

coastbeat

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ISSUE 05 / SUMMER 19
GREAT LAKES TO BYRON BAY



**FOUR GENERATIONS OF
SURF LIFE SAVERS**

**SCOTT DOOLAN
FROM BOWRAVILLE TO EVEREST**

**BEHIND THE SCENES OF
THE NATURE SCHOOL**

**SAVING THE
AUSTRALIAN BRUMBY**

**FAMILY FUN
IN PORT MACQUARIE**

THE PULSE OF THE COAST



Pacific Bay Resort Photos: Mad Love Photography



Beautiful Beachside Weddings

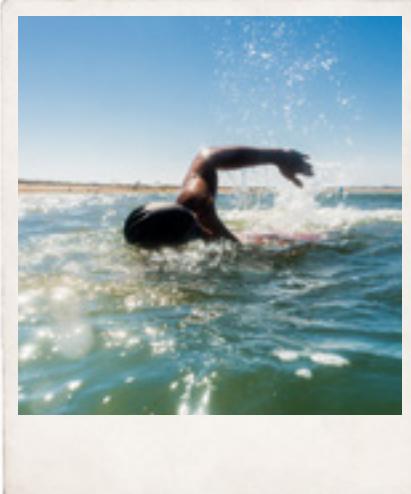
Set upon the pristine shores of
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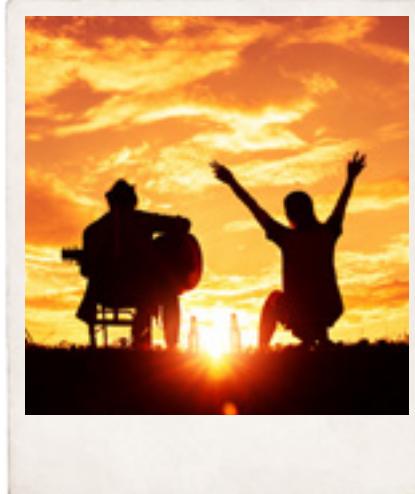
Summer Vibes

1.



That salt on your skin feeling after an ocean swim

2.



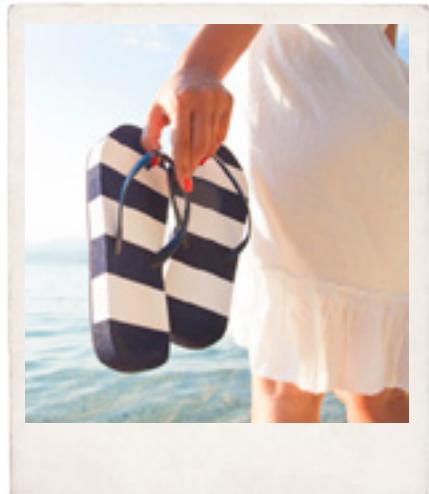
Sunday sessions with cold beers and great tunes

3.



Delicious fresh seafood shared with friends

4.



Thongs (the ones on your feet) and zinc on the nose

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Welcome



Jetty on the Hastings River, Port Macquarie. Image by Cain Pascoe

Dear Fellow Coasters,

Summer is upon us with Christmas, New Year and the school holidays just around the corner.

As I write this intro, Miriam and I are in the middle of a mini road trip from Pacific Palms to Manilla, Bingara, Inverell, Tamworth and then back home. It's great to spend some quality time on the road with my wife. We are with one of our good friends near Bingara in the New England region and last night had 14mm of rain! This was great news as it was follow on rain. The temperatures over the last few days have bounced from between 39°C and 12°C after the change and rain last night. What a wild country we live in.

At our home in the Great Lakes we are currently suffering a bit of an identity crisis. Are we in the Great Lakes or part of the recently renamed Barrington Coast? For Coastbeat, we'll save any confusion and stick to the Great Lakes. We loved that our travels west also took us through the Barrington 'Coast' as it is such a beautiful part of the world – even if a long way from the coast given considering its new name...

Armistice Day, the day we remember our fallen heroes and all who served our country, is only a few days away and will have passed by the time this issue of Cb goes to print. 100 years since the end of WW1; a time to pause and reflect. The Invictus Games were such a positive for our veterans. What a great initiative. Well done to all involved.

This, our fifth issue of Cb has some great stories; the wonderful work being done by the team at Ratua in Vanuatu for local school children, the story with Will Studd about cheese on the north coast and the article by the videographer about his day with a nature lover on the Great Lakes. We also have some terrific stories from Port Macquarie. Did you know that 2018 marks 200 years since the region was first surveyed? Bicentennial celebrations will continue through to 2021 (200 years since European settlement).

We are slowly inching closer to releasing residential land blocks at our Sawtell Commons estate in Coffs Harbour. Thank you to everyone who has expressed an interest. Negotiating between various Government authorities to move this project forward has been glacially slow. Fortunately, we should be in a position to resell the first stage of eight blocks before Christmas.

Summer will be here when this issue hits the streets, water is warming up and people are venturing into the surf. Sharks are back in the news. Nick Carroll has curated some relevant content on Coastalwatch.com. It's worth keeping up to date on this very controversial issue. Keep safe this summer! Thanks to our Foundation Sponsors, all our advertisers, and most importantly to you - our readers, for supporting Coastbeat. I hope everyone has a happy Christmas and safe, healthy and prosperous New Year.

For the Coast

JG

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Cb Summer Issue Team



Zacharey Jane

Writer

I loved writing about the people in this issue but taking time out from words to put together the Summer Fashion pages was FAB. Thanks particularly to models, Nicole (Mum) and Mila (daughter).



Justin Gilligan

Cover Photographer

Having first honed his underwater photography skills off the north coast, Justin feels a deep connection to these waters and views his introduction to the *Coastbeat* community as an overdue homecoming.



Glenn Leahy

Videographer

Two big passions in my life are nature and cinematography. So filming Whistling Kites with photographer Glen Golby for this issue, in my beautiful local area of Pacific Palms was a real treat.



Ali Hiddlestone

Writer

For this issue, brand new mama Ali (welcome little Archie) caught up with Coffs Harbour's Lawler family on their long-standing involvement with surf life saving and also discovered a bustling hub of local growers.



Geordie Bull

Writer

Geordie faced her life-long phobia of leeches at the Port Macquarie Nature School. "Lighting fires, bamboo forests and reading outside on the grass...I wish there were schools like this when I was a kid!"



Elize Strydom

Writer & Photographer

Byron based Elize was inspired by the heroic yet humble efforts of Jim Stevens and Scott Doolan. With a focus on the environment and mental health respectively, both men are making a huge difference.

Photographers in addition to those above

Sam Clarke, Aaron Cuneo, Brendan Ray, Rob Wright

Feel free to share a photo, story or let us know what you love about the coast at hello@coastbeat.com.au

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A word from the Editor

Welcome to our Summer magazine and one year of *Coastbeat*! Over the past four issues as Editor, I've worked with the most supportive and talented contributors and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank them from the bottom of my heart. Together, we love bringing you the stories of amazing people from our region and this issue is no different.

Coastbeat catches up with inspirational adventurer Scott Doolan, meets blacksmiths from Nulla Nulla, chats to a family encouraging the fourth generation of surf life savers, visits a Brumby sanctuary, and, as is fitting for this time of year, celebrates family.

We also introduce 'Postcards from the Pacific' and Cb News which revisits past articles.

Those wondrous humpbacks have now moved beyond our shores for a while, but you can still support the Gowings Whale Trust (and buy a great Christmas gift too) by visiting the Concierge Desk at Port Central or Coffs Central or online at gowings.com/whaletrust/shop/

Go well and have an amazing Summer,
Yvette Harper – Editor / Content Manager
yvette@gowings.com

Pelicans cover image by Justin Gilligan

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Flying the red and yellow flags

Every weekend from October to April, rain, hail or shine, families descend on the beaches of the north coast and on shorelines across the country to take part in an iconic Australian tradition. Donning red and yellow, our volunteer surf lifesavers are our eyes in the water, at the ready to rescue anyone who needs help.

Words by Ali Hiddlestone Images courtesy of Surf Life Saving NSW



Three Generations. Front L to R - Oliver, Abbey, Bailey and Payton Lawler
Back L to R - Sean, Bruce, Grant & Melina Lawler. Image by Brendan Ray

For many coastal families, surf life saving is not only a way of life, it's a family tradition passed on from generation to generation. The Lawler family is no exception, with the family's surf life saving history spanning four generations. The youngest family member is just a few months old.

It's a rainy Wednesday afternoon that for many would be spent indoors, but not the Lawler family. Brothers Sean and Grant have brought their kids down to Coffs Jetty for their usual afternoon training session. Payton (12), Bailey (11), Abbey (10) and Oliver (9) are dressed in their Nippers training gear and are raring to go. The newest member of the Lawler family, Myah, is asleep in the car, unaware of the important role she will soon play in this great family tradition. The dedication and passion for serving the

community through surf life saving runs deep in the Lawler family and begins with Bill Lawler – father to Bruce, grandfather to Sean and Grant and great-grandfather to their five children. “The tradition started with my father, Bill and his two brothers. I then got my Bronze Medallion in 1972 and I’ve been involved with Coffs Harbour Surf Life Saving Club ever since,” says Bruce. After having three boys of his own – Ben, Grant and Sean - Bruce says it was a natural progression that his sons would become involved with the club and life saving.



“I spent so much time at the club when the boys were little that it just happened – they fell in love with it and have kept it going ever since.”

There’s immense pride in Bruce’s voice as he explains the important role surf life saving plays within his entire family. “It’s probably one of the best building blocks for kids anywhere simply because they enjoy it, get themselves fit and it’s a non-contact sport,” he says. “Not only that,” he adds, “my sons have all met wonderful friends from their years spent on the beach – it has been such an important part of their upbringing.”

Carrying this pride is Bruce’s son Sean, who, along with wife Kylie and two children Bailey and Oliver is a devoted member of SLSA (Surf Life Saving Australia). For Sean, getting his sons involved was ‘a natural fit’. “My brothers and I did patrols and competed for about 13 years and progressed into long

service members and kept competing. We intrinsically knew how beneficial it was being part of surf life saving so it was a natural progression for our kids to join as well.”

For Grant and his wife Mel, getting daughters Payton and Abbey involved was driven by their desire for the girls to understand the surf. “One of the things I wanted our girls to do was to learn to read the surf. Additionally, I want them to be comfortable in the surf, given we live so close to the beach,” Grant says.

“The kids love it but it’s not always smooth sailing.

The ocean environment can be pretty treacherous. Both girls have had times of uncertainty but that has been alleviated by consistency in their training and building their confidence.”

Grant believes it’s important that Abbey and Payton remain positive about surf life saving, so does not put unnecessary pressure on them. “You can’t force a love of surf onto your kids because that’s when they’ll walk away from it.

Any adult who tries to force a kid into surf that’s beyond their capability is setting their future lifesaver up for failure.”

Safe to say the kids are anything but hesitant, throwing themselves (and their parents) into training four afternoons a week.

“We train with John Mills who has been a member of life saving for years and has been coaching us for more than 30 years,” says Sean. The training regime for the kids centres around swimming, board paddling and surf awareness.



Bill Lawler (2nd from left) in 1946 with Open Belt Championship teammates including current Lawler family coach, John Mills (centre).



"It's not about winning," says Sean. "Once they get their technique down pat, they may step it up a bit but for now, we're keen to ensure it's enjoyable for them."

When asked what they see as the 'end goal' for the kids, Sean and Grant agree that they hope surf life saving will always remain a part of their children's' lives. "They don't have to compete, they can do patrols and get involved in other aspects of surf life saving but I think, to remain in the club environment would be really beneficial for them in the long run – as it has been for us," says Sean.

For Grant, reflecting on the future for his daughters in surf life saving, it's about service. "The fact that they can do something for the community and save someone's life is the most important

thing," he says. "I think it's really special that our family, across the multiple generations, has probably saved umpteen people from drowning and that's why we do what we do," he adds. It seems the drive to save lives is an inherent trait amongst Lawler family members.

"I like doing surf life saving because if someone is in trouble in the water, I will have the skills to go and help them," says Payton before nine-year-old Oliver adds, "We love having our family involved – it's good to look up to somebody."

For information about Surf Life Saving Australia or to find your local surf club go to www.sls.com.au



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Scott Doolan and Matt Laycock - the dream team that resulted in Scott becoming the first paraplegic to reach Mount Everest Base Camp

The Able Disabled

In the wake of personal tragedy, Scott Doolan began to rebuild his life with a focus on mental and physical strength. His goal to motivate and inspire others took him from Bowraville to Mount Everest and back again in a wheelchair.

Words by Elize Strydom

Photography by Steven Grevis and Nigel Kippers, courtesy of Apexgen

With just 50 metres to go, he was flooded with a complex mix of emotions. The gruelling 10-day journey was about to come to an end – something he'd been longing for every excruciating minute of every day. Suddenly he was acutely aware of his spectacular surrounds: towering, snow-capped mountains as far as the eye could see and the sky a brilliant blue. It had been the hardest thing he'd ever done but now, he didn't want it to end. A crowd had gathered and watched on, silently willing him to the finish line. He placed one hand on the ground and supported the weight of his muscular, aching body then lurched forward onto the other hand. As he reached out to touch the pile of rocks in front of him, the crowd erupted into claps and cheers. He'd made it, it was done.

29-year-old Scott Doolan had become the first paraplegic person to reach Mount Everest Base Camp with minimal assistance.

Scott grew up in Bowraville on the mid north coast and had a close group of mates. They rode motorbikes and played footy on the weekends. But one day all of that came to a tragic end. Riding his brother's dirt bike through the bush, 17-year-old Scott collided head-on with a ute. "I broke every bone in my body," he explains. "I was in intensive care for the first two weeks and once I was stable they moved me to a spinal ward for three months and then a rehab centre for another six months."

It was a dark time but one he remembers with clarity, including the conversation he had with his doctor about recovery. "I asked him straight out if I'd ever be able to walk again and he said there was a 99.9% chance that I wouldn't." This dire prognosis confirmed Scott's worst fears. "It was tough to hear, that's for sure. Part of me knew it was coming but I didn't think it would be that bad."

A major setback can often act as a catalyst for major change. A health scare might compel someone to go on a diet or quit



Scott ahead of the daunting challenge to reach Everest Base Camp

"29-year-old Scott Doolan had become the first paraplegic person to reach Mount Everest Base Camp with minimal assistance."

smoking and a divorce could lead to constructive introspection and self-improvement. But Scott says he initially went in the other direction. "I got quite depressed and it took a few years to come back from that."

He credits fitness for his return to mental wellness. "I started training at the gym before the accident and going back there helped a lot," he says. "The more I got into fitness, the more purpose I had. It got me out of the negative mental state and gave me a good mindset." Scott's mates did their best to keep him on the right track, refusing to cut him any slack or let him take short cuts. "They didn't look at me any differently and they made me work just as hard as I used to!" he laughs. "That gave me strength."

Eventually Scott felt he was ready to leave his home in Bowraville and made the move to Newcastle. It was there that he met Matt Laycock who told him about a company he was working to launch: Apexgen Lifestyle. He explained that the aim would be to promote mental health and wellness while empowering people to overcome adversity. They teamed up and began making short fitness videos that highlighted Scott's abilities. The videos gained traction online and received positive feedback. Buoyed by their success,

Matt and his Apexgen Lifestyle partner Tommy Leung began working behind the scenes to pull together an extremely ambitious project.

"One day, completely out of the blue, Matt asked me if I wanted to go climb to Mount Everest Base Camp," Scott says. "I thought he was crazy and said there's no way I'm doing that!" Matt and Tommy didn't give up on the idea but allowed Scott time to think it over. "I sat back on it and talked to my family," he says. "At first mum said no but dad was supportive."

Eventually, Scott's realisation that such a massive feat could motivate and inspire others pushed him over the line and onto a plane bound for Nepal.

But it would take more than eight months of intense training before Scott was ready to make the trip. He pored over hundreds of photos and videos of Mount Everest to get an idea of what he was in for. Scott knew that the rocky terrain would make certain sections impossible to complete in his wheelchair, so he had to think outside the box.

"Initially I tried crawling on my hands and knees but that

**"One day,
completely out of
the blue, Matt asked
me if I wanted to
go climb to Mount
Everest Base Camp"**

was too slow," he says. "So I asked one of the guys to grab my legs and I tried walking on my hands. We got a bit of pace and I thought, this could work!" Hikes in the Blue Mountains, oxygen restricting masks and sessions at a high-altitude training centre all featured in Scott's preparation for the climb. He was in peak physical condition and ready for anything. "But then I got over there, and it was a completely different ball game," he says with a smirk. "I definitely didn't think it would be as hard as it was."

Once his journey began, the thought of giving up and going home crossed his mind many times but he focused on making it through one day at a time. "There were instances where



For Scott and Matt, meeting locals made the experience extra special



Scott and Matt will continue working towards their next adventure to raise awareness for mental health and overcoming adversity



Scott's achievement owes much to his Sherpa team including Dawa Sherpa from Blue Dragon Adventures (in red)

I was taking too long, or I just couldn't go any further," Scott explains. "I'd jump on a Sherpa's back and they'd carry me to the next teahouse. It was definitely a team effort." But the climb took a toll on his body and left him with a fractured tailbone, chest infection and altitude sickness. Once Scott made it to Base Camp, a helicopter picked him up and transferred him straight to hospital in Kathmandu. Fortunately, he only needed to stay overnight and was able to celebrate his epic achievement the next day.

Even before he left Nepal, Scott was thrust into the spotlight. He was fielding interview requests from international media outlets and had strangers approach him on the street to say congratulations. Once back in Australia, the interview requests kept coming. Scott was booked to give motivational presentations and work on a documentary began.

ApexGen Lifestyle co-founder Tommy Leung says it was wonderful to watch Scott grow through that experience. "Seeing him speak to troubled teenagers and watching their reactions to his story has been so interesting," he explains. "Scott's had so many opportunities to inspire people and a lot of families have reached out to thank him."

The 'what next?' question comes up frequently and Scott has a few ideas. Mount Kilimanjaro tops the list followed closely by the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. "I'd like to play basketball at an elite level and the Tokyo games are definitely on my radar," he says. "But that's not for a few years so I think I could squeeze in another goal between now and then!"

Regardless of where he goes and what he does, Scott can rest in the knowledge that his story will continue to motivate and inspire people struggling to overcome personal challenges and rise above doubt.

Watch Scott reach EBC in 'Rise Above Doubt' at www.coastbeat.tv. Follow Scott @wheelyfit and Apexgen Lifestyle @apexgen. Coastbeat proudly supports The Challenged Athletes Foundation - www.challengedathletes.org



Scott hopes his incredible accomplishment will inspire others



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PORT CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'

Family

“Other things may change us, but we start and end with family”

From togetherness through the festive season to holiday escapes, Summer is about family. This issue, we celebrate that with wonderful things to do in Port Macquarie and on the Coffs Coast. We also meet the inspirational and talented Light family.



Splashdown at the Water Park. Image courtesy of The Big Banana Fun Park

Coffs Coast Family Favourites

With Summer ahead and families seeking different activities through the school holidays, we chatted to one (newly) local family about the things they love to do.

Words by Yvette Harper and Jane Franke

Images of the Franke Family by Elize Strydom



Wayne and Jane Franke with children Jenna and Eli

For the Franke family it's certainly been an action-packed few years. They travelled around Australia throughout 2016, moved to the Coffs Coast in early 2017 and opened their business, Lighthouse Health and Education at the start of 2018. But more importantly, they are a positive and resilient bunch, well aware that life can sometimes throw you a serious curve ball...

Jane Franke tells me that their family have a long-standing joke about Wayne (her husband) being one of the unluckiest people they know. In the couple's 14 years together Wayne has had a hospital stint at some stage during every year of their marriage – never anything to cause concern. But in January this year, two days before they were to open their new business, things got serious, deadly in fact when Wayne had a brain haemorrhage that he was incredibly lucky to survive. Wayne was flown from Coffs Harbour to John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle where, in



Look At Me Now Headland, Emerald Beach. Image by Norm Farmer



Learning to SUP at Moonee Estuary

ICU he underwent an emergency craniotomy to stop the bleed and release pressure from his brain. Wayne's recovery has been phenomenal especially considering that those who experience a brain trauma such as his rarely, if ever, achieve full functional capacity again (Wayne had a spontaneous subdural haematoma and subarachnoid haemorrhage).

Jane says they all feel amazingly fortunate to have come through such an experience and be in a position to simply go about their day-to-day lives and explore their relatively new hometown. "We often have to pinch ourselves to believe that we're the same little family unit of four."

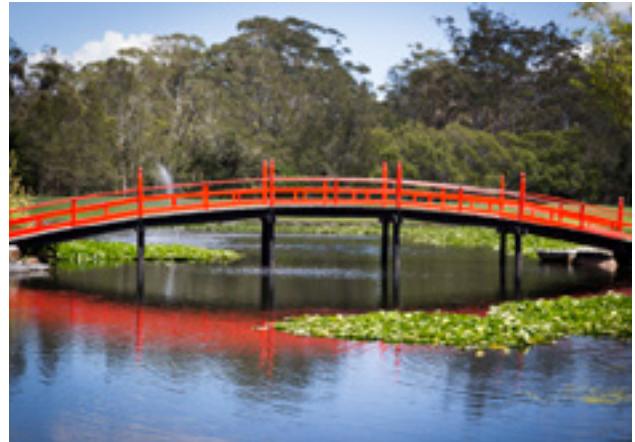
With a depth of understanding that few of us can appreciate that life and family can never be taken for granted, Jane shares with us numerous local hotspots that she and Wayne love to take their kids, Jenna (10) and Eli (6).



Jenna and Eli at home

Our Family Favourites:

- We love exploring the many rockpools in search of crabs, starfish and jellyfish along our gorgeous coastline. The kids particularly love doing so at Diggers Beach and Emerald Beach
- The Big Banana represents great value for money with a range of activities for all ages. As a whole family, the Water Park, mini-golf and laser tag are our top picks.
- Wildlife watching – be it whales from Woolgoolga Headland when in season or spotting kangaroos at Look At Me Now Headland at Emerald Beach.
- Mylestom is a fabulous little spot – it's at the end of the road and well off the highway, making it quiet and unassuming. Our kids enjoy swimming in the enclosed river pool and playing in the park. We've often used the large undercover BBQ space for big family gatherings. Add in a delicious milkshake from the corner store and the kids are keen to go back time and again.
- Yarrawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Corindi offers some interesting and insightful school holiday programs.
- We're learning to SUP with Galways Go Round and often go to Moonee Estuary. Moonee is our local go-to where we love floating on inflatables/body boards with the outgoing tide, the playground area, the availability of picnic tables and shady spots. It's also dog friendly making it perfect for our family which includes our pooch, Bonnie.
- Waterfall walks are another great way to experience the region. Our local favourite is Dangar Falls in Dorrego and we enjoy the drive along Waterfall Way, especially after we've had some rain.

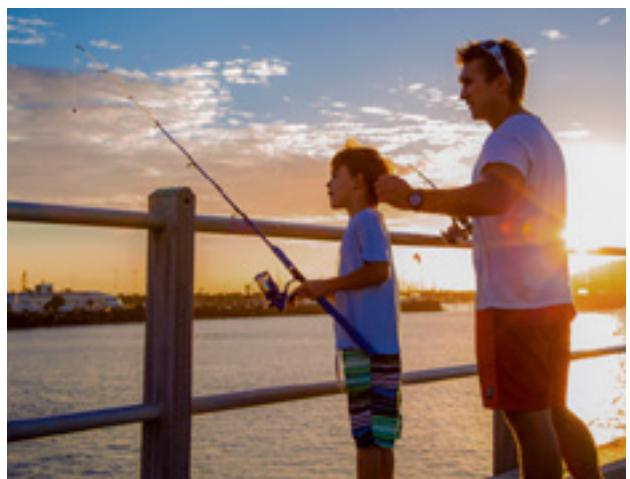


The Japanese Garden in the Botanic Gardens.



Try a surf lesson. Image courtesy of Solitary Islands Surf School

- We all get a kick out of a visit to Coffs Harbour's Botanic Gardens. Jenna and Eli particularly like the Japanese Garden, seeing the water dragons and following the mangrove trail along the river.
- Surf Schools – Jenna and Eli have had a go with Solitary Island Surf School at Sawtell, Emerald and Woolgoolga and just love it!
- It's wonderful to drive along the appropriate beaches in search of a private spot to stop for a swim, sandcastle creation or picnic lunch. For us, Wooli to Sandon is our beach highway of choice (we often grab hot chips and fresh coffee at the Minnie Water store on the way!) and the kids love getting some use out of their fishing rods too.



A local family fishing at the Coffs Jetty. Image courtesy of coffscoast.com



The Franke family highly recommend blueberry picking in season.
Image courtesy of coffscoast.com

- We all love riding the Railway Rattlers during their open days out to Corambe and Boambee.
- Weekend Markets – there's one on every weekend locally. From Woolgoolga's beachside markets (2nd Saturday of every month) to the Twilight Food Markets at the Park Beach Reserve on Friday evenings (October to April – in line with daylight savings) local markets are fantastic. You can buy fresh fruit and veg, arts and craft or listen to the region's musicians and appreciate the raw talent that exists in our community.
- It may only be seasonal but blueberry picking at Lower Bucca is so worth it!
- It's often fun to spend time exploring and yet not having to venture far. We'll sometimes start the day at Muttonbird Island at the Coffs Harbour Marina and end it at another island - Flattop Island at Sandy Beach.

So, this Summer, why not follow the lead of Jane, Wayne, Jenna and Eli and experience all that the Coffs Coast has to offer.

Jane and Wayne run Lighthouse Health and Education at Moonee Market which focuses on improving the psychological well-being and literacy skills of the community.

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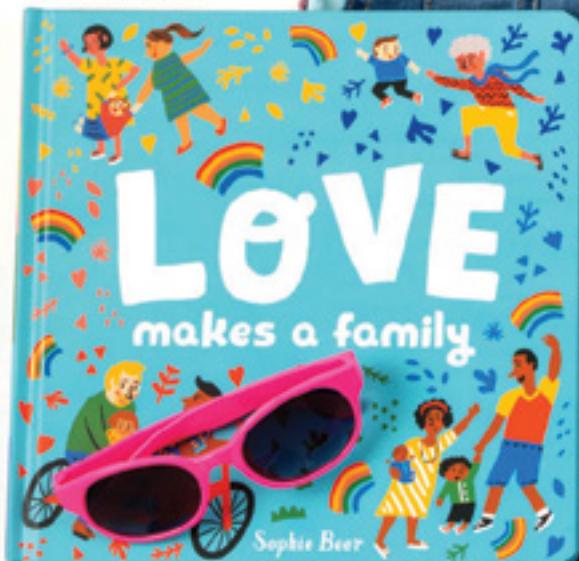
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 COFFS CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'



Tacking Point Lighthouse. Image by Cain Pascoe



Art on the Breakwall at Town Beach. Image by Matt Kramer



The Outdoor Classroom at Sea Acres Rainforest Centre

Family fun in Port Macquarie

With its spectacular coastline and thriving café scene, few regional cities are better set up for a family weekend away than Port Macquarie. Boasting some unique attractions and off-the-beaten track adventure opportunities, Port has it all.

Words by Geordie Bull



Experience a camel safari on Lighthouse Beach. Image courtesy of Lindsay Moller Productions

Here are some of *Coastbeat*'s favourites to get you started...

Sunrise from Town Beach lookout

If you've got young kids, chances are you're an early riser. Kick your morning off by watching a spectacular sunrise over the ocean from the Town Beach lookout, then head down the hill for a dip in the ocean – the perfect start to a summer's day.

Spot wildlife at Sea Acres Rainforest

One of the largest remaining coastal rainforest reserves in New South Wales, the beautifully preserved Sea Acres is a treat for the senses. Begin at the Sea Acres Rainforest Centre to learn about local Aboriginal culture and the rainforest environment. Pick up a brochure and head to the 1.3km boardwalk to spot rare rainforest birds, goannas and, if you're lucky, a slithering diamond python (guided tours are also an option), before ending your visit with lunch under the canopy at the Rainforest Café.

Animal attraction

Home to 200 different animals, including lions, cheetahs and penguins, Billabong Zoo lives up to its award-winning reputation. Wander the park at your leisure or join daily

feeding presentations by experienced guides to gain a deeper insight into your favourite animal. Watching the huge resident crocodile, Shrek, being fed his lunch is sure to be a highlight!

Climb Big Brother Mountain

Located 30-minutes from Port Macquarie in Dooragan National Park, where Big Brother Mountain is a must for bushwalkers. The challenging three-kilometre, one-way summit trail winds through towering forest to the top of the mountain where it ends with an incredible view. Don't feel like sweating it out? It's an easy drive up the mountain, where you'll find a short rainforest walking loop, ideal for kids of all ages.

Wet and Wild

Release your inner child at Stoney Aqua Park, a supersized water adventure land complete with floating trampolines, obstacles, slides, ladders and swings. Situated on a freshwater man-made lake 10 minutes north of Port Macquarie, the park has a team of lifeguards on duty and is safe for kids aged three and up (children under six require parental supervision).



Kids at the Harry Thompson statue on Shelly Beach



Boats on the Hasting River next to The Hibbard Ferry



Meet Shrek at Billabong Zoo

Foodie Adventures

Port Macquarie's café scene offers plenty of choice for food-loving families.

In the CBD, *Coastbeat* recommends Drury Lane and LV's on Clarence – both feature fresh local produce prepared with love. The newly opened Burger Rebellion is a delicious lunch option while Bills Fishhouse + Bar is great for a classy night out. Those with little kids will love the designated kids' areas and child-friendly food at Pancake Place or the Beantree Café.

Other family favourites include Bookface Café in Port Central, which has some healthy lunch options and a great selection of sweet treats, or Salty Crew Kiosk at Town Beach. Salty Crew is the perfect choice for parents keen to relax with a coffee while the kids play in the sand.

The Port Central Real Food Markets are another must-do for lovers of local produce. Held every Tuesday from 2pm-6pm in the Port Central/Glasshouse Forecourt, these farmers' markets are overflowing with a huge range of fresh, locally made and produced food.

Save a Koala

The Port Macquarie Koala Hospital is run by a team of passionate volunteers who care for over 250 injured or ill koalas every year. Visit the hospital at 3pm to join a tour, meet the koalas and hear the fascinating stories behind their rescue and rehabilitation. If you're feeling generous, pick a koala to 'adopt'

"The Port Macquarie Koala Hospital is run by a team of passionate volunteers who care for over 250 injured or ill koalas every year."

and you'll receive a certificate and information pack, or choose a furry souvenir from the Koala Shop before you leave.

The hospital is also a great place to begin the Hello Koala Sculpture Trail. Download a map from the Hello Koalas website to find 62 koala sculptures painted by local artists and placed around the Port Macquarie Hastings region.

Create a masterpiece

While there's plenty of outdoor fun to be had in Port Macquarie, there are some great indoor options too.

Crafty kids will love Port Central's holiday workshops (held on the food terrace), where they can create dreamcatchers, learn the art of paper bead making and more. While you're there, take the opportunity to do some shopping at P'chi or Stormriders for a great range of summer fashion and swimwear.

Next door at the Glasshouse, view the latest travelling exhibitions and shows or sign your little ones up for the Glasshouse Sprouts art workshops that are held for children aged 4-6 during school holidays.

Art on the Breakwall path

Stretching from the CBD to Town Beach, this popular walkway is a Port Macquarie icon. Spend hours perusing the colourful and quirky artworks by locals and visitors alike or simply enjoy strolling along the river to Town Beach, where you'll find a great skate park for the kids and a relaxing spot to enjoy the sunset.



Explore 2kms of trails in the largest hedge maze in NSW at Wauchope's Bago Maze & Winery. Image courtesy of Bago

Family friendly beaches

Whether you're into surfing or prefer a calm bay to paddle in, Port Macquarie has a beach for you. *Coastbeat* favourite Shelly Beach has plenty of rock pools to explore and white sand to relax upon while patrolled hotspots Flyns, Town Beach and Lighthouse are safe for kids and are also great surfing beaches. At Lighthouse Beach you can take a camel ride with Ken the camel man or visit the Tacking Point Lighthouse which stands at just eight metres tall.

Wonderful Wauchope

A short drive west of Port Macquarie lies the historical timber-cutting town of Wauchope, where you'll find two of the region's

most popular attractions. Travel back to the 1800s at Timbertown, a replicated colonial town where you can take a ride on a genuine steam train and learn how to crack a whip before heading on to the nearby Bago Maze & Winery – the largest hedge maze in New South Wales. Wind down with a glass of locally made wine or a sweet treat from the resident artisan chocolatier.

For details on upcoming workshops at Port Central, go to www.portshoppingcentre.com.au

For more info on the above attractions and activities go to www.portmacquarieinfo.com.au



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Image of Yani from Shayne Nienaber Photography



Keeping the Light Love Shining

Ideals manifest in many ways. For Anja Light, the house she built near Iluka stands as a symbol for the family ethos. Using reclaimed, recycled and sustainable materials, it grew from a shed to a home, part of a life devoted to raising her children Pacha and Yani in a non-materialistic way. Then the kids started surfing, and everything changed. Or so she thought.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Sam Clarke



Image of Pacha from Shayne Nienaber Photography

It all began when nine-year-old Pacha wanted a surfboard for her 10th birthday. As a single mum this was unaffordable, so Anja suggested Pacha busk for a board. As dancing was Pacha's passion, she gladly set up her boom box on the boardwalk at Tugun and started to dance.

Not only did she raise money, but she attracted the attention of pro-surfer Laura Enever, who admired Pacha's determination and gave her one of her own boards. Since then, Pacha has surfed almost every day and has made surfing her career. Pacha is now sponsored by Billabong. Younger brother Yani was already a surfer and a talented artist. Yani is in his element free surfing which he describes as 'dancing on water'. He has also recently begun designing and shaping his own boards. Anja is now a surf mum, but as we talk it becomes obvious that the Light family are still living by the same ethos, just along a different pathway. They left their bushland home to care for Anja's mother on

the Gold Coast, where Pacha was accepted into Palm Beach Currumbin High School's highly competitive Surf Excellence program (that Mick Fanning attended), initiating huge change.

"It was a leap," Anja says, laughing. "All the other kids had stickers on their boards from sponsors."

Pacha had no stickers and an old spring suit patched up using dental floss."

Did that matter to you? I ask Pacha.

"No. We know where we come from and why we started: to have fun, out of love for the water."

"We have so many memories of surfing in Iluka," says Yani. "In crystal clear water, with dolphins popping up alongside you and it doesn't matter

if you have the worst wetsuit in the world, it's being in the moment."

"It was actually Yani who got us into the whole thing," says Anja. "He was junior champion surfer at Iluka Boardriders, but he knew you don't need all those things."



"I remember my first class at Surf Excellence," says Yani. "We were given a form to fill out that asked us to list our sponsors. I just put a line through it."

Ironically, shortly afterwards Yani was sponsored by Billabong. I ask if Pacha and Yani's success with the commercial side of surfing has ever altered their non-materialistic approach to life. "Mum was an environmental activist when she was a child and we surf for the love of the ocean," replies Pacha. "She has always believed that anything is possible. So, if I don't win a comp I put it aside and go surfing for fun."

"Our family has always been environmentally active – it's part of our family to protect what we love," agrees Yani.

"I remember when I was eight or nine-years-old," says Anja. "Being part of a protest with my mother, led by Rabbit Bartholomew, to stop Currumbin being turned into a massive marina, some 35 years ago!"

Anja went onto a career as a musician, touring Japan every year as part of their environmental protest movement, taking the kids with her.

In 2016, Pacha joined the campaign to save Kirra Beach from a casino and cruise ship terminal. She then lent her support to a successful campaign to protect the southern Gold Coast as a world surfing reserve, organising her peers to paddle from Snapper Rocks to Currumbin, to draw attention to the issue.

"It's totally natural to look after what you love," says Anja, "and surfers can lead the way in caring for the ocean."

"Billabong are supportive of my environmental work," says Pacha. "And I've sought sponsorship by other brands that are leading the way in environmentally sustainable production, like Firewire surfboards."

"When we first met with Billabong," says Anja, "we explained that our family vision is purpose before profit. They said 'Awesome – we want you to be who you are.'"

Pacha has become the face of Billabong, modelling their clothing and swimwear range. "It's daunting when you first start," says Pacha. "But as soon as you build relationships with the people behind the camera, it becomes fun."

We discuss 3am calls for swimwear shoots in the middle of winter. Anja talks about Pacha's determination and drive, forgetting to mention that for every 3am call, she was the driver and chaperone.

Now 17, Pacha organises her own shoots, chooses the locations and manages her own media profile. She recently spent some weeks in South Korea and Japan, documenting the ancient cultural tradition of freediving as it is practiced by the Haenyeo and Ama women of these countries. Documentary making now works alongside surf competitions. "I love to compete," says Pacha. "I love to strive to be my best and always push myself. Watching Yani progress with free surfing looks like such a beautiful way to interact with the ocean, but I love to hustle." Could this be an attitude born from gender, where women are forced to prove themselves to be taken seriously? "Maybe...I'd like to be known as a hardcore surfer who shreds."

"It's so funny when guys talk to me about Pacha and say she's so pretty and I think, yeah, spend a few weeks with her and you'll change your mind – she's fierce!" says Yani, laughing.

I ask Anja if she ever questioned the fearlessness with which she raised Pacha and Yani. "In retrospect, maybe. Once they went surfing in a thunderstorm and I wondered if I should hold them back, but they came out of the water saying 'Oh My God, that was amazing!' And that's what life is about."

"You know when Mum was 18 she bought a one-way ticket to China!" says Pacha. "We do what we love," says Anja. "Whether it's surfing or the environment."

The kids grab their musical instruments and start to play, another love they have learned from their mother. It's all about the love.

**Follow them Instagram @yanisurfer and @pachalight
Yani and Pacha are part of the Billabong
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The Light family at home

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The Kid Least Likely

In his final year of high school, a decent swell mattered far more to Anthony Wilson than the HSC. In fact, his peers voted him ‘the least likely to succeed in life’. Call it karma, but the owner of numerous surf stores is having the last laugh.

Words by Yvette Harper



Anthony doing what he loves at his local, Lighthouse Beach. Image courtesy of Matthew J Photography

The kid from Hallidays Point never set out to prove his fellow students wrong – serendipity was simply at play. One summer Saturday back in the late 80s, the owner of a Taree surf store found himself short-staffed and called upon one of the lads who was always hanging around the shop to lend him a hand. Day one went well and soon after the plucky young employee asked his boss about a partnership. Within 18 months the two were in business.

“Everyone thought I was mad,” Anthony tells me over a flat white in the café within his Saltwater Wine store in Port Macquarie. “Next year is 30 years since we went into business, so I guess I wasn’t crazy after all!” His business partner retired in 2004, resulting in Anthony and wife Vanessa juggling three stores with six-month-old daughter Milla. The Wilsons survived the madness and retail expansion followed.

Wilson Retail Co. now owns 17 stores; Saltwater Wine in Forster, Taree and Port, Stormriders in 10 regional locations and as of June this year, four Red Herring stores in Tasmania.

Anthony is the first to admit there was no masterplan. He started with one shop and has since grabbed opportunities as they presented. I ask if he feels more connected to Saltwater Wine or Stormriders...

“Actually, I’m equally wedded to them both,” he says. “Saltwater Wine has been in Forster since the mid-70s and is engrained with surf culture on the north coast. I feel a bit like the custodian of all

that history for kids like me who used to hang around the store like a bad smell when there were no waves.”

‘Stormies’ on the other hand, was a blank canvas that Anthony and his team created from scratch in 2010. “It’s like my baby; so much blood, sweat and tears went into how it all looked and what brands and products were available.”

Taking on Red Herring is another gutsy move. Like Saltwater Wine, there is over 40 years of history, with the brand an inherent part of the Tassie surfing scene. “It’s amazing to think Red Herring launched at a time when wetsuits were really only just being developed and surfers were out there, in those waters, wearing jeans and woollen jumpers.”

“Stormriders is like my baby; so much blood, sweat and tears went into how it all looked and what brands and products were available.”



Exterior of Stormriders at Port Central



Anthony (r) with Hardgoods Category Manager, Mike Porter

Sure, surfing is important to Anthony's company (his retail businesses collectively sell surfboards, surf hardware as well as surf, street and skate apparel) but in many ways it is his salvation too. He grew up with scoliosis and Scheuermann's disorder, a childhood skeletal disorder that impacts the spine. As a teenager it prevented Anthony from playing sport, but fortunately, surfing was manageable as it involved arching the back.

Even now, at 52 and with work and family keeping him busy, Anthony makes time to surf. The day we caught up he'd been up at 5.30am surfing with mates. "It's one of those things that you never ever master. It's as frustrating as it is addictive," he laughs.

Raising girls is something else he'd love to master. Of his three daughters, two are now in their teens and Anthony feels as if he's navigating a whole new world. He is a proud and devoted father. Business is important, he says, but family is everything.

Will the girls follow in your surfing footsteps? I ask. "Maybe one out of the three."

With the older two, Milla and Lottie into horse-riding and dancing respectively it appears 10-year-old Pippa is the only one to have inherited her dad's love of the sport.

Strangely enough, surfer girls carving it up on the big screen were responsible for an important commercial inflection point. Anthony tells me the 2002 film, *Blue Crush* cemented female sales for the business. "At one stage we were selling more boardies to women than men." The 90s was an earlier growth period for Saltwater Wine. "Fuelled by the recession, we were opening stores because people weren't working and were out surfing. They needed what we were selling. We'd call those fellas the Bob Hawke Surf Team."

Talk turns back to the Wilson Retail Co. and the fact that people are the cornerstone to its success; while customers are the number one priority, finding the right staff is also essential. "We have a no dickheads policy and that works well for us," Anthony says with a broad smile.

"We're now taking on kids of past employees which is exciting, even if it makes me feel really old." Anthony does not take his responsibility as an employer lightly. "I'm well aware of the role we play in mentoring younger staff and teaching them the value of a strong work ethic. It's also about capturing 'shooting stars' as they come through - those people who intuitively get it." Anthony's the first to admit that there's room for improvement. "You never get everything right all the time. Sure you may get aspects of it right but there are so many moving parts to retail." The fact that so many employees have been with him for over a decade suggests that Anthony is doing plenty right. I notice a staff member hovering nearby, not wanting to interrupt our conversation but needing Anthony's decision on something, so we wrap things up. As he bids me farewell and flashes a smile that stands out a mile against his olive skin, it's easy to picture that bold young man who went to his boss with a question that would change everything...

**Stormriders can be found at Port Central, Kempsey Central and several other locations.
For further info see www.stormriders.com.au and www.saltwaterwine.com.au**



The Wilsons. (L to R) Lottie, Anthony, Vanessa, Milla and Pippa (seated)

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Friday Creek Retreat view. Image by Mitch Franz - @mitchfranziphoto

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Discovering the Western Hinterland

The Coffs Coast is famous for its sun, surf and sand but take a drive west and you'll discover a side of the region that's just as special. Nana Glen, Coramba, Dairyville, Fridays Creek and the Orara Valley are some of the hidden gems you'll happily stumble across as you explore rivers, dairy farms, historic buildings and bushland.

Words and images by Elize Strydom



A quintessential roadside scene in the Orara Valley

This is an area I've always known about but haven't taken the time to explore. I assumed that because I'd driven up to Lowanna, where my brother lives, that I'd seen it all. How wrong I was!

On the 15-kilometre journey from Coffs Harbour to Coramba we felt like we were gliding along winding roads over impossibly green rolling hills. Each bend in the road revealed one stunning vista after another. After driving over a large bridge on a sweeping corner, the village came into view. The Coramba General Store was the ideal stop for coffee, breakfast and a chat. We explained to the shop attendant that we were on the hunt for creeks and waterholes and she pointed us in the direction of the Orara River, just down the road. Here we found a calm, wide section of the river full of shallow pools, rocks and logs. It was perfect for a paddle with the kids and a top spot to cool off on a hot summer's day.

We then went in search of the Magic Pools on Dingo Creek Road. We were delighted to discover we had the whole pool (and rope swing!) to ourselves and marvelled at its shimmering aqua green and pearly blue surface. We were soon joined by other families keen to make the most of the beautiful day. An afternoon of peace and serenity at the nearby Friday Creek Retreat followed. As soon as I stepped into our cosy yet



One of farmer Danny Wilton's Jersey cows

stylish cottage, I was flooded with a feeling of contentment. Shifting into relaxation-mode was as simple as reclining on the comfortable couch and taking in the room's tasteful, Asian-inspired décor then gazing out at the hills that gently sloped down to a large glassy lake. After a stroll around the grounds and a quick dip in the pool perched high above, we grabbed our cameras and set out to capture the stunning landscape just before sunset.



The footbridge over the Orara River at Corambla is the perfect place for a family photo or two

As difficult as it was to leave our charming cottage, we got up early the next morning with the intention of photographing friendly local horses and flowers in full bloom. A few kilometres down the road we came across Danny Wilton and 170 of his Jersey cows. Within minutes of pulling over we were called on to assist with a cow who had just given birth to a calf and was having trouble standing up. We stayed with mum and tried to keep her calm while Danny went off to find the newborn who had wandered across the paddock. We were grinning from ear to ear and laughing at our luck. We'd somehow managed to wind up as apprentice farmers – all before 8am!

Afterwards, we were warmly welcomed into the dairy and watched on as the cows were milked and calves were given their breakfast. The farm hands introduced us to the cows by name and happily chatted about life on the land.

The remainder of the day was spent meandering through Dairyville, Karangi and Nana Glen, checking out historical sites and buildings and taking snaps of quirky letter boxes, general stores and local produce.

In the early evening we found ourselves back in Corambla and pulled up stumps at the pub. The outdoor tables were positioned as front row seats to a spectacular sunset. While waiting for our

meals, the kids took full advantage of the swings and found a tree or two to climb.

We reflected on our travels through the western hinterland and felt a little sheepish that we'd put off exploring the area for so long. This natural wonderland is just minutes from the Coffs coast and offers an array of picture-perfect vistas and delightfully surprising experiences.

**For more on the western hinterland
go to coffscoast.com**



Top Five Spots for Photos

- Orara River at Corambla
- The Magic Pools on Dingo Creek Road
- Friday Creek farms at sunset
- Azona Jersey Stud on Island Loop Road
- Lowanna in the early morning fog

Photography Tips

- Get snapping in the early morning or late afternoon to capture landscapes bathed in golden light.
- Don't forget the details. While the rolling hills and winding roads are practically begging to be photographed, you'll be rewarded if you stick around long enough to focus on the farm animals, flowers and birds surrounding you.
- Keep your camera on hand at all times as you never know when you'll encounter local wildlife crossing the road. We saw a massive python slithering along the Island Loop but were too stunned to take photos!



In Season this Summer

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



FoodieTip: Shop for local produce at farmers' markets, greengrocers and specialist seafood retailers.

Fruit				
Avocado (early)	Lemon	Nectarine	Pineapple	Tomato
Banana	Lilli Pilli (late)	Passionfruit	Plum (early)	Watermelon
Blueberries	Limes (early)	Pawpaw (early)	Raspberries	
Custard Apple	Lychees	Peach (early)	Rockmelon	
Finger Limes (late)	Mango	Pear	Strawberry	

Herbs				
Basil	Dill	Lemongrass	Oregano	Watercress
Chilli	Garlic	Mint	Parsley	
Chives	Ginger	Myrtle	Spring Onion/Shallot	
Coriander	Herbs	- Lemon/Aniseed	Thyme	

Vegetables				
Artichoke	Capsicum	Gourds	Potato	Squash
Asparagus	Carrot (early-mid)	Kale	Pumpkin	Sweet Potato
Beans	Choko	Lettuce	Radish	Tatsoi
Beetroot (late)	Choy Sum	Mushroom	Rhubarb	Turnip (early)
Bok Choy	Corn	Okra	Rocket	Zucchini
Button Squash	Cucumber	Onion	Silverbeet	
Cabbage	Eggplant	Parsnip (early)	Spinach	

Seafood				
Albacore tuna (early)	King Prawns	Mackerel – spanish (mid-late)	Octopus	Tuna - big eye (early)
Balmain Bugs (mid-late)	Kingfish - yellowtail (early)	Mackerel – spotted (mid-late)	Redfish - nannygai (early)	Tuna - yellowfin
Bonito (early)	Lobster - eastern rock (early)	Mahi Mahi	Snapper	Whiting
Bullseye – red (mid-late)	Mackerel - blue (early)	Mud Crab	Swordfish	
Cuttlefish			Teraglin (early)	
Grinner - painted (early)				

Season timing indicated in brackets. This Summer Harvest Calendar is brought to you by Coffs Coast Harvest.



A bamboo forest forms part of the school's playground

Learning by Nature

On a quiet block on the outskirts of Port Macquarie lies one of the most unusual and progressive schools in Australia – a place where children can be found swinging from trees, lighting fires (under supervision, of course) and making mud pies in the rain.

Words by Geordie Bull

Photography by Aaron Cuneo



Birdwatching is a favourite activity



Exuberant faces ready for the day



Studying a friendly leech

While following the national curriculum, The Nature School is founded on the philosophy of child-led learning in a natural outdoor environment – an approach that is gaining increasing support as parents struggle to tear their kids away from screens.

Six-year-old Aria is staring at a stick, fascinated, her eyes following a leech travelling towards her hand. As kids gather around to marvel at the squirming creature, I stand frozen, hoping no-one will notice my very real leech phobia. I let out an involuntary squeal of terror when Aria drops the stick and the little girl looks at me quizzically, wondering what the fuss is, before running off to join her friends as they explore a dense tract of bushland. A teacher happily follows the kids into the bush while another supervises a group quietly reading on a mat spread out beneath the trees. Leeches aside, it's a delightful scene.

"We don't like it when our children are injured, but at the same time, there's a lot of learning that happens in the process of falling down and getting back up."

The Nature School (TNS) was founded by three parents and educators, Jodie Feeney, Lloyd Godson and Sybil Juzwiak Doyle. After successfully launching an early years program for three to

six-year-olds in 2015, TNS Primary opened its doors at the beginning of 2018 for children in Kindergarten to Year 2. In 2019, the school will expand to include Year 3.

Co-founder Jodie Feeney is understandably excited about the success of the school – one of the few of its kind in Australia. "After beginning with the early years program just three years ago, to see this actually happening is incredibly exciting," she says. "We don't see ourselves as an alternative school; we're a

progressive school. A lot of what we do is just common sense. We follow the children's interests, making learning fun and deeply engaging."



The school's resident chook loves cuddles

It's a sentiment shared by head teacher Catherine Oehlman, who left work at a prestigious Sydney private school to accept her role at The Nature School. A self-confessed 'nature nerd' and avid birdwatcher, Catherine has well and truly landed her dream job. "Not everyone gets to do playground duty that looks like this!" She laughs, as we chase kids through a fairy-tale-like bamboo forest, struggling to keep up as they scramble up thin sticks and drop to the ground with confidence. "I always said that if anyone started a nature school in Australia, I'd be there."

One child trips over, scratching her knee. I ask Catherine how she deals with the risks posed by an outdoor environment in an age of over-protection. "Our approach is to make things as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible," she says. "We don't like it when our children are injured, but at the same time, there's a lot of learning that happens in the process of falling down and getting back up."

A typical day at TNS Primary includes between three to six hours of outdoor time either spent on the school grounds - a classroom and huge outdoor area that the school leases from a local community centre - or in one of the various nature reserves utilised for outdoor learning. Children are also taken on fortnightly excursions into the community - to museums, waterways, supermarkets and beaches. While the school follows the same curriculum as other schools, lessons are decidedly more fluid; science could involve sketching an insect identified in the bush, while maths might involve weighing mud pies in the dirt kitchen. "We sometimes begin our day around a fire, which the kids light themselves with a flint and steel," Catherine says. "The children will lead their learning through creative play, cooking, gardening, craft, reading and sports. It's a lot of fun – and, believe it or not, rainy days are the best! We don't believe in bad weather, just a spare set of clothes."

Mother-of-two and Nature School parent Melissa Wiersma is grateful for the change she's witnessed in seven-year-old Zade



The children enjoy harvesting fresh veggies

since he began attending the school at the beginning of this year. "Zade started at a mainstream school and would come home every day agitated and crying," Melissa says. "He was scared and bored and couldn't understand why he wasn't allowed to take his shoes off in the sandpit or why he couldn't climb a tree. I wanted him to love school and love what he was learning. He's in his element here."

As the school day concludes it's evident that most of the kids are reluctant to leave, still engrossed in discovering bugs or making leaf artworks. Eventually, they come racing out of the bush, herded by a group of teachers and parent volunteers who are weighed down by books, binoculars and woven grass creations (leeches are thankfully left behind). If these kids' exuberant faces are anything to go by, The Nature School is clearly onto something wonderful.

**For more information, go to
www.thenatureschool.org.au**



Nature School founders (l to r) Lloyd Godson, Sybil Juzwiak Doyle and Jodie Feeney

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Beneath the Surface

In 2017 Justin Gilligan was named the Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year for his image of a Maori octopus preying upon spider crabs. The pelicans scrambling for fish on the cover of this issue is also one of his images. As well as being an internationally acclaimed photographer, Justin is a trained marine scientist and loves to showcase those fascinating creatures we know so little about. We caught up with him to find out more about what goes on beneath the surface.

Interview by Yvette Harper All images by Justin Gilligan



The image that won Justin the 2017 Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year

Justin, do you remember when the underwater world first captivated you? Absolutely. I was 14 years old and learnt to scuba dive in Port Stephens (my then hometown) with my dad. It was like being introduced to a whole new world and one that not many people knew about.

We can all swim and surf but for me, being underwater is completely immersive...pardon the pun. You can fly around weightlessly, check out unusual creatures and watch the most beautiful light fall through the water.

Fortunately, even after all these years that fascination keeps growing. I feel very lucky to have found something I'm so passionate about.

And did your interest in photography follow? Yes, I got into it not long after learning to dive.

Again, it was something I shared with dad. We'd halve a roll of film and take 18 photos each. Waiting to see how the images would turn out was like waiting for presents on Christmas Day.

You have an Honours Degree in marine science and your images and articles have been published around the world.

How do manage to combine both fields so seamlessly?

They really do go hand-in-hand. Marine science is a really good way to record information and facts for those within the industry, but my photography can be very effective in communicating to a much broader audience.

What's so special about creatures of the ocean? They are largely unseen. A lot of the time they go unnoticed which means they don't have their own voice. People often don't know their stories or haven't seen these creatures, so I have this wonderful opportunity to shed some light and share untold stories.

Tell us about your award-winning shot of the octopus and the spider crabs? It was one of those serendipitous moments that happen so rarely in nature photography. I was covering some marine research work off Maria Island on the east coast of Tasmania. We were documenting an artificial reef experiment on kelp when totally unexpectedly, a group of spider crabs about size of a football field wandered through the experiment. The octopus, as excited as a kid in a candy store, followed their every move.



Grey Nurse Shark at Broughton Island, Myall Lakes National Park



Weedy Seadragon, Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania

The unexpected appearance of the crabs reinforced how little we know about the marine environment and how important that work was.

For those Cb readers who prefer to stay above the surface, explain what they're missing... There is the most amazing light and you get to witness an incredible underwater seascape. It's magical to see those light rays coming through the water like car headlights on a foggy highway. Even murky green water can create a stunning backdrop to a colourful cast of bizarre creatures.

Work takes you to some spectacular places...

Yes, part of winning the Australian Geographic prize was a month in the subantarctic and Antarctica. Macquarie Island was unbelievable.

Western Australia's Shark Bay and Ningaloo Reef are breathtaking locations and I'm keen to spend more time there. I love being able to walk off the shore and be straight on the reef. You're based on the south coast of NSW and often get back to see family in Port Macquarie. I love getting back to the north coast. Fish Rock Cave at South West Rocks is one of my favourite places in the world to dive and of course the Solitary Islands

Marine Park on the Coffs Coast has the perfect mix of warm and cold-water species.

As someone specialising in underwater photography, living on the coast means that I get to spend more time on or in the water which increases my chances of capturing something unusual.

What's next in store for you? In Cape York the Traditional Owners are doing tremendous conservation work demonstrating their link to sea country which I'm very keen to delve into. I'd also like more time on the Great Barrier Reef as well as on the temperate reefs off southern Australia which are full of surprises. I want to focus most of my work here in Australia. We have so much diversity in our marine world from subantarctic waters all the way to tropical coral reefs, so I'd like to explore more of our own backyard.

Of the countless photographs you've taken over the years, do you have a favourite? Hmm, maybe the very next photograph I'll take...there are always more stories to tell.

Find out more at www.justingilligan.com or follow Justin on Instagram @justingilligan



The Port Macquarie Coastal Walk

There are few walking trails on the Mid North Coast that are as accessible – and beautiful – as Port Macquarie’s Coastal Walk. Listed as one of the city’s must-do’s, the nine-kilometre path follows the spectacular coastline from Lighthouse Beach to Westport Park, encompassing deserted beaches, rainforest and bushland.

Words by Geordie Bull

I’m tackling the Coastal Walk on a quiet weekday with my Mum, who’s in training for the Camino de Santiago (a five-week walking adventure that follows an ancient European pilgrimage route). The Coastal Walk is a partnership between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the local council, resulting in well-marked tracks, stairs and paths constructed across rocky headlands. The walk can be broken up into four sections that are each just over two kilometres apart, linking from beach to beach. There are a few hills to tackle, so a moderate level of fitness is required.

We decide to begin at the Lighthouse Beach end of the track, descending stairs onto a rocky cove before heading up the hill and into Sea Acres Rainforest – one of the few preserved forests of its kind on the coast.

It’s a steep start to the track and we’re soon puffing as we reach the top and round the bend, hit by an incredible view of turquoise ocean and rugged rocks. The path descends again to Miners Beach, where we encounter a view we hadn’t bargained on – nude sunbathers lounging on the sand. As Port Macquarie’s only nudist beach, Miners is an obvious choice because it can be accessed only on foot.

“The path descends again to Miners Beach, where we encounter a view we hadn’t bargained on – nude sunbathers lounging on the sand.”

Surprises aside, the beach is pristine; bordered entirely by rainforest with crystal-clear rock pools just begging to be explored. The several hikers who pass us don’t even look sideways at the nudists, who likewise seem unbothered by the foot traffic on their beach.

After Miners, the track winds over the headland to Shelly Beach – a favourite with local families. We take a break to check out the statue of local legend Harry Thompson, who lived in a caravan on the reserve beside the beach for 25 years as its unofficial caretaker.

Walking to the end of the beach, we find a group of kookaburras sitting together on a piece of driftwood and concur that, despite its proximity to the heart of Port Macquarie, this place feels a world away.

The walk continues through a series of beaches and headlands, with plenty of challenging ascents followed by easy flat sections. We continue north over the headland to Flynns Beach, where we’re tempted to take a break by the smell of coffee wafting from the kiosk (which also does tasty burgers for those wanting lunch).



Just one of the gorgeous spots along the Coastal Walk. Image courtesy of Greater Port Macquarie Tourism



Salty Crew Kiosk at Town Beach where we concluded our walk. Image courtesy of Greater Port Macquarie Tourism

Forcing ourselves onward and upward, we trek over a short section of road before, thankfully, heading back into the bush. Each time we emerge from the scrub, we are hit by an ever-more incredible view, and our conversation revolves around how lucky we are to call this section of coastline home.

Coming to a pandanus-lined cove near Rocky Beach, I make a mental note to bring the kids to this unnamed beach on a flat day for a snorkel.

We walk over Windmill Hill to Nobbys Beach, where a sign tells us about the geological rarity of the stunning rock formations that characterise the Port Macquarie coastline.

A headland path then takes us to Oxley Beach, toward an optional detour up Flagstaff Hill - which is well-worth it for its panoramic views and the possibility of a dolphin sighting.

Rounding the corner, we find ourselves back in civilization at the busy Town Beach, where our second car is parked and sit down for a much-needed chai and treat at the Salty Crew Kiosk – a fitting end to a beautiful morning.

Tips:

The walk is one-way, so you'll need two cars. Alternatively, catch a cab back to your car for around \$20.

To complete the full nine-kilometre walk, begin or end at the Westport Park. The section from the park to Town Beach takes you along the

river, past the Marina, through the Town Green and along the famous painted breakwall.

If the weather's warm, pack your swimmers! Flynn's Beach and Town Beach are both patrolled and are great for swimming.

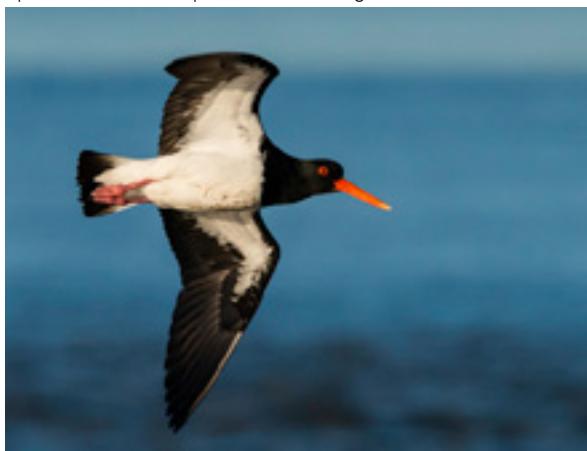
A digital map of the walk can be downloaded at www.discoverportmacquarie.com.au or grab a printed copy from the Concierge Desk at Port Central Shopping Centre



Overlooking Lighthouse Beach. Image by Lindsay Moller Productions



Spotted Turtle Doves perform the mating ritual



A Pied Oyster Catcher



A White Faced Heron searches for food



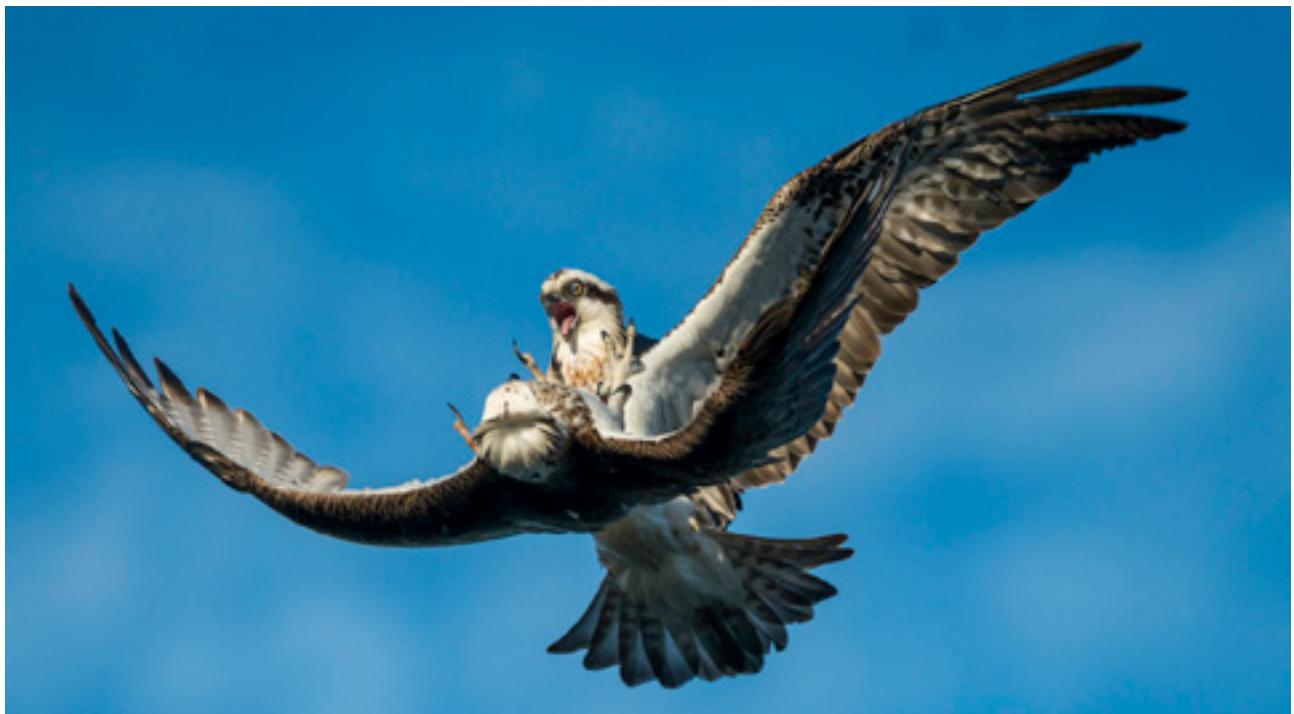
Pelicans on Wallis Lake

Bird Of Prey

Coastbeat goes behind the scenes with a videographer and a nature lover, both from the Great Lakes region, to learn the challenges of capturing birds of prey in action.

Words by Glenn Leahy

Photography by Glen Golby



Two Osprey having a territorial dispute

Getting up before dawn is always hard but it's almost always worth it, especially when you live in this part of the world. Normally when I'm awake at this hour I've got my surfboard and wetsuit in the back of the van, hoping to score a few uncrowded waves, but today is different.

Today, I've got a van full of camera gear and audio recording equipment and I'm hoping to capture something just as elusive as the perfect wave.

As I pull up at Santa Barbara Reserve on Seven Mile Beach, a slight orange glow is starting to show behind the silhouettes of the towering Norfolk pines. A car pulls up and local nature photographer, Glen Golby steps out. He has a quick look skyward to the top of the pine trees. We both collect our camera gear and head toward the dunes.

I run a video production company, creating video content for brands and businesses, so this shoot is entirely different to what I'm used to. The challenge with this shoot is to capture the story behind a single photograph.

Glen and I step onto the beach just as the sun rises. The dawn is mesmerizing. We take the short hike up the sand dune to a spot Glen has been many, many times. He sets up his Nikon with a 600mm lens and points it toward the top of one of pines. I'm not sure where to train my lens so I start with Glen.

"I've been on this Whistling Kite nest for about a month now,"

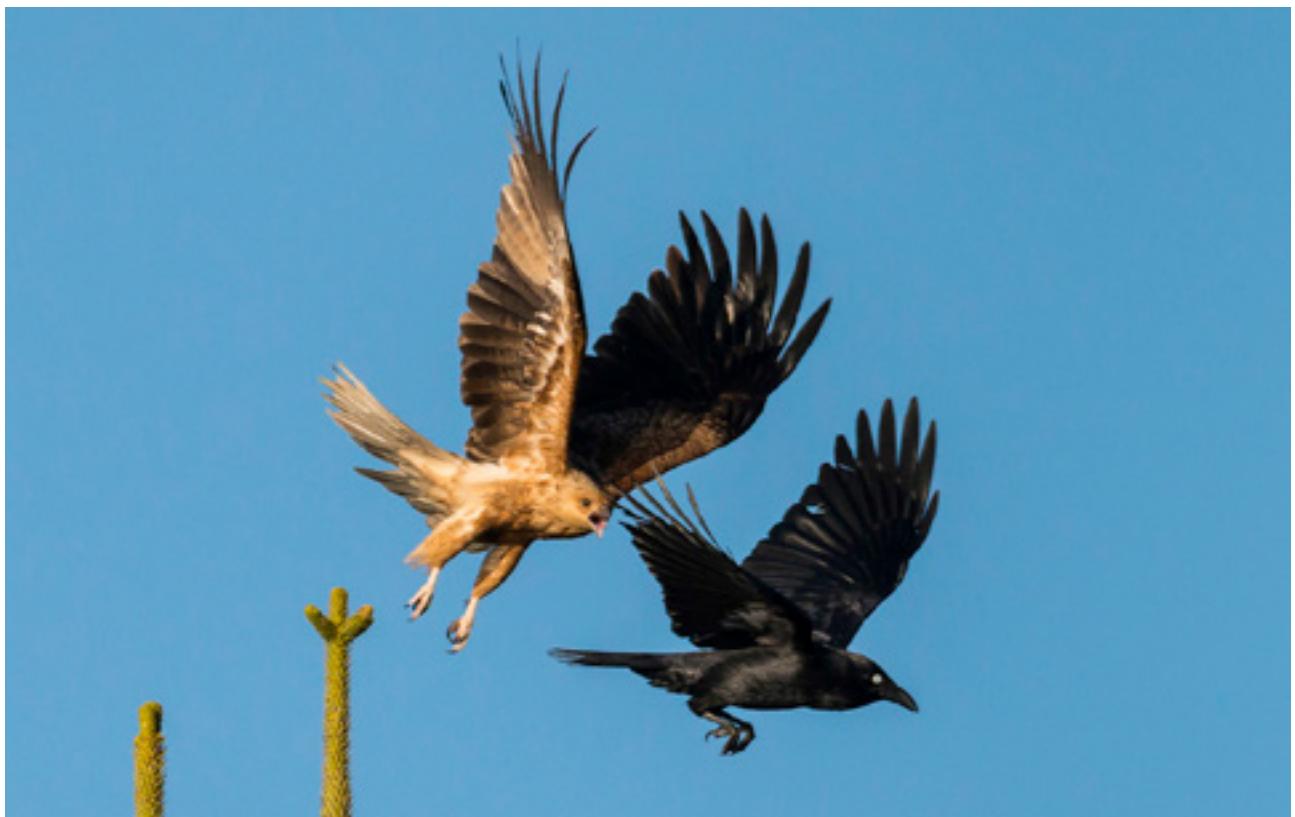
he says. "I reckon the youngster will leave the nest any day. He's been flapping like mad on the edge of it and I'm sure he's going to make his first flight. I've been coming every single day and really don't want to miss it."

Glen points to the top of one of the pine trees. "See that small branch at the top, how it's bent over to the left?" he says. "That's because the parents fly from the nest to that spot over and over every day. It's the highest vantage point for them to take in this whole area. When that youngster takes his first flight, I reckon that's where he'll land so that's where I've got my lens pointed," he adds.

Who am I to argue? I swing my camera around and zero in on the branch. Now what? I ask. "We wait," comes the obvious answer.

It's not easy for me to wait. I'm a busy person with important stuff to do. Glen, however, has clearly mastered the art of waiting. He stands centred and still.

With a smile he says, "It would be an absolute waste to stand here every day and not notice everything." He continues, "The whales drifting past, pods of dolphins hunting, fishermen up the beach. The Kite is watching the fishermen too, waiting for them to leave - ready to fly straight to where they've gutted their fish. I watch wrens darting amongst the scrub at my feet and sea eagles overhead. I watch the tide change and see what it leaves



The Whistling Kite defends his family

behind – for other birds of prey to come to claim the prize. I love it. I can't get enough of it."

We spend the next two hours talking, watching and simply being. Glen's not yet taken a single picture.

The next morning, we return to the same spot, except something has changed. I think it's me. Today I'm happy to wait and am totally absorbed by every move of the Whistling Kites. As the young bird stumbles to the edge of his nest and flaps his wings like mad, Glen and I are both completely fired up. "Oh yeah! Go you good thing!" calls Glen, urging the youngster on. In between short and frantic bursts of excitement, there's plenty of time to talk cameras and exposure as well as the different ways of setting a 'trap' to capture that elusive shot.

You can't help but love Glen. He's the perfect mix of old school hippie surfer, crusty fisherman and a pirate. When he gets excited, which is often, he morphs into a 12-year-old kid.

We've focused our cameras on one of the Whistling Kite adults on a nearby tree top. My video camera has now been rolling for two hours.

Suddenly, Glen lurches for his camera. "Look here!" he exclaims and starts firing shots. "Mr Crow!" he yells as a single pesky crow flies toward the Kite. With lightning speed, the Kite launches, spearing straight at the crow. The two birds engage in 10 seconds of awe-inspiring manoeuvres, twisting and contorting with perfect balance until the crow bails out and the Kite lands back on the top of its favourite branch.

I stand there dazed...is that it? It happened so quickly. Did I actually get it on film? Was it in focus? We both huddle around the back of Glen's camera as he checks the shot. "Yep. It's a bloody good shot," he says with understated excitement.

"The Kite's wings are at full spread and its talons are clearly visible." I'm blown away by the intensity of the image. You can feel the fear in the crow's eyes and the dominance of the Kite's power is overwhelming when isolated by this one frame in time.

After two days of shooting, I tell Glen that we've got enough footage for his video. "No worries," he says. "I'll be back here first thing again tomorrow and every day until that youngster takes his first flight if you're keen to join me?"

Why not? Glen the bird man has me hooked.

Watch Glenn Leahy's video @ www.coastbeat.tv or reach him @ www.digitalvideolab.com.au

For more nature photography or to experience your own day out, you'll find Glen Golby Photography on Facebook



Image of Glen Golby by Glenn Leahy

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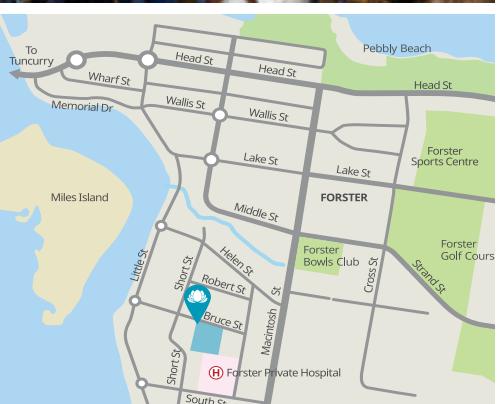
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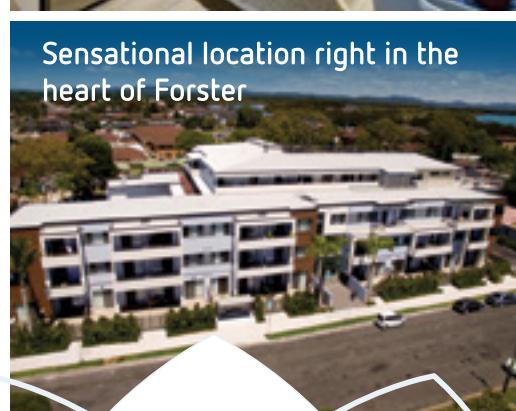
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bcu, Community at the core

Community is at the heart of matters for bcu. they support numerous local events and have proudly sponsored the Coffs Tri for seven years. bcu had many of their staff competing in the 2018 event with Project Manager, Michaela Pleasance among them.



A young competitor crosses the line

Michaela is the definition of a modern-day wonder woman. She juggles raising two beautiful sons, Josh and Luke as a single mum, heads the bcu Project Team and can also call herself a successful triathlete, having completed the Enticer race in the 2018 bcu Coffs Tri.

Michaela moved to the Coffs Coast four years ago from Sydney with a decade prior to that spent in London. After the hustle and bustle of city life Michaela is very content with her 'little piece of paradise' in Boambee. "I love the sense of community and the peace and quiet is sensational. My boys love having a large backyard to run around in too."

Michaela joined bcu as a Project Manager in 2016 and says there's no such thing as a typical day in the office. "The variety of projects keeps my job challenging and interesting. I love implementing projects that deliver great services to our

Members." The bcu Project Team has grown significantly since Michaela commenced at the organisation and now includes a second Project Manager and two Business Analysts.

Michaela has achieved some incredible milestones in her role such as delivering the New Payments Platform to bcu Members on the first day it was made available in Australia - an accomplishment she describes as her professional highlight to date. However, working full-time also meant Michaela struggled to maintain her fitness and as a result, was finding it difficult to keep up with her boys. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Michaela knew she needed a goal

to work towards and set her sights on completing the Enticer event at the 2018 bcu Coffs Tri. "Setting myself this goal gave me the motivation I needed to get back in the pool, on my bike and to start running again," she says.

Michaela's training and determination paid off and she crossed the finish line in her first ever triathlon in March this year. The adrenaline and exhilaration of the race had her hooked and Michaela will be competing again in the 2019 event. In fact, she can't wait. "I plan on being fitter and faster so that I finish towards the front of the pack!"

Michaela's passion and purpose leading up to her first ever triathlon was contagious and inspired her eldest son Josh to enter the kids' tri event. Despite being only six at the time, Josh finished in the top 10 on the day and like mum, will be competing again come March. From the sidelines, Michaela watched Josh partake earlier this year with pride. "I was super proud to see him cross the finishing line and do so well. He was over the moon that he had completed it."

Michaela has already started training for the 2019 bcu Coffs Tri, hitting the water three times a week and getting on her

"Michaela has already started training for the 2019 bcu Coffs Tri"

bike at home in the evenings as well. She is about to ramp up her training and focus on running which she describes as her weakest leg. "Being a single mum working full-time can make it hard to get out for a run but I'm hoping to start the 5km parkrun at the Park Beach Reserve on Saturday mornings with the boys."

Michaela has also recently joined the Coffs Harbour Triathlon Club and hopes to compete in their fortnightly races.

For anyone who has considered doing a triathlon or is looking for that next fitness goal, Michaela encourages them to make the commitment. "Give it a go! I was very unfit when I started but I had a lot of fun getting back into shape," she says.

Entries are now open for the 2019 bcu Coffs Tri which will be held on 2nd & 3rd March. For more info go to www.villagesports.com.au



Kids racing into the ocean for the swim leg

Just like Michaela, David Blandford and Jake Mahoney are part of the bcu team servicing the Coffs Coast.

David Blandford

David first moved to Coffs Harbour as a high school student in the late 1970s. His interest in helping people realise their dreams has resulted in David working in the banking and finance industry for most of his career which has included stints in Sydney, Canberra and Cairns. Coffs has been home once again for the past 20 years and he resides here with wife Shannon and son Nathan.

For David, the Coffs Coast has the perfect lifestyle balance. "We not only have amazing beaches and a great climate, but Coffs is big enough to have fantastic facilities yet small enough to still have a great sense of community."

"Working with an organisation that contributes so much to the local community through the various sponsorships and events is truly enjoyable." As a local bcu Lender, David works closely with existing or new Members. He is involved with each stage



Michaela gets a congratulatory hug from Scoot

of the process from research to the application and approval process be it for personal, home or business loans. Although he is based in the Urunga store, David has a mobile component to his role and is happy to meet with people at their home or place of business to make the entire process as easy and stress-free as possible.



Jake Mahoney

A born and bred Coffs local, Jake is a self-confessed sports fanatic with a love of soccer, having played in the local competition since he was just four years old. For Jake, the north coast will always be home. "This area just has so much to offer. Drive one way you're at the beach, drive the other and you're at a waterfall in the mountains."

Jake launched his finance career after completing a Cert IV in Finance and quickly progressed to a role in personal lending. "Once I started lending I knew that was what I wanted as a career path," he says.

Having recently bought a house in Coffs with his wife Gabrielle, Jake has first-hand experience of the purchasing process. "Having just been through it, I know how stressful the process can be. My job is to try and remove that stress – at least from the monetary side of things."

Jake joined bcu in 2017 and is an Associate Lender, servicing the Coffs region. He loves working with bcu Members and says they make coming to work easy. The community-focused structure of bcu is also something Jake is passionate about and he is a genuine advocate for the organisation. "bcu is very active in the community with sponsorships. I'm proud to work here and be part of the company's growth."

For anyone with questions about the process of buying, building or what bcu can offer, Jake encourages them to get in touch. "I can help with any form of lending or banking enquiry no matter how big or small and I'm always available for a chat."

bcu in the CBD

The much-anticipated relocation of bcu into the Coffs Harbour CBD was recently completed with staff from 15 different departments now based in the one commercial space in Coffs Central. Seventy corporate employees, including Michaela Pleasance, have settled into their new working environment. bcu CEO Alan Butler calls the relocation of the different teams an important milestone for the organisation particularly given bcu's key focus on local banking. "This move gives bcu the space and flexibility to continue to grow with the community into the future," he says.

To talk to one of the friendly bcu team, visit your local branch or head to www.bcu.com.au



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"We are very proud to be part of the vibrant mix of innovative retailers who call Coffs Central home.." - Felipe Barrera, Fresco Marketplace.



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- Bridgette Vartiainen, Red Sparrow.

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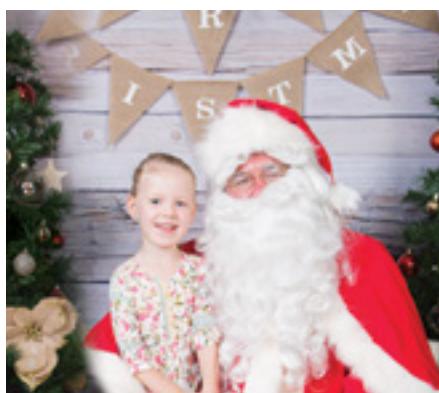
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 COFFS CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'



What's On at Coffs Central this Summer



Santa Photos

Avoid the lines this Christmas by booking in for private Santa Photos for only \$25*. Due to booking out last year a few additional times have been included but get in quick to secure your spot.

Saturday Dec 1st: 10am – 3pm
Saturday Dec 15th: 10am – 2pm
Sunday Dec 16th: 10am – 2pm
Thursday Dec 20th: 11am – 3pm
Friday Dec 21st: 11am – 3pm
Saturday Dec 22nd: 9am – 4pm
Sunday Dec 23rd: 10am – 2pm

*\$25 for a USB with 3 best photos for you to take home.

Sensitive Santa

Coffs Central offers private bookings with a qualified assistant Elf carer who is trained to work with children with special needs. Sensitive Santa Photos are \$25*.

Saturday Dec 8th: 1pm – 5pm
Sunday Dec 16th: 2pm – 4pm

*\$25 for a USB with 3 best photos for you to take home.

Santa Paws

Coffs Central offers private bookings with Santa for you and your pets. Pawfect Santa Paws Photos are \$25*.

Saturday Dec 15th: 2pm – 4pm
Thursday Dec 20th: 3pm – 6pm
Friday Dec 21st: 3pm – 5pm

*\$25 for a USB with 3 best photos for you to take home.

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Send Letters to Santa

Coffs Central wants to help get those important letters to Santa so we have a special mailbox specifically for Santa himself. Santa's mailbox will be located at the top of the travellator, level 1 in the Food Court and letter templates will be available on the foyer table next to the mailbox if you fancy using that. Don't forget to include your address so Santa knows where to reply to! Please drop off all letters by Wednesday 12th December.



Community Chest & Gift Wrapping

Donate gifts to the Salvation Army this Christmas in our Community Chest at Coffs Central's Concierge Desk. Giving to those in need and sharing the magic of Christmas.

Coffs Harbour Quota Club will be offering gift wrapping daily on level 1 near Kmart. Remember to bring a few gold coins, as money raised supports disadvantaged women and children in our community.

When: 10th Dec - Xmas Eve



Xmas Decorations & Gifts Workshop

Coffs Central will be offering a Kids Xmas Decorations and Gifts Workshop perfect for on, or under, the Christmas Tree. Grab a coffee and relax while the kids create.

When: Saturday 8th December, 10am - 11am

Where: The Recharge Hub, Level 1, Coffs Central.

Cost: \$10

Bookings: Call 5622 8900 or email customerservice@gowings.com



Create your own Perfume Workshop

Diploma Qualified Aromatherapist, Carmen Fearnley, will lead this workshop where you will create your own signature scent spray to take home. You'll also be able to order larger bottles of your special fragrance, should you wish.

When: Sunday December 9th, 11am - 1pm

Where: The Recharge Hub, Level 1, Coffs Central

Cost: \$35

Bookings: Call 5622 8900 or email customerservice@gowings.com



The Depot Xmas Party Venue

The Depot Café is THE venue for a Xmas party with designer décor, great tasting gourmet food and sipping cocktails on the balcony whilst enjoying the view.

With multimedia equipment and a large screen, you can add even more fun to the evening with staff videos and photos.

For more information and bookings contact Dave on 6651 1812.



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'the heart of it all'



What's On at Port Central this Summer



Santa Photos

Santa's Wonderland will be open from 10am daily up until Christmas Eve.

Printing is instant so no long waits and there are packages to suit the whole family from hard copy prints to digital copies on a USB stick. We will ensure to capture your memories of Christmas 2018 so that you can cherish them forever.

When: 1st December - 24th December
Where: Level 1 Food at the Terrace

\$25 for a USB or choose from our variety of printed packages starting from \$20.

Sensitive Santa Photos

Port Central is offering a private booking with a qualified assistant Elf carer who is trained to work with children with special needs.

When: Sunday 9th December
Time: 1:30pm - 4pm
Where: Level 1 Food at the Terrace

\$25 for a USB or choose from our variety of printed packages starting from \$20.

Bookings: Call 5525 1000 or email portcustomerservice@gowings.com

Santa Paws

This Christmas Santa Paws is back by popular demand! Santa Paws is the paw-fect way to capture a unique family photo this Christmas that you will treasure for years to come.

Bring your furry friend to our exclusive Santa Paws sessions in Santa's Wonderland.

When: 5th, 12th & 19th December
Time: 4pm - 6pm
Where: Level 1 Food at the Terrace

Bookings: Call 5525 1000 or email portcustomerservice@gowings.com



Phone (02) 5525 1000



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Xmas Market

Join us for our Christmas Market Celebration. There will be stalls with plenty of gift ideas not to mention loads on offer from our retailers. Christmas is the time of giving so there will be discounts on Santa Photos for this exclusive one day event, festive taste testers, face painting for the kids, roaming entertainment and much more.

When: Saturday 8th December

Time: 10am - 3pm

Where: Port Central Shopping Centre



Gift Wrap service for Charity

Get your gifts wrapped in designer gift-wrap for a gold coin donation! Your donation will be supporting the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, a team of dedicated volunteers who provide lifesaving support in emergencies.

When: Friday 14th Dec - Monday 24th Dec

Time: 10am - 4pm

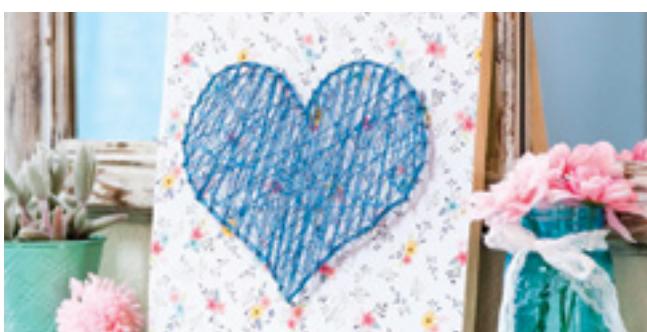
Where: Port Central, Ground Floor near Strandbags



Real Food Markets

The Real Food Markets are held every Tuesday from 2pm - 6pm. More than sixteen stallholders, boasting a diverse range of locally made goods and freshly grown and harvested produce, come to life on the Port Central Forecourt each week treating locals and visitors alike to what our wonderful region has to offer.

For more information phone 5525 1000 or email portcustomerservice@gowings.com



Creative Summer Workshops

Join us for creative hands on workshops in January, hosted by our very own local treasure Skye Petho from reknowned Arthouse Industries. Skye will nurture your child's creativity in the following workshops:

Shrink Plastic Key Rings: 8th January 2019

String Art: 10th January 2019

Weaving: 22nd January 2019

Children leave with their own works of art for hanging at home or to give to someone special. Bookings: Call 5525 1000.



Australia Day one stop shop

Port Central has all your Australia Day needs covered, from the hottest Australia Day fashions, food, entertaining needs and decorations. Whether you're planning a party, a day at the beach or a night on the town, stop in at Port Central where you'll find everything you need to celebrate everything Aussie.



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PORT CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'



What's On at Moonee Market this Summer



Toy & Clothing Swap

Join us at Moonee Market for our first Council Toy and Clothing Swap. Simply bring in a max of 5 items all in good condition with all pieces included, then you swap.

When: Friday November 30th at 10am.



Welcome Santa

Santa will arrive at Moonee Market on the big red fire truck! There will be FREE face painting and bargains available from many of our stores.

When: Saturday December 15th at 11am.



Community Murals

We invited mural submissions earlier in the year and second prize winner Ellie Hannon's 'Reef' mural is near the underground car park and above Coffs Coast Health Club. Take a look!



Sugarmill Summer Nights

Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar has a new manager, new menu, fantastic wait staff and is open Friday & Saturday nights! Keep an eye on their facebook page for upcoming events
facebook.com/sugarmillrestaurantandbar



Nourished Earth Spa

What better way to relax in the silly season than with a massage and facial at Nourished Earth. A voucher from Nourished Earth Spa is the perfect gift for a loved one or friend. Or treat yourself!



Summer Swimming

With the warmer weather now's the perfect time to sign your children up for swimming lessons at Swimcare Moonee. Swimming lessons continue throughout the Summer break.

Celebrating SWIFF

We sneak a peek at the upcoming Screenwave International Film Festival taking place in Coffs Harbour and Bellingen in January.

As the cost of metropolitan living rises, a new wave of artists and creatives are flocking to regional areas, which is great news for coastal communities who are able to experience a new wave of arts festivals, exhibitions, workshops and creative programs.

Husband and wife team Dave Horsley and Kate Howat are two metro expats who moved to Coffs Harbour four years ago, and now make film festivals for a living, including their flagship Screenwave International Film Festival (SWIFF) every Summer.

Kate, SWIFF's Artistic Director, brings much experience to the Festival having worked for the Brisbane International Film Festival and Australian Cinémathèque for The Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA).

SWIFF has quickly established itself as one the most diverse feature film programs in regional Australia. SWIFF 2019 will screen over 50 different Australian and international films. Come January, Coffs Harbour will see an influx of film-lovers from across the country and overseas to connect with screen culture and to rub shoulders with Australian and international actors, directors and producers.



An image from 'Aga' - one of the films screening at SWIFF 2019

"Culture is driven by people in local communities. We hand pick films to create a unique program each year, but it is our regional audiences that enable arts festivals like ours to thrive. 2018 has been a phenomenal year for film and particularly Australian film so, we'll be putting the best of them on the big screen for people to enjoy," explains Festival Director, Dave Horsley.

Whether you're heading into Coffs for a SWIFF daytrip or hitting full film festival mode for two weeks, it's worth checking out the pristine beaches and nature trails in between film sessions. See you at SWIFF!

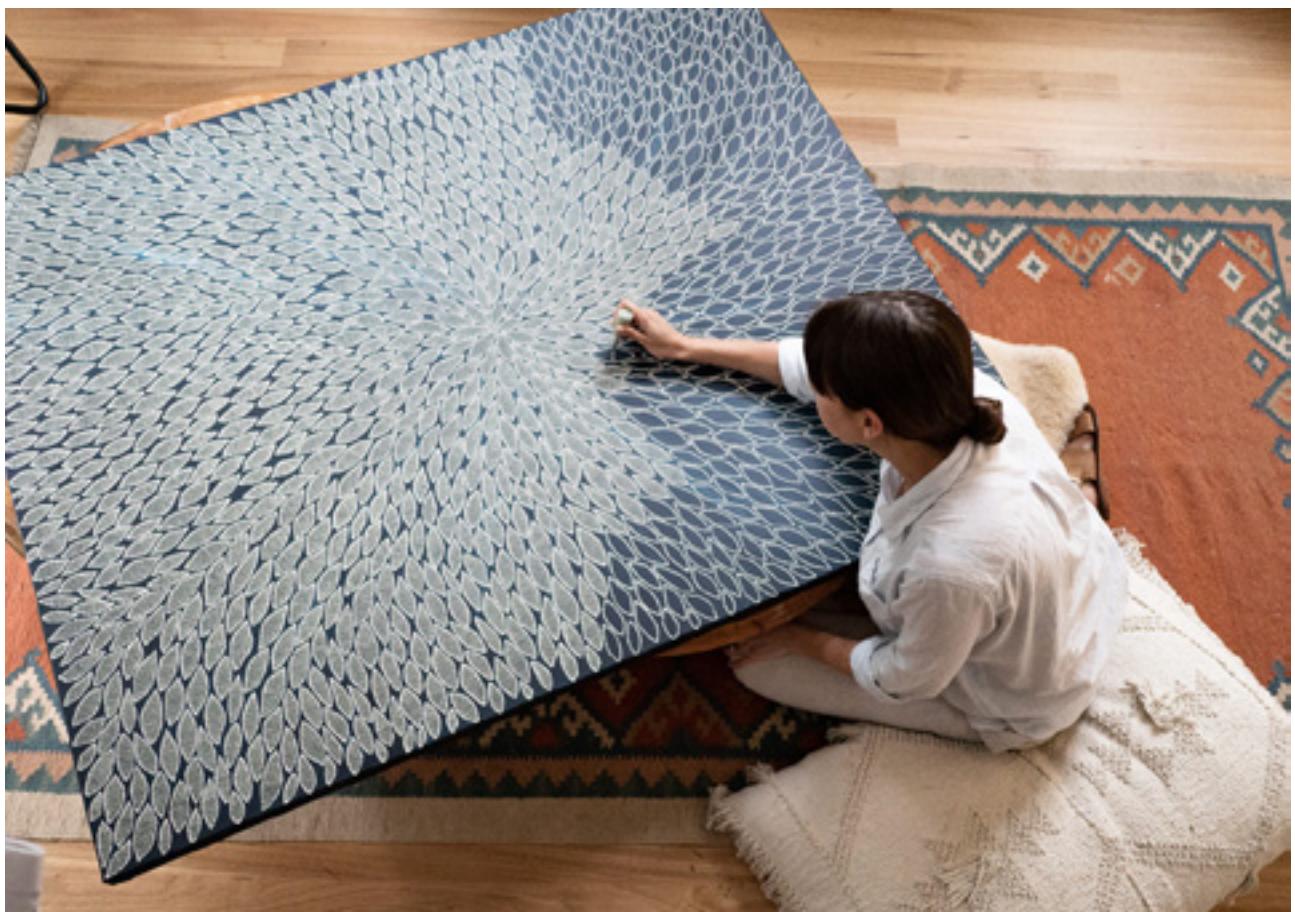
When: January 10-25, 2019

Where: Coffs Harbour Jetty Memorial Theatre and the Bellingen Memorial Hall.

Further Info: For tickets and a complete rundown of films and events visit www.swiff.com.au

SCREENWAVE INTERNATIONAL '19
FILM FESTIVAL
10 - 25 JAN | COFFS COAST HEART OF FILM

TICKETS ON SALE NOW SWIFF.COM.AU



Ngudjung Yugarang - Mother's Heartbeat by Niah

Artist, Niah Juella McLeod

Niah Juella McLeod is the face of the future: a child of the digital age who looks to her ancestors for inspiration. She is a post-modern pin-up girl, a cultural cornucopia, effortlessly melding boundaries to find meaning.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Sam Clarke

As an award-winning artist, model and proud woman of the Yuin nation, Niah is feted worldwide, but chooses to stay at home with her two children in northern NSW, co-parenting with her film producer partner, Blake. She has won the Byron Bay Art Prize (2016) and the UNSW Paddington Art Prize (Young Artist category, 2017). Her work is commissioned by Tourism Australia and she recently returned from meetings with European gallery owners. Niah's first solo exhibition opens this month at Bangalow's Ninbella Gallery. She is still years from 30. Niah's paintings invoke dreams, the night sky, or perhaps her ancestral Dreaming. She doesn't attempt to define the images that come to her. Rather, she finds inspiration as she approaches the blank canvas, fed by stories she feels she should know, but has never heard.

"It's a strange feeling," she says, when we meet at her home.

"My images don't have explicit narratives, just an idea of a story I think I may be a part of. My Uncle Paul once said to me, 'It just appears from the mystic unknown that's all around in the Dreaming'. I think that's a pretty special way to look at it."

How do you negotiate between tradition and painting your own way? "I follow my gut. I've had moments where I start to paint something and think 'that doesn't feel right, that's not my painting', but it's completely intuitive. I didn't grow up with Aboriginal artists around me to ask questions, so I'm still learning. I know I'm painting a story - I can feel it - but I don't always know what the story is. My heritage gives me a solid sense of identity; it keeps me grounded by giving me a feeling of belonging."

Has art always been part of your life? "Yes and no. I grew up in a house filled with beautiful Aboriginal art and my mum is an artist (not Aboriginal). I didn't start painting until about four years ago when I began getting bad anxiety. Painting is my meditation."

You committed to the life of an artist when you were 23 years old. Was that a difficult decision? "It was a bit of a leap. I had just moved down to Sydney; I didn't know anybody. Luckily, I was renting with an awesome woman, then I met my partner, Blake. They were both really encouraging. I was accepted for an exhibition where, graciously, I sold every single piece of artwork. To top it off I found out I was pregnant with Matilda on the last day of the exhibition, so that was pretty special!"

What influenced your decision? "There were two moments in particular. I had sent the first painting I did to my paternal grandmother in Wreck Bay, on the south coast. I didn't hear back from her, so I assumed that she didn't like it. Then just after I moved to Sydney my sister called to say Grandma wasn't well. I hadn't been to Wreck Bay since I left with Mum when I was two, so this was daunting.

"I walked into this house with all my brothers and sisters and uncles and aunties and cousins, and everyone looked like me, but I had no idea who 99 percent of them were! It was amazing, but overwhelming.

"I was able to see my grandmother and say my goodbyes and she passed away the next day. While I was there my family told me that my grandmother had loved my painting, which sent this whole new set of inspired tingles through me.

"Then a few days later I had a casting for Fashion Week. I remember standing in line with a bunch of extremely young, stunning girls, feeling like cattle about to walk down the runway only to have someone say 'Next please'. I thought ok, I can do better, and left. That was the moment I took that leap of faith."

My images don't have explicit narratives, just an idea of a story I think I may be a part of."

How does art and motherhood work? "Matilda and Darcy are beautiful souls and I'm very lucky. In saying that, kids and fine dot art don't mix well! I've had some big painting accidents with Matilda, and I've walked past paintings and seen that she has dotted along to put her part in, which is nice. Matilda has her own canvases now and I love that."

Why Bangalow? "I moved to Bangalow when I was two years old: it's home."

Crazy question: how would aliens from another planet interpret your imagery? "Give me all the crazy questions! I would say they might read my art as looking like movement but feels still." Which describes Niah herself, moving fast towards the future, powered by the still depths of the past.

**Niah's first solo exhibition is on at Ninbella Gallery in Bangalow, 7-27 December 2018.
Visit the gallery at www.ninbella.com**



Blake holds Darcy while Matilda cuddles up to Niah

It Takes Two

The sum of the parts has got to be greater than the whole when those parts are musicians, Ollie McGill and Georgie Chorley. They make up the core of Hip Mama, a cool jazz outfit who have gone out of their way to call Bellingen home. Why Hip Mama and why Bellingen? *Coastbeat* chatted to Ollie and Georgie about the power of collaboration and why Bello is the place to do it.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Photography by Brendan Ray



Ollie in his element on stage. Image courtesy of Ollie McGill

Ollie came to Bellingen by chance. Well-known as the keyboard player for internationally renowned Melbourne band The Cat Empire, he fell for Bellingen while on a short visit to a family friend, who took him on a tour of all the venues. It seemed like music-mecca, with a band on every corner; Ollie packed up his piano and headed north.

Georgie arrived from another direction, physically and metaphysically. She was born and raised in Tenterfield, but says she came to Bello out of disdain for the machine of the classical industry where she had worked, and a love for the freedom of jazz.

Disdain seems a strong word...

"I was classically trained in Newcastle and at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music," says Georgie. "But the way I like to approach music is not classical. I worked in Sydney as a trumpet player, but I never did it the way they wanted me to, so I left the music world entirely for five years and travelled. I came back for jazz. Classical music is an industry compared with jazz, which is more of a community."

For Georgie, jazz is also energy and emotion, not work. Ollie too, and this shared understanding drew them together in a town synonymous with music, thanks to the community driven Bello Winter Music Festival. When they met, Georgie had just returned from New Orleans and Ollie had just started listening to off-beat New Orleans jazz.

"Off-beat, tilted rhythms," he says, in an attempt to describe the style. "Neo-soul. Dr John and Professor Longhair."

"Lush," says Georgie, interrupting him. "Strong harmonies. Music that makes people happy." "Is that the Hip Mama style?" I ask, getting a word in edgeways.

"We don't necessarily label ourselves," Ollie replies. "We like the music to evolve in performance; we fire off each other."

"And we want to make music that's on fire," Georgie adds. The conversation with Hip Mama veers towards the chaotic, with interruptions and talking over and a lot of laughing, but it always makes sense. Like their music, Ollie and Georgie are



Image of Geordie courtesy of Peter Toming

light-hearted but they know exactly what they are doing. Hip Mama features Georgie singing and Ollie on keyboards, with a regular bass and drummer. They offer up a mix of originals, and some covers from sources as diverse as The White Stripes and Stevie Wonder.

Geordie has a rich, warm voice, deep and bluesy with a lyrical falsetto that counterpoints her dark tones with sweeter notes. Ollie has been called ‘the best jazz pianist in the country’, which you can substantiate for yourself via any of his many clips on YouTube. His playing is prominent in Hip Mama, right hand dancing across the keyboard while his left anchors the energy with a rollicking riff that almost tumbles into pure boogie. They make music that makes you feel good

“With jazz,” Georgie says, “You can express yourself as you feel at the time.”

“Improvisation and emotion,” says Ollie.

Currently, Hip Mama play in and around Bellingen, and are planning a schedule of music festivals, where they know their upbeat style will be perfect.

This is between Ollie’s not insubstantial commitments to The Cat Empire. Plus, ongoing collaborations with the Indigenous choir Spinifex Gums, and a few other smaller projects.

“I moved to Bellingen two years ago,” says Ollie, “But I spend about three months of every year touring.”

And Georgie herself is busy with at least two other bands in Bellingen, as both trumpet player and singer.

However, Ollie and Georgie understand that, like jazz, the best collaborations allow room for the individual. And one can imagine that, like the wild and crazy improvisations Hip Mama hurl out, just when life seems most chaotic they will slide back around after their solo-break, with a control reflecting the fine musicians they are, and magically be in sync.

For more info on Ollie go to www.omm.com.au and follow Georgie @georgiechorley





Jan Carter with one of her Brumbies. Image by Elize Strydom



The Bond. Image courtesy of Carol Hancock Photography



Image courtesy of Kris Daley Photography



Brumbies at Long Plain, Kosciuszko National Park. Image courtesy of Kris Daley Photography

Saving the Australian Brumby

*There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around
That the colt from Old Regret had got away,
And had joined the wild bush horses - he was worth a thousand pound,
So all the cracks had gathered to the fray.*

Words by Zacharey Jane

Brumby images thanks to Carol Hancock and Kris Daley



The Meeting. Image courtesy of Carol Hancock Photography

Like so many of us, I learned this poem in primary school and can write these lines from memory. Brumbies, these ‘wild bush horses’, are a much-loved part of Australian history. The Brumby has carried us into the annals of legend, from The Man from Snowy River through World War I, to now. No, wait – not anymore. Now, Brumbies are deemed a feral pest in many parts of Australia and it is legal to hunt and shoot them, from helicopters, like vermin. A shocking way to thank these beautiful, loyal creatures that have done so much to help us.

STB Tallagandra Rose, known as Rosie to her adopted family, is one such who might have been slaughtered had she not been rescued by Jan Carter from Save the Brumbies (STB) at the New England Brumby Sanctuary, Armidale.

Rosie’s mother died when Rosie was just a few weeks old. The abandoned foal was found by a horse trapping contractor at the

Guy Fawkes National Park, who took pity on Rosie and called Jan. Jan dropped everything to make the 10-hour round trip, bringing Rosie to their high-level care sanctuary at Bellingen. “Rosie was very weak, but she was still standing, and the Brumby is a hardy animal. Even then her sweet nature shone through – we called her Rosie because she was so beautiful,” says Jan.

Rosie thrived under the loving care of Jan and her volunteers. She soon became a favourite with visitors and was eventually adopted by Elizabeth and Tom Testone, in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

I ask Elizabeth why she chose Rosie.

“Tom had been following the plight of the Brumbies and was devastated after hearing about the Brumby cull of 2000, right after Australia showcased the importance of these horses in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 2000 Sydney

Olympics. In 2006, I came across the STB website and decided to surprise Tom for his birthday by sponsoring a Brumby. By sponsoring a foal, we figured we had a few years to prepare before we officially brought her home. In October 2007 we went to meet Rosie in person and that is when our love and devotion for Brumbies officially began.

He was hard and tough and wiry — just the sort that won't say die — There was courage in his quick impatient tread; And he bore the badge of gameness in his bright and fiery eye, And the proud and lofty carriage of his head.

The Testone's love affair grew to include Ruben, hand-picked by Jan as a suitable 'bestie' for Rosie: it's a policy of STB to rehome Brumbies in pairs or small mobs. Ruben and Rosie are inseparable now and Elizabeth says that although they have different personalities, both are intelligent, hardy, loyal animals who repay love and respect tenfold. Elizabeth cannot imagine life without them. In support of protecting Brumbies, Elizabeth says:

"Our Brumby heritage is very important to our colonial history. What strikes an even deeper chord is that Guy Fawkes National Park, where Rosie and Ruben came from, was originally a remount station for the Australian Cavalry, before it was abandoned along with its horses at the start of WW2. The ancestors of today's Guy Fawkes Brumbies carried our Light Horsemen to victory in WW1. Sadly, they never got to come home. Brumbies are a living link to these four-legged Diggers that never returned, and we believe they should be cherished and honoured out of respect: they were as much a part of our history as the brave men who rode them."

Horses from the Northern Tablelands of NSW were bred for the

remount trade and known as Walers; the Brumbies today can be traced back to those early bloodlines, including the great Arabian stallion, Saladin. It was the Australian Light Horsemen who were first to cross the desert and enter Damascus in WW1, ahead of Lawrence of Arabia.

Save the Brumbies is a registered charity petitioning for the Brumby, working towards the abolition of aerial or ground shooting of Brumbies, Australia wide. STB wants humane management plans introduced, that comply to RSPCA guidelines, supporting the continuation of healthy Brumby herds as a part of our national heritage. Indeed, the United Nations argues that all countries of the world must conserve wild horses to breed back the strength and endurance we have lost in domestic horses through inbreeding. Jan and her crew are all volunteers. The refuge runs on donations and sponsorships, which can be easily organised online as small monthly payments. In drought, feed is expensive, so any donations are gratefully received.

Australians celebrate ANZAC Day as important to our national identity. But what of the beautiful horses who stood beside those ANZACs? Can we let their descendants be shot down like vermin?

Let's give Banjo Patterson the final word on the future of the Australian Brumby:

*But his pluck was still undaunted, and his courage fiery hot,
For never yet was mountain horse a cur.*

For more information or to donate,
go to www.savethebrumbies.org



Grace by Carol Hancock Photography. All of Carol's images are from the Kosciuszko National Park where, as of June this year, the Brumbies are protected under the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill. The Brumbies from the Guy Fawkes River National Park have no such protection.

Odd + Quirky Facts on... Macleay Valley



Kempsey has been home to Akubra since 1974. The town holds the Guinness World Record for the largest gathering of people wearing Akubra hats (1,912 people in 2012).



Image courtesy of Macleay Valley Coast



Founder of Milo, Tom Mayne on his 90th b'day. Image courtesy of Nestlé

Milo was first developed in Smithtown in 1934 and is still produced here. These days Milo can be found in 40 countries worldwide.

Captain Cook named Smoky Cape in 1770 due to the smoke emitted by fires on the headland. The hills were an important meeting place for local indigenous tribes and the fires were likely to have been created from such a gathering.



The Macleay Valley has over 100,000 hectares of National Parks, State Forests, wetlands and rainforest



Image of Slim at his childhood home by C John Elliott

Australia's King of Country, Slim Dusty was born in Nulla Nulla Creek in 1927. His childhood home, 'Homewood' is now heritage-listed.



Kempsey's National Heritage Courthouse was used for scenes in the movie, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*. The film was adapted from a book by renowned Aussie author Thomas Keneally – who grew up in Kempsey.



SAWTELL COMMONS

between the mountains and the sea

'Commons' (def') is the cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society, including natural materials such as air, water, and a habitable earth.



"A place of family, friends, fresh air & all good things." John Gowing



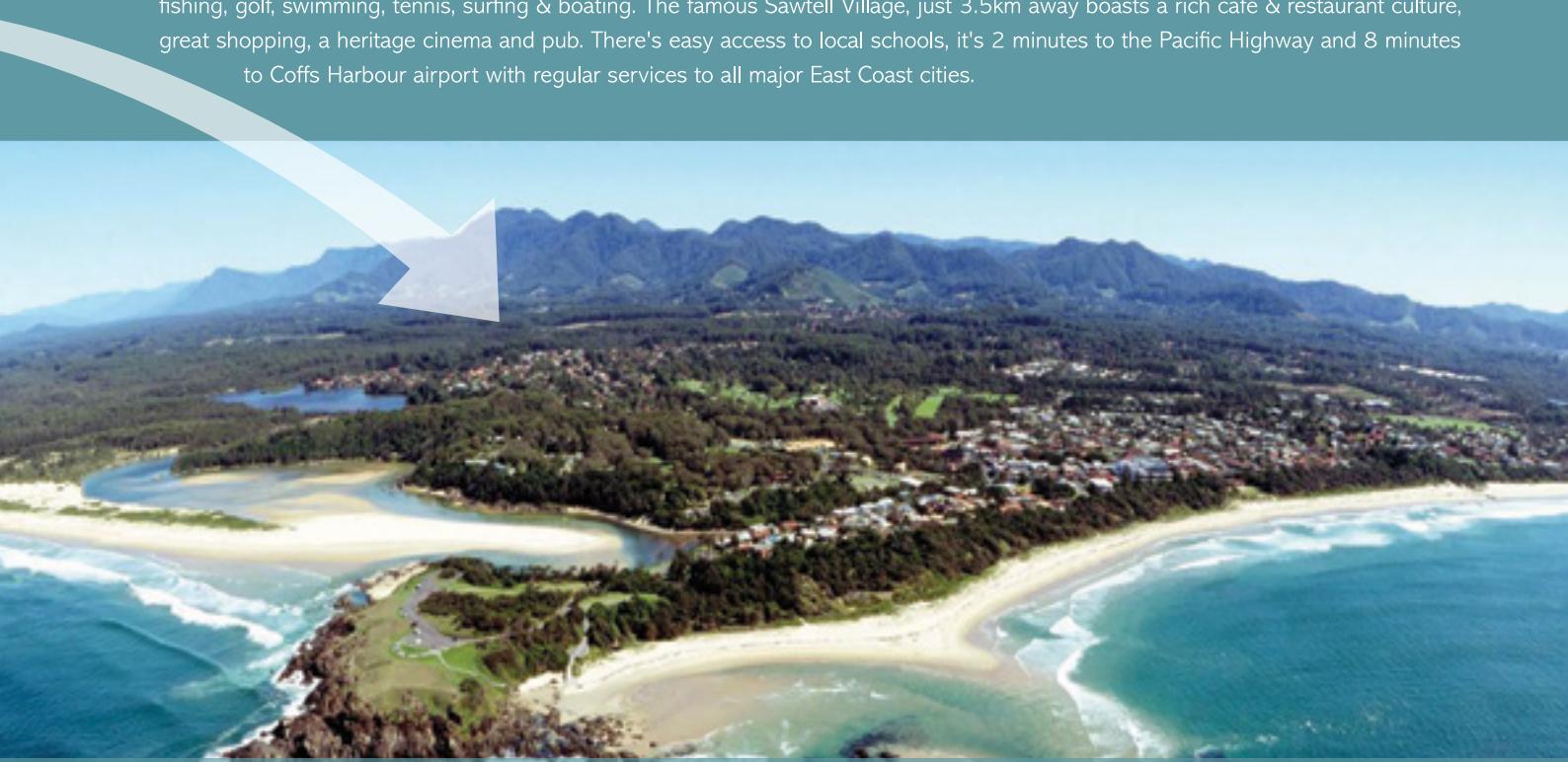
Bongil Bongil National Park



Site map subject to change, pending development approval.

Sawtell Commons 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 park lands. A children's playground & community garden will be features 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 2 minutes to the Pacific Highway and 8 minutes to Coffs Harbour airport with regular services to all major East Coast cities.



Thank you to all those who have already registered.

Register your interest before February 28th to receive VIP priority block selection.

Contact Olivia Hannah at olivia@gowings.com or 0416 388 562



Vines of Ricardo's Tomatoes. Image by Lindsay Moller Productions

From paddock to plate

While our beautiful region is well-known for its stunning beaches and relaxed coastal pace, it's also a burgeoning hub of local producers passionate about providing their community with the freshest and most nutritious fruit, vegetables and homemade goodies.

Words by Ali Hiddlestone



Homemade chicken and pesto lasagne from Bellingen Maid

Keen to learn more about this dynamic industry, *Coastbeat* caught up with four local producers to talk about their business, their philosophy and the overwhelming support they receive from the coast's locavores – a community dedicated to buying local produce.

Ricardoës Tomatoes and Strawberries – Anthony Sarks

Starting from a small honesty box set up at their front gate, Ricardoës has become an institution in the Port Macquarie area and surrounds, famous for its succulent tomato range and fragrant strawberries.

"We started growing a small tomato patch for a bit of fun. We found that people would be willing to drive any distance to get quality, fresh produce and that's what we were providing," says Anthony. "All of a sudden, word got out and we had people turning up in the middle of the night wanting our tomatoes!"

15 years on and the Ricardoës farm is no small operation, with 8,000 square metres of tomatoes – including Conchita cherry

"I just love growing good produce and providing the local community with a product they love."
says Anthony

tomatoes, Flavorino Mini Roma cherry tomatoes, large Roma and full-size gourmet tomatoes – along with 4,000 square metres of strawberries. All Ricardoës products grow in large greenhouses, making them an all-year-round treat. The family

owned and run business is also no stranger to the spotlight, with the farm becoming a popular tourist destination.

"We hold tours of the farm at 11am on weekdays, and our U-Pick strawberry experience has proven overwhelmingly popular with families looking for a fun, wholesome outdoor experience." It's providing locals and tourists with this experience that keeps Anthony passionate about his job. "I just love growing good produce and providing the local community with a product they love."

Lakeview Mushrooms – Dan Jessup

After growing up on cattle and crop farms with his family, taking over a mushroom business 11 years ago seemed like a natural fit for Dan Jessup. "When the opportunity came up, I jumped at it," says Dan. Operating out of eight large indoor growing rooms, the Lakeview Mushroom farm at South Boambee turns over a tonne of Agaricus white mushrooms and field mushrooms per week.



More delicious food from Bellingen Maid

The mushrooms are then delivered to small fruit and vegetable chains right along the Coffs Coast. "It's a great business, and it's farming but you're not dealing with the outside elements which makes it easier to manage. I now also employ five casual staff which helps too." One of the only mushroom farmers on the Coffs Coast, Dan is passionate about keeping his product in the local area. "I don't send my mushrooms to any of the major cities – they all stay here," he says. "This way they can be picked one day and be in store the next which I think is really important."

Tyler Farms (Dorrigo District Potatoes) – Mike Tyler

Built on four generations of farmers, Tyler Farms are the experts when it comes to spuds. "I grew up on the farm and left school early to help my father grow potatoes. Dad had been growing them since he was 14, along with my grandfather and my great-grandfather before that," says Mike.

The Tylers have been growing potatoes since the 1930s. They leave the potatoes brushed in red soil for freshness and increased shelf life and their produce has proven to be a long-time local favourite.

"Dorrigo has a reputation for growing extraordinary potatoes because of the quality of the red soil," Mike explains. "To ensure this quality we also follow biological farming so we minimise the need for chemical sprays." With their crops spanning 20 hectares, Mike estimates that they grow between 500 and 600 tonnes of potatoes a year. While they specialise in Sebago potatoes, Mike says he is looking to expand production of Dutch Cream, King Edward and purple skin varieties as their popularity is increasing.

Bellingen Maid – Polly Walton

Polly Walton has always loved cooking and her passion for homemade cuisine is evident in the delicious array of savoury treats created by Bellingen Maid. Starting with one Bellingen customer – the local IGA store - Bellingen Maid now services the entire Coffs Coast, with the team of six creating



a smorgasbord of popular dishes including fresh salads, fish cakes, patties, lasagnas, pies and sausage rolls, just to name a few. "Things have really taken off over the last few years," says Polly. "I think the fact that everything is handmade and personalised makes us a popular choice for locals. Every one of our quiches is handmade and pressed – we don't use anything mechanized in our kitchen."

Polly believes that creating local food for local people is what makes Bellingen Maid popular. "People love that our food is all made here in Bellingen and we really push that local ethos."

Ricardoes, Lakeview Mushrooms, Dorrigo Potatoes and Bellingen Maid products can all be found at Fresco Marketplace at Coffs Central.



Stormriders
Ripcurl Alf Shirt \$79.99

BOOK FACE
Stainless
Steel Drink
Bottle \$69.95



Sunglass Hut
Polarised Ray Ban
Sunglasses \$225.00



**Chemist
Warehouse**
Tommy Hilfiger
EDT 200ml
Spray \$59.99



Stormriders
Afends Denim Shorts \$79.99

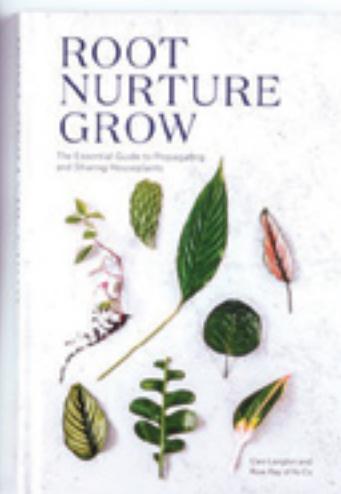
Stormriders
Reef Thongs
\$99.99



Prouds
Pulsar Watch
\$299.00



Strandbags
Colorado Wallet
\$54.99



BOOK FACE
Root, Nurture, Grow \$29.99

 **PORT CENTRAL**
'the heart of it all'



Debra Allard from Cheeses Loves You in the dairy on her Upper Burringbar farm



Debra with one her blue cheeses



One of Debra's much loved Jersey cows



Cheese from Debra's Cheeses Loves You

The rise of artisan cheese

A friend has invited you over for dinner. "What can I bring?" you ask. "Oh, just some cheese and crackers," he replies with a casual wave of his hand. Your chest tightens, and your breathing becomes shallow. No longer is cheese just cheese. Gone are the days of big, hard blocks from the supermarket; now it's all about local, handmade farmhouse varieties. *Coastbeat* speaks to an international cheese specialist and a cheesemaker, both based on the north coast, to find out about the rise of local specialty cheese.

Words and images by Elize Strydom

"There's been a revolution in consumer interest in all things artisan including cheese," says Will Studd. "There's a thriving local industry." And he should know. Will has been a cheese aficionado since the 1970s when he began establishing delis in London.

"I'm a cheese seller," he clarifies. "Making cheese isn't something I want to do – it's really hard work – but I admire the dedication and enthusiasm of those who do."

After visiting the northern rivers on their honeymoon, Will and his wife Bonnie settled in Melbourne with the view of eventually putting down roots in Byron Bay.

He worked as a wholesaler in the city before the cold Melbourne winters drove him north to his beloved Byron.

Since then, Will has released two books, produced and presented more than 70 episodes of TV series *Cheese Slices*, visited hundreds of dairies all over the world and led the campaign for Australian cheese made from raw milk.

"When I arrived, there wasn't any real local specialty cheese," Will says. He acknowledges that farmers markets have played an important role in the success of artisan and farmhouse cheese.

"The markets give the producers a chance to meet their customers and for customers to interact directly with cheesemakers," he explains. "Making great cheese is one thing but you've got to be able to sell it and farmers markets provide that platform."

Will thinks one of the most important elements of specialty cheese is the distinct character that represents where it has been made. "When you buy artisan cheese you want to be able to taste Byron Bay or Nimbin or Burringbar," he says.

"That's one of the things my friend, Nick Haddow from the Bruny Island Cheese Company in Tasmania is working on. He's going to set up a dairy on Bruny Island and concentrate on making cheese that really has a taste of place."

Will considers Nick's artisan cheeses to be some of the best in Australia. Locally, he's excited about Nimbin Valley Dairy and Cheeses Loves You which is produced by Debra Allard in Upper Burringbar.

"They represent as close to a taste of place as we can get up here without using raw milk," Will says. "Debra has a small herd of Jersey cows that produce really rich milk, so she

makes some lovely cream, yoghurts and cheeses."

Debra first learnt to make cheese 13 years ago and has spent time in Europe honing the craft. Two years ago, she and her husband Jim sold their beef cows and turned their farm into a dairy. The Jerseys provide fresh milk for Debra's artisan farmhouse cheese each day.

"I sell about 95% of my cheese through three farmers markets that are within 20 kilometres of the house and dairy, so it's nice, quick and local," she says. "It's taken off from the word go!"

Debra rarely manages a day off and says every season has been a challenge, but she has been rewarded with a strong and loyal customer base. "We're ticking boxes a lot faster than we expected," she smiles.

The crowd of people lining up in front of her table at the Thursday morning Byron Farmers Market confirms this. Debra talks about her haloumi, fresh ricotta and white cheese to a captive audience.

Perhaps they too are on the hunt for something special to take to that next dinner party.

Making great cheese is one thing but you've got to be able to sell it and farmers markets provide that platform.

The Bruny Island Cheese Company proudly supports the Gowings Whale Trust. For more info go to www.willstudd.com and www.brunyislandcheese.com.au



Cheese specialist Will Studd

Coastbeat also loves these producers and suppliers of delicious local and international cheese:

The Great Lakes

Burraduc Buffalo Dairy along The Lakes Way at Bungwahl specialise in fresh, water buffalo milk, yoghurt and artisan cheeses handmade at the farm, right next to the dairy. The award-winning mozzarella is available from Blueys Cellars and Deli at Blueys Beach or buy directly from the farm.

The Manning Valley

Comboyne Culture is a small, family-owned, artisan cheesemaking business that has been operating for over a decade. They produce quality French soft and semi-hard cheeses with fresh milk from the Comboyne Valley. Their website provides a list of stockists in the Great Lakes and Port Macquarie region.

Coffs Harbour

At **The Cheesemaking Workshop and Deli** you can choose from a rotation of over 300 Australian and international cheeses. Better yet, learn to make your own cheese at one of Lyndall and Mel's renowned workshops.

Pansabella Providores in Coffs Central offers a range of beautiful international cheese such as Roquefort from the south of France, Asiago from the Veneto foothills in Italy and Manchego from Spain's La Mancha region.

Fresco Marketplace, also in Coffs Central, stock Will's recommended Nimbin Valley Dairy as well as many other tasty



Mel from The Cheesemaking Workshop & Deli

varieties with an emphasis on imported Italian cheeses such as Taleggio, Gorgonzola and Truffle pecorino. Fresco love educating their customers and encourage them to sample their range before purchasing.

Russells Prime Quality Meats at Moonee Market (see p78) also have a great range of delicious cheese available.

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Freshwater Grill

Freshwater Grill restaurant at Kempsey Macleay RSL Club offers a dining experience to satiate all of the senses.

Overlooking the Macleay River this coveted dining spot offers guests a delicious, earthy menu focusing on beautiful, fresh local produce and high quality, tender meat sourced from local producers within the Macleay Valley.

The restaurant and kitchen at Freshwater Grill has recently undergone a significant renovation in order to further enhance the dining experience for members and guests.

The dining space now makes the most of the restaurants spectacular views and location as well as delivering a menu that honours the amazing produce that we are grateful to be able to work with.

Speaking of menu, our Head Chef Lloyd Newell has been enthusiastically experimenting with some of the new additions to our state-of-the-art kitchen, including our new Josper oven.

The Josper oven is a unique combination of a BBQ grill and an oven in a single machine. It promises to take our meat dishes to a whole new level by infusing a wood-fired flavour at the same time as capturing and intensifying the meats moisture.

Our Summer Menu focuses on simplicity and versatility with our ingredient selection. We complement our proteins with fresh and zesty salads founded on the flavour sensation of when sweet meets sour.

Dishes such as Josper-baked Atlantic Salmon fillet served on a Green Apple Nicoise Salad, Pickled Poached Egg and Hollandaise Sauce will have our diners' taste buds begging for more.

Our Lemon-Zested and Parmesan Crusted Pork Schnitzel finished with Alto Olive Oil on a bed of Caramelised Apple Mash and topped with Micro Salad provides a zesty alternative to the popular Chicken Schnitzel.

Seafood lovers will be delighted with our twist on a Prawn Salad with our Tokyo-Style BBQ King Prawn Salad, topped with charred Rice

Paper Roll and finished with a Salad of Black Sesame Seed and Watercress drizzled with a Ginger and Mango Dressing.

Our talented and fun-loving Chef Lloyd grew up in the Macleay Valley then relocated to Sydney to commence his apprenticeship in 1986. After working within the bustling Sydney food scene for many years in a number of fine-dining establishments, he returned to the Macleay Valley.

He joined our team at Freshwater Grill with a clear vision; to create a high quality restaurant and dining experience that our Valley can be proud of.

He and his kitchen crew are extremely passionate about the produce the Macleay Valley yields and they design seasonal menus that highlight our region's fresh local produce.

"One of the highlights of my week is when I get a local producer drop off fresh produce that has been literally picked that morning," he says.

"As soon as it comes in I start thinking of what dishes I can create to make that fresh produce the hero. Then it's on our Specials Board that evening for our diners to savour. You can't get fresher than that!"

We look forward to welcoming you to Freshwater Grill.
To find out more or to make a reservation please call 6560 1111 or visit kempseymacleayrsl.com.au



Lloyd's Recipe for Vanilla Crème Brûlée

There is nothing quite like experiencing the silky smooth texture of thick custard topped with the rock-hard crunch of scorched sugar. Head Chef of Freshwater Grill, Lloyd Newell, shares an easy to prepare Crème Brûlée recipe that offers pure dessert decadence. Enjoy.

Method

1. Pre-heat oven on 110 degrees.
2. Bring the cream and vanilla extract to a gentle boil, remove from heat.
3. In a separate bowl, whip egg yolk and sugar together; slowly add to the cream whilst stirring.
4. Return pot to a medium heat stirring constantly for 3 to 5 minutes.
5. Pour into small ramekins or oven-proof dishes and place in water bath in oven, cook for 20 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and place in refrigerator until set.
(Approximately 2 hours).

To serve: sprinkle surface with castor sugar evenly then melt sugar with a small butane hand torch until caramelised into a crispy crust. Serve immediately.



Crème Brûlée



Salmon



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More Than Meats the Eye

In today's convenience culture it's refreshing to make a considered purchase from someone who knows their products and where they've come from. Russell Greenwood has been a butcher on the Coffs Coast for close to 19 years and recently opened a purpose-built shop at Moonee Market: Russells Prime Quality Meats. *Coastbeat* spoke with Russell about the new venture, his range of gourmet products and the importance of quality.

Interview by Elize Strydom



Russell and Deborah Greenwood at their new shop at Moonee Market on the Coffs Coast. Image by Brendan Ray

How long have you been in the meat industry? Too long!

My father was a butcher and yes, I got dragged into it, but I've always loved the meat industry.

I've done all aspects of it – export, wholesale and retail. It's been very interesting.

My wife Deborah and I have been in Coffs for 19 years and we had another shop for 18 of those years.

How did you end up at Moonee Market?

I came here and looked at a vacant shop and there was another vacancy beside it. I saw a great opportunity to take on both shops and make them into something altogether different. There was potential to expand and diversify. I value the good relationship I have with my landlords too, they really listen.

How have you diversified? We sell much more than meat now.

We've got sauces, German smallgoods, cheeses from around the world, olives, jams, relishes and oils. It's very gourmet!

Our dry aged beef is done in a Himalayan Salt Dry Aging Unit for up to 60 days. We're the only ones from Newcastle to the Tweed to offer meat that has gone through the aging process in this particular unit.

Have you had a good response? A lot of our former customers have followed us here and

the new customers of Moonee have been absolutely fantastic as well. In general, people have cut down on their consumption of meat but they're focusing on quality rather than quantity. We came to Moonee Market for the friendly atmosphere. It's a beautiful shopping centre!

Tell me about the design of the shop? It's quite long and you can see everything from outside. Customers can look through the windows and decide what they'll buy before they even step inside.

When they do come in, they're greeted by my wife Deborah, who is my right hand. She's very friendly and efficient. There are self-service units to the left and right of the main counter. I want customers to be comfortable and feel they can make their own choices.



Russell also sells oils, sauces, cheese, jams and relishes

What sets you apart? We take pride in what we do. We wouldn't sell anything that we wouldn't eat ourselves and that's the way we've always done it. I don't like to sell rubbish so I'm very particular about what we put out over the counter. We've been doing it for 18 years, so we have the right people to buy from. Many of our customers want to know where their meat comes from and we can answer them with confidence.

When asked for a great recipe, Russell suggests www.australianbeef.com.au. Here is one tasty dish:

Sausage, Kale, Mushroom and Feta Frittata

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 4 x 200g beef rump steaks, trimmed
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp ras el hanout or Moroccan spice
- 1 cup labneh
- 1 tbsp pine nuts, toasted

Kale salad

- 1 bunch Tuscan kale (cavalo nero), trimmed, washed and shredded
- Juice of half a lemon
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 250g grape or baby roma tomatoes, halved/quartered
- 200g green beans, 4cm lengths
- Lebanese bread, to serve

Method

1. Brush steaks with oil and sprinkle both sides with spice, salt and pepper. Preheat a char grill or BBQ to very hot and cook steaks for 4-5 minutes per side or until cooked to your liking. Rest for 5 minutes. Slice.
2. Place kale in a large bowl with lemon juice, salt pepper and oil and turn to coat. Pour boiling water over green beans, leave for 5 minutes, drain. Combine kale with tomatoes and blanched beans.
3. Serve beef rump with kale salad and labneh topped with pine nuts, drizzled with a little extra oil if you like.

**Russells Prime Quality Meats is located at Moonee Market. Chat with Russell and Deborah in store or reach them via Facebook
- Russells Prime Quality Meats**



Image of Russell at work by Rob Wright

Meet the Barista – Bookface Café

In the heart of Port Macquarie just at the entrance to Port Central, you'll find the perfect spot to grab a coffee and something delicious to eat. And being part of the Book Face book store means that there's no better spot to soak up those gorgeous summer rays and tuck into a riveting read. *Coastbeat* caught up with Jo Hawes who runs the café with her husband Dan.



L to R - Jamie, Pallas, Dan, Jo and Meheret. Image by Brendan Ray

We understand that you are both long-term locals here in Port? Yes, we're both now in our early 40s and have lived here since our late teens when we made the move (as childhood sweethearts) from Kempsey. Dan is actually a painter by trade having done that for close to 25 years and I worked as a pharmacy assistant for that same length of time. We have two children, Jake and Georgia. Jake (20) was working with us full-time but has recently commenced a new role with Telstra here in Port Central. He still helps out when he can. Georgie is only 15 but she lends us a hand after school and on weekends.

How long have you been here at the Bookface Café? We purchased the café in May 2015.

What motivated the decision to step away from your existing careers and buy Bookface Café? Our good friends own Peak Coffee Australia (the first coffee roasting business to be located on the mid north coast) and they had been telling us for years to make the switch to coffee. So, when the opportunity arose, we jumped at it. It was very scary to start but also very exciting. We have now owned the café for 3½ years and Dan and I agree that it was the best move we've ever made.

What are the pros and cons of working with your partner? We've been married for nearly 20 years and are best friends so that helps when working together.

Do you focus on quite separate components within the business? Yes, we do. Dan generally deals with the

coffee side and I mostly deal with the food, staff and the administrative part of the business.

What makes a great barista? I think a passion for great quality coffee and the ability to consistently deliver that.

And a great coffee? I think delicious coffee is the result of quality coffee beans that are freshly roasted. Good quality milk is important too.

What key qualities do you look for in your team? We value staff with plenty of personality that are willing to go above and beyond. It also helps to work well under pressure and be supportive of other staff.



And you source many of your products locally? Yes, all of our suppliers are local. Not only do they use quality fresh ingredients, but they are passionate about their quality too.

We have numerous local suppliers but do source a great deal from Burkhardt's Organic Bakery and Bels Gordon St Bakery.

What are your favourite menu items? The frittata and salad that I make from scratch in our commercial kitchen and our toasties with mango chutney or fig conserve.

What sets your café apart? We are a very fast paced café that provides friendly and efficient service. We strive to consistently deliver specialty coffee and quality menu items. We also cater well for the gluten free and vegan customers.

What do you love about living in Port? We love Port Macquarie with both the bush and the beach within such easy reach. People often go away for holidays, but we think the best holiday destination is right here on the mid north coast.

Why is this region your cup of tea? Having been lucky enough to be born and bred here, this is home.

Do you get much time away from work together? Yes, wherever possible we try to have Sundays together as a family. We like to 4WD or paddleboard at Point Plomer near Crescent Head.

If we have a little more leave, we pack up the caravan for a beachside stay at Point Plomer or Diamond Head.

We also enjoy bush camping at Swans Crossing by the beautiful Upsalls Creek in the Kerewong State Forest.

Thanks so much Jo.

Bookface Café is located at Port Central.

Jo and Dan can be reached at the café on Ph (02) 6584 4238



Image of Jo Hawes by Elize Strydom

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The guest retreat on the Nulla Nulla property



Fresh produce is available daily at the farm gate



Tools of the trade



Guido at work

Forging a Sustainable Life

It's not often you meet people like Wendie McCaffley and Guido Gouverneur – a couple who have packed so much into a lifetime that it's hard to keep track of it all. After long and illustrious careers, the successful blacksmiths left a booming business behind in Sydney to buy a remote property in Nulla Nulla, west of Kempsey in the Macleay Valley. Guido and Wendie now face their most exciting creative challenge yet – living the sustainable dream.

Words by Geordie Bull

Photography by Aaron Cuneo



Guido and Wendie from Nulla Nulla Farm

Driving into Nulla Nulla Farm is like entering a long-lost Garden of Eden. Located a stone's throw from Slim Dusty's childhood home, the property is an island of lush greenery encircled by the pristine waters of Nulla Nulla Creek. It's not hard to see why Guido and Wendie, who moved here last year, fell in love with this place and the potential it holds.

The creative Kiwi couple met in Australia and established their business, Wrought Artworks in 1987. Guido was already an accomplished blacksmith, having learned the trade from his father in what began as a literal baptism of fire.

"I was about five years old and watching my father work, when a spark flew up, landed on my woollen jumper and burned a hole straight through it," Guido says. "It made such an impression on me. From then on, I was hooked!"

Wendie, an accomplished textile artist and fashion designer, became enthralled with the ancient craft of blacksmithing as she watched Guido work. After completing an apprenticeship, she quickly developed a name for herself creating architectural metal sculptures and lighting fixtures for a number of Sydney homes, calling them her 'Wendie houses'.

"I was about five years old and watching my father work, when a spark flew up, landed on my woollen jumper and burned a hole straight through it."

When the couple took over the Eveleigh Locomotive Workshop in 1991, Wrought Artworks went from strength to strength – employing up to 30 staff and creating some of Sydney's most iconic metal structures. It was during this time that Guido was commissioned to craft the Dawes Point Harbour balustrade – the

most photographed railing in Sydney. Wendie and Guido became well-known in Sydney creative circles, garnering media attention as they campaigned to save the government-owned workshop from being sold to developers.

"It was such a busy time," Wendie says. "It was just work, work and more work - plus we had two kids to raise! During that time, we always had the dream of buying a property,

growing veggies and working on our own designs rather than big commissions. Even in the city, we had free range chooks and grew our own food – sustainability has always been a priority for us." When the government sold the historically significant Eveleigh workshop to development giant Mirvac last year, Guido and Wendie took it as a sign that it was time for a change.

"When they decided to sell this amazing heritage site that we'd spent 25 years getting going, we knew we had to go," Wendie says. "We couldn't fight it anymore."



Blacksmiths in action

"We threw ourselves into learning everything we could about sustainable farming and rented a house on an avocado farm in Telegraph Point while we looked for the right place to settle." After an exhaustive search, they finally found Nulla Nulla Farm – a park-like property with its own golf course, an old horseman's cottage to holiday let and a beautifully crafted stone homestead. The couple swiftly adapted to the lifestyle change.

"While I do sometimes miss the income, I enjoy the fact that you can get by on the smell of an oily rag here," Guido says. "Living in Sydney, a lot of your money is spent paying for things to compensate for being there. Now I feel like we can finally make the things we want to make. This is exactly what I want to be doing."

Wendie agrees. "I've never been so happy - I don't think I knew what happiness was!" She says. "When we got here, I thought, 'so this is what it feels like to relax!'"

It's clear that, for Wendie and Guido, the idea of 'relaxing' means anything but sitting idle. In the year since settling at the farm, Guido has completed a sought-after commission to recreate Ned Kelly's famous armour for an upcoming Russell Crowe movie whilst also assisting Wendie to plant hundreds of fruit trees and establish a market garden. He was also recognised with a lifetime achievement award for his heritage skills by the National Trust Heritage Awards 2018. At the same time, Wendie and Guido have managed to convert the cottage into a popular retreat where guests can enjoy a home-grown veggie hamper, freshly baked bread and private yoga classes (Wendie is a yoga teacher). The farm also offers a camping option where all the gear is provided. Much of it, as well as the cottage furniture, has been made by Wendie and Guido.

It's all part of a plan to put their artistic skills to practical use. The couple eventually aim to run homesteading workshops, teaching

people how to create everyday items like wooden spoons and gardening tools.

According to Guido, "There's a resurgence in craft just as there's a growing interest in sustainable farming. We want to show people how to fix things and get them comfortable with having a workshop, carving with timber and growing food."

"People need confidence to do this for themselves because the world needs a new generation of farmers," Wendie agrees. "We believe that growing food and living sustainably is the most important thing we can do right now."

Fresh produce from Nulla Nulla Farm is sold at the Kempsey Riverside Markets and the Gladstone Quality Markets.

**Find the Nulla Nulla Blacksmiths Retreat
on www.airbnb.com.au**



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Sven from Amber Drop Honey



L to R: Finn and Neil Griffin from Griffin Family Honey.
Image courtesy of the Griffins



Image courtesy of Vicky from It's Naturally Honey

The Hive of Life

Bees are the ‘canary in the coalmine’: if bees die, so do we. Fortunately, there are people all along the coast not only looking after our interests by looking after the bees but selling delicious, pure Australian honey, too. *Coastbeat* meets four north coast apiarists.

Words by Zacharey Jane

Amber Drop Honey, Port Macquarie area

Ana and Sven from Amber Drop Honey started as Bee Rescuers. Didn’t know that these well-armed little wild things needed rescuing? “When a colony makes a home in an inconvenient place it worries people,” Ana tells me. “Calling a pest control company means killing the bees. The alternative option is to find someone like us to rehome the colony safely. We once rescued a colony that had set up home inside a rowing boat!”

Amber Drop Honey started as Sven and Ana’s personal contribution to helping our environment. Now it is Sven’s fulltime job. “Bees’ difficulties in surviving are a clear indication that we are coming to a tipping point in our environment,” says Ana. “But everyone can help bees, through everyday choices: plant bee-friendly flowers, avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides and purchase honey from a local beekeeper.”

Putting money where our mouths are, and inspired by the success of Flow Hive (see article in our Winter issue), Ana and Sven are crowd-funding to build a portable extracting, bottling and training facility for apiarists to help them market their honey direct to the public. They hope to create a ‘honey collective’ of pure Australian honey. Their website has more information – amberdroponey.com.au

It's Naturally Honey, Taree

Vicky from It’s Naturally Honey, started beekeeping by accident. Nine years later her full-time job is selling honey, honeycomb and queen bees. Despite the hard yakka, stings and seasonal ups and downs, she still considers bees ‘fascinating little creatures’. Vicky’s husband calls her bees, ‘the new chooks’.

Beekeepers come from all walks of life, Vicky says, and their numbers are growing. Without mentioning names, she cites a Governor of NSW as an avid beekeeper. Her local association in the Manning Valley has some 1,600 members. Vicky recommends that beginners join a local amateur club and find a friendly beekeeper mentor, much like herself. But she warns: “If you’re only in it for the honey, stay out. Our bees are too precious, and we can’t afford for them to be wiped out.”

Mila and Maple’s Arakoon Apiary, South West Rocks

When Bellingen beekeepers gave Jerome Allen a chunk of honeycomb to try he was transported back to memories of his own childhood in the south of France, sucking on fresh

honeycomb. “It was magical,” he says. “I placed my first box in the front yard and immersed myself in everything to do with bees and beekeeping.”

Jerome has partnered with his young granddaughters, who the business is named after. He regards beekeeping as an honour and a privilege but also feels the responsibility of safeguarding “these magical little insects which provide two thirds of the planet’s food through pollination. We have all become aware of the global issue surrounding bee health. We can save this sacred garden for all future generations, but it needs to be done now.”

All profits from Jerome’s honey sales go towards his granddaughters’ education and Save the Bees, Australia.

Griffin Family Honey, Coffs Coast

Neil and Tanya Griffin started beekeeping for fun, but as Neil explains, “It became an obsession. If an outsider saw the effort that goes into beekeeping they would think we were plain mad, but I find it very rewarding. We keep ridiculous

hours,” he says, “because shifting bees is done at night, with hundreds of kilometres between sites. But beekeepers help each other out and I think that is the best part of the game. I’ve met some great people and we always have stories to tell – usually about getting stung in the middle of the night!”

Neil worries about the future for his kids and his bees. “If you couple deforestation and monocropping with pesticide, herbicide and fungicide use then the odds aren’t good for bees. Or us.”

That’s the sting in our tale. Bees are our early warning system. Without bees we have no flora and without plants well... you know the rest. So here is the challenge to *Coastbeat* readers: plant bee-friendly bushes and buy your pure, unadulterated honey locally. Sweet.

“Bees’ difficulties in surviving are a clear indication that we are coming to a tipping point in our environment”

To purchase honey from these beekeepers; Organics MattR in Port Central stock the full range of Amber Drop Honey (such as ginger, chilli, coconut and with honeycomb included). Amber Drop is also available from Nourished Earth at Moonee Market and online at www.nourishedearth.com.au

Nourished Earth is also your go-to for Griffin Family Honey. Contact Vicky from It’s Naturally Honey, Taree directly at itsnaturallyhoney@gmail.com

For Mila and Maple’s Arakoon Apiary, email Jerome at jah.roam@gmail.com



The Ratua Story

As the first in our ‘Postcards from the Pacific’ series, *Coastbeat* caught up with dynamic Kiwi couple and owners of Vanuatu’s Ratua Island Resort and Spa, Brett and Leah Fasher about life in paradise and the tireless work they do supporting the local community through their charity – the Ratua Foundation.

Interview by Ali Hiddlestone



Local children with some of the 7,000 school bags distributed by the Ratua Foundation so far

Originally from Kerikeri in the North Island of New Zealand, Brett and Leah Fasher took over Ratua Island two years ago and now balance life between the two picturesque locations.

Cb: What inspired you to move to Vanuatu?

We loved the island, we loved the people and we really loved the Ratua Foundation and what it stood for. It was definitely one of the attractions to taking over the resort, with 100% of all the resort's profits going directly to the children of Vanuatu.

Cb: What is the focus of the foundation? The main goal of the foundation is to improve the educational conditions for children in Vanuatu. We do this through student scholarships and providing schools with supplies like stationery, library books, computers, sports equipment, musical instruments and infrastructure support.

Our main project is the ‘One Child One Bag’ initiative, which aims to provide every child in Vanuatu with a school bag full of stationery, books, pens, pencils and a small game. When you see how little these children have, it’s truly heartbreaking. So far, the Ratua Foundation has distributed 7,000 bags but there’s around

60-70,000 school children so it’s a big job.

Cb: How important is having charities like the Ratua Foundation to support the community? It’s vital. Vanuatu is still very much a third world country and the government simply can’t



Ratua guests can ride horses into the lagoon for a bareback swim



Ratua Island Resort and Spa is set amongst 146 acres of tropical gardens, beaches, lagoons and coral reefs

afford to fund essential things like schooling and even healthcare. I think it's certainly something we take for granted in Australia and New Zealand. Put it this way, in Vanuatu, school costs the average family three months of their yearly salary – and that's if they're lucky enough to even have a job.

Cb: Clearly the Ratua Foundation is doing really important work – what have been some of its key achievements? Helping with the rebuild after Cyclone Pam was quite significant. We have assisted with building classrooms, re-roofing school buildings, providing mattresses for dormitories, and installed power plants and water systems as well as computer labs and libraries at a number of schools. Another initiative is our scholarship program. We have six scholarships running at the moment.

The great thing about the foundation is that it's politically neutral, so it's completely independent. The Ratua Foundation board decides where all the funds go and there's no 'skimming' off the top for administration etc.

Cb: How can people support the foundation? When guests stay at the Ratua they're directly supporting the foundation, with 100% of our profits going to the community. It's very difficult to understand how little these children have until you visit a school. Guests will often give donations during their stay and some of our regular guests bring over suitcases full of supplies which they can then deliver directly to a local school. This proves to be such a rewarding experience.

Aside from this, cash donations can also be made directly to the Ratua Foundation website.

Cb: What can we expect from a holiday with our South Pacific neighbours? Vanuatu offers some utterly unique experiences. From watching the land diving at Pentecost Island, standing on the edge of a live volcano on Tanna, touring the extraordinary Millennium Cave, snorkelling at Million Dollar Point, diving through what is described as one of the best wreck dives in the world or

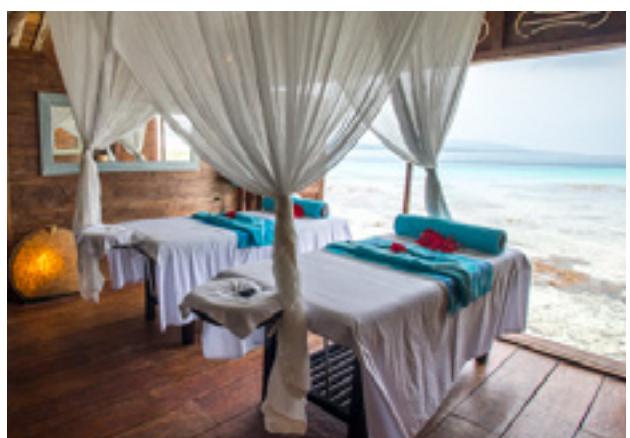
soaking up some sunshine on Champagne Beach – one of the top five beaches in the world – Vanuatu is truly a wonderland. And our little island paradise of Ratua has so much to offer too. Described as 'the land forgotten by time', Ratua is set among 146 acres of lush tropical gardens, private beaches, lagoons and coral reefs and has all the cultural and natural wonders of Vanuatu right on your doorstep. Guests can experience swimming with horses, going out on our brand new 46ft game fishing boat or taking a neighbouring Blue Hole tour through the rainforest. To truly unwind, our overwater coral reef spa is one of the most relaxing places on earth!

To support the Ratua Foundation visit

www.ratuafoundation.com

Travel Associates at Coffs Central have a great Ratua Island Resort and Spa package for 5 nights with flights and much more from \$1,990 per person.

Call 1300 650 326 to book your island escape.



The overwater day spa adds to the eco-luxe experience

Cleaning Up the Coffs Coast

With his dog Buddha by his side, Jim walks the streets and beaches picking up the rubbish left behind by residents and visitors. He isn't paid, nor is he looking for recognition, but his commitment to cleaning up can't be ignored. *Coastbeat* sat down with Jim and found out why he wants to make a difference.

Interview and photography by Elize Strydom



When did you first come to this area and what brought you here? I came here in 1976. I'd just come home from overseas and there was nothing really holding me anywhere. I was riding a motorcycle from Melbourne to Cairns when I stopped off here on the northern beaches. I was with a friend looking at the kangaroos at Safety Beach and she said, "How would you like to live here?" And that's how we ended up calling this region home. I didn't make it to Cairns until 15 or 20 years later!

What was Woolgoolga like back then? We drove in on a BMW with sidecar. We pulled up at the newsagency and an older gentleman was outside. He had a little moustache and was wearing a blue polo neck jumper and blue beret. He said hello and asked about us. I told him we were from Melbourne and planned to stay in Safety Beach. I didn't find out until six months later that he was the retired local policeman and when anyone new came to town he would introduce himself. He'd then go home and write their details in his little black book. It was just a small country village and you couldn't go unnoticed. You knew everybody, and it was very peaceful and quiet.

What did you do to keep busy? I was fixing motorbikes in the backyard and came across a guy on the side of the road who couldn't start his bike so I suggested he bring it around for me to look at. If you fixed someone's motorbike and it didn't break down, then someone else would bring the next bike and the next and then suddenly there's 20 of them and you're in business!

When did you start cleaning the town up? When I stopped work I thought, "What am I going to do now?" I was wandering around one day with my dog and just started picking up rubbish. I'd been doing it for a while when the guy who used to run the caravan park came and said to me, "You can't keep doing this!" and he gave me a stick with the clamp on the end. The rest is history! I retired in 1998 so I've been doing this for 20 years now. I have days off here and there, but I've done it every day, basically.

Does it frustrate you that people are still littering? If people drop rubbish in front of me, I never say anything, I just walk over and pick it up. Kids at the skate park come up and ask whether or not I get paid to do it. I say no and tell them that I live here, and it was clean when I arrived. A few minutes later I'll see them putting some rubbish in the bin or in my bag. Doing what I do gives young people something to look to. If anybody is going to do it, it has to be the older people. We had the planet and we didn't do too well so that's why it is the way it is. I'm in tears when I see all of the plastic.

What keeps you going? I've got a reason to do it. This is the frontline. When it gets to the sea it's gone, it's too late. So we have to work here, we have to work in the streets. We've got to look after where we are, that's all you can do. I love it here, always have. While I can keep going, I'll do it. If you don't keep going, you knock over real quick. Life is a gift, it's not a right. I'm optimistically thinking that my contribution will make a difference.

We can all take inspiration from Jim and make a difference by collecting rubbish, cigarette butts and plastics - www.take3forthesea.org



florent & mundey



Professional

Dynamic

Innovative

florent & mundey

10 Trevally St, Korora



4 2 2

\$ 719,000

162 Heritage Dr, Moonee Beach



4 2 8

\$ 950,000

1277 Solitary Islands Way, Sandy Beach



5 4 4

\$ 965,000

122B Old Coast Rd, Korora



6 5 5

\$ EOI

Brand New Home - Korora Beach

Ideally positioned only a short stroll to Korora Beach. There are three separate living areas, one perfect to enjoy as a living/media room, while the large main living area combines family, dining and kitchen in a light and bright open plan. Stylish kitchen with 40mm stone benchtops and stainless steel appliances, all perfectly complemented by neutral colour palettes that flow through glass stacking doors to the covered entertaining area.

Contact Shane Brooks 0403 266 707

The Complete Package

Tucked away on the high side of the street at the rear of Heritage Park, this delightful four bedroom, two bathroom property delivers on many levels. Vaulted ceilings, spotted gum timber flooring, skylights, innovative architecture and a floor plan designed for modern lifestyles make this residence an impressive entertainer and equally, a comfortable and versatile haven for the family.

Contact Yvette Ward 0403 602 544

Stunning Ocean & Island Views

Set on an easy care 2.5 acre block your options are endless. The open plan kitchen, dining & lounge areas lead out to the huge undercover deck, with fabulous views certain to Wow. Nothing has been left out in this home's design with CBus computer controlled lighting, ducted air conditioning, security cameras plus 10kw solar power with 18kw generator, 90k litre tank and solar hot water.

Contact Nicole Stark 0418 290 153

Ocean & Hinterland Views

This private and luxurious beach-style home plus enormous separate studio is exquisitely designed to maximise the stunning coastal scenery and create a beautiful indoor/outdoor lifestyle. Perched high on approx. 5 acres and commanding uninterrupted ocean views from most rooms from both dwellings. Only 10 minutes to Coffs Harbour, resorts and beaches.

Contact Yvette Ward 0403 602 544

"We Make it Happen!"

SOLD

5 Trevally St, Korora



4 2 2

\$ 735,000

11 Trevally St, Korora



4 2 2

\$ 719,000

64 Mimiwali Dr, Bonville



4 2 2

\$ 629,000

251 North Bonville Rd, Bonville



Vacant Land

\$ 695,000

Sleek & Stylish Residence

This new four bedroom home is one of the most stunning modern residences to be offered for sale in the highly sought after Korora Estate. Sleek and stylish with a high level of quality and finish, this home offers an abundance of space, natural light and contemporary comfort.

Contact Yvette Ward 0403 602 544

Brand New Level Home

Ideally positioned only a short stroll to beaches, this home is approx. 263sqm of floor space encompassing four generously sized bedrooms; the master bedroom includes a walk-in wardrobe and stylish ensuite. Those who love to entertain will appreciate the equally stylish kitchen with 40mm stone benchtops and stainless steel appliances, all perfectly complemented by neutral colour palettes that flow through glass stacking doors to the large covered entertaining area.

Contact Shane Brooks 0403 266 707

Brand New - Sawtell Ridge Estate

Boasting quality inclusions throughout, this brand new home will not disappoint. The open plan design caters for families seeking space, entertainers will love the covered alfresco area that looks out to the surrounding bush reserve. Features also include open plan living area, separate media room, kitchen with engineered stone benches & quality stainless steel appliances, ceiling fans throughout, main bedroom with ensuite & walk-in robe and remote double lockup garage.

Contact Luke Wenban 0418 165 979

Spectacular Mountain Views

Have you been looking for the perfect block to build your dream home? Look no further! Situated in prestigious and beautiful Bonville, this north facing 2.74 acre block features unsurpassed mountain & valley views, it is fully fenced with gated entrance. The home site is huge, level & elevated. Power and Telstra already connected to the block. World renowned Bonville Golf Resort is just down the road and beautiful Sawtell beaches are only 10 mins away.

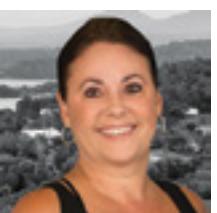
Contact Nicole Stark 0418 290 153



Shane Brooks
Principal & Licensee
0403 266 707



Nicole Stark
Sales
0418 290 153



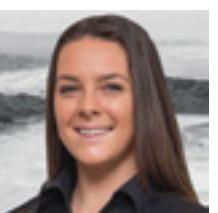
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02 6652 7888



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40 Park Avenue, Coffs Harbour, NSW 2450



www.fmrealestate.com.au

Coastbeat News

In Cb News we follow up on stories from previous issues of the magazine.



Nelli standing before her large-scale mural. Image by Rob Wright

Prize winning mural finds its home at Coffs Central

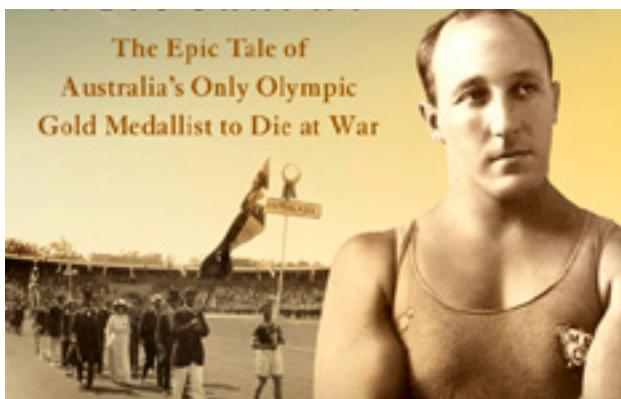
Earlier this year, Coffs Central ran a competition encouraging artist submissions for large-scale murals. The Centre was overwhelmed by the quantity and quality of entries. Nelli Gallop, featured in the Spring issue of *Coastbeat* was awarded first prize for her bright and bold artwork depicting 'Gurruuja' the whale and 'Gawnggan' the brolga, the beloved ancestors of the Gumbaynggirr people. The Bowraville based artist is renowned for painting large-scale murals, often inspired by Aboriginal Dreamtime stories. Nelli's striking work now takes pride of place on the Vernon Street façade of Coffs Central.



Beth and Hayden McMillan. Image by Alicia Fox

A Helping Hand for a Macleay Valley farm

'The Little Farm with the Big Name' appeared in the Autumn issue of *Coastbeat*. Beth and Hayden McMillan from Burrawong Gaian Farm supply their poultry to some of our country's most reputable chefs such as Kylie Kwong, Neil Perry, and Shannon Bennett. Sadly though, they have run into some trouble due to poor quality feed from a supplier which has greatly impacted their business. They have set up a crowdfunding page to try to overcome this challenging period. We encourage you to support them at [gogetfunding.com/helpsaveourfarm](https://www.gogetfunding.com/helpsaveourfarm)



Cecil Healy book

In our second issue, to commemorate our ANZAC history, we brought you the fascinating story of Cecil Healy - our nation's only Olympic gold medallist to die at war.

A boy from the northern beaches of Sydney, Cecil also played a part in bringing fellow Olympian Duke Kahanamoku to Australia. The Duke's inspiring surfing demonstrations popularised the sport in Australia.

The book on Cecil Healy by Larry Writer and John Devitt was officially launched in August, on the centenary of Healy's death, by the Governor of NSW, General David Hurley. Purchase the book where all good books are sold or at www.stokehillpress.com



The Pandion crew set sail

Also in Autumn, we met Miles, Melissa and their three children. Since May when the family set sail from Iluka, they've been in Vanuatu cruising among islands inhabited by 'the friendliest people on Earth'. Melissa tells us that they often drop the anchor in a secluded bay, dinghy in to meet the chief and before they know it, are loaded up with mountains of fresh produce and invited in for a meal. "Every day is an adventure in this beautiful place," she says. The Pandion crew are soon to make a short stop in their home port of Iluka before heading to Lord Howe Island for Christmas and south to Tassie for the remainder of the summer.

Follow their journey @ www.svpandion.blogspot.com



From The Farm to The Beach House

Earlier in the year (Autumn) we brought you the wonderful story of Tom and Emma Lane from The Farm in Byron Bay. Since then, the couple have been busy with an exciting new venture; The Beach House. The beautiful, boutique venue in East Ballina shares a similar ethos to The Farm but rather than focusing on produce and the land, The Beach House is all about marine and coastal sustainability. Set across two lush acres by the beach, the property is available for weddings, events and retreats and offers accommodation ancillary to an event, sleeping up to 28 guests. The Beach House opens soon. See www.thebeachhouseeastcoast.com for further information.

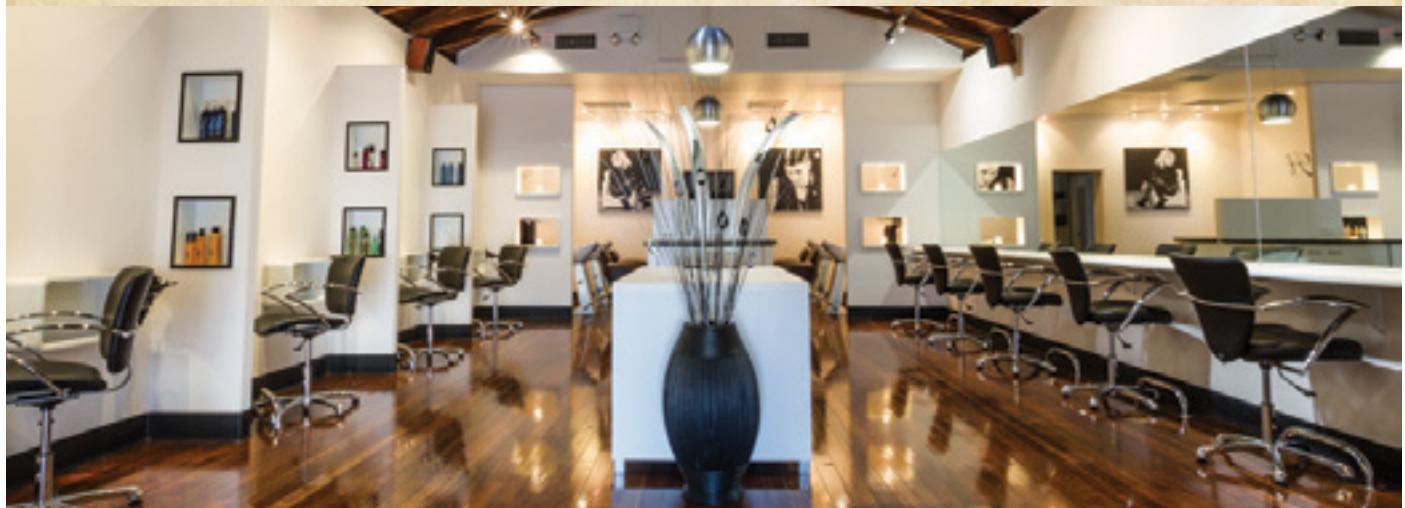
The Baird Institute

In our second issue, John Gowing highlighted the incredible work of Professor Paul Bannon who operated on his son James in 2017. Professor Bannon is not only a gifted cardiothoracic surgeon but also the Chair of the charitable foundation, The Baird Institute. The Institute seeks financial support for their innovative surgical solutions program at the Hybrid Theatre at the University of Sydney. With the desire to remain at the forefront of international cardiothoracic research, funds will go toward the development of a team consisting of a post-doctoral fellow and at least two PhD students. To support The Baird Institute on their quest to generate innovative research and findings, go to www.bairdinstitute.org.au

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Best Books for Summer

The team from Book Face Port Macquarie share their favourite reads this season.



Fiction

Inside The Tiger

We love celebrating a local author! This is the powerful and award-winning debut by Port Macquarie based author, Hayley Lawrence. Schoolgirl Bel starts writing to a Death Row prisoner in Thailand (just a year older than she is) and finds herself falling in love. Lawrence delves into a confronting topic and one not often addressed in fiction. The novel is aimed at young adults but is getting rave reviews from readers of all ages.

Nine Perfect Strangers

The newest release from Liane Moriarty tells the tale of nine strangers who gather at a health retreat. Under the direction of Russian wellness guru, Masha, the guests are there to reboot their lives. To say the woman-in-charge opts for an unconventional approach with her guests would be an understatement! Following the runaway success of Moriarty's *Big Little Lies* on the small screen, Nicole Kidman has already snapped up the rights to *Nine Perfect Strangers*.

Wintering

For those readers who enjoy crime fiction, we recommend Krissy Kneen's new novel about a woman whose partner disappears. With the dark Tasmanian wilderness as a backdrop, this book is part ghost story, part romance and part thriller.

So Much Life Left Over

The second in a trilogy by Louis De Bernières, this book follows on from *The Dust that Falls from Dreams*. The story centres on the troubled marriage between Dan and Rosie as they navigate the unsettled time between the World Wars. It has been described as 'evocative and emotionally charged.'

Non-Fiction

The Barefoot Investor For Families

Following the runaway success of *The Barefoot Investor*, Scott Pape turns his attention to simple and practical money matters for families with everything from the money milestones kids should know before leaving home to tailor-made lessons for different age groups – all part of the author's mission to make kids financially strong.

Milk Of Paradise

Acclaimed cultural historian Lucy Inglis offers an extraordinary insight into the history of opium – one of the most dangerous and profitable plants in the world. The author has drawn on a wide range of sources and trade, war, corruption, crime, medicine and humanity all come into play.

Jesse Blackadder's book *Sixty Seconds* and all of the above titles are available at Book Face Store and Café at Port Central. Phone 6584 6001

Intimate, Raw and Beautiful

All writers were readers first. On the eve of the American release of her acclaimed new novel *Sixty Seconds*, *Coastbeat* checks in with acclaimed writer Jesse Blackadder about the books that inspired her.

Words by Zacharey Jane

The title of this article are the words best-selling American author Bryan Reardon used to describe the writing of award-winning northern NSW writer, Jesse Blackadder.

Jesse is renowned for telling powerful stories with poetry and grace. Her latest novel, *Sixty Seconds* is a heart-rending story of loss and forgiveness, inspired by a tragedy from her own childhood. *Sixty Seconds* tells the story of the Brennan family as they deal with the tragic death of their son and will be released in the US under the title, *In the Blink of an Eye*.

Sixty Seconds revisits the northern NSW setting of Jesse's first novel, *After the Party*, a novel of darkly humorous social observation. Jesse's next novel, *Ravensheart*, is a work of historical fiction inspired by research into her own ancestors and their fictional interaction with Mary, Queen of Scots.

Chasing the Light, another work of historical fiction, dramatises the real-life race to be the first woman to set foot in Antarctica. Both are exciting, sensual narratives told through passionate female characters.

Jesse is also the author of the popular children's books *Paruka the Desert Brumby*, *Stay, the Last Dog in Antarctica* and *Dexter the Courageous Koala*. She is currently writing the screen adaptation for *Paruka the Desert Brumby* with the producers at Bangalow Pictures.

Jesse's books are rich with real people, their passions, their flaws and their victories. One finishes a Blackadder book feeling that not only has history been brought to life, but that you know the people of her books, intimately.

Jesse is also active as a mentor for young and emerging writers. As a regular speaker and teacher with the Byron Writers Festival StoryBoard program, Jesse and her StoryBoard colleagues visit schools in the northern NSW area in a fabulous custom-made bus-library-workshop, spreading the word about writing and how to do it.

Leading a life of adventure just like her characters, Jesse is currently on her second Australian Antarctic Arts Fellowship, living and writing on the ice for four months, working on a new book series and a screenplay with writer Jane Allen (*Cleverman*, *Janet King*, *Wentworth*, *Love Child*).

Before Jesse weighed anchor, *Coastbeat* asked her to give us her own Top 10 of all-time favourite reads. We are certainly putting her on ours and hope to catch up with her when she returns, but in the meantime, here is some great summer reading:

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society
by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

The Museum of Modern Love by Heather Rose



The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Understory by Inga Simpson

The Passion by Jeanette Winterson

All Creatures Great and Small by James Herriot

Antarctica by Kim Stanley Robinson

The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

Find out about Jesse, her books, films and adventures at www.jesseblackadder.com



Mama's Girl

Coastbeat celebrates mothers and daughters in this issue's Summer fashion feature. We took our mother and daughter models, Nicole and Mila, to beautiful Port Macquarie to enjoy a seaside shopping spree, with thanks to the fabulous fashion retailers at Coffs Central and Port Central.



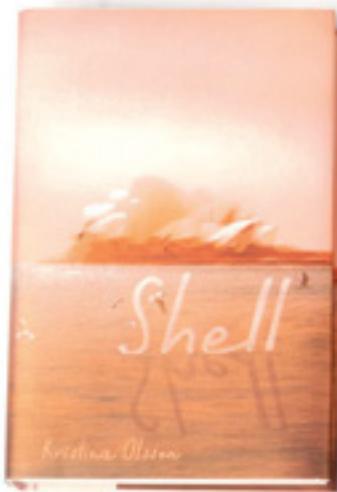
Baby Loves Pink

Pretty in pink works for all ages this summer, in dusty tones and retro styles. Add stacked runners for a 21st century look.

Nicole (l) wears a Pink Avery wrap dress from Urban Life (\$74.99) & carries a Royal Republiq curve bag from Uptown Local (\$339.95). Mila (r) wears an Element Wonder World Pini (\$79.99) & Serena Top (\$59.99) - both from Urban Life. Nicole and Mila wear shoes from Uptown Local. All retailers are in Coffs Central

Stormriders
Ripcurl Hat
\$39.99

Stormriders
Live Sunnies \$59.95



BOOK FACE
Shell \$35.00



Chemist Warehouse
Salvatore Ferragamo
Incanto EDT 100ml
Spray



Stormriders
Sunset Stripe
Swimmers
\$99.99



Williams The Shoeman
Emmi Tan Wedge \$49.99



Prouds
Hoop Earrings
\$299.00



Guess Watch
\$449.00



Stormriders Essential Festival Bag \$29.99



PORT CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'

Ally Fashion
Polka dot scarf
\$7.99



Urban Life
Le spec
enchanteuse
eye wear
\$89.95

Red
Sparrow
Tea Co.
Bamboo
eco cup
\$22.95



Red
Sparrow
Tea Co.
Tea scoop
\$12.95

Tea blends,
from \$3.50



K'pane
Friands and
cakes from
\$2.50



Flower bouquets
from Pansabella
Providores



Ally Fashion
Button front dress
\$36.00

Coopers
Rusty straw hat
\$49.99



Ally Fashion
Tassel
earrings
\$7.99



Kmart
Kate Morton Book
\$16.00



Lily & Sapphire
Two strap sandal
\$99.95

 COFFS CENTRAL
'the heart of it all'



Flower Child

Feminine florals are blooming this summer, in soft cottons and demure styles. Let the summer flow gentle on your mind.

Mila wears an Auguste Wynde play dress from Lily & Sapphire (\$145.95) in Coffs Central



70s Cool

Nicole rocks denim-on-denim, reworking 70s glamour in high-waisted flares and a safari-look denim jacket. Her floppy 70s hat is sun-smart and stylish.

With thanks to Coffs Central, Nicole wears Lily & Sapphire hat (\$44.95), Seafolly eyewear from Coopers (\$79.95), the Ticking stripe jacket from Sportscraft (\$199.99) and Eastcoast flares from Uptown Local \$159.95.



Simply Stylish

From the boulevard to the beach, elegance works everywhere. Enjoying the natural way with linen and cotton fabrics.

Mila (l) wears a Zulu & Zephyr coast dress from Uptown Local (\$200) and Nike SB shoes from Urban Life (\$114.99). Nicole (r) wears a Vestire Rosarito Jumpsuit (\$279.95) and carries the Status Anxiety bag (\$319.95) both from Uptown Local. Shoes are Braided Bootie from Dotti in Port Central (\$69.95)



White on White

Timeless and ageless, summer white lets in the light. Wear white with attitude.

Mila wears Elements Nashville overall in bright white from Stormriders (\$89.99) and The Brunswick long sleeved cotton shirt from Cotton On (\$34.95). Both stores are located in Port Central

Bespoke Perfumery

Throughout our lives, different scents have the capacity to evoke treasured memories, transport us to beautiful places and remind us of people we love. And while the creation of artisan fragrances is readily available in Europe, Carmen Bertlin Fearnley from Nosewise is aware of just one other person in Australia creating signature blends.

Words by Yvette Harper

Images courtesy of Mad Love Photography

I was lucky enough to meet with Carmen at her Valla Beach home where she created a beautiful, personalised fragrance for me. It's lovely to have my own little bottle that smells absolutely amazing and combines the scents that I adore. At only 15ml, I was understandably cranky when my eight-year-old son sprayed it about liberally because he loved it too!

Before meeting in person Carmen and I exchanged a couple of emails and I advised her of a handful of my favourite perfumes (commercially-made). My suggestions included those I wear as well as fragrances I have admired on others. Upon arrival I see that Carmen has used my suggestions to create a fragrance profile for me, reducing the selection from a blending bar of over 50 essential oils.

Carmen tells me that we're often subconsciously drawn to many of the same ingredients in fragrances. "Even across an array of suggestions, I find people are drawn to the same structure and many of the same notes will appear." Not surprisingly, the 15 or so fragrances before me feature a number of overlapping components.

While the majority of off-the-shelf products contain synthetics or are produced unethically (tested on animals or created using animal-derived ingredients), Carmen uses the natural alternatives available in pure essential oils with their therapeutic properties offering added benefits.

"People are becoming more conscious about what they wear and what they put on their bodies and we're very proud to offer vegan, all-natural essential oils that we source from different Australian suppliers."

Carmen has always been drawn to fragrances. As a child in her homeland of Finland, she would spend hours in the aisles of stores trying out all the different samples and, after completing her diploma in aromatherapy, she decided to pursue her passion for perfumery.

Here in Australia, where she has lived for the past 11 years, Carmen was surprised by how untapped the artisan perfumery



Bespoke perfume creator Carmen Bertlin Fearnley

market was. It comes as no surprise that people seek her out from all over Australia and internationally too – including lovebirds for whom she creates a unisex fragrance for their wedding day.

"In Europe perfumeries are very popular, they're practically on every corner and you can go in and make your own custom blend, but bespoke perfumery is still very rare in Australia," she says.

We get to the task at hand – finding the right combination of pure essential oils to make up my unique blend.



Freshly ground coffee is at hand for a quick whiff here and there to reset my sense of smell as I try one essential oil after another, putting aside the favourites until we're left with half a dozen or so. I find it fascinating watching Carmen at work – a drop here, two drops there, it's like watching a scientist concocting something in a lab or observing an artist select their colour palette.

I learn about the three layers to fragrances; the base notes being the building blocks of a perfume with those scents lasting longest on the skin. The heart of the perfume is the next layer and the top notes are those smells that quickly evaporate. My blend was created from seven essential oils in all (three for the base, two for the heart and two for the top).

My lovely little 'Y' bottle may only last a few months as I'm already wearing it every day but, generally speaking, the Nosewise fragrances have a shelf life of up to four years and will actually get stronger over time as the oils are still infusing in the base.

A few hours after my appointment, Carmen emails me the ingredients of my signature blend and outlines some of their aromatherapeutic properties.

Reading through it makes me feel invincible! There's pink lotus for increased mental clarity and intuition, mandarin for a sense of joy and playfulness, jasmine to instil a sense of empowerment and inner strength, patchouli to bring out my inner creativity and ambrette seed to support my adrenals in times of stress and tension. The last sounds perfect should my eight-year-old get hold of my much-loved fragrance again!

For more info visit www.nosewise.co. Carmen will be hosting a perfumery workshop at Coffs Central on Sunday 9th December. To book Ph) 5622 8900 - please note, numbers are limited.

Carmen's Suggestions

Don't rub your wrists together after dabbing on your fragrance; you're breaking down the molecules of the perfume by doing so.

Spray perfume in your hair. The texture of your hair holds a fragrance for much longer.

As an alternative to the hair, apply perfume to the nape of your neck and on each wrist – three different spots in all is plenty.

Keep perfume away from direct sunlight and anywhere too hot. Carmen advises storing fragrances in the bedroom over the bathroom (thereby keeping them away from excess moisture)

Opt for a light spray in the air, letting the perfume rain down on an item of clothing. There's nothing quite like a scarf that still smells of beautiful perfume the next time you wrap it around yourself.



Making Good Scents

For the creators of The Palm Beach Collection, it's always been about the coast. Inspired by their love of the beach and outdoors, the brother and sister team hoped their scented candles would remind people of that great family seaside holiday, epic coastal road trip or the feeling of freedom that comes from diving into the ocean. *Coastbeat* chats to the woman behind the range, Kirsten Walker.

Words by Yvette Harper

The Palm Beach Collection, which now includes candles, soaps and diffusers is from Kirsten and her brother, Mike Grey, who had an idyllic upbringing on the northern beaches of Sydney. Kirsten describes it as a 'wonderland' - boating adventures on Pittwater, bushland to explore, creeks to splash through and an abundance of flowers and native plants surrounding them. Jasmine from their grandmother's garden is just one fragrance inspiration.

In late 2009, Kirsten and Mike made the decision to walk away from their secure, full-time roles (she in the retail industry and he as a carpenter) to establish a business together. Sure, it was a huge leap of faith, but the timing was right. Or so they thought.

Kirsten handed in her resignation at General Pants after a decade with them as a buyer. The very next day, she discovered she was pregnant with her first child and the pair's best laid plans went out the window. After all, who in their right mind balances a new business with a newborn?

"It was utter madness, the hardest thing I've ever done. I was very naïve as a first-time mother to think I could juggle it all," Kirsten says. "I thought 'Oh the baby will sleep all the time and I'll just work when the baby sleeps' but when Hudson arrived, it was a shock. Neither of my kids (daughter Indigo arrived in 2012) slept much through the day. My husband and I were convinced our kids would fit into our lives, but it seems that we fit into theirs!"

From the outset, the business grew quickly with the siblings juggling all elements of production from pouring the candles to selling and delivering their products. Trying to do everything with a new baby made it even more difficult. "The business was so young though and needed my attention, so I had no choice."

Within a couple of months, Mike and Kirsten had 30 accounts across the northern beaches. "We thought we'd made it but then, in early

2010 we took on some agents and that's when we really saw growth. With their help, we could get all over Australia." Kirsten says before adding, "We've continued to grow every year."

The Palm Beach Collection is now available in 600 stockists



across Australia as well as in New Zealand, Singapore and Japan. "Never in our wildest dreams did we think it would turn into what it has," says Kirsten. "Mike and I just thought we'd give it a go."

"The Palm Beach Collection is now available in 600 stockists across Australia as well as in New Zealand, Singapore and Japan."

It's fair to say that not everyone is up for working so closely with those they love but it works for these two. "Our partnership took us to a whole new level. Family is our bond. I can't imagine doing this with anyone but Mike." In fact, the family connection even extends to Kirsten's husband Toby who also works full-time in the business. Toby and Kirsten sit side by side each day.

It helps that all three individuals have quite separate roles within the organisation; Mike handles production and operations, Toby is National Sales Manager and Kirsten is responsible for marketing, branding, product development, online store and financials.



"Of course it's not always rosy but we know the boundaries and how far to push. There's absolute trust too, so we can be completely honest with one another and still be sure that that person has your back, no matter what."

When it comes to time away from the business, the Walkers are likely to be beachbound, "We're all really happy by the ocean," Kirsten tells me. "My husband and kids love surfing and fishing and it's great to explore the coast. We're not long back from a great break in Byron Bay and we often get down to Huskisson on the south coast too. Next on the list is a family trip to Port Macquarie."

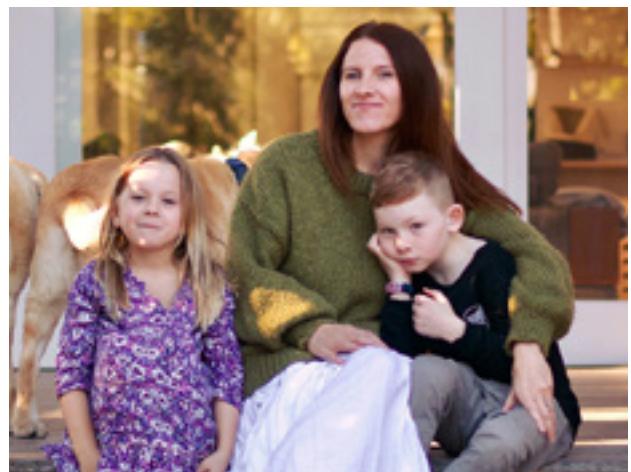
Not surprisingly, moving out of the city and residing somewhere with a more relaxed pace appeals to Toby and Kirsten. "We love the idea of getting out of Sydney and relocating to a regional spot on the coast."

Wherever she may find herself, chances are that there'll be a store close by with the gorgeous Palm Beach range available, including her new favourite scent, Sea Salt. And like any business owner well aware of all the love, sweat and tears behind the success, Kirsten's heart will swell when she sees the products on the shelf.

"I still get excited when I see our range. I don't think that feeling ever leaves you." Of course, she'll then straighten up any boxes out of place.

And so, with a spring in her step, Kirsten will be out the door to enjoy those things she most loves; family, friends, good wine, yummy food and sunshine, all of which makes for a beautiful summer by the sea.

For more info visit www.palmbeachcollection.com.au
Lilly & Sapphire in Coffs Central stock the full range from The Palm Beach Collection.



L to R - Indigo, Kirsten and Hudson Walker

The Summer Burn

It's the season when our skin tans, the sun lightens our hair and the ocean temperatures rise. The days get longer too so our bodies have access to more sunlight, thought to increase the brain's release of serotonin – one of our 'happy hormones'. With that being the case, Summer is the perfect time to get outside and improve your fitness. From the beach to the pool, the ocean to the garden, why not burn some calories while engaging in fun, outdoor activities?

By Jen McCulloch from Coffs Coast Health Club



Here are my Top 5 Summer Fitness Activities;

Ocean Swimming: Water temperature, waves, currents and the ever-changing weather all play a part in ocean swimming. Swimming is one of the most effective ways to blast those calories this Summer. Your total calorie burn depends on the stroke you choose. Whether you splash around burning 400 calories an hour or expend 748 calories per hour perfecting your butterfly stroke, all swimming burns calories. I consider Coffs Jetty Beach the best local spot for beginners.

Beach Running: Running is already one of the best cardio exercises for maximum calorie burn. Running at six-minutes per kilometre (10kph) burns an average of 300-400 calories per half hour of exercise, meaning that an hour-long run this Summer can easily torch 800 calories! Plus, running on the beach increases lower body strength and conditioning. Diggers Beach is one of my favourite locations for an early morning run.

Surfing: Depending on the time of day, the strength of the current, and size and speed of the waves, the intensity of surfing can vary. If you are new to this, get yourself to one of the many amazing surf schools on the coast. In general, this activity burns up to 400 calories per hour and you can work on that summer tan while you're at it! The coastline offers endless choices for top surfing spots. Locally, I'm a fan of Emerald Beach.

Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP): Test your balance with this amazing core workout at one of our many creeks and beaches. This is a great family friendly activity too. As SUP involves balancing on a board on the water, your core muscles need to be working overtime to steady yourself. You can burn 305-430 calories leisurely paddling in an hour. I would suggest Moonee Creek or Coffs Creek for this fun workout.

Beach Frisbee: Who remembers 'Ultimate Frisbee'? Don't underestimate this small plastic disk! And it's not just for kids. A 60-minute game of Frisbee will burn about 600-700 calories. It has also just been recognised by the International Olympic Committee and is eligible for the 2024 Olympics. So get yourself out there and start training!

About Jen

Jen is a personal trainer at Coffs Coast Health Club. She moved to Australia from the UK in early 2018. Originally a teacher, Jen retrained as a personal trainer to combine her passion for education and fitness and to diversify her career. Jen's love of fitness stems from her background as a long-distance runner. Her training style involves high intensity, functional and strength training.

For more info see www.coffscoasthc.com.au



Jen working with a client at Coffs Coast Heath Club at Moonee Market.
Image by Court Waters

Have you got household problem waste? Not a problem.

Drop off these items for FREE at
your Community Recycling Centre:



Coffs Harbour City Council CRC
31a Englands Road, Coffs Harbour

Port Macquarie Waste Facility CRC
Kingfisher Road, Port Macquarie

Gloucester Waste and Recycling Centre
385 Thunderbolts Way, Gloucester

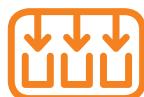
Tuncurry CRC
Tip Road, Tuncurry

Bucketts Way CRC
6839 The Bucketts Way, Tinonee

Raleigh CRC
Short Cut Road, Raleigh

Nambucca CRC
711 Old Coast Road, Nambucca Heads

Macleay Valley CRC
638 Crescent Head Road, Kempsey



**Community
Recycling Centres**

MIDWASTE
Regional Waste Forum

For more information and opening hours visit www.midwaste.org.au

Only household quantities accepted 20kg or 20L maximum container size. Please transport your materials carefully.

Dangerous goods and items other than those listed will not be accepted.

This project is a NSW EPA Waste Less, Recycle More initiative funded from the waste levy. Visit www.epa.nsw.gov.au

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, mulloway, 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	Mulloway, tailor	Spanish mackerel, kingfish, pearl perch, snapper	Bream, luderick	Closed season for Australian bass
OCT - DEC	Mulloway, 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, mulloway, 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, mulloway	Snapper, kingfish, Spanish mackerel	Luderick, bream, mulloway	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, mulloway	Snapper, pearl perch, kingfish	Bream, luderick	Closed season for Australian bass
OCT - DEC	Mulloway, tailor, bream	Snapper, kingfish, marlin	Dusky flathead, bream	Australian bass

Coopers
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Sportscraft
Jasper print shirt
\$99.99

Ramsay pharmacy
Jimmy Choo Blue
perfume 100ml
\$119.00

Bananas from
Fresco at
market value

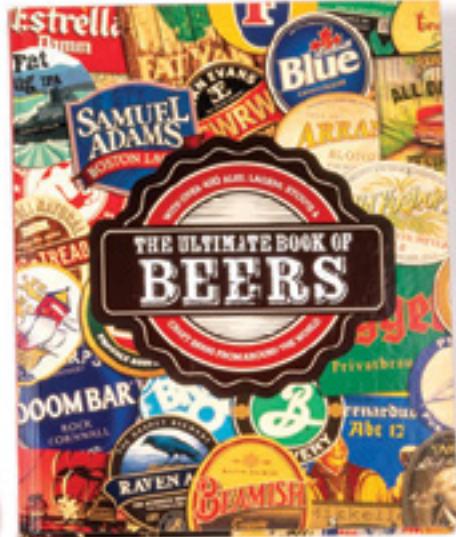


Kmart
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Gazman
Linen shorts
\$89.95



Kmart
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cards \$3.00



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beers
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Tea Co
Enamelled
ceramic mug
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Urban Life
Matchcourt shoe
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'the heart of it all'



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Solitary Islands Village is the premier over 55 community in Mullaway near Coffs Harbour, New South Wales. Luxurious villas, a world class restaurant, and the incomparable natural splendour of Australia's magical northern beaches.

www.solitaryislandsvillage.com



WHAT'S INCLUDED

Personal Director's Tour of the development site - Tour of Woolgoolga and the local beaches

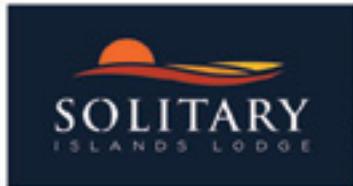
One night's stay at Solitary Islands Lodge - Breakfast and dinner at our partner restaurant Anchor Kitchen & Bar

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Solitary Islands Lodge bed & breakfast is located on Woolgoolga headland. Each room has ocean views - own ensuite and lounge. Located within walking distance of beaches, shops and cafes. (02) 6654 1335 | www.solitaryislandsodge.com.au | 3 Arthur Street, Woolgoolga, NSW, 2456

ANCHOR
KITCHEN & BAR



Anchor Kitchen & Bar is a restaurant committed to using only ethically and sustainably caught fish and crustaceans and local organically grown produce and livestock. (02) 6654 9234 | www.anchorKitchenandbar.com.au | 16 Market Street, Woolgoolga, NSW, 2456

Events Great Lakes



Christmas Race Day Party
10 December, Tuncurry
www.tfjc.info



The Merry Widow
11 December, Taree
mec.midcoast.nsw.gov.au



Forster Farmers Market
15 December, Forster
[f Forster Farmers Market](#)



Mount George Markets
22 December, Mount George
[f Mount George Village Markets](#)



Wingham Summertime Rodeo
5 January, Wingham
[f Wingham Rodeo](#)



TasteFest on the Manning
12 January, Taree
tastefest.com.au



Grow Your Own Music Festival
12 January, Tuncurry
growyourown.tv



Battle of the Boats
23-24 February, Elizabeth Beach
pacificpalmsslsc.org.au

Events Port Macquarie



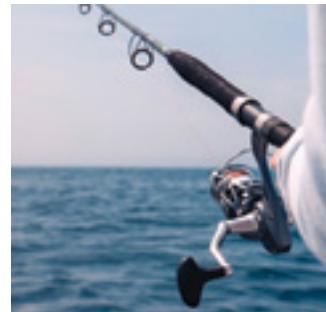
Festival of the Sun
13-16 December, Port Macquarie
fotsun.com



Thirsty Merc
28 December, Laurieton
laurietonclub.com.au



Oysters in the Vines
29 December, Port Macquarie
cassegrainwines.com.au



Golden Lure Tournament
4-12 January, Port Macquarie
pmgfc.com.au



Lunar Electric Music Festival
5 January, Port Macquarie
lunarelectric.com.au



Laurieton Riverwalk Mkts
6 January, Laurieton
riverwalkmarkets.com.au



Pete Murray Tour
10 January, Laurieton
petemurray.com.au



Grape Stomping Champs
10 February, Wauchope
bago.com.au

Events Macleay Valley



Motorcycle Toy Run
16 December, South West Rocks
naturelandclassicmotorcycleclub.org.au



Annual Santa Surf
24 December, Crescent Head
thescentheadsurf.com



Hat Head Trig Marathon
26 December, Hat Head
hatheadtrigmarathon.com



Crescent Head Rugby 7s
2 February, Crescent Head
visitnsw.com

Events Coffs Coast



The Italian Tenors
14 December, Sawtell
coffscoast.com.au



Carols by Candlelight
15 December, Coffs Harbour
coffscoast.com.au



Screenwave Int'l Film Festival
10-25 January, Coffs Harbour
swiff.com.au



Camp Creative Bellingen
14-18 January, Bellingen
campcreative.com.au



Cinema Under the Stars
2 February, Coffs Harbour
newcastlepermanent.com.au



NSW OZTAG Junior State Cup
8-10 February, Coffs Harbour
oztag.com.au



Summersalt Coffs Harbour
17 February, Coffs Harbour
summersaltmusic.com.au



Sgt Locke Charity Event
22-24 February, Bellingen
grubclub.dexwise.net

Events Clarence Valley



December Weekend of Rowing
9 December, Grafton
visitnsw.com



Yamba Christmas Markets
22 December, Yamba
simplyhandmadeyamba.com



Yamba Ocean Swims
7 January, Yamba
visitnsw.com

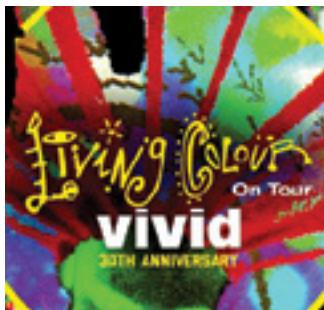


Gate to Plate Masterclasses
22 February, Yamba
gatetoplate.com.au

Events Byron Bay



Mad Professor Tour
5 December, Byron Bay
www.eventfinda.com



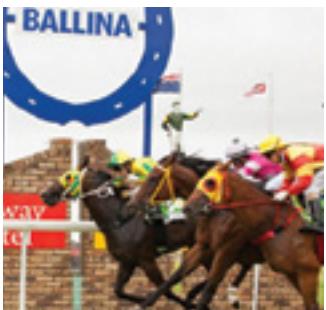
Living Colour
21 December, Byron Bay
[f Living Colour Byron](https://www.facebook.com/livingcolourbyron)



Secret Sunrise Byron Bay
22 December, Byron Bay
[www.secretsunrise.com/byron-bay](http://secretsunrise.com/byron-bay)



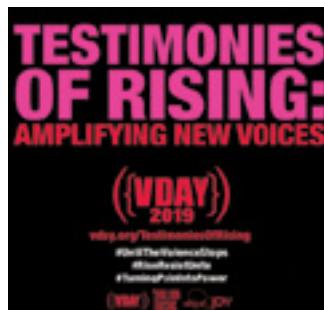
Christmas Eve Fiesta
24 December, Byron Bay
[f Barrio Byron Bay](https://www.facebook.com/BarrioByronBay)



Ballina Boxing Day Races
26 December, Ballina
[www.ballinajockeyclub.com.au](http://ballinajockeyclub.com.au)



Falls Festival
31 December, Nth Byron Parklands
[www.fallsfestival.com](http://fallsfestival.com)



Byron Bay V Day
14 February, Byron Bay
[www.byronbay.com/events](http://byronbay.com/events)



Wendy Matthews
28 February, Byron Bay
[www.wendymatthews.com](http://wendymatthews.com)



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13TH ANNUAL LADIES CHARITY RACE DAY, SUNDAY 13TH JANUARY 2019



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Pink Silks Luncheon Tickets available at coffsracingclub.com.au

The Pink Silks Trust is a local registered charity, committed in raising awareness and funds for local women who are challenged by cancer or illness
[Visit pinksilks.com.au to find out more](http://pinksilks.com.au)

Contacts / Retail Directory

bcu	Ph) 1300 228 228 www.bcu.com.au	Freshwater Grill	Ph) 6560 1111
Big Garden Furniture	Ph) 0417 205 807 www.biggardenfurniture.com.au	Greater Port Macquarie Tourism	www.portmacquarieinfo.com.au
Bookface Cafe	Ph 6584 4238	Macleay Valley Holiday Parks	Ph) 1300 425 605 www.macleayvalleyholidayparks.com.au
Coffs Central Leasing	Ph) 0403 266 707 shane@fmrealestate.com.au	Pacific Bay Resort	Ph) 6659 7000 www.pacificbayresort.com.au
Coffs Coast Health Club	Ph) 1300 040 479 www.coffsharbourhc.com.au	The Palm Beach Collection	www.palmbeachcollection.com.au
Destination Coffs Coast	www.coffscoast.com.au	Russells Prime Quality Meats	Fb – Russells Prime Quality Meats
ETC	Ph) 1800 007 400 www.etcltd.com.au	Sawtell Commons	Enquiries to olivia@gowings.com
Evermore	Ph) 6528 0000 www.evermoreliving.com.au	Stormriders Port Central	Ph) 6584 1600 www.stormriders.com.au
Fashion pages	All featured fashion is available from the retailers of Port Central & Coffs Central	Sugarmill Restaurant & Bar	Ph) 6653 6085
Florent & Mundey Real Estate	Ph) 6652 7888 www.fmrealestate.com.au	Surf Club Restaurant & Bar	Ph) 6652 9870 www.surfclubcoffsharbour.com
Freedom Coffs Harbour	Ph) 6650 0755	Travel Associates	Ph) 1300 650 326
Fresco Marketplace	Ph) 6652 8882		

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