, 'I Love Bello Shire' is your go-to online guide for the Shire.

The 2018 Bello Winter Music Festival will run from 12-15 July.



Z-Star Trinity

Bowraville Art Hub

A mere sixty kilometres from Coffs Harbour is a small, quiet town where a community of budding and talented artists are preparing to make waves.

Words by Ali Hiddlestone

Photography by Brendan Ray



Bowraville is becoming an arts hub to rival its hinterland sister Bellingen, with artists from around the world calling its tree-lined streets home. They cover a range of disciplines – painting, sculpting, large-scale murals, macramé – you name it, they do it. They've created a studio in town which acts as a kind of local artist 'co-op'.

As you walk through the quaint little shop it's hard not to be blown away by the talent on display, from the striking paintings on the wall to homeware, trinkets and beautifully hand-crafted woodwork.

So, who are some of these artists? Coastbeat caught up with two international light sculptors who now call Bowraville home, and an Aboriginal mural artist.

Claude Teyssier & Margrit Rickenbach – Light Sculpture

Claude and Margrit have lived a life you would only expect to read about in a book.

Born in Paris in 1940, Claude migrated to Australia 32 years ago, bringing with him his international experience as a painter, a mask and lantern maker and a teacher. He has worked in Paris, London, Switzerland and everywhere in between, including Beswick in our own Northern Territory. At the ripe age of 78, Claude's career continues to thrive in the little town of Bowraville.

Margrit wasn't as quick to move to Australia. She and Claude met overseas at a festival in Basel and kept in contact. Like Claude, Margrit has a colourful career history having worked as a florist, a rehabilitation centre worker and a carer in an art-therapy nursing home. All the while, she focused on art as therapeutic expression and never lost her childhood passion for painting and creating pieces with textiles and other unique materials.

It wasn't until Margrit visited Australia via a trip to Tahiti that she realised she wanted to settle down-under. So, in 2002, after an impressive artistic career abroad, Margrit moved to Australia and the pair set up on the mid north coast.

The couple reside on a small farm 17km out of Bowraville. This husband and wife team have been creating extraordinary light sculpture lanterns for display both regionally and across the country for the past eight years.

They can create large-scale lanterns of absolutely anything, but their favourites tend to be sea creatures, insects and other animals. Together they work on projects ranging from private commissions, gallery exhibitions, public art, community group mentorship, festivals and special events.

Claude and Margrit's artistic talents complement one another beautifully - their individual expertise combine seamlessly to create these remarkable pieces. Claude works on the structure itself, weaving and designing the shape of the animals from an idea in his head. Once this is complete, Margrit takes over with the outer design. "Claude can envisage the lantern before he's even started, whereas I can't," says Margrit.

"I think the key to working together is that each person has to have their own special domain. You find something you have in common first – for us, it's the large bamboo light sculptures –

and then you work together. Claude and I accept one another's views. Sometimes he will say, 'no, we can't do that' and other times I'll disagree with something, but we compromise and we're a good match."

So, how are they made? Every sculpture is made from bamboo that Claude sources from local bushlands. Using a special clumping variety, Claude bends and twists the various pieces into the shape of his desired frame, securing with string and zip ties. From there, the lighting is installed on the frame, followed by the covering – a combination of transparent paper, glue, paint and other materials for decoration.

While they estimate a large lantern could take up to a month to create, Claude laughs and says if they get a brief to have one ready in a week, they do it. "We will work day and night to get it done. All the designs are in my head," he says.

Passionate about sharing their expertise with locals, Margrit and Claude regularly hold workshops. "We basically give people the beginning of a big lantern – so the structure is done beforehand – and then the workshop focuses on the outside layers. Everyone can do it. Children in particular love doing the painting part so we often focus on that if we've got a big group of children and their parents," says Margrit.

Claude and Margrit love being able to share their lanterns with the local community. "There was a festival in Bowraville over Christmas and we brought all our lanterns out and set them up in the main street – the children were so excited."

"Everybody loves lanterns; they love to be involved in it and to see it and we love that we can give this to them."

You can see some of Claude and Margrit's work at Port Central Shopping Centre where they have a whale light sculpture on display.

For more information,

visit www.lightsculpture.com.au





Nelli's award-winning mural, *Guruuja*



Nelli Gallop – Mural artist

One of Nelli's earliest childhood memories is painting with her grandmother. Many years later, this talented Bowraville artist is still painting – this time in the form of large-scale murals.

"I've completed about nine murals now. My very first mural in the area was on the side of the Museum, which was a collaboration with a few local artists," says Nelli.

Since her first gig, Nelli has become highly sought after by primary schools in the region wanting her artwork to be a feature in their playground. For Nelli, mural art, particularly within schools, is something that's gaining a great deal of momentum.

"The idea of mural art is progressing and so is the idea of getting children to help with the project. It's obviously easier doing the project yourself but the benefits of having the children involved in the project make it so worthwhile," she says. "They get to have ownership over it and there's certainly a learning aspect to it especially when we do cultural projects."

Inspired by Aboriginal dreamtime stories, Nelli says her work is always based around 'interconnectedness'. "I believe getting the children to connect to country is paramount for a healthy future. If they don't have that connection, then I feel like we're all a little bit lost. I think there's a lot of relearning happening and remembering how we fit."

Art hasn't always been a part of Nelli's life. Originally from Goulburn, she lived and worked for the public service in Sydney for close to a decade before realising she wanted more out of life. Nelli took off to travel the world for a year before returning home with her partner and starting the journey north in search of their new home.

"I think the city kind of showed me how not to live and my time overseas really opened my eyes and I experienced a lot of personal growth."





"When we got home, we took a Kombi van up north as far as Cairns, looking for somewhere to set up. We had friends in Bellingen but when we discovered Bowraville, we just knew this was home."

Of Aboriginal heritage, Nelli says she has been welcomed with open arms by the local Gumbaynggirr people. "My ancestry is Aboriginal but from down south in Dharawal country," she says.

Nelli works with the Gumbaynggirr Elders quite often for her murals. In fact, they were the ones who taught her how to dot paint. "It's very important that I follow protocol and get permission if I'm wanting to feature certain cultural elements. I like to talk to as many people as possible and get their input."

When asked why she creates murals, Nelli said she loves the impact they create. "I love creating big art and walking away from something striking but no-one really knowing it's my work. Sure, sometimes there's a bit of glory at the beginning but at the end, no-one knows who made it and I like it that way. I get to create it, share it and then enjoy it just like everyone else."

"I believe mural art is very much through you, not from you. When I paint, I get very lost in it and then I find the painting starts telling me what needs to be done."

Nelli adds, "I believe mural art is very much through you, not from you. When I paint, I get very lost in it and then I find the painting starts telling me what needs to be done."

While she may love the anonymity of her work, her recent prize in Coffs Central's mural competition will no doubt thrust her back into the limelight.

"The prize-winning mural tells the story of 'Guruuja' the whale, who is travelling from his ancestral home in the Milky Way.

Guruuja is a beloved ancestor of the Aboriginal people. He has the Earth in his sights as he travels through the Dreamtime.

The whale migration is depicted on the Earth and is seen being held by the

Murrabay tree – the link between the physical and spiritual worlds," says Nelli.

Guruuja is soon to be installed as a large-scale artwork on the Vernon St facade of Coffs Central.



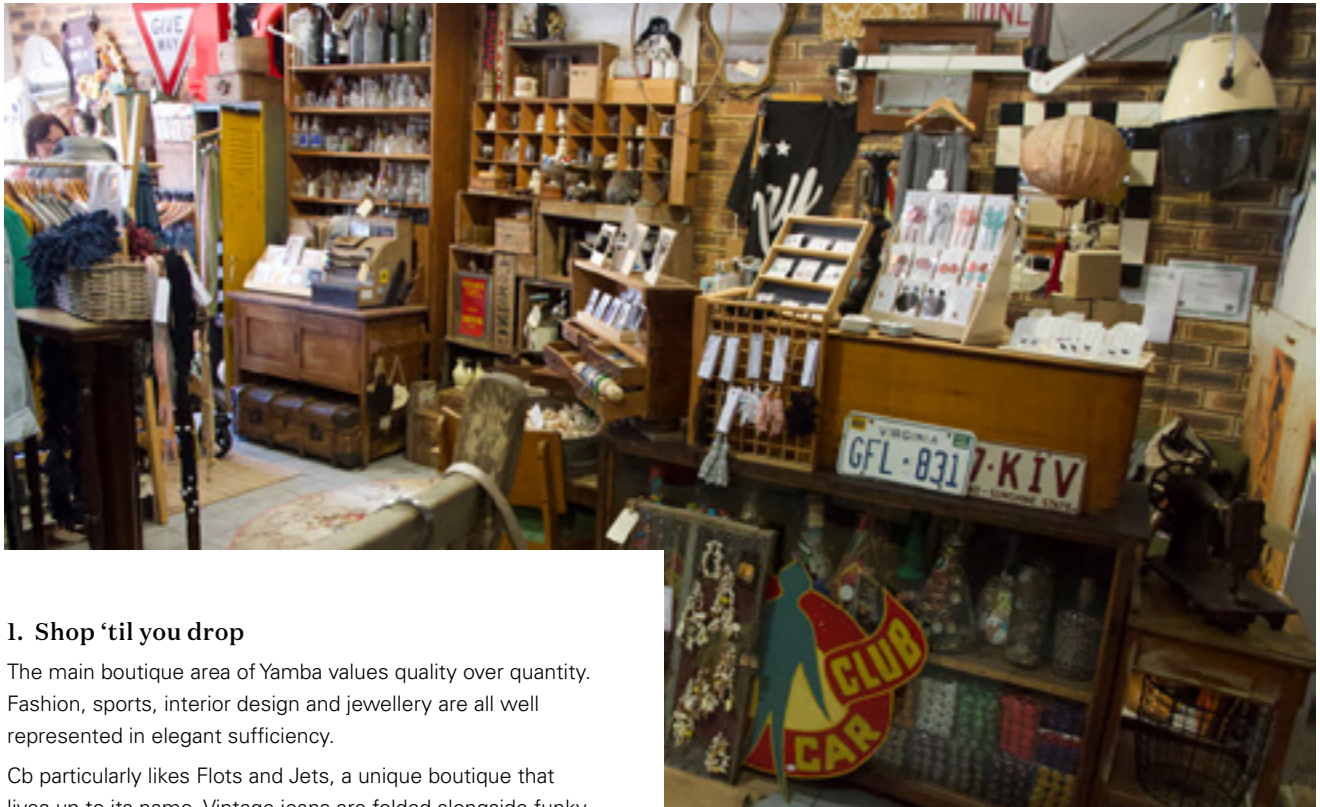
Top 10 Things to do in Yamba

Yamba is a relaxed holiday town at the mouth of the Clarence River, in the Clarence Valley.

It's perfect for anyone who likes chilling out by the sea and enjoying spectacular natural scenery from the comfort of a first-class eatery. It's a Coastbeat kind of place.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Debrah Novak



1. Shop 'til you drop

The main boutique area of Yamba values quality over quantity. Fashion, sports, interior design and jewellery are all well represented in elegant sufficiency.

Cb particularly likes Flots and Jets, a unique boutique that lives up to its name. Vintage jeans are folded alongside funky modern knits and cool designer jackets. In old wooden crates nestles a cornucopia of memorabilia and other objects of desire. Some things are not even for sale – they're just for fun.



2. Coffee and a nice sit down

After you've done the shop, you can do the drop, at any one of a dozen or so cafes: Irons and Craig, Leche, Caperberry, Latitude 29, Drift...and many more. Irons and Craig is named for the owners' grandmothers, in memory of these esteemed ladies' notions of good food and hospitality. The owners exhibit local artists on the walls of their 1940s cottage and each room is decorated with vintage objects d'arte, possibly Grandma's.

Right next door and different is Leche, offering divine organic meals in post-industrial décor, with a fine view to the high street.

Or, take a culinary trip to Beachwood where owner and chef Sevtap Yuce creates her award-winning Turkish cuisine. It's best to book ahead for this fully licensed restaurant, tucked away in a side street at 22 High St.

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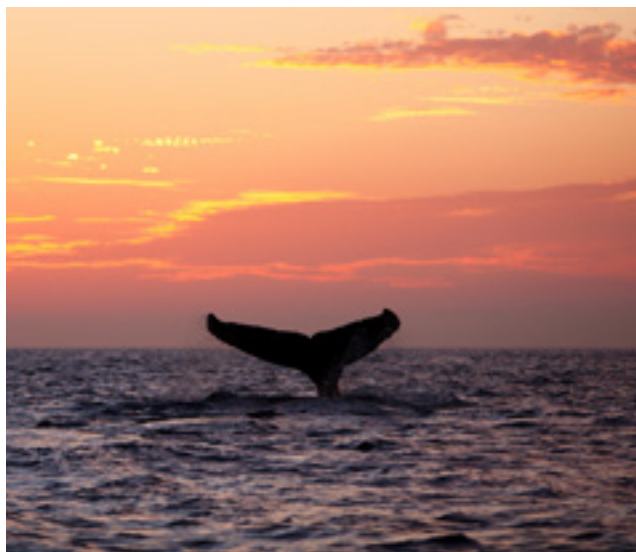
3. Charter boat fishing

Reel Time Tours is a well established charter boat company sailing from the Yamba Marina and they've got the fishing business well-covered. You can charter their boats for an hour, a part-day or a whole day on the water, making the most of skipper Dave's local knowledge.

Of course, there's no law against chucking in a line from the shore. Yamba has a number of local bait and tackle shops where you can obtain a fishing licence and anything else you may need to reel 'em in.

4. Whale Watching

ReelTime also conducts whale watching tours between June and October, observing these beautiful mammals as they make their way along the coast. Check out Dave's stunning whale images online.



Images courtesy of Pacific Hotel



Images courtesy of Pacific Hotel

5. Pacific Hotel

The Pacific Hotel has been a northern NSW landmark since 1934. It holds court on the hill near the Yamba lighthouse and boasts coastal views as far as the eye can see. The front bar is an honest to goodness pub with a variety of traditional and boutique beers on tap. There's live music Thursdays to Sundays but to our mind, the main joy of the Pacific is the bistro, which serves family-friendly Australian fusion meals overlooking one of the most spectacular views on the north coast.



6. Main Beach and Surf Club Café

Remember the burning concrete boardwalks of Australian beaches, hot chips, ice-creams and seagulls? Well, Main Beach café at the Yamba Surf Life Saving Club on Marine Parade is nothing like that. Sure, the boardwalk is concrete, but it is graced with comfortable seating at tables beneath umbrellas where you can get good espresso. The café is open seasonally from October to April for breakfast, lunch and snacks and yes, you can get an ice-cream there too. It's a cruisy atmosphere, with the beach mere metres away.

This surf club itself was founded in 1908, making it one of the oldest Surf Lifesaving clubs in the world.

7. The Ocean Walk and the Ocean Pool

If you need to walk off a long lunch or build up an appetite, take the trail from the Yamba lighthouse along Main Beach and across the rocks to Pippi Beach, Yamba's surf beach. Factoring in fossicking, beachcombing and gazing out to sea, it should take you about two hours there and back.

Too lazy to surf? Look no further than the Yamba ocean pool at Main Beach. This inviting Australian icon is cleaned out like clockwork by the tide and there's plenty of space for lounging in the shady grassed areas.



8. Clarence River Ferries and Sunday Jazz Cruise

The Iluka-Yamba ferry operates every day across the Clarence River and through the pristine Yamba canals, often accompanied by one of the dolphin pods that frequent the Clarence River mouth. On Sundays the ferry turns into a live jazz lounge, cruising upriver as far as Harwood. The ferries can be booked for weddings, parties, anything, but a simple voyage to Iluka and back makes a great couple of hours on the water.

9. Kayaking on the Clarence River

This is a truly unique experience. You can hire a kayak and paddle about on your own but Cb recommends you take one of the tours on offer by Clarence River specialists, Philip and Laurel Moore. Perhaps the Sunset Oyster Tour or the Full Moon Paddle?

The Oyster Tour takes you through the Clarence River canals to the Yamba Oyster Farm and yes, of course, you get to sample the goods! Then it's back to the Yamba Marina as the sun sets.

The Full Moon Paddle happens just once a month (what a surprise) so make sure to book ahead. It starts at sunset and continues under the light of the moon, culminating in dinner on a river beach before a magical paddle home.



10. Blue Pools, Angourie

Just a 10-minute drive from Yamba is the village of Angourie which has long been a favourite for surfers. With beautiful beaches, walks and a laidback vibe, it's well worth a visit. At the end of Crescent Street is the track leading to the Blue and Green Pools, perfect spots for a picnic and swim in the cool, deep water. Both pools began as quarries until the diggers hit underground water and the holes filled up, creating these amazing natural pools. A lovely way to end your day out.

For more on Yamba and other great spots to visit in the region go to:

www.myclarencevalley.com



L to R: Darren and Howard Croker

Still Waters Run Deep

How an innovative family business struck out from the Manning River and conquered the world with Croker Oars.

Words and Photography by Kirk Owers



The Manning River snakes down from Barrington Tops, fat and brown and undisturbed by dams and weirs. On its winding journey it becomes engorged by multiple tributaries before forking into a double delta at Taree and eventually joining the ocean at Old Bar and Harrington. The delta region is made up of several islands including Oxley Island which is green and wet and surrounded by dark clouds the day I drive across from the mainland. I make my way through the drizzle past lowing cows and leaning fences until a small sign tells me I'm at the right place: Croker Oars.

Two large green sheds and several smaller ones make up the complex which is busy with delivery trucks and workers. Less active are the cows, bulls and horses that also reside on the property. It's an attractive spread but not a spot you'd expect to find technical sporting equipment being manufactured for export. You wouldn't guess that Olympians

from as far away as Italy and China are heavily invested in what comes out of these big sheds next to these indifferent cows.

"Everyone thought I'd go broke when we moved here," says founder and family patriarch, Howard Croker, whose son Darren is now the business owner. Both men show me around the property while they share their remarkable success story.

The Croker family fell in love with the Manning Valley after holidaying nearby for many years and in 1977 Howard decided to move his oar manufacturing business to the region despite the naysayers. "We were doing well in Sydney, but I wanted a lifestyle change.

I researched some companies in America that had done a similar thing and had been successful. We've been here forty years now - there's no-one building oars in Sydney anymore."

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A big part of the attraction was the river which borders the property and is delightfully suited to still-water rowing. "The river is shallow hence boating is not hugely popular – especially big boats that give a lot of wash. The wind is pretty good also – we can get blown out by the north-easter but we're pretty sheltered from the southerly," Howard explains. "There's nearly 100km of rowable water here. It's 28km just around the island so you can go as far as you'd want without turning back," adds Darren.

The father and son duo work well together, finishing each other's answers and sharing an easy laugh. "We're very lucky we get along so well because a lot of families don't. We do pretty much everything together," says Darren.

"It's very much on Darren's shoulders now. I have to bite the bullet and back away. Succession is very important. A lot of businesses don't manage it well, but I think we have. It's been extremely hard for me to give that away. You've got no idea how hard it was," says Howard, whose success in business was recently recognized with an Order of Australia (OAM). Now in his 70s, he still rows most weeks for pleasure and is definitely not retired.

We tour the grounds and in a dark shed cluttered with dusty tools Howard digs up a prized possession: the very first pair of wooden, hand-crafted Croker oars. It took a day's hard work and considerable expertise to make a pair like this and few were as good at it as Howard Croker.

"I did a boat-building apprenticeship and afterwards I noticed no-one wanted to make rowing oars. They all wanted to make boats. It was all done by hand and it was physically very hard work. It wasn't until the late sixties when we started using machinery that it made it [financially] worthwhile," he says.

Howard is the first to concede that modern machine-produced oars are a big improvement. "Carbon fibre oars are almost half the weight. I miss working with my hands, but I couldn't do it anymore. If I picked up a jack-plain it'd really hurt. There are only a few people left who know how to make a wooden oar."

Not that there's a calling for vintage oars in the ultra-competitive, high-tech sport of rowing. Nor would it make economic sense. Croker Oars used to produce 500 wooden oars a year; now it makes thousands of carbon fibre oars, most of them for export and many for Olympians.

The fledgling company's big break came in 1964 when



Howard with a photo of Peter Kemp

"Many of the Croker family members are successful rowers themselves, dating back to distant relative Peter Kemp who won a world championship in the 1880s."

Howard supplied the Victorian rowing crew with oars for the Tokyo Olympics. After that boost and many years of hard work, Croker Oars gradually established themselves as the biggest oar manufacturer in Australia and eventually to its current position as the second biggest in the world.

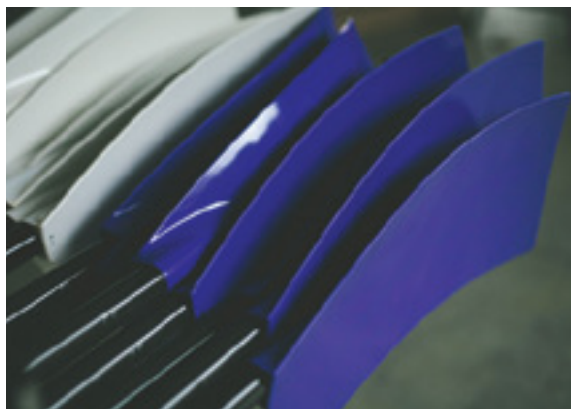
But there's never been time to rest on their reputation. Oar manufacturing is a dynamic business which demands constant innovation in order to get even a tiny edge on the opposition.

Many of the Croker family members are successful rowers themselves, dating back to distant relative Peter Kemp who won a world championship in the 1880s. Howard has won Australian titles as has his daughter Joanne. Another Croker sibling, Troy has

competed in surf boat tournaments. To get a sense of just how competitive the industry is I ask the Crokers who they would support in an Olympic final: Germans using Croker Oars or Aussies using a rival oar maker.

"Germany," they answer immediately and in unison.

It's not that they aren't patriotic. Many Australian rowing



teams use their oars but 80% of their stock heads overseas. As international teams won't travel to Taree to go oar shopping, the Crokers must go to them (Darren spends six months of the year on the road; Howard has been to ten or twelve Olympics). In the constant quest to top their rivals, Croker Oars have a distinct advantage: the colour pink. They began using the bright colour for their oar sleeves in the 1990s and it quickly became a highly visible signature. Now, when Olympic rowers cross the finish line, it's easy to see how many are using Croker Oars.

In fact, the industry is so competitive that there are some areas in the manufacturing shed I'm asked not to photograph. Instead, we finish the tour strolling the paddocks, admiring

some bulls and feeding Howard's much-loved draft horses, Ted and Denza.

Howard says he feels a similarity in the disparate disciplines of rowing and driving a draft horse. "The set-up of the plough is like setting up the pitch of a [rowing] blade, the way it goes through the soil. And the other thing is striking out [starting off] – I can strike out extremely well because you learn in sculling to line two points up to keep the boat straight. I make two points up in the paddock and head for those."

Maybe rowing and farming aren't such an unusual mix after all.

To learn more about Croker Oars go to:
www.crokeroars.com

A Touch of Italy

Stefano Mazzina's love affair with gelato goes back a long way. From fond childhood memories of making it with his grandparents, to visits to friends' homes in his local district of Lake Como with a kilogram tub in tow. That nostalgia and craving for 'how it used to be' was the motivation behind creating Sotto Zero Gelato.

Words by Ali Hiddlestone

Photography by Rob Wright



Gelato, coffee and pasta – it doesn't get much more Italiano than that. The multi-faceted Italian wonderland, which opened in mid-April, is something Stefano Mazzina has always wanted to do.

"There was no-one in Coffs Harbour doing Italian gelato as it was when I grew up," says Stefano.

"Sotto Zero Gelato is about as Italian as you can get and that's what it's all about. I can only do what my experiences are in life – and this is it! Compare this to any gelateria in Italy and this is exactly what you would get," he says.

So, pasta and ice cream? While this is a little left of Italian tradition, Stefano wanted to include everything he loves about home.

"Because of this great space, my business partner, Victor Russo and I thought we could marry all three things – but we do keep them separate. In Italy, you wouldn't find ice cream and pasta together! Coffee and ice cream is a perfect marriage but pasta, not so much. That's why we've kept them a little bit different in the store design too."

Stefano uses a carefully selected Central American bean from Bassett Espresso, roasted to the style of an Italian espresso bar. His gelato is all natural and made on-site with fresh fruit and an authentic 'base' of milk, cream and sugars. "There's nothing else added – it's just authentic Italian gelato," he says.

Sotto Zero Gelato also offers sweet treats including cannolo siciliano and nutella bombs which Stefano says don't last long on the shelf. "We make small batches of both items every morning and they just sell out so quickly!"

As well as breakfast and morning tea, Stefano and his team also create fresh, made-to-order pasta during lunchtime which has proved extremely popular.

"It's doing really well, and we've also had a lot of people asking about pasta packs to take home and so we're planning on having little packets of pasta and sauce for people to pick up on their way home – that's dinner sorted!"

The store is a slight change of pace for Stefano, who for the past 12 years, has been the head chef and part owner of Italian Restaurant, Fiasco – something he continues to juggle with his new venture.



"I was always working at night time, so I thought I'd see what day life was like but it's a bit hectic at the moment as I seem to be working day and night. Hopefully I can find a balance at some stage."

While he's been based in Coffs Harbour for the past 14 years, Stefano says he tries to get back home to Italy as often as he can with his three daughters. "I love going back to visit my village with my family – I do miss it."

With the Coffs Central store off to such a great start, Stefano



L to R: Stefano Mazzina and Victor Russo

hopes they may emulate that success with other stores.

"We wouldn't mind, if it goes well, opening up more shops and we've been asked to do a bit of wholesale too so that's something we might also explore."

More gelato, pasta and coffee? Eccellente.

Sotto Zero Gelato is located at Coffs Central Shopping Centre.

For more information visit them on Facebook – Sotto zero gelato



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made fresh and
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grinder's \$12.00



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Bed Bath N Table



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Urban Life
Pork Pie Fedora
\$89.99

Flower lapel
created by
Pensebella

Uptown Local
Jacquard
herringbone
blazer
\$249.95

Gazman
Leather tan belt
\$39.95

Gazman
Handkerchief 3 set
\$13.95

Urban Life
Nixon Sentry SS Watch
\$349.99

Ramsay Pharmacy
Valentino perfum
\$145.00

Uptown Local
Classic Loafer
\$309.95

Uptown Local
Herringbone
Textured Chino
\$99.95

Red Sparrow
Handmade
ceramics \$34.95

Seasons Boutique
Cashmere wrap
\$139.00

Urban Life
Waylon Jacket
\$249.99

Pansabella
Cotton branch

Uptown Local
The Ascendants bag
BlikFur \$219.95



Ramsay
pharmacy
Black Perfecto
by Guerlain
\$189.00



Uptown Local
The Horse watch \$189.00
Violet Pandora earrings \$150.00

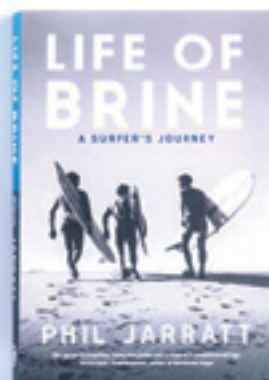
Seasons Boutique
Corall camel boots
\$195.00

Coopers
Vintage Hi-Rider \$99.99

Stormriders
Quicksilver Shirt \$79.99



Stormriders
Oakley Cap



Bookface
Life of Brine \$29.99

Stormriders
Quicksilver Wallet \$69.99



Just Jeans
Straight Skinny Jean \$79.95



Stormriders
Herschel Backpack \$129.95



Chemist
Warehouse
Paco Rabanne
XS Aftershave
100ml



Sunglass Hut
Aviator Ray Ban \$215.00



Prouds
Guess Watch
\$349.00



Stormriders
Vans Authentic Shoe \$99.95



Michel's Patisserie
Beef and Mushroom Pie \$5.20

Target
Harriet Wool
Fedora
\$20.00

Portmans
Genuine Leather
Jacket \$189.95

Target
Mock Turtle Neck
Knit Top \$20.00

W.Lane
Necklace

Colette
Clutch
\$34.99

Prouds
Obaku Watch
\$219.00



Bookface
The Lost Flowers of Alice
Hart \$32.99

Sunglass Hut
Prada Sunglasses
\$460.00

Colette
Jewellery
from \$12.99

Portmans
Scarf \$19.95

Just Jeans
Skinny Extra
Highrise Jeans
\$79.95

Manning Shoes
Willow Boot
\$219.95

Mum, Manager and MBA

Between her role at Kmart, being mum to two young sons and studying for an MBA, Coastbeat finds out how Katrina Tregoning fits it all in...

Words by Yvette Harper

Hi Katrina. Tell us a little bit about you...

I am the new Store Manager of Kmart at Coffs Central. We also have a young family - two beautiful boys (aged three and five) who keep my husband and I busy. Together, we like to spend a lot of time outdoors but in my down-time I enjoy reading and cooking. I'm also in the process of completing my MBA so I seem to be spending an awful lot of time with my head in the books lately. Work actually provides a nice break!

Did you move here for the role?

Yes, I had the opportunity to relocate my family to the beautiful city of Coffs Harbour earlier this year and I'm so glad I did! I grew up in Northern NSW and have many fond memories of visiting the Big Banana, Dolphin Marine Magic and The Clog Barn.

I'm delighted to be able to share these same experiences with our sons.

We see Coffs Harbour as wonderful fit for our family. A beautiful town with kind and friendly people – the ideal place for our boys to grow up.

What is your retail background and what drew you to the industry?

I've worked in the industry for over a decade and I've been lucky to have worked with a lot of knowledgeable and interesting people. The opportunity to meet diverse groups of people and learn from them is probably what drew me to the industry.

Today, my team consists of over 160 people. That's a lot of people to brainstorm with; to share ideas and skills with; and to collaborate with. For me, that's where the real magic happens.

It's no secret Kmart has a dedicated following around the county; has Coffs proven to be part of that?

The Coffs Harbour community was literally buzzing with excitement when we began development on site last year. When we officially opened our doors in late March, we were greeted with hundreds of smiling faces which was incredible. Since that big reveal, customers have continued to embrace us.

Tell us about the first few months servicing the Coffs community.

It has been an absolute honour for the entire team to service a community that has been so welcoming. We hope that by providing our community with a great place to shop we will continue to receive such support from people locally and in the surrounding areas like Grafton - as has been the case so far.

What feedback have you had from customers?

We are humbled to be part of a community that is so supportive.

The team have had so much positive feedback especially in relation to the size of the store and the range of products. This store is a bit of a bigger format than some of the surrounding stores which helps give us a point of difference.

Coffs Central is the perfect fit for the business too. Lots of new and exciting developments in the area which were already attracting new customers; plus, a central location with plenty of parking spaces which allows us to service more customers. The atmosphere throughout the centre is great and everyone is so friendly. I particularly love the coffee at the Depot Café not to mention that gorgeous aromatherapy hand soap in the bathrooms!

How do like to spend time away from work?

As a family we often go on mini-adventures around the beautiful Coffs Coast - now that we can call it home! We love sightseeing and discovering new places.

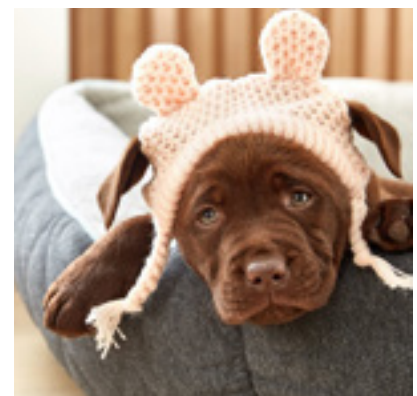
I love life on the north coast because....

Every day is such an adventure; I'm constantly finding new beaches and beautiful scenery. It's like living in a postcard.



Katrina's Top 10 Kmart buys

Store Manager, Katrina Tregoning shares with us her favourite buys across the store



1. Highland Cow Print

This is a gorgeous black white print for under \$20 that will work well anywhere.

2. Kmart Stick Vacuum

The perfect addition for the home or office as it easily allows you to spot clean without the hassle of dragging cords around.

3. Kmart Air Fryer

It wouldn't be winter without roasted veggies. The air fryer allows you to enjoy these without the added oil.

4. Beyblades

The kids can't get enough of these. They'll battle them anywhere – "3,2,1...Let it rip!"

5. Canvas and Faux Canvas Prints

Printed in store and with several sizes available; these prints allow you to highlight your favourite moments and display them at home.

6. Occasional Chairs

Our grey occasional chairs are so easy to style with a throw or cushion. Designer style without the designer price tag.

7. Winter Boots

From long, high-heels boots to short, western boots in taupe, chocolate and black – there are boots to suit any occasion.

8. E.l.f. Make-Up

I love these products. They are super affordable, and no animal testing occurs in development so it's always my feel-good buy.

9. Pet Accessories

With everything from outfits to donut treats, it's no wonder I spoil my dog in this section of the store!

10. Outdoor Furniture

We have a great timber range ideal for storage and entertaining.

For more information on great products you'll find in store visit:

www.kmart.com.au



Grab a Great Read - Our Top 12

Winter is the perfect time to snuggle up with a wonderful book. This issue, we share some of our favourites with you. Happy reading from the Coastbeat team and Bookface!

Cathy - Bookface

***The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* by Holly Ringland**

"This truly is a story of hope. The author takes the reader on an incredible journey with Alice as she grows into womanhood. When tragedy strikes, Alice is sent to live on a flower farm with a grandmother she never knew she had. Not only does Alice discover the language of flowers but she also discovers a whole new family of damaged women given sanctuary by her grandmother. It's a courageous and beautifully written novel set against the Australian outback. If you're looking for a book filled with empowering women and a true meaning of hope, this might just be the book for you."

Yvette - Coastbeat

***Wonder* by R.J. Palacio**

"Not long after its release several years ago, I purchased this book simply because the cover caught my eye. Little did I know what a beautiful story was inside. It's rare for a book to bring me to tears but this did, more than once. I love the message about choosing 'kind' and look forward to delving into Augie's world once again when my sons read *Wonder*. It may be a book aimed at children and young adults, but I think it's read for everyone."

***Wimmera* by Mark Brandi**

"I don't read enough Aussie fiction but am glad to have discovered this author's debut novel. As an avid reader, my measure of a good read is one where the storyline and characters do not fade from memory. This is one of those. It's a story of friendship and coming of age and of darker themes that are implied rather than discussing implicitly."



Sam - Coastbeat

***Barbarian Days* by William Finnegan**

William Finnegan attended the Byron Writers Festival* a couple of years ago and after hearing him talk, I just had to get a copy of his book.

Barbarian Days details Finnegan's obsession with surfing and those days of his youth when he travelled the globe in search of the best waves. For me, the stories of island hopping through the South Pacific and exploring the coast of Africa stirred up an itch to travel and search for uncrowded locations. It also had me yearning for that bygone era when there were still so many unexplored parts of the world to discover amazing breaks. The author's reference to surfing a now world-famous break in Fiji for weeks on end with no-one to share it with had me in awe.

For the non-surfer, reading this book may go a long way to explain that drive surfers have. And for surfers, it might give you some ammo when you need to justify why you're so late for dinner (again)! Extremely well-written, superbly descriptive and emotive. A great read.

Jenny - Bookface

***The Pastor and The Painter* by Cindy Wockner**

"This is a heartbreaking read. Told from a mother's perspective, it's a book that will stick with you long after you read it. The author had truly formed a relationship with both Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. As you read further, the heartbreak continues, and you certainly get a sense that they were sincerely exonerated by having both done so much. Both Chan and Sukumaran were worth more alive than dead. It's a gripping yet sorrowful book which is perfect if you're looking for a tale of hardship and tragedy."

Ali - Coastbeat

***What Alice Forgot* by Liane Moriarty**

"What a book! A beautiful read from start to finish, *What Alice Forgot* will leave you feeling a little wiser, a little more grateful, maybe a little sadder temporarily, but generally a lot more appreciative of the simple things in life. It's also a great reminder not to sweat the small stuff."

Brendan - Coastbeat

***The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton**

"This was standard reading in Year 6 and probably the first book I ever read without pictures. The main thing I got from the book was that it doesn't matter where you come from, what really counts is what sort of person you are. It's remarkable to think the author was just 16 when she wrote it."

***Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline**

"As a child of the '80s, I really enjoyed the pop culture throwbacks in this futuristic / sci fi book (set in 2045). I love seeing that the '80s are cool again. As always, read the book rather than see the movie. "

Zacharey - Coastbeat

***Whipbird* by Robert Drewe**

I have been a fan of Robert Drewe's writing ever since being mesmerised by his novel, *The Drowner*, an enigmatic fictional account of building the water pipeline into the desert interior of Western Australia. Since then I have read everything Mr Drewe has written. His 2017 release, *Whipbird*, is the story of a classic Australian family catastrophe that would hurt, if it wasn't so funny. Robert Drewe at his satirical best.

Chris - Bookface

***City on Fire* by Garth Risk Hallberg**

"It's one of those books where the size intimidates you but once you begin, the first page hooks and reels you in. This is a behemoth of a novel but there is so much to absorb - it's almost impossible put it down.

With nearly a dozen characters with individual stories interlocked and the plot set against New York City circa 1977 (and the blackout that occurred) it's almost like a television series in the form of a novel.

There are many rich and diverse characters; an heir to a huge family fortune, a detective investigating a Central Park shooting and two teenagers seduced by the punk scene.

The author's use of language is lively and inventive which then allows you to experience what the characters are experiencing."

Melissa - Coastbeat

***All the Light We Cannot See*
by Anthony Doerr**

This is a beautiful, captivating read. My 14 year-old daughter read it, loved it and gave it to my 71 year-old father, who also loved it. Doerr's skill lies in embedding poignant little



stories within the larger story in a nail-biting crescendo of suspense.

***The Road* by Cormac McCarthy**

This is not an easy read. It's beautifully written and so compelling that I read it in one sitting, but McCarthy's post-apocalyptic world is grim and frighteningly plausible. The real triumph of this book lies in the heart-breaking portrayal of the relationship between a father and his young son.

All of the titles referenced in this article are available at Bookface Store and Café at Port Central in Port Macquarie.

To speak to Cathy and the team, phone: (02) 6584 6001.

*The 2018 Byron Writers Festival is on 3-5 August.



Gowings Whale Trust

At Coastbeat, we are avid supporters of environmental awareness and sustainability. Some years ago, our managing director John, began Gowings Whale Trust with the aim of increasing people's understanding of the humpback whale and to garner support for the beautiful creatures that we have the pleasure of seeing from our shorelines.

The trust has a long-standing partnership with Sea Shepherd. To support Gowings Whale Trust, there are great gift items available for purchase such as Keep Cups, caps, books and t-shirts. 100% of proceeds go toward funding projects to ensure that these majestic mammals grace our oceans for a long while yet to come.

You can make a purchase online at

www.gowings.com/whaletrust/shop or at a concierge desk at Port Central or Coffs Central.







What's On at Coffs Central this Winter



Re-Craft It Workshops

Learn how to make beautiful and practical reusable Beeswax Wraps. Beeswax Wraps are not only eco-friendly but also very practical! Whether you want to wrap your fruit & vegetables, cheese & ham sandwich for a nice picnic, a loaf of bread or simply cover a bowl of leftovers – Beeswax Wraps are the perfect way to do it.

Date: Wednesday 18th July
Time: 11:00am - 12:00pm
Cost: FREE
Bookings: www.eventbrite.com.au



Live Cooking Demos

Come down to Coffs Central and enjoy our LIVE cooking demonstrations with Chef Dave. He'll show you how to cook delicious meals at home. PLUS take home a FREE recipe booklet! No bookings necessary! Located on the Ground Floor.

Thursday 5th July 11:30am - 1:30pm
Thursday 19th July 11:30am - 1:30pm
Thursday 2nd August 11:30am - 1:30pm
Thursday 16th August 11:30am - 1:30pm
Thursday 30th August 11:30am - 1:30pm



School Holiday Workshops

Kid's Sushi Making Workshop
Children will learn to make their own Nori Rolls with fillings of their choice.
Date: Wednesday 11th July

Kid's Rice Paper Roll Making Workshop
Children will learn to make delicious Rice Paper Rolls with fillings of their choice.
Date: Wednesday 18th July

Cost: \$20pp
Time: 10:30am - 12:00pm
Bookings essential: 5622 8900 or
customerservice@gowings.com

 ENQUIRIES
CALL NOW
Phone (02) 5622 8900

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Kids FREE Jungle Show

A dance spectacular set in the African Jungle. Your hosts Cool Bananas, Jungle Jane and Funky Monkey will have the kids jumping for joy and laughing lots at Coffs Central!

Date: Saturday 21st of July
Time: From 10:00am
Location: Level 1 in front of Kmart
Cost: FREE



Design a Whale competition

It's whale season and Gowings Whale Trust (GWT) is passionate about research and the conservation of the Humpback Whale.

You can get involved by designing a limited edition GWT whale tote bag! Draw/paint/design a whale, submit it at Coffs Central's concierge desk and go into the competition to win your whale printed on limited edition tote bags! The proceeds of each tote bag go to Gowings Whale Trust.



French Styled Xmas in July

Joyeux Noël! Coffs Central is celebrating Bastille Day and Xmas in July with Xmas craft workshops, promotions and tasty french style treats. Bring your families and friends to Coffs Central and enjoy some Xmas festivities in July.

Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page to find out where activities are happening and when.



Kids FREE Peppa Pig Show

Do you like jumping in muddy puddles? Peppa can't see any anywhere and she's lost her little brother George too. What will she do? A Peppa Pig adventure your kids will love!

Date: Saturday 18th August
Time: From 10:00am
Location: Level 1 in front of Kmart
Cost: FREE



Warehouse Sale

Hold onto your hats fashion lovers, Coffs Central is holding it's second spectacular Warehouse Sale Event. Up to 80% off Uptown Local, Urban Life, Coopers, Rockmans and much more! Only 300 spaces available, so book now!

Date: Saturday 30th June
Time: 6:00pm - 9:00pm
Cost: FREE
Bookings: 5622 8900 or customerservice@gowings.com



FIND US
COFFS CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE
35 - 61 Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

COFFS CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'

What's On at Port Central this Winter



Real Food Markets

Every Tuesday from 2pm the Port Central Forecourt comes alive with local passionate food stalls boasting a diverse range of locally made or produced food. Whether it's Farm Fresh eggs, certified organic and in-season fruit and veg, locally grown organic macadamias, honey and beeswax products or locally harvested olives and oil, you will find this and more every Tuesday. So bring your baskets and head down to the Port Central forecourt each Tuesday, have a chat with our lovely stallholders, stock up on some top quality produce and taste the difference!

Where: Port Central Glasshouse
Forecourt, Port Macquarie, NSW, 2444



Protect our Whales

Help us save our Whales!

Spend over \$30 at any Port Central Retailer and pick up your Gowings Whale Trust Tote Bag from The Concierge Desk on the Ground Floor for just \$3 valued at \$10.

The Gowings Whale Trust was established in 2000 to increase people's knowledge, involvement and understanding of the Humpback Whale through public education.

All proceeds go to protecting the future of our Humpback Whales and every tote sold helps us venture towards a plastic free future and safer oceans for our marine life.



Kids Holiday Workshops

String Art

Circle - Monday 2nd July
Flower - Monday 9th July
Birds - Thursday 12th July

Easy Sewing Project - Tuesday 3rd July

Dream Catchers

Wednesday 4th July
Friday 13th July

Pom Pom Wall Craft Hanging

Thursday 5th July
Tuesday 10th July

Art Collage - Monday 9th July

Cost: \$20.00pp
Time 10:00am - 12:00pm daily
Bookings essential: 5525 1000 or
portcustomerservice@gowings.com



FREE Kids Shows

Bring the whole family down to Centre Court, near Target, for some free entertainment for the kids! Shows commence at 10am through to midday and there will be a chance to have photos afterwards! Boost Juice and Baker's Delight will offer family meal deals to keep hunger at bay as well!

Superhero and Dinosaur Show - Saturday 23rd June

Funky Monkey Show - Saturday 14th July

Peppa Pig Show - Saturday 11th August



Kids FREE Circus School

Looking for something physically fun and creative for the kids? Clown around at Port Central with Danielle & Lara from Conscious Creatives Circus. Kids can come and try out activities like diablo, trick sticks, juggling, spinning plates & hula hooping!

Date: Saturday 7th July

Time: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Bookings essential: phone 5525 1000 or email portcustomerservice@gowings.com



Name the Whale

Port Central is celebrating the beginning of the 2018 Whale Watching Season by featuring a locally crafted Whale Lantern in the Centre's Atrium. We would like to put it out to the community to name it! Simply head to Port Central's Facebook Page or the Concierge Desk and choose a name for the Whale for your chance to win 2 Whale Watching Tickets with The Cruise Terminal Port Macquarie, a Gowings Whale Trust Gift Pack. Runner-up will receive a cute whale plushie! Competition opens 15th June and ends on the 30th June.



French Styled Xmas in July

Joyeux Noel! Port Central is celebrating Bastille Day and Xmas in July with Xmas craft workshops, promotions and tasty Christmas treats. Bring your families and friends to Port Central and enjoy some Xmas festivities in July.

Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page to find out where activities are happening and when.



Kokedama Workshop

Besides hanging from string, Kokedama's can be placed on decorative plates & used as feature pieces. They are a breeze to dress up for social events and also make fantastic gifts! This succulent bouquet/kokedama workshop is a great class to learn new skills associated with succulent and cacti gardening.

Date: Saturday 4th August

Time: 10:30am - midday

Bookings essential: 5525 1000 or portcustomerservice@gowings.com



FIND US

PORT CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE

40 - 42 Horton Street, Port Macquarie NSW 2450



WINTER EATS

TO WARM THE SOUL

Moonee Market has all kinds of cosy dining covered this Winter, from sophistication and delicious food at restaurants Sugarmill and Moon Dragon to tasty take away meals from Rosie's, Aloy Dee Thai and Taj & Co.

Whilst surrounding yourself with stylish, contemporary design in Sugarmill, you can sit back, relax and watch the talented cocktail waitress whip up some stunning, tasty cocktails. Grab a booth at Moon Dragon and savour the flavours of Chinese cuisine whilst catching up with family and friends. Or sit near the inviting, warm fireplace in the food court whilst you enjoy your take away. The choice is yours.

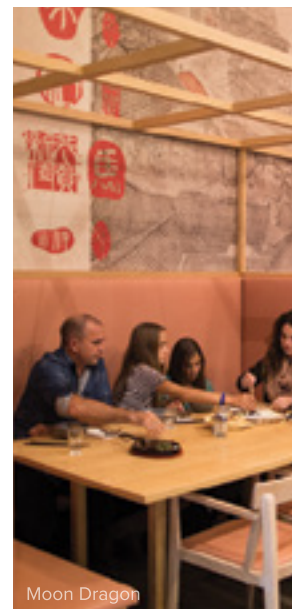
With breakfast, lunch and dinner options available, we've got all your winter eats covered.



Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar



Moonee Market Food Court



Moon Dragon



Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar



Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar



Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar



Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar



Moon Dragon

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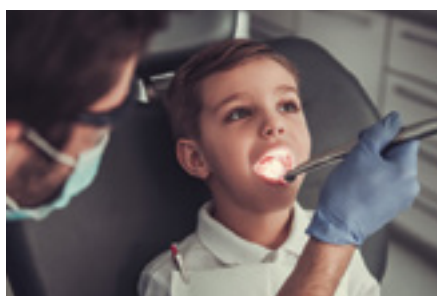
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Katsby World of Fashion - Storytime

Katsby is launching FREE storytelling for kids. As a former Primary School Teacher & Librarian, Kat will introduce all her favourite books in a fun filled reading session, followed by free face painting. Reading sessions begin weekly from Wednesday 13th of June at 11am. Visit Kat instore to find out more.



Coffs Coast Dental Opening Soon

Coffs Coast Dental is a family orientated dental practice with over 25 years of experience, making your visit to the dentist as stress free as possible. Providing both Dental and Facial care, they offer the full dental experience from Implants to Preventative Care, Facial treatments to Restorations. They'll conveniently be open Saturdays and late nights.



Bastille Day Celebrations

Bastille Day is on the 14th July and we're celebrating with some french flair in centre. Sugarmill will serve French inspired dishes and Bakehouse will have freshly made croissants, custard tarts and chocolate eclairs. Maggie's Dog Café will also be hosting a French Bulldogs play date, with an en masse walkies around the centre. Bring your Frenchie to Maggie's on 14th of July at 10 am and join in the fun.



Maggie's Support RSPCA Cupcake Day

Maggie's Dog Café will be selling cupcakes at Moonee Market on 20th August near the Food Court and in their café — both for human and pup consumption. All proceeds made will go directly to help prevent animal cruelty in Australia. Maggie's can supply information on animals available for adoption from our local RSPCA shelter.



Russells Prime Quality Meats Coming Soon

Russells Prime Quality Meats is opening soon! The only gold medal winner to win the Sydney Royal three years in a row Australia wide, they are proud of their products and guarantee all their meat is from paddock to plate.





Mike and Cheryl Smith



Soil School, South Pacific. Image courtesy of Organic Matters Foundation

The Good Soil

Solum Farm and Soil School

We don't dish the dirt in this magazine but it's about time we did – real dirt, upfront and gritty. By the end of this article you'll understand why muck-raking is great for your health and why sustainability never tasted so good.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Debrah Novak



Solum Farm's Feast in the Field 2018 celebrated seasonal seafood

Soil specialist, Mike Smith from Solum Farm tells me that if I get myself over to his pub in Harwood now, he can tell me the story of his life in 20 minutes. So, I do.

An hour and a half later, with a queue of people behind me waiting to talk to Mike, I put down my pen, admitting defeat. 20 minutes? It would take as many hours to do justice to the exploits of Mike Smith and his partner Cheryl and even then, there'd be more.

So, for this article, we'll just dish the dirt...by which I mean the Soil Project, Mike and Cheryl's initiative to spread the good oil about good soil, through their NGO, Organic Matters Foundation.

"It's not just about growing food," says Mike. "You have to know how to grow soil first. If you can't grow soil, then you won't grow food for very long."

Mike and Cheryl are farmers. They created the Organic Matters Foundation to help other farmers in the Pacific area improve their soil and in doing so, improve their lives. "It's important to pass the farm on to your children in a better state than when you got it," says Mike.

From this belief grew Soil School, a training program

designed to teach soil sustainability practices in developing countries such as Fiji, Palau, Samoa, PNG and the Solomon Islands.

"These countries are often the dumping grounds for other countries' crap," says Mike, "including chemicals that are banned elsewhere and linked, anecdotally, to a lot of sickness. Soil School teaches a more sustainable way of doing things. Our whole ethos is not that everyone wants to be organic but that everyone wants to feel better and wants to be able to hand their farm on to their children."

"There are two things you can ask yourself," says Mike, with the intensity of an earthy Dirty Harry. "Is nature perfect? Or is nature not perfect? Now, if you believe that nature is not perfect then that's okay – humans have invented a whole bunch of insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, genocides and regicides – all the things that kill – to fix nature's 'problems'. But we believe nature is perfect, so we have to understand why that pest or disease is there in the first place. Biological agriculture looks at the cause, not the symptom. You know, nature hasn't placed a weed there just to piss you off!"

>>



Soil School, South Pacific. Image courtesy of Organic Matters Foundation

A two-year Soil School program on an island in Fiji costs around \$50,000 USD which is, “cheap-as-chips” in comparison to what government agencies spend for much less return, according to Mike. It is a three-stage approach with multiple soil samples tested between stages to monitor and adjust for the differing soil biologies. On completion of the Soil School program the farmers will have the knowledge to continue soil farming on their own, a redundancy Mike has built in to ensure the independence of farmers the Organic Matters Foundation assists.

Their work garnered international attention from Sea Mercy, an international NGO that enlists the yachting community worldwide to deliver aid and information to communities decimated by the effects of extreme weather events. Sea Mercy has partnered with the Organic Matters Foundation to create Remote Island Soil Education or RISE. Each year Sea Mercy sponsors an intensive four-week RISE Internship for an at-risk island, to teach the Soil School program.

As Mike says, “For any health, self-sustainable or economic development related program in the South Pacific to succeed, it must start with soils training.”

Mike and Cheryl’s global perspective has grown from their own travelling experiences. They met and married in the Clarence Valley but then went to see the world, as many do, returning from their home in Samoa when Cheryl’s father became ill. Around the same time, the land they now call Solum Farm came on the market and the next stage of Mike and Cheryl’s life began.

The name ‘solum’ is Latin for the first layer of soil, most affected by plant roots. Solum Farm is renowned in the Clarence Valley for excellent organic produce, workshops, TAFE internships and the biannual Feast in the Field, a fundraiser for the Organic Matters Foundation, which operates with no government funding.

Feast in the Field is edible philosophy. It celebrates fine dining the Solum way, providing a delicious education on

Weeds have an important function and it is up to the biological agriculturalist to work out what micro-nutrient deficiencies that weed is remediating. Natural remediation might take a very long time but by identifying the deficiency, soil farmers can start helping nature along.

“Realistically,” says Mike, “farmers have to grow a crop in one season so the quicker we understand what nature is showing us, the quicker we can work with nature to solve the issue.”

Mike and Cheryl have taken Soil School all around the Pacific area, including teaching for garden and farming groups in Australia. Over the past twelve years they have trained around 1,800 farmers. Soil School has been effective in changing farmers’ perspective, but as Mike says, “We are not really teaching anything new, we’re just reminding ourselves of what we’ve forgotten. Quick fixes have a terrible knock-on effect that result in sick eco-systems which results in sick people.”



Soil School, South Pacific. Image courtesy of Organic Matters Foundation

where food comes from – the back story, Mike calls it.

The 2016 Feast in the Field was ‘Nose to Tail, Flower to Seed’ and involved slaughtering and butchering three steers raised on Solum Farm.

“Three weeks out all the chefs turned up to watch the process,” Mike tells me. “It was all done calmly by a qualified butcher with as much kindness to the animals as possible, under the circumstances. Yet the emotion among the chefs was just amazing – none of them had ever seen a beast killed; to them, meat came in a cryo-vac bag...there were some tears, some real emotion. When it came time to cook the meat they approached it with, well, I guess the word is reverence. It was quite moving.”

“When we told this story at the Feast some of the diners couldn’t cope with it. But I think it’s really important to know where your food comes from. Otherwise we lose connection with the animal and the ground.”

"We started our campaign before it was groovy to know where your food comes from but that's what it's all about, showing the process. I want people to realise that there is a healthy alternative to packaged food, readily available. It's hard to change people's habits but we are getting there."

This year's Feast in the Field featured local chefs celebrating seasonal seafood. The event was a sell-out success. Clearly, Mike's message is getting across.

As well as Solum Farm, Mike and Cheryl have developed the Yamba Farmers' Market, building it up to become a thriving centre for locally grown produce.

"You know, you give someone a dozen free-range eggs and they'll rave to you about how good they are. But the next week they go back to the supermarket, not thinking to offer to buy from you. We want to draw people's attention to the value of locally produced food."

"If you get in step with nature you'll be more grounded: you'll understand the cycle," Mike explains. "You see, people are so removed from the cycle of life that they think nature is over there, but nature is here: nature is us."

We are interrupted by a local, wanting Mike's attention.

"Come talk to me if you want the dirt on this one," the local says, laughing.

But we've already got it and it's all good.

Find out more about Solum Farm and Soil School at Organic Matters Foundation:

www.organicmatters.org.au



Sailing with a greater purpose

Sea Mercy strives to assist over 2,400 inhabited islands in an area of over a million square miles of the South Pacific.



70% of the population in this region live on 19 primary islands that have first world infrastructure. The remaining 2,300+ remote islands do not have hospitals, power, roads or airports. Even more challenging; they are located between 30 and 300+ kilometres from the primary islands and can only be accessed by boat through narrow reef entrances and shallow lagoons. The people of these islands live without proper medical, dental, and eye care services and are the last to receive emergency aid (if at all) following a natural disaster such as a cyclone. To add to these significant difficulties, there is an increasing exodus of talent and youth to the primary islands for job and income opportunities.

Sea Mercy is the only NGO (Non-Government Organisation) dedicated to providing a self-sustaining delivery platform to remote islands in the South Pacific. Since 2012, Sea Mercy has been providing medical aid and disaster response as well as economic and educational development programs to remote outer island communities in the South Pacific. Between 2012 and 2018, Sea Mercy delivered over US\$1,000,000 of building materials, goods and services to hundreds of isolated communities.

Using volunteer vessels from the international cruising and superyacht community as its delivery platform, Sea Mercy's leadership mission is to help create healthy, self-sustaining and thriving remote island communities in the Pacific region. Sea Mercy assists communities out of reach of government resources (therefore unable to access basic health care and education) and those communities most vulnerable to natural disasters.

Sea Mercy has proven its ability to deliver. It has developed and refined its programs from first-hand experience. Now in its sixth year of operation, Sea Mercy has been incorporated as a registered charity in Australia and is seeking partners from business, Government and philanthropic organisations to help expand its capacity.

For further information:

www.seamercy.org
E info@seamercy.org.au
Ph 1300 101 596



SEA MERCY
Sailing with a greater purpose

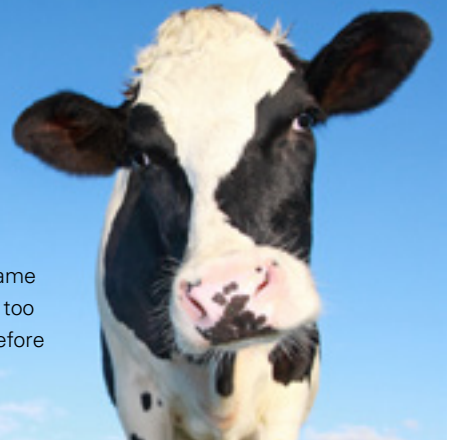
Odd + Quirky Facts on... Forster-Tuncurry & the Great Lakes Region

1. The pretty and popular holiday spot of Seal Rocks was named after the fur seals often seen at the rocks near Sugarloaf Point Lighthouse.



2.

Take a trip to Pacific Palms to visit the gorgeous Elizabeth, Boomerang and Blueys beaches. Rumour has it that 'Blueys' takes its name from a cow who grazed too close to the headland before toppling into the ocean



4.

The twin towns of Forster-Tuncurry is where Wallis Lake meets the Pacific Ocean. The bridge connecting the towns was built in 1959.

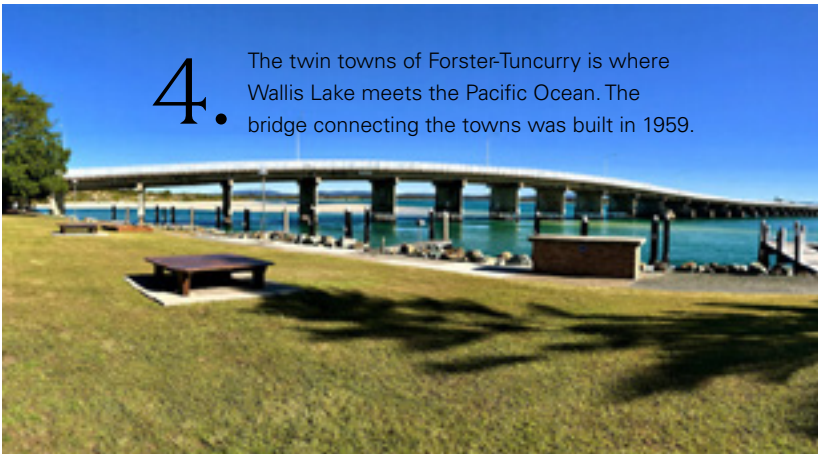


Image courtesy of Black Diamond Images



3.

Forster, pronounced 'Foster', is famous for its oysters. The first oyster lease was granted in 1884 and today, Forster is the largest producer of Sydney Rock Oysters in Australia.



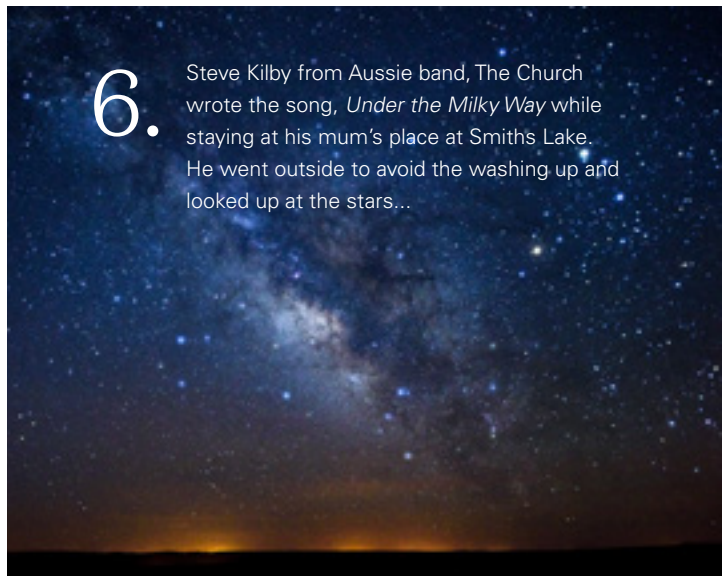
Image courtesy of Kirk Owers

5.

Pacific Palms is also home to the lovely, Green Cathedral, an open-air cathedral beneath a canopy of trees and upon the shores of Wallis Lake.

6.

Steve Kilby from Aussie band, The Church wrote the song, *Under the Milky Way* while staying at his mum's place at Smiths Lake. He went outside to avoid the washing up and looked up at the stars...





The Casley family at home in Federal

A Haven in the Hills

From catching camels in the desert, to travelling the globe, creating a successful fashion label and now, opening a lifestyle concept store; Byron Bay designers, Kaidee and Bulan Casley would make even Oprah proud about how they're 'living their best life.'

Words by Kue Hall Photography by Sam Clarke

Together and individually, Kaidee and Bulan have achieved some incredible things. They've travelled all over the world, worked with international designers and created their own successful label, Kultcha Collective. But wherever their travels take them, the Byron hinterland is home and very much where the heart is. It makes sense then that their latest project celebrates the place they so love.

Lifestyle concept store, The Hills Emporium in the village of Federal is a labour of love for the Casleys. Not that they knew that to start with. It began as a simple search for the ideal studio / workshop space for Kultcha Collective. Kultcha Collective is a collaborative effort between the two and has evolved over their 10 years together.

When Kaidee and Bulan met, Kaidee was building her own fashion label, Kaidee Peel. She had already found success in the industry including showing at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Sydney. Knowing she needed to expand her knowledge, Kaidee jumped at the chance when offered to work under renowned textile and fashion designer, Colin Heaney in Byron Bay. She made the move north in 2007.

"It was in the Byron region that I was really exposed to the abundance of creative talents and I fell in love with the area."

Bulan grew up as a traveller. From the age of three, his family wandered the Australian desert capturing and training wild camels. It was Bulan's family that started the iconic camel rides on Broome's Cable Beach. His father took him all over Asia and Bulan watched him sourcing textiles and master leather-working, making saddles for the camels.

When the couple met a decade ago, their shared love of travel saw them head off around the world where they were inspired by the creatives they met along the way. Kaidee says, "We loved the traditions of cultures from around the world; weaving, embroidering, natural dying and silver work."

"It was totally natural for us to buy anything shiny and textile and we soon began working on ideas. We'd create and collaborate with people we'd meet along the way – and that's how Kultcha Collective was born," she adds.

Just two years after their adventures began, they fell pregnant with daughter, Inca. It didn't slow the pair down though. Before she was two, Inca had travelled to Thailand, Mexico, the US, Bali and Malaysia. A little over two years later they welcomed son, Ari. And as much as they loved travelling as a family, with Inca ready to start school, they decided to set down some roots.



"We spent a bit of time on the Coffs Coast after the kids were born to be closer to family, but we felt a definite pull to return to the Byron shire. We've always felt this was home," Kaidee says.

The couple had lived in Federal previously and knew it was the perfect place to settle their young family. They love the friendly faces and being surrounded by people with similar passions and values.

"We meet up at the park for playdates and skating, get together at the café and there's a movie night at the hall each month with dinner. There's just such a wonderful community vibe here," explains Kaidee.

Once they had found their home, the next mission was finding a space to showcase Kultcha Collective. Kaidee had been eyeing-off a rustic shed for a while which happened to come up for lease. She says, "I loved the space. It had so much character with the big timber exposed beams and corrugated iron. We applied for the lease and got it."

There was one catch though. It was much larger than they required for the family. The Casleys started to think about how they could best use the space and the idea for The Hills Emporium was born.



>>

According to Kaidee, "It really kind of evolved on its own." She adds, "We worked really hard to make sure we had lots of Kultcha stock to open with, but it wasn't long after opening that we started meeting amazing artists who were creating beautiful things right here in Federal. People started to come in and show us what they do and that's how our product range has grown. You know you're on the right track when things come together naturally like that."

On any given day Kaidee and Bulan (and possibly their little helper, Ari who is not yet at school) are likely to be found toiling away at their work station, creating jewellery or designing their next samples for Kultcha Collective. Those familiar with the label recognise their unique style, described by Kaidee as 'Nomadic Boho Gypsy Luxe'. Australian made and sustainably sourced, their designs are regularly featured at the designer markets in Byron Bay and are available at selected stockists around Australia.

Children's label, Child of the Wild can also be found in-store along with an eclectic array of homewares, candles, furniture, art works and feature pieces, all sourced from local artists and collectors. Each piece comes to the store directly from local artists or collectors and the range is always evolving.

What sets The Hills Emporium apart is that every item

has a story. The stories are all fascinating and some are truly remarkable. Take 'Biscuit' for example, the eight-foot wooden hand-carved horse statue. Sourced from a local antiques collector, 'Biscuit' is originally from India and more than 70 years old. The statue is one of only four of its kind in the world and the only one in Australia.

Then there are the hand-blown glass chandeliers with hand-made copper fittings; unique pottery from local artists, candle holders and lamp bases made from recycled local timber, beeswax candles and wraps which are also made on-site.

Yet it's not all about the treasure trove of products. Bringing the community together is something Kaidee and Bulan are passionate about and they hope to continue to foster that at The Hills Emporium. The next stage of evolution will be to host workshops and small social events for the community.

This family have truly found their haven in the hills and hope to be showcasing beautiful things and sharing their stories for a long time to come.

For more information

Find The Hills Emporium on Facebook, on Instagram @the_hills_emporium or visit www.thehillsemporium.com



What's Trending This Winter

Angela and Micah from Uptown Local share the leading trends for the season.

Winter looks to be an exciting one when it comes to fashion. There are plenty of new trends emerging along with some strong carry-over styles.



Double Breasted Blazers And Suiting

For the first time in many years, the double-breasted blazer is back! And we LOVE it.

This does not mean pulling out your blazer from the 1980s as everything comes back better, as you would hope. The styles are tweaked to be a little more glamorous than the golden years.

The look is awesome with a pair of straight leg washed denim jeans or as a suit...which brings us to suiting. Women's suiting is a strong look for 2018 and not just for the corporate woman but for evening attire too. It's sexy and cool. This winter trend is likely to stick around for seasons to come.



Lilac

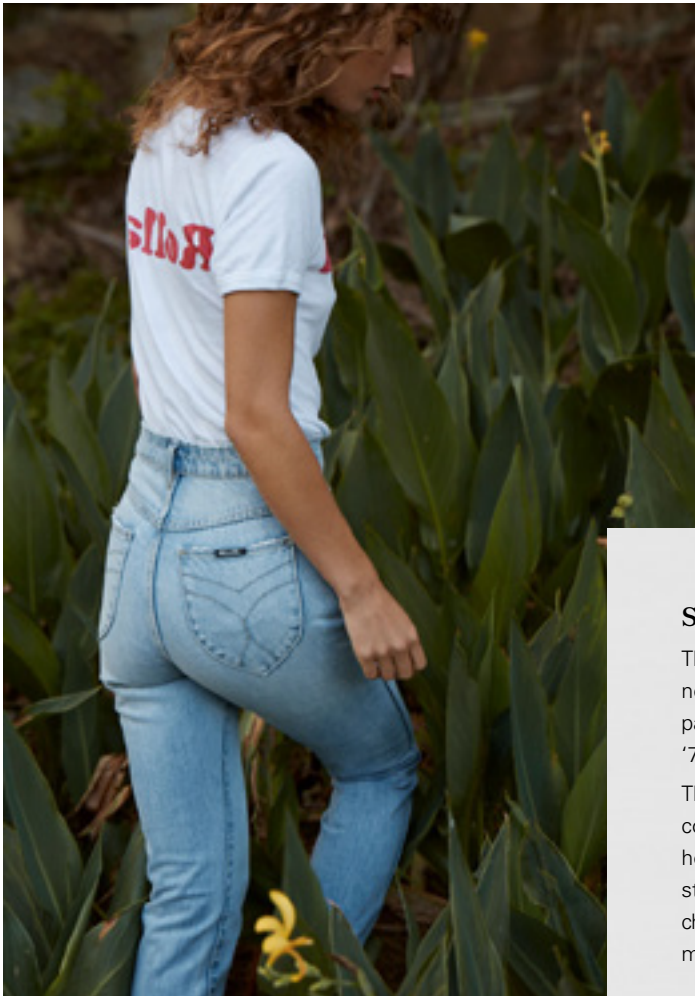
One of this season's biggest trends is the emergence of lilac. Again, it's been a long time since this colour palette has been used in fashion circles which makes it really exciting. People may be hesitant to wear pastels but the colour is so fresh and light.

It looks beautiful and lifts winter's tradition of heavy knitwear, denim and jackets. Lilac is set to be around for a while yet as we're also seeing it being used strongly in Spring 2018 collections.

Bright, Bold Colours

In addition to lilac, winter sees bold and bright colours remaining a focus as they were through summer and autumn. Living a coastal lifestyle, most of us are happy to embrace this trend. Perfect blue-sky days with a chill in the air makes it easy to opt for colour.





Anti-Fit Denim

Anti-fit denim follows on from last winter, but it is being embraced more readily. A skinny fit jean will always be relevant, however we love seeing more options as well. From the 'Mum' jean, to high-rise straight (even wide) legged jean, style has not been compromised. Worn casually with a tee and sneaker or dressed with heels/boots and a jacket, this style of jean is a great alternative. Be mindful though that most jeans are made from rigid denim, so the anti-fit requires a bit of wear and love.

Silk Sets

This season takes the silk shirt to the next level by adding a matching silk pant. It's pyjama-like yet with more of a '70s glamour, luxury vibe.

This modern look ensures style, comfort and sexiness. Not for the faint-hearted but such an admired look from street style to evening attire. Of course, choosing one piece (top or bottom) is more than acceptable too.



Textures

Textured fabrics and designs are a statement for winter. Play with them to give an overall edge to an outfit. It need not be overly dramatic and definitely adds interest whilst still feeling cosy. Velvet (yes, it's back), corduroy (yes, it's back), tweed (yes, it's back) and [faux] furs are all this season's must-haves.

The same applies to men's fashion this winter. Textured blazers make for a great Sunday lunch jacket (worn with denim or chinos). Soft corduroy has been prominent too, as has a take on the traditional Sherpa jacket, which not only looks awesome but is also practical.

For all these trends visit Uptown Local at Coffs Central or find them online:

www.uptownlocal.com.au /
Instagram – @uptown_local
and even on www.coastbeat.tv

How to Thrive in Winter

Sam Wooldridge from Coffs Coast Health Club shares her insight into how we can avoid that winter weight gain.

Do we gain weight in winter or is that just a mindset?

One history-based theory suggests it could be in our genes: cooler, shorter days and less sunlight impacts on our hormones, making us feel lethargic and creating the urge to eat more, to store as energy for the cool months ahead, when traditionally, food was scarce.

In winter, we are less inclined to be outside and this reduction in exposure to sunlight impacts our body's melatonin levels. Being the sleep hormone, we therefore feel more tired and less inclined to get up and about and be energetic. We crave those warm, hearty meals that while comforting, are carbohydrate heavy.

It's ok to eat this way, just not every day so, in order to combat the need for warmth and carbs here are some tips that might help get you and your body through the wintery weather:

- Don't stop your regular exercise routine. Set an exercise routine and stick to it. If conditions are poor outside, do some movement at home. Spend 30 minutes getting the heart rate up, include the kids or use them as weights to make sure you stay on track. (See workout on the next page)
- Make exercise fun. Get an exercise buddy. Research has shown that having a fitness buddy can motivate people to work out up to 50% harder in exercise sessions.
- Consider investing in a personal trainer for the colder months - someone to kick your butt and get you motivated. Group PT is another great idea.
- Enjoy lots of fresh vegetables for dinner; don't fall for comfort food too often. Healthy, homemade soups are a terrific choice.
- Hydrate! If you find your water intake is lacking (me too, its cold!) up your intake of herbal teas or drink warm water (adding lemon for flavour). When we're dehydrated we can feel the need to eat more, especially in winter. Avoid that mindset by staying hydrated.
- Be mindful. Think about why you're eating. Are you thirsty? Stay present to prevent overeating and if you catch yourself emotionally eating, think of ways to change this habit. Fill that space with something else you enjoy.
- Eliminate room for error. Avoid stepping out the door when you're hungry. Have something to eat before leaving home so you don't opt for fast food when you

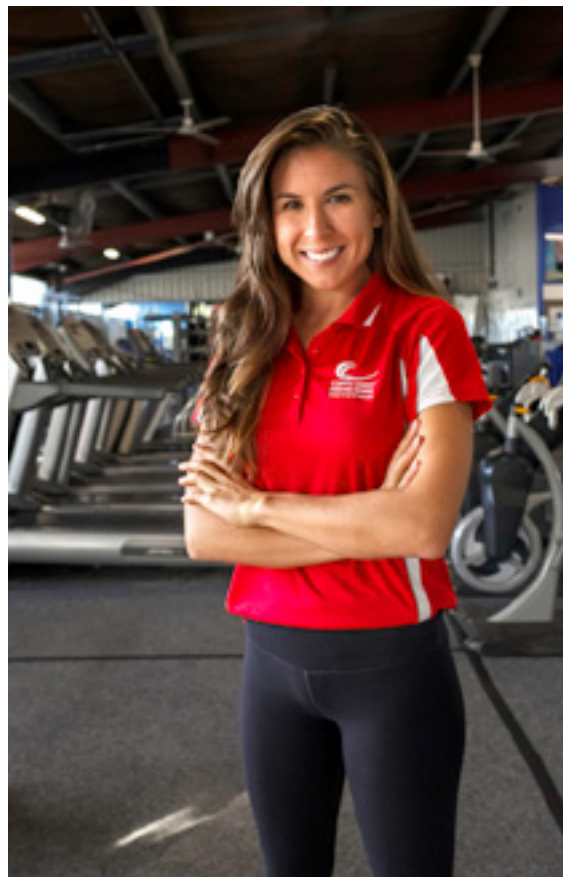


Image of Sam Wooldridge courtesy of Jen McCulloch

- get peckish. Handbag snacks are also crucial - they save me every time!
- Step outside. Exposure to sunlight, yes, even in winter, is crucial for Vitamin D synthesis and for melatonin regulation. You'll feel energised. Plus, nature is gorgeous through the winter (and super romantic). Get rugged up, grab your partner or bestie and get outside, even if just for a walk.
- Reduce stress and be sure to get enough sleep. Cortisol and other stress hormones have an impact on how much we eat and how energy is stored too. Establish a routine that allows for enough sleep. Research has shown that adequate sleep levels help prevent weight gain.
- Look after your gut bacteria. Evidence reflects a distinct difference in the gut bacteria of healthy people versus those who are overweight. Keep up those veggies and probiotic foods.



At home fitness program:

Exercise	Reps/ Sets	Instructions
Squats / squat jumps	15 /2 sets	These can be done in any open space of the house. Piggy backing kids is a great way to challenge yourself!
Plank	1 min /2 sets	Activate that core. Challenge your kids and family to a plank-off!
Push-ups	15 /2 sets	Full range of movement (ROM) go all the way down to the floor and all the way up. Option to start on knees and build up to toes.
Tricep Dips	20 /2 sets	These can be done on a chair or stairs with the option to bend legs. It's harder if legs are straight out in front.
Bent Over Row	15 /2 sets	If you have weights at home – perfect. If not, put some bottles of water into a backpack and improvise.
Bicep curls	20 /2 sets	Bottles of water also work well here if weights are not readily available.
Diamond sit-ups	20 /2-3 sets	Feet together, knees apart, full ROM. Touch the ground above your head in the low position, come all the way up and touch your toes.

Coffs Coast Health Club is located at Moonee Market with another gym also located in Toormina
www.coffscosthcc.com.au



The Plastic Problem

By 2050, it's estimated that there will be more plastic in our oceans than fish. As coast-dwellers, this will impact upon our daily lives for generations to come.

To keep you informed, this issue of Coastbeat is proud to present profiles on individuals and organisations who are really stepping up when it comes to ocean preservation and plastic pollution.

We hope you take heart from people like Louise Hardman from Plastic Collective, from Sea Shepherd who have surpassed the million dollar mark in the collection of marine debris and from Tianne Albrow who is showing the next generation just how beautiful 'rubbish' can be. We are also offering up a few simple ways to make small changes to everyday plastic use.

Louise Hardman – Waste Warrior

Coastbeat meets the inspirational, Louise Hardman – a self-described ‘high school science teacher’ fighting the war on waste....and winning.

Words by Kue Hall



Louise demonstrating the Shruder in Vanuatu



Image courtesy of eco documentary, *Blue*



People in Vanuatu sorting bottle tops for shredding

Louise Hardman, founder of Plastic Collective and designer of the game-changing, plastic-recycling machine, ‘The Shruder’, is literally turning trash to treasure and in the process, saving the ocean from pollution.

Knowing that, it’s easy to understand why her invention and her Coffs Harbour-based company, Plastic Collective, are gaining global attention from policy-makers and massive companies alike – think Prince Charles, the Indonesian Government and Coca-Cola bosses to name just a few.

Louise is extremely humble and when she describes herself as a ‘high school science teacher’ she is underselling herself. She has a Bachelor of Science (Zoology / Anthropology), a Graduate Certificate in Environment Education and a Graduate Diploma in Education (Biology / Chemistry). For years she also worked as a Marine Biologist on the Solitary Islands Marine Parks.

In fact, it was an incident that occurred when Louise was working on a Marine Turtle Survey sponsored by National Geographic that really marked the start of her journey to rid the oceans of plastic.

“I got a call to pick up a sick turtle in Woolli River. It was so sick that it couldn’t be saved and when they completed the necropsy [animal autopsy], its entire digestive system was full of all different

types of plastic,” says Louise.

“It was horrific and that’s what alerted me to the issue of plastics in the ocean. Unfortunately, I didn’t have a solution back then.”

That changed when on holiday with her daughter in Thailand in 2003. Whilst visiting a remote island, Louise witnessed a young girl throw a bag full of rubbish into a beautiful river. “I asked the girl why she would do that, and she told me everyone did it – ‘that’s how rubbish disappears’, she said. That was the moment I realised I had to do something. I decided to start with educating people.”

Louise completed her teaching qualifications and began doing just that. However, when she lost her job due to an injury, she got the kick-start she needed to take her mission a step further. Louise was determined to create a proactive solution to ridding the ocean of plastics. And so began the very early stages of Plastic Collective.

“My initial goal was to change the mindset around plastics being waste – moving from the idea that plastic is rubbish to showing people there is value in it. We discard it and see it as waste; but if we start viewing it as a recyclable resource, the whole attitude around it changes. It moves from ‘waste management’ to ‘resource recovery,’” says Louise.

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That re-education is still at the core of Plastic Collective. Helping communities learn how to recycle their plastics is the first step to making a difference. And now, thanks to The Shruder, people can create products that will directly benefit their community and even impact the local economy.

So, what exactly is The Shruder? Basically, it is an all-in-one plastic shredder and extruder that is completely portable, can be operated by one person and runs on your typical household power outlet. The machine is ideal for recycling used plastics which can then be either on-sold to plastic recyclers or extruded into filament or cord to be made into other products such as concrete, household items, pavements and even houses.

It sounds simple enough, but Louise's design is unique and took two years, tens of thousands of dollars and much trial and error to get right. Louise even worked closely with military level engineers to ensure The Shruder would be a success. According to Louise, "It's been a long process and we've been through lots of 'yes, that works, no that doesn't' but we're finally at a point where we're in production and ready to roll them out."

Along with The Shruder, Louise and her team have created a three-step program to ensure that communities will use it effectively and better yet, utilise it to benefit the local economy. "First, we go in and educate people about being plastic neutral – the different types of plastic, how to use and recycle it effectively. The second phase is 'Innovate'; where we sit down and figure out what final product we could make that will be most beneficial for the community.

Thirdly, we bring in the machine, create that final product and show community members how to make it themselves.

Louise's ultimate vision is to see small recycling stations in every backyard, in every community but for now, she's focusing on remote communities and those on islands in the Asia / Pacific region. Which begs the question, why start there?

"There are 4,000 inhabited islands in the Asia / Pacific region that contain 370 million people, all of whom earn less than \$5,000 a year and there's no infrastructure for waste. 69-70% of plastics are coming from the Pacific Ocean and 84% of leakage is happening in the Asia / Pacific region. If we can reduce waste there, that will make a huge impact," says Louise.

With such vision, coupled with a real and implementable solution, it's not surprising Louise is one very sought-after woman in the waste management world.

She has attended a Plastics Pollution meeting with the International Sustainability Unit in the UK where she met and introduced herself to Prince Charles – inviting him to Coffs Harbour nonetheless. This month, she will speak as a guest of the Australian Consulate General of Bali in front of the Indonesian Government for World Environment Week.

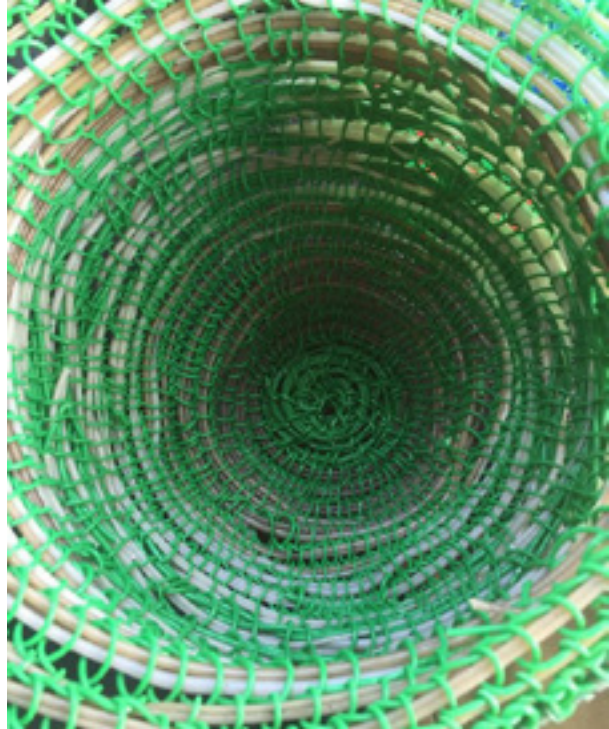
Interestingly, it was a presentation closer to home that led to the first corporate deal to roll-out The Shruder. Louise was attending a Plasticity Forum at the Beyond Plastic Pollution Conference in Sydney with industry giants like Coca-Cola and Woolworths in attendance when opportunity knocked. "Coca-Cola South Pacific heard my presentation and as a result, sponsored a machine to go to the Whitsunday Islands



Trash Hero Komodo. Students cleaning up their island. Image courtesy of Cath Witten



Image of Louise by Brendan Ray



Basket made from Shruder extrusion by Coffs artist Martina LoSchiavo

to help Libby Edge's Eco Barge Clean Seas Inc. and the Whitsunday Marine Debris Removal Program. That occurred in May which was really exciting."

The first five Shruders are currently in production. After that, the machines will be available to order. Louise expects to make upwards of 30 machines in the following 12 months with plans to escalate from there. Louise says it's thanks to those passionate about our oceans and business-savvy locals that she's got this far.

Alongside the Shruder program, Louise and the team run a Plastic Neutral Program for individuals, communities and businesses. Individuals can learn how to become plastic neutral in their own lives and communities, while businesses can sponsor a community within the Shruder program to offset their own plastic use.

Always leading from the front, the team are also working on an ambitious program to make Louise's home town of Woolgoolga, plastic neutral.

This passionate waste warrior says she is inspired by those around her and acknowledges that all the achievements to date are very much a team effort. "I may have had the initial idea but there's been so much help, mentoring and support from the start to now; it's definitely not just me doing all this, it's the team," says Louise.

"Everyone at the Six Degrees Co-Working Hub in Coffs Harbour, the Start-Up and Pitch Your Passion competitions – without all that support I would have gone mad."

One of the biggest highlights so far for Louise has been

meeting people who share her passion and who are taking action to make a difference. Knowing it's a collaborative effort and that she has a whole tribe of people backing her all the way, really drives Louise.

"I still have sleepless nights regularly because I feel like I haven't stopped the plastics...when I can actually see that and see the idea spreading along the coastline, then I'll start to relax I think."

And Louise's biggest piece of advice for people feeling disempowered or wanting to make a difference? Find your pain point and work on it.

"If you have an idea or want to reinvent yourself, find out what upsets you most and figure out a solution. I used to cry seeing animals die, it just enraged me. Once I figured out a solution that could help, I couldn't sleep anymore, I was so excited."

Powerful advice from an inspirational woman. Follow Louise's lead and you may just end up changing the world in the process.

For more information on The Shruder Program, Plastic Neutral programs for individuals and businesses or the work of Plastic Collective,

visit www.plasticcollective.co



From Lid to Art

Just like her friend, Louise Hardman from Plastic Collective, Tianne Albrow has found a wonderful way to make something special from plastic. With the help of local school students, she's creating colourful murals from bottle top lids.

Words by Yvette Harper

Photography by Elize Strydom



One of Tianne's murals, now being enjoyed by the students of Sandy Beach Public School

Wandering around Tianne Albrow's Emerald Beach home feels a little like stepping into an art gallery, albeit a very family friendly one with a dog. Tianne's portraits and photographs adorn the walls, painted pieces of driftwood rest against the doorway and coloured bottle tops sit next to countless drawings by her children.

Creativity certainly runs in the family. Tianne's father is a talented photographer, another family member a professional illustrator. The Albrow household of five (Tianne and husband Marc have a 10-year-old son and 9-year-old twin daughters) is one where music and art are prevalent.

Marc plays the drums, the three kids all play guitar and are natural artists too. Tianne enjoys painting, drawing, pottery and craft but apparently missed out on the musical talent. "I think I just got the groupie thing instead," she says with a laugh.

It's not just her own kids who take inspiration from

Tianne's artistic ability but many local primary school children too. Perhaps it's just as well that a desire to see the world interrupted her Creative Arts degree and she became a teacher instead. Even as an outsider, it's easy to see that teaching is her calling in life.

Tianne loves being a primary teacher. "It means I get to be creative and work with kids too. Every time I walk into the classroom the kids go, 'Yaayyy, we get to paint or do something fun today.' It's fantastic to see students delve into their arty and imaginative sides. I get them all to have a go and always say to them, 'nothing you do in art is wrong. It's all great.' Everyone has potential."

The whole 'lid to art' concept has only come about in the past 18 months. It was a colleague at Kororo School on the Coffs Coast who saw a bottle top mural on Pinterest and suggested Tianne have a go. With a smile she says, "You shouldn't suggest I do anything, because I'll do it."

As with her other murals (three locals schools now home her work), the first mural was very much a collaborative effort. Students are involved at every step. They bring lids in from home, help sort through the colours and sketch their ideas for the design.

For Tianne, the bottle top art ticks many boxes. "Firstly, I love that kids are learning the importance of recycling and using the lids that would otherwise end up in the bin. I also like showing them that 'rubbish' can actually make beautiful, colourful art that will last. The end result is very tactile too and students love to see and touch the finished work. They really interact with it which is great."

The schools have all been super supportive with the entire school community embracing the concept from the outset. Reminders to bring in lids go in the newsletter and the process begins...Tianne says it helps to be working with coastal schools given all those blue milk bottle lids that are sent in!

Tianne has also taught students whose first language is one other than English and with assistance from the children, she created culturally significant murals as part of their learning journey. A French boy helped create the Eiffel Tower and a young Japanese girl made a beautiful cherry blossom tree.

For the school closest to home, where her three children attend, students submitted their designs with an ocean theme throughout as the students learn about The Solitary Island Marine Park as part of their curriculum. Tianne was sorting through the various drawings while sitting at her local beach one day when she looked out and saw a dolphin jump out of the water. Needless to say, when the dolphin didn't appear in the designs from the kids, Tianne



made an addition of her own.

She also took inspiration from students when it came to the snorkeler in the design. When considering what colour to make the girl's hair she asked three Year 6 girls helping her that day, for their thoughts. The girls, who all happened to be redheads, were unanimous in their decision!

It's not surprising that Tianne regularly finds bags of lids sitting at her doorstep, dropped off by locals who appreciate her creations. And now that she has so many lids, she's ready for the next design.

Amazingly, even with up to 4,000 lids, a mural only takes Tianne a month or so to complete.

And so, where to from here?

Tianne is more than happy to share what's she learnt and to get people on the bottle top recycling bandwagon, teachers or otherwise. A mum at a nearby school recently got in touch and Tianne talked her through the process and advised her of everything required. That completed mural now hangs on a wall at a local school for children to enjoy.

Tianne started up the Facebook group, 'From Lid to Art' so anyone can get involved. She did the same on Instagram. For Tianne, the view is certainly the 'more the merrier' when it comes to people getting inventive with recyclable materials. "The Facebook Group has support from people all over Australia which I think is awesome."

As for all those lids sitting at her home just waiting for a second life, she hopes a phone call from a school with hopes of bright, colourful, interesting work for their walls, is just around the corner.

Until then, it's a safe bet that if teacher Tianne steps into a classroom somewhere on the Coffs Coast anytime soon, the smiles will be wide, and the creative endeavours will be wonderful.

To find out more

You can follow Tianne on Instagram @from_lid_to_art or join the Facebook group - From Lid to Art Bottle Top Murals



Tianne with Ludo

Addicted to Plastic?

Ditch those bad habits and make July plastic free! Got plans this July? Why not join millions of people in 159 countries around the world as they challenge themselves to ditch single-use plastic in an effort to reduce plastic pollution. **Plastic Free July** is an Australian initiative to raise awareness of the problems with single-use disposable plastic by challenging people to pledge to do something about it.

Words by Lou De Mattia



What's the deal?

It's safe to say that plastic is everywhere. Be it a bag, wrapper or bottle, it's in your shopping trolley, bathroom cabinet, gym bag and littered all over our coast. Our oceans, marine life and ecosystems are ingesting it.

The issue with plastic is that it was designed to last and yet we're using it once, throwing it out and it is not breaking down. When plastic is littered, it begins its journey to our waterways, beaches and oceans where it slowly, very slowly, begins to break down into millions of pieces.

Current research by Tangaroa Blue, an Australian Marine Debris Initiative, estimates that eight million tonnes of plastic are entering the ocean each year, making marine debris a major environmental issue worldwide.

But don't be discouraged - while solutions require global action, real change can also come from small changes by individuals.

Going cold turkey

You've committed and so it's now time to step away from the plastic. If this is completely new to you, I recommend choosing a tried and tested item that is easy and convenient to replace with a non-plastic alternative. For example, swap plastic bags for reusable bags or invest in a reusable coffee cup.

If this isn't your first plastic detox, try raising the bar. Challenge

yourself to get creative and avoid plastics with some forward-thinking before hitting the shops. Just a few minutes of planning

means you can shop smarter. For example, why not take your own containers to the butcher, buy bread from the bakery instead of in its plastic wrapping from supermarkets or even make your own dips to store in existing containers (mmm, hummus) thereby avoiding the plastic containers they come in.

To register your chosen pledge online go to www.plasticfreejuly.org

Planning is paramount

Keen to get through your challenge successfully? Organisation and accountability are your new best friends. Get out that diary because you'll find it helpful to write shopping lists and plan where you'll shop. Don't forget to check that you have your reusable shopping bags (cotton bags perhaps?) and your cutlery and cup in your bag.

And should you slip up, don't be too hard on yourself, just remember why you chose to cut plastic and continue on your quest.

Last year, I made myself a deal that if I forgot to bring my reusable cup to work, I had to go without my fresh, barista made coffee. This was a daunting thought that forced me to be diligent and I'm pleased to say that I've stuck with it (real tears are shed on those days when I have to endure instant coffee through the work day).

Simple swaps

Think Keepcup, mug or a jar with a lid instead of a café supplied coffee cup (which are generally non-recyclable). Cafes know the drill and will often even give you a discount to use your own cup. Say no to plastic straws too.

Invest in a steel or bamboo set of cutlery for your bag. Replace your plastic toothbrush for a bamboo version. Delve into the endless online world of DIY blogs to learn how to make your own deodorant, beauty and cleaning products.

A Google search will bring up a wide range of clever substitutes for those everyday essentials.

Ask your local café to join Plastic Free July

At some point during the month as you make changes and sip from your Keepcup you may think, 'Wow. I'm amazed at how easily I am conquering this. Everyone should be doing this!' When this happens, don't walk but instead, run to your favourite café or bar and ask them if they will use their power as a local business and consider cutting single use plastics from their business model.

An action as small as not offering plastic straws instantly cuts down on waste and sends a gentle reminder to consumers that we all need to be more conscious about what we consume.

Are you a business looking to step up and stand out?

There is a real demand from consumers for businesses to become more accountable and sustainable. Create a market edge

by choosing to incorporate plastic free items in your business and promote any positive changes to your customers - both online and in store.

Consider replacing disposable plastic cutlery and containers with bamboo or corn starch varieties, both of which can be purchased locally at competitive prices. Consider offering a discount for reusable coffee cups and make it known that you support people who BYO jars and containers for takeaway orders.



The Plastic Free July website has a range of downloadable posters to communicate your commitment.

Good Luck with your plastic detox, not only during Plastic Free July but for all the other months of the year too!

Note: Coffs Harbour City Council will be putting on a range of workshops and events throughout Plastic Free July. Details can be found online at www.ourlivingcoast.com.au

Louise de Mattia is the Waste Education Officer at Coffs Harbour City Council

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COFFS CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'

Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign exceeds the million-dollar mark

In February 2016, Sea Shepherd Australia announced a campaign dedicated to raising awareness and combatting the global catastrophe that is plastic pollution in our seas. Since then, over 1.2 million pieces of rubbish have been collected from Australia's beaches and waterways. However, with eight million tonnes of plastic flowing into our oceans each year, we all need to 'think globally, act locally' to turn the tide.

Words by Kimberley Bernard Images supplied by Sea Shepherd

Since launching in early 2016, Sea Shepherd's Marine Debris Campaign in Australia has gone from strength to strength, proving to the world that plastic pollution is a problem worth addressing for the greater good of our oceans and its inhabitants.

"We are seeing our oceans choke at a catastrophic rate under the pressure of plastic pollution," says Sea Shepherd's National Co-ordinator for Marine Debris, Liza Dicks.

The Marine Debris Campaign takes direct action on plastic by physically removing dangerous debris from our coastlines and waterways. The campaign concentrates on facilitating change within our communities through education and involvement.

In the past two years, the Marine Debris Campaign has had some astounding feats. Over 1.23 million items have been collected from our shores and waterways, 80.2% of which was plastic. And its all thanks to countless passionate and dedicated people.

Every state in Australia has a Marine Debris team and volunteers also make trips to remote locations such as the Cocos Keeling Islands off the coast of Western Australia.

Tireless coordinators have educated hundreds upon hundreds of children, reached tens of thousands of people online via social media and collected and recorded over one million items of debris.

It takes an army of compassionate and pro-active people to collect so much debris and the campaign is incredibly proud to have engaged over 10,000 locals from communities across the nation in beach clean-ups since launching in early 2016.

Liza says, "Our beach clean ups are a hands-on effort to help ease the pressure on our delicate native eco-systems."



What we've been collecting – The Big, Bad Top 5

1. Cigarette Butts and Filters

Cigarette butts contain cellulose acetate, a form of plastic, and while they are small, the several trillion estimated discarded cigarette butts around the world are having a toxic effect on our oceans. Did you know that it can take up to 25 years for one cigarette butt to break down?

2. Plastic Bits and Pieces (hard and solid)

Scientists estimate that in the coming years, 99% of the seabird population across the world will be impacted by hard plastic ingestion. Plastic does not break down - it breaks up into tiny items of plastic, often small enough to be considered micro-plastics.

3. Plastic Film Remnants (bits of plastic bag, wrap etc.)

Soft plastic film remnants are light and small, making them easily missed by council workers, and readily picked up by wind or rain. Plastic film remnants can quickly find their way into the ocean and are often mistaken for jellyfish and ingested by turtles. We have also seen dolphins suffer with plastic bags covering their blow holes. Sadly, whales also ingest unfathomable amounts of plastic bag and plastic film remnants.

4. Plastic Food Packaging (wrap / packets / containers)

We live in a disposable society where we would rather buy a quick meal in a plastic container than make and store one ourselves. Unfortunately, a lot of packaging ends up on our beaches and shores rather than being disposed of.

5. Paper and Cardboard Packaging

Found in almost every household, business, or shop, paper and cardboard packaging is produced at an astonishing rate and is extraordinarily detrimental to our forests.

What You Can Do

“We need to put the responsibility back on the plastic manufacturers and make them accountable for their wasteful plastic production,” says Liza.

“We can all make a difference by simply refusing single use plastic and opting for reusable alternatives. It can just be a small change like investing in a Keep Cup or taking your own reusable cutlery to a picnic that can make a difference. I like the saying ‘think globally, act locally’ because change starts with us. It doesn’t have to be overwhelming.”

Along with reducing, reusing, remaking, resourcing and

recycling, you can join your local Sea Shepherd Marine Debris team and offer them a hand. Beach clean-ups continue to grow each month with Sea Shepherd seeing a substantial number of volunteers join in to help keep Australia’s shorelines beautiful.

Clean-ups are free and family-friendly. Everyone dedicated to marine debris love seeing kids getting involved and becoming the change that our local communities and eco-systems need.

The toxic tide of plastic pollution is slowly beginning to turn but with eight million tonnes of plastic flowing into our oceans every year, the fight to keep our oceans plastic free continues.

Sea Shepherd and Marine Debris - The Facts and Stats

Totally number of items collected since February 2016	1,233,595
Percentage of collected items that were plastic	80.2%
Number of people involved in beach clean-ups since campaign launch	10,000
Total weight of items collected	22,126 kilograms
Number of bags full of debris	1,6000
Number of metres of beach covered by clean-up participants	77,736 metres
Number of cigarette butts collected	276,499
Number of hard, solid plastic bits and pieces collected	154,170
Number of plastic film remnants collected	148,038
Plastic food packaging items collected	122,640
Paper and Cardboard packaging collected	57,806



To donate or learn more about the campaign or to get involved in a beach clean-up

Go to www.seashepherd.org.au/marinedebris/ or find them on Facebook - Sea Shepherd Marine Debris Campaign Australia or Instagram @seashepherdmarinedebristeam

Kimberley Bernard is Queensland’s Marine Debris Co-ordinator



Meet the Chef Kenny Liang, Moon Dragon

A fusion of fresh authentic Chinese dishes and unique Asian cuisine, Moon Dragon at Moonee Market has fast become a crowd favourite among locals and tourists alike. Coastbeat chats to head chef, Kenny Liang, about bringing this touch of Asia to the northern beaches.

Words by Ali Hiddlestone



Chef Kenny from Moon Dragon. Image by Rob Wright

Cb: Tell us about your background.

I was born and raised in Guangdong, China. When I was 16 years old, we moved to Australia as a family so I could further my studies. I have been cooking professionally since arriving in Australia. It's a real passion of mine. I feel very fortunate to now call Coffs Harbour home – it's such an amazing place to live.

Cb: What is the inspiration behind Moon Dragon?

We really wanted to bring something different to the northern beaches. We sought to develop and offer a combination of the old 'favourite' Chinese dishes with other more traditional dishes. Plus, we've introduced some fusion foods for those willing to try new things! We also wanted to expand on our existing business in Coffs Harbour, Dragon

Chinese Restaurant and we're really excited to now share our great dishes, fantastic service and overall wonderful dining experience with locals in this area.

Cb: Tell us about the Moon Dragon team?

The team is great and works really hard to create the ultimate dining experience for our patrons. My aunty and I work with a line-up of great waitresses and waiters. The team consists of me (head chef), Jackie (sous chef), Kimmy (deep fryer), and seven waiters and waitresses that all help to keep the business ticking.

Cb: What is your vision for the restaurant?

Our goal is always to serve great authentic Chinese food to locals across the Coffs Coast whilst growing our business as much as we can.



Cb: What is the inspiration behind the menu?

We understand that people have different tastes when it comes to Chinese cuisine, so we've really tried to cater for everyone. This is part of the reason we have traditional Chinese dishes, a few fusion options and other specialised and unique Asian dishes.

Cb: What makes Moon Dragon unique?

I believe it is unique in the fact that we not only sell the archetypal Chinese cuisine that you're used to seeing but we make other foods that you're not used to seeing in Coffs Harbour. Also, our degustation 8-course meal or 11-course meal is completely different from other restaurants and we've received a lot of positive feedback from it.

Cb: What are your preferred spices to cook with?

It sounds very simple – but salt and pepper are actually my favourites to cook with! I think Chinese cuisine really lends itself to the simplicity of these spices – and funnily enough, a lot of our salt and pepper-based dishes are our top sellers.

Cb: How do you best unwind from work?

Away from work, I enjoy hanging out with my wife and travelling to different parts of Australia as much as we can. I also enjoy watching movies and trying other restaurants and different cuisines to learn more about food and gain inspiration for dishes I may cook in the future.

Thanks so much Kenny.

Moon Dragon is located at Moonee Market.

They are open 7 days.

Ph 6653 7888 or find them on Facebook – Moon Dragon





Red Curry Chicken

Recipes courtesy of Moon Dragon's Chef, Kenny

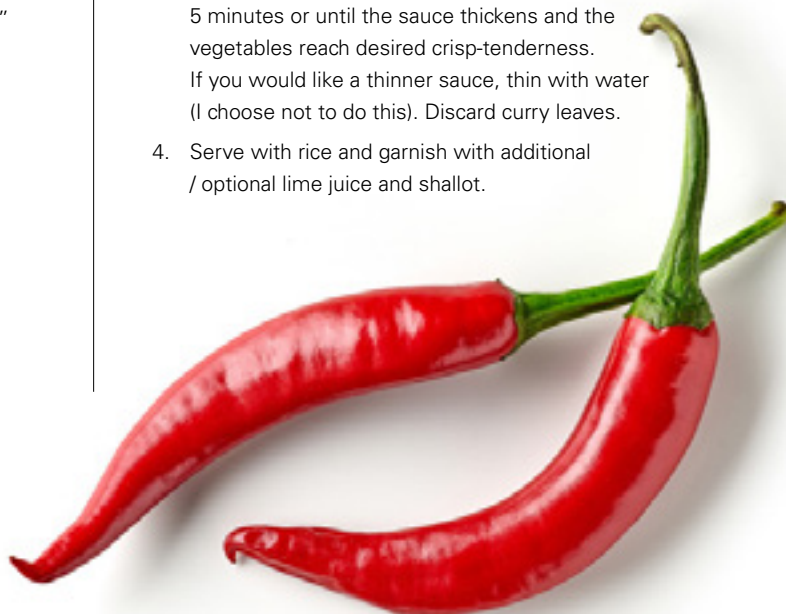
Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 tbsp olive oil or coconut oil
1-pound chicken breasts sliced into 1/4" slices then 2" pieces
200g mixed vegetables
2 tbsp red curry paste
4 garlic cloves minced
1 can (13.5oz) quality coconut milk (I like Chaokoh)
1 tbsp corn starch
2 tbsp lime juice
1 tbsp brown sugar
5 curry leaves
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
For the Garnish
Shallots
Fresh lime

METHOD

1. Heat oil over medium to high heat in large non-stick skillet. Add chicken, onion, red curry paste and garlic. Cook just until the chicken is no longer pink.
2. Add half of the coconut milk. Mix remaining coconut milk with cornstarch and add to skillet along with all remaining ingredients (except garnishes).
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer for 5 minutes or until the sauce thickens and the vegetables reach desired crisp-tenderness. If you would like a thinner sauce, thin with water (I choose not to do this). Discard curry leaves.
4. Serve with rice and garnish with additional / optional lime juice and shallot.



Traditional Slow Braised Pork Belly in Soy with Aniseed and Garlic

Serves: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lb. (900g) pork belly
- 10 spring onions
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 cup Chinese cooking wine
- 1 cup dark soy sauce
- 1 cup light soy sauce
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 4 tbsp peanut oil
- 4-star anise
- 2 cloves
- 8 tbsp brown sugar



METHOD

1. Cut the pork belly into large strips large of 1.5 to 2 inches then dice the meat into big cubes. Pour the pork belly into boiling water and cook for 3 minutes, then drain and dry with paper towels. This process will remove any impurities and will tenderise the meat.
2. Now it's time to brown the peanut oil. Pour the peanut oil combined with 4 tbsp of brown sugar into a wok or a pan big enough to contain the pork belly stew. Place the pan on medium/low heat. When the sugar is well melted, add the meat. Caramelize the pork belly dices until golden brown, then add the Chinese wine and raise the flame. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Pour 2 tbsp of peanut oil into a separate, thick-bottomed heavy pot. Cut the spring onions into slices ¼ inch thick and peel and crush the cloves of garlic. Slice the fresh ginger into thin slices. When the oil is hot, but not smoking, stir-fry the vegetables combined with the star anise and the clove and the ginger slices for 5 minutes.
4. Now pour the meat with wine and soy sauces into the pot. The liquid has to reach to ¾ of the height of the meat pile. If not, add hot vegetable broth. Cover the pot with a lid and set the heat in order to gently simmer the pork belly stew. Cook for a couple of hours until the meat is extremely soft, but the fat strips are not melted.

CARAMELISED CHINESE SAUCE

When the pork belly stew is ready, drain the meat pieces and place into a bowl covered with aluminum foil. Add 4 tbsp of sugar, raise the flame and bring the sauce to a simmer until it becomes a thick sauce. Finally, pour the meat back into the sauce, lower the heat to a minimum and cook 15 minutes more.

FINISHING

Serve the pork belly stew with white rice and stir-fried vegetables. The pork belly stew is great just cooked but it's even better the day after! Just remember to warm it on a very low flame otherwise the meat will be a little gristly. Store the pork belly stew in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Not up for cooking? This delicious pork belly dish is on the menu at Moon Dragon.

NOTES:

Choosing the pork belly - If possible, use pork belly with skin on as this is used in traditional Chinese cuisine. The skin combined with the sugar gives the stew more flavour and the characteristic translucent effect.

Shaoxing Chinese Cooking Wine - This ingredient is essential to obtain the authentic taste and color of the pork belly stew Shanghai style. This wine is easy to find at most Asian shops and markets.

Rapid Action – Coastbeat goes Rafting

At just under 200 kilometres, the Clarence Canoe and Kayak Trail is the longest white-water trip in Australia and includes three wild and stunningly beautiful river systems, the Nymboida, the Mann and the Clarence. The sheer length and diversity of the trail means there's adventure levels to suit all types and plenty of access points to 'dip in' to the trail as desired.

Words by Melissa Beit



Image courtesy of Melissa Beit

I first kayaked the upper sections of the trail with my rafting guide boyfriend more than 20 years ago and whether it was the thrill of white water, the mind-blowing scenery or the heady beginnings of that relationship, this is a place I've come to associate with romance and adventure.

Fast forward a couple of decades and that boyfriend is now my husband and we're spending a long weekend taking our three kids down one of Australia's most spectacular rivers, the Nymboida.

There are ten families and a LOT of kids on this trip. Between us we have four ex-rafting guides, three rafts, more than a dozen kayaks and 17 excited and noisy kids. The youngest is five and the oldest is 16.

Day 1 – Codhole to The Junction - rafts

The adults of the group and any child over the age of 11 are rafting the 'top' section today, the same section that the four guides commercially rafted back in the '90s.

A few years ago, when our firstborn children were suddenly old

enough to go rafting, each guide purchased a white-water raft so there's plenty of space for parents, kids and some much-loved blow-ins as well.

The Nymboida can be rafted at any time of year but after a spell of rain is best so the river is at a good level. If it's too low, guides spend a lot of time picking tricky lines between exposed rocks. Fortunately, we've been blessed with perfect conditions: the sun is shining in a cloudless sky and there's plenty of water in the river from recent rain. There are 25 rapids to navigate today, ranging in difficulty from grade two to four and it's going to be fast-paced and wet.

It's hard to overstate the unique beauty of the Nymboida River. The rock walls loom right beside the rapids and rainforest drapes the hills. The rocks look to have been deliberately placed to make this perfect white-water and the dark pools at the bottom of the rapids swirl with cream-coloured foam. There are endless places to stop and play: cliffs to jump off, rapids to swim down and stretches of flat water for boat-to-boat combat and water fights.

One raft flips going down a rapid known as 'S-Bend', sending six teenagers and a guide (not mentioning any names) into the drink. It's the scariest thing that happens to the kids all day but it's also the thing they can't stop talking and laughing about. It warms my heart to see the next generation of river rats having so much fun together.

One of my favourite places on the Nymboida River is The Gorge, a relatively slow-moving stretch of water that winds between towering granite cliffs. The appeal of the Nymboida lies in its inaccessibility as much as its beauty, for these are places you can only get to by boat.

On other trips, I've woken at dawn to watch platypus swimming and diving in the long, still pools. Today, not long after the rafts have rounded the bend taking their noisy passengers with them, the freshwater turtles will clamber back onto rocks to sun themselves and platypus will emerge from their hiding places in the riverbank.

At the end of the day everyone is saturated with happiness, sun and fun and the kids fall into bed in a state of exhausted bliss.



The Gorge. Image courtesy of Melissa Beit



The Gorge. Image courtesy of My Clarence Valley

Day 2 – Black Mountain Road to just below Pitkin Falls – rafts and kayaks

An old rafting guide once told me, "Kayaking is the drug and rafting is how you pay for it."

The rafts are fabulous for getting little kids down the lower sections of the Nymboida and older kids down the technical top sections. But the kids soon realise that it's more fun to be in

your own kayak than a raft and so, on this day we have a dozen kayaks, three double inflatables and three support rafts. The rapids are not as extreme as the previous day, but we still have a strong adult to child ratio and an experienced kayaker leads each group of kids down the best lines, like a mother duck. The experienced adult also teaches the kids how to ferry glide, eddy in and out and how to perform a 'wet exit' in the event a kayak flips over.

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The Big One – Pitkin Falls

The biggest rapid for today is Pitkin Falls. We all eddy out at the top to scout the rapid from the bank and to set up 'cover' - placing guides at various points down the rapid with throw bags (rescue ropes) in case someone 'swims' or comes out of their kayak.

Pitkin Falls is a grade three rapid so it's more complicated than the previous rapids on the trip.

If you get the line wrong, there's a good chance you'll flip in the big circulating rapid at the bottom, known as a 'hole'. Those who haven't yet learned to Eskimo roll will have to wet exit from their kayak if they flip.

Once the kayakers have been prepped, they get back into their boats, ready for action. With the guides all in place, one of the adults goes down first by kayak to show the kids the correct line. Half way down is another adult who'll shout advice as everyone comes down – 'A little to the right!', 'Straighten up your boat!', 'Keep paddling!'. Further down, at the top of the last descent, another guide is in position, ready to do the same.

The kids are nervous. I'm nervous. My fear is multi-pronged: I'm scared for my daughter, who's waiting in the top eddy with a white but determined face; I'm scared for all these other kids who I love so much, and I'm scared for myself because big rapids scare me.

In reality, there's very little danger. Everyone on the river is wearing a life-jacket and helmet. The rapid pours into a deep, straight pool and there are two guides standing at the bottom with throw bags to haul in anyone who flips.

From a kayak, it's impossible to see the bottom of the rapid when you're at the top but the guide standing at the top of the rapid can communicate with those at the bottom. He blows a whistle when the coast is clear. One-by-one the eddy empties of paddlers. The whistle blows and my daughter grimaces at me and paddles into the flow of the river and is gone. Not long after, the whistle blows again so I assume she's made it through without flipping.

I'm lucky last and I peel out into the current and send a little thought of gratitude to each of the guides as I pass them by. The last guide is my husband who yells something characteristically cheeky as I skirt the hole and make it out the other side.

All the kids greet me at the bottom. Two of them ended up flipping but were pulled back to shore - unscathed but very wet. They're all euphoric, keen to tell their stories. My daughter says to me, at least five times in the next 24 hours, each time with a huge grin on her face, "I can't believe I did it!"

Right there with you, sunshine.

My Clarence Valley has compiled an essential resource for people who want to raft, kayak or canoe themselves down various stretches of the Nymboida River, complete with maps, information about camping and planning tips

- www.myclarenc valley.com/clarence-river-canoe-and-kayak-trail

If you'd rather go with professionals, the same site has details on a number of operators but here are two to get you started:

Exodus Adventures - exodusadventures.com.au/activities/water/
& Wildwater Adventures - www.coffscentral.com/wildwater/



Image courtesy of Melissa Beit

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Sawtell Heights Estate

Register your interest for a piece of paradise today

'Sunny Sawtell' the area between Boambee and Bonville Creeks, 8km South of Coffs Harbour is recognised as one of most popular places to live, work and holiday on the Coffs Coast.



Indicative pricing for blocks subject to development approval between \$270,000 - \$320,000. A Gowings Properties Development Project.

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Sawtell Heights Estate is the last undeveloped residential land close to Sawtell with fantastic access and views over the Bongil Bongil National Park.



Pending development approval for 220 lots, with block sizes ranging from 450m² to 850m², all blocks have either North-South or East-West orientation and access to cycleways and pathways connecting natural vegetation areas to creek reserves and parklands. A children's playground will be a feature of the parkland areas.

Lifestyle and location are unmatched with beaches, fishing, golf, swimming, tennis, surfing & boating. The famous Sawtell Village, just 3.5km away boasts a rich café & restaurant culture, great shopping, a heritage cinema and pub. There's easy access to local schools, it's just 2 minutes to the Pacific Highway and 8 minutes to Coffs Harbour airport with regular services to all major Australian cities.



Register your interest before July 31st and to receive VIP priority block selection.

Contact Olivia Hannah at olivia@gowings.com or 02 9264 6321



The lookout at Mary's View near Daisy Plains in the Carrai National Park

Kev Goes Camping

I'm often asked for recommendations on great camping spots close to home and with the array of national parks, state forests, private stations and You Camp listings on the coast and in our hinterland, it's a tough choice. But here are a handful of my all-time favourites. I've selected two campgrounds by the beach, two hinterland destinations and a spot right on the river.

Words by Kevin Smith



Kev at Crowdy Head Lighthouse

By the beach

Crowdy Bay National Park - Between Taree and Port Macquarie

Often I travel for days to find the perfect camping location but sometimes the best spots are right under my nose. I discovered Crowdy Bay National Park a few years ago and am a huge fan. Not because of the great four-wheel-driving or mass of activities but because of how peaceful it is.

At Crowdy itself you can explore the lighthouse on the headland or safely swim and fish in the bay, but my relaxation starts in the camping areas just away from the beaches.

There are two campgrounds: Crowdy Gap and Kyllies, both with unique features. Crowdy Gap is my pick as there are large grassy areas, free barbecues and a track to the beach for an early morning fish or romantic evening beach stroll. Just up the road is Kyllies Beach campground. It can get busy in peak times and it's first in, first served basis (no bookings available). At Kyllies, keep an eye out for koalas and yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

A short stroll from the campground will lead you to Kyllies Hut. This timber slab hut was built in 1940 by a reclusive local farmer, Ernie

Metcalf, for local author, Kylie Tennant as a writing retreat. The beach and hut are named after her. The hut has been restored by NPWS and there is walk-in camping around the hut.

Pebbly Beach – Between Coffs and Grafton

Midway between Coffs and Grafton at the southern end of Yuraygir National Park is a fantastic beachside camp - Pebbly Beach. Because it's 4WD access only and getting to camp is dictated by the tides, it can be tricky to get there. But once there, it's pure magic.

The smell of the ocean, taste of salt and the stunning scenery lures you in every time. There's great fishing, whale and dolphin spotting, beachcombing for miles and a wonderful array of wildlife that calls this place home.

The trek from the highway to the beach turn-off is 17km of dirt road but that's all part of the adventure! When spending time at Pebbly, we always head back into the Barcoongere State Forest to explore and pay homage to the mysterious Key Man statue. Not hard to find along Yellow Cutting Road, this statue was made by a timber cutter back in 1957. The creator of the statue was a Lithuanian who migrated to Australia after the Second World War. The Key Man statue is said to be a nod to his heritage and a celebration of his new life in Australia.



Pebbly Beach



The Needles, Gibraltar Ranges National Park

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In the hinterland

Daisy Plains – About 1.5 hours west of Kempsey

Not a lot of people have heard of Daisy Plains, tucked up in the Carrai National Park but I consider it a hidden gem. To get there from the Coffs Coast, we go west through Kempsey, Temagog and Willawarrin. The trip into the hills passes through stunning farmland and then twists and winds its way skyward.

Be sure to check out the restored buildings at Kookaburra where, back in the day, there was a small village supporting the local sawmill. Wander down to the creek to see the huge old timber water wheel.

Further up the mountain we normally camp at the NPWS huts that are open to the public. Staying here is free and the huts are a great alternative if the weather gets nasty. Daisy Plains, now an abandoned town was once an area thriving with mines and a village. Look out for the mining gear, hut and sign beside the road.

I love this area as the forest is alive with bird calls, stunning tree ferns grow beneath massive gums and the views from Mary's Lookout down to the valley below and across the plateau will leave you speechless.

Mulligans – About 1.5 hours west of Grafton

West of Grafton up on the Gibraltar Range sits a special little place where you can explore local history, attempt one of the many world heritage walks or just sit back and soak up the serenity.

I first discovered Mulligans campground a decade or so ago and have visited many times since.

Hiking within the park is a popular activity with walks varying in length from 10 minutes to several days. The flora is diverse too, ranging from stunning rainforest pockets and ancient grass trees to wetlands and dry timber forests.

Being granite country, there are a lot of unique rock formations within the park. The views on offer are magnificent, as are the

cascades. Check out Mulligans hut which NPWS has restored to its former glory. Even though this is a NPWS camp area, it is extremely well set-up for day users, walking campers and off-road caravans.

On the river

Nymboida - About 1.5 hours west of Coffs Harbour

The Coffs Coast is such a great place but when I need to unwind and switch off, it's off to the hills I go, headed for the Nymboida region. Directly west of Coffs and only an hour or so inland is where the mighty Nymboida River cuts through gorges. It twists and winds its way north to join the Clarence River.

And while there are several fantastic camping options along the river, my favourite has to be Platypus Flats. Here, we often just spend the day watching and listening to the water trundling by, crashing over the rocks into huge pools of water. Swimming and rafting in the warmer months is the perfect way to escape the heat.

Morning walkers will often see the odd platypus popping its head up, checking things out and possibly looking for a feed. Along the road to Platypus Flats there are many options to stop to observe old growth forests, heritage locations and waterfalls.

But what I like best about this spot is that you're so close to town, yet it feels a million miles away. And another plus? There's no phone service.

Kevin Smith is a mad keen fisherman, camper, mountain-biker, explorer and all-round adventurer. He has been based on the coast for the better part of 30 years and runs Woolgoolga Off Road as a sideline hobby. He loves getting out and about, be it by vehicle, kayak or SUP.

For more information

Kev can be reached via Facebook and Instagram @ woolgoolgaoffroad

What to Catch When

With thanks to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), here's an overview, just for Coastbeat, on what's best to catch along our coastline throughout the year



North Coast - Coffs Coast and surrounding regions

	BEACH	OFFSHORE	ESTUARY	FRESHWATER
JAN - MAR	Bream, whiting, mullet, dart	Dolphin fish, marlin, yellowfin tuna	Dusky flathead, mangrove jack	Australian bass
APR - JUN	Bream, tailor, whiting	Marlin, Spanish mackerel, wahoo	Bream, mangrove jack	Australian bass
JUL - SEP	Mullet, tailor	Spanish mackerel, kingfish, pearl perch, snapper	Bream, luderick	Closed season for Australian bass
OCT - DEC	Mullet, tailor, bream	Kingfish, marlin, snapper, cobia	Bream, dusky flathead	Australian bass

Lower North Coast - Forster to Port Macquarie and surrounding regions

	BEACH	OFFSHORE	ESTUARY	FRESHWATER
JAN - MAR	Bream, whiting, mullet, dart	Dolphin fish, marlin, snapper, kingfish	Dusky flathead, bream, whiting	Australian bass
APR - JUN	Bream, whiting, tailor	Dolphin fish, marlin, kingfish, Spanish mackerel, snapper	Dusky flathead, luderick, bream	Australian bass
JUL - SEP	Tailor, mullet	Snapper, kingfish, Spanish mackerel	Luderick, bream, mullet	Closed season for Australian bass
OCT - DEC	Tailor, bream	Snapper, kingfish	Dusky flathead, whiting, bream	Australian bass

Upper North Coast - Yamba to Byron and surrounding regions

	BEACH	OFFSHORE	ESTUARY	FRESHWATER
JAN - MAR	Bream, whiting, dart	Marlin, Spanish mackerel, dolphin fish	Bream, dusky flathead, whiting, mangrove jack	Australian bass
APR - JUN	Bream, tailor, dart	Spanish mackerel, wahoo, snapper	Bream, luderick	Australian bass
JUL - SEP	Tailor, mullet	Snapper, pearl perch, kingfish	Bream, luderick	Closed season for Australian bass
OCT - DEC	Mullet, tailor, bream	Snapper, kingfish, marlin	Dusky flathead, bream	Australian bass

Events June to August

Great Lakes



Melbourne Comedy Festival Roadshow
20th June, Taree
mec.midcoast.nsw.gov.au



Pix from the Stix
21 June to 15th July, Gloucester
facebook.com/pixfromthestix



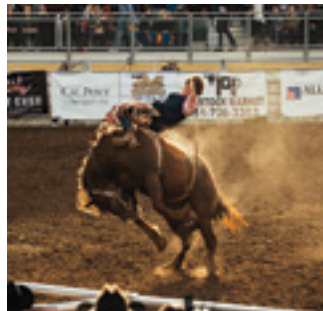
Skiers & Boaties Reunion
7th to 8th July, Tuncurry
greatlakes.org.au



Brick & Rolling Pin Throwing Contest
14th July, Stroud
stroudbrickthrowing.com.au



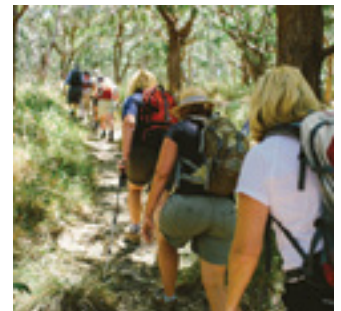
Family Fishing Competition
14th to 15th July, Darawank
discoveryholidayparks.com.au



Glowalman Junior Campdraft
17th July, Gloucester
campdraftcentral.com.au



Sydney Balalaika Orchestra
25th August, Taree
mec.midcoast.nsw.gov.au

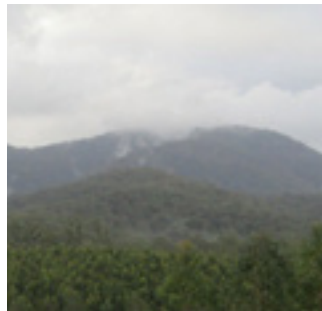


Women's Adventure Summit
30th Aug 2nd Sep, Forster
www.travelplaylive.com.au/play

Port Macquarie



Timbertown Annual Steam Fair
7th to 8th July, Wauchope
timbertown.com.au



The Elephant Trail
20th to 22nd July, Pembroke
elephanttrailrace.com.au



Fox Superflow
5th August, Port Macquarie
rockytrailentertainment.com



Luminosity Youth Summit
25th to 27th July, Port Macquarie
luminosityyouthsummit.com.au



King of the Mountain
19th August, Laurieton
visitcamdenhaven.com.au



Mid-North Coast Caravan, 4WD, Fish & Boat Show
10th to 12th Aug, Port Macquarie
ruralscene.com.au



NSW Regional Events Conference
30th to 31st Aug, Port Macquarie
regionaleventsconference.com.au



Ekam Yoga Festival
15th & 18th Sep, Port Macquarie
www.ekamyogafestival.org.au

Events June to August

Macleay Valley



Slim Dusty Day
16th June, Kempsey
slimdustycentre.com.au



Willawarrin Community Pot Luck
24th June, Willawarrin



Kempsey Country Music Club
1st July, Kempsey
slimdustycentre.com.au



Kundabung Country & Farmers Markets
8th July, Kundabung
facebook.com/kundabunghall/



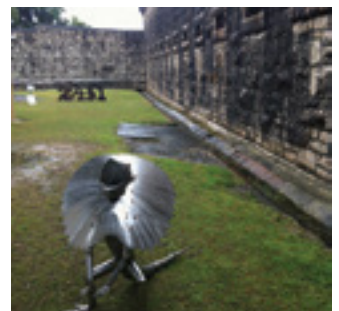
NSW V Sport Rallysprint
8th July, Kempsey
rallynsw.com.au



Gladstone Quality Market
15th July, Gladstone
facebook.com/gladstonequalitymarket



Movember in July
26th July, Gladstone
mvarts.org.au



Sculpture in the Gaol
5th Aug to 1st Sep, South West Rocks
southwestrocks.org.au

Coffs Coast



Sawtell Chilli Festival
1st July, Sawtell
sawtellchillifestival.com.au



Show n Shine for Blood Cancer
1st July, Coffs Harbour
facebook.com/shownshine4bloodcancer/



Bello Winter Music Festival
12th to 15th July, Bellingen
bellowintermusic.com



Coffs Harbour Swap Meet
15th July, Coffs Harbour
sites.google.com/site/chvcc/



Moonee Food Truck Winter Wonderland Festival
28th July, Moonee Beach
facebook.com/tastecoffscost/



Volkswagen Spectacular
29th July to 6th August, Macksville
volkswagenspectacular.com



Coffs Harbour Gold Cup
2nd August, Coffs Harbour
coffsracingclub.com.au



Woolgoolga MTB Festival
25th to 26th August, Woolgoolga
woopimtbfestival.com

Events June to August

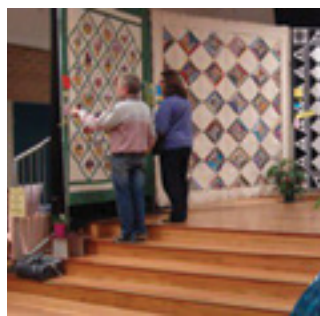
Clarence Valley



Ay Pachanga
30th June, Grafton
cvcon.com.au



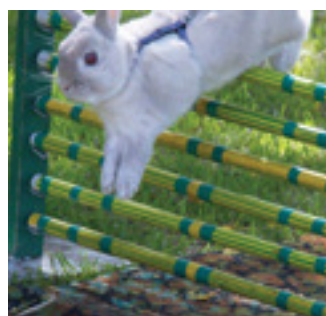
Grafton July Racing Carnival
12th July, Grafton
crjc.com.au



Arts, Crafts & Quilts
13th July, Maclean
ferrypark.org



Mission Songs Project
3rd August, Grafton
cvcon.com.au



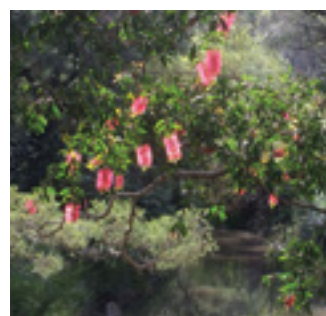
Loving Life Festival
4th August, Grafton
www.fm1031lovinglife.com.au



**Australian Formula
Powerboat Grand Prix**
12th August, Grafton
afpgp.com.au



Wings & Wheels Festival
12th August, Grafton
graftonaeroclub.com/wings-and-wheels



Camp Oven Festival
17th August, Nymboida
clarencevalleycampovenfestival.com

Byron Bay



Ballina Food & Wine Festival
1st July, Ballina
ballinafoodandwine.com.au



Star Stuff Festival
7th to 8th July, Byron Bay
starstuff.com.au



Pralad & the Chants
15th July, Mullumbimby
praladandthechants.com



Splendour in the Grass
20th to 22nd July, Billinudgel
splendourinthegrass.com



Byron Writers Festival
3rd to 5th August, Byron Bay
byronwritersfestival.com



Lennox Longboard Classic
4th to 5th August, Lennox Head
lennoxlongboarders.org

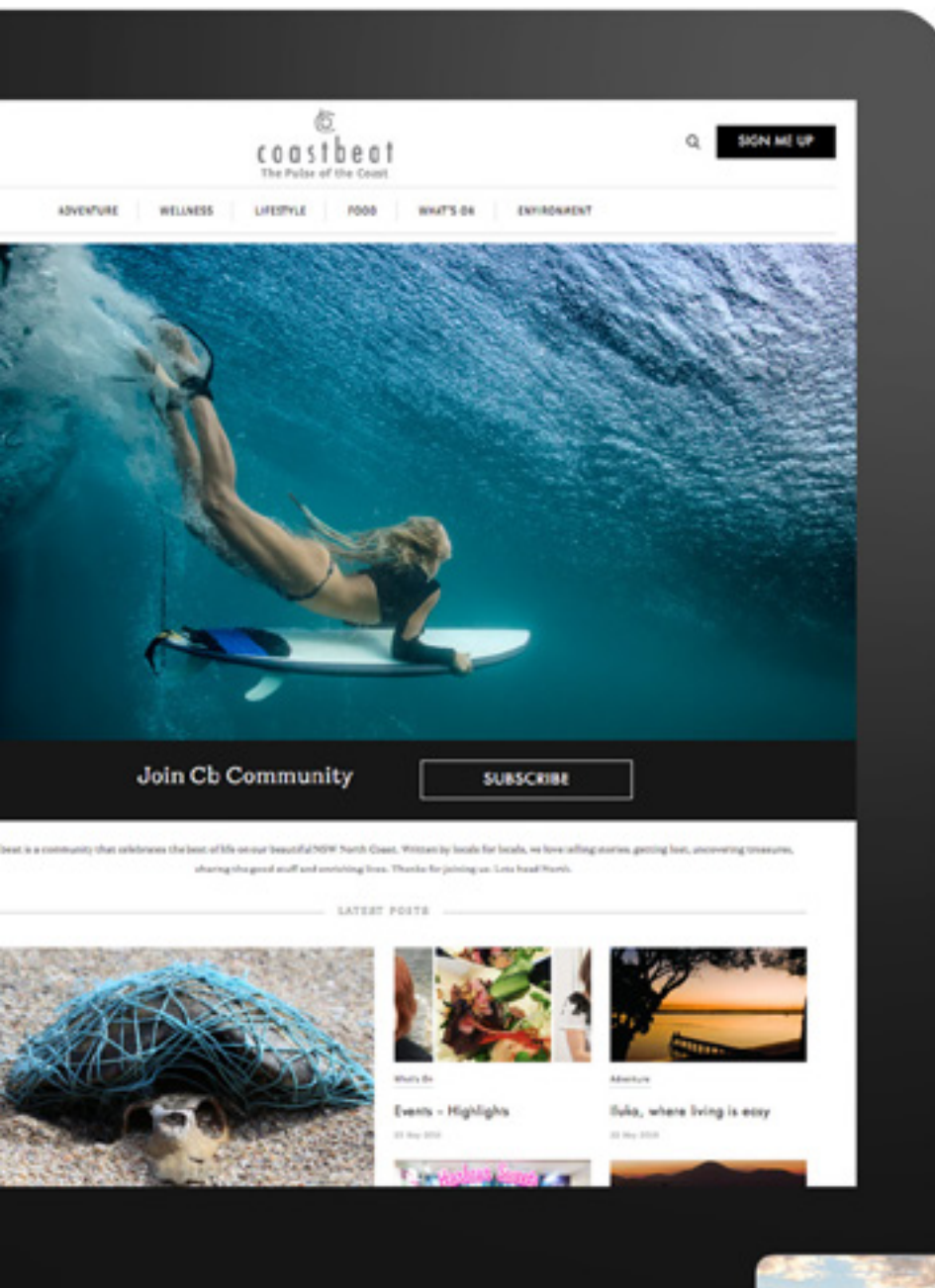


Bangalow Music Festival
10th to 11th August, Bangalow
southernxsoloists.com



Bangalow BBQ & Bluegrass Festival
17th to 18th August, Bangalow
bbqbluegrass.com.au

coastbeat.com.au



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Contacts / Retail Directory

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Big Garden Furniture	Ph 0417 205 807 www.biggardenfurniture.com.au	My Clarence Valley Tourism	www.myclarencevalley.com
Bookface	Port Central Ph (02) 6584 6001	Pansabella	Coffs Central Ph (02) 6652 7489
Coffs Coast Health Club	Ph 1300 040 479	Plastic Collective	www.plasticcollective.co
Croker Oars	www.crokeroars.com	Quest Tours	Forster Ph (02) 6554 7478
Destination Coffs Coast	www.coffsscoast.com.au	Sawtell Heights Estate	E olivia@gowings.com Ph (02) 9264 6321
FCS	www.surffcs.com.au	Sea Mercy	www.seamercy.org
Flow Hive	www.honeyflow.com.au	Sea Shepherd	www.seashepherd.org.au
Fresco Marketplace	Coffs Central Ph (02) 6652 8882	Sotto Zero Gelato	Coffs Central Ph (02) 6651 1531
The Gladstone Hub	Fb – The Gladstone Hub	Sportscraft	Coffs Central Ph (02) 6600 1500
The Hills Emporium	Fb – The Hills Emporium	ST Images	www.stimages.com.au
I Love Bello Shire	www.ilovebelloshire.com	Uptown Local	Coffs Central Ph (02) 6652 7489
Kmart	Coffs Central Ph (02) 5634 4900 www.kmart.com.au	Winter Feast pages	All food and products from these pages are available from the retailers of Port Central and Coffs Central

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Oak \$600



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