



Seaside havens

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM CALIFORNIAN RANCH CHIC, ITALIAN SUMMERS, AND AUSSIE SURFER STYLE, THESE NEW OR REVAMPED HOTELS EACH HAVE THEIR OWN UNIQUE STYLE.
BY CARLI PHILIPS



ANSON SMART. OPPOSITE: TOMMASO RIVA

Byron Bay's Sun Ranch has a distinctive Californian-Spanish vibe.
Left: Crescent Head is home to surfing-inspired Sea Sea Hotel.



Surfing is king at Sea Sea Hotel on the NSW Mid North Coast; its rooms feature retro lighting, modernist furniture and personal art selections.

SEA SEA HOTEL

After over a decade living abroad, George Gorrow, the co-founder of streetwear fashion label Ksubi, has returned from Bali where he owned and operated The Slow, a trendy hotel in the heart of Canggu. Moving back to Australia with his family was always on the cards and their latest venture, Sea Sea Hotel, has been years in the making.

Located in Crescent Head on the Mid North Coast of NSW, the classic Aussie surf village has sentimental value for Gorrow. "Dad was a longboarder and

he was always chasing waves with us up and down the coast. Crescent Head point was on our hit list for those trips. I went back a few years ago for the first time," says Gorrow, who fell in love with the place all over again.

Sea Sea Hotel takes its cues from 70s surf culture and is more a cultural hub than just a place to sleep while you're in town. It has been designed so guests feel immersed in the local surf community, and runs a roster of events including live gigs, art exhibitions and movie nights.

All 25 rooms are on the ground floor so they feel ensconced in nature, wrapped by lush native plantings and succulents. The interiors have been furnished with retro lighting, modernist furniture and a range of artworks from Gorrow's personal collection. The kitchen serves up casual dishes with a hyper-local focus using ingredients from the surrounding Macleay Valley. On the drinks menu, expect batch spirits, tonics and extractions. Sea Sea is laid-back vacationing at its finest. *Sea Sea Hotel opens November 1, 2024*



TOMMASO RIVA



The welcoming rooms at Il Delfino marry traditional luxury with Aussie warmth.

ANNA PHAN



IL DELFINO

Named after a pod of dolphins regularly seen frolicking in the ocean out front, Il Delfino is a Med-inspired hideaway in Yamba at the mouth of the Clarence River on the North Coast of NSW.

Close to some of Australia's best surf breaks, it's one of the last remaining buildings on the ocean front. Fringed with palms and frangipani, it's been reimaged by Sheree Commerford, an Australian stylist who grew up on a nearby farm.

Commerford has transformed Il Delfino into a sophisticated yet simple inn, marrying traditional luxury with old-school Aussie warmth.

Each of the four generously sized suites and the standalone bungalow have been named after a seaside Italian location, such as Ischia and Ravello, calling to mind the lazy days of hot Mediterranean summers.

Rooms are decorated with vintage furniture sourced from Europe, and accessorised with bespoke fittings and artworks by local artisans. The walls feature murals painted by Commerford's friend, artist Heidi Middleton.

The welcoming rooms exude summertime charm, decorated with linens, pedestal basins, seagrass chairs and lipstick-red awnings. French terracotta roof tiles and crazy pavers line the paths, and every room has a balcony with flawless views to Yamba's Convent Beach.

The outdoor terrace is set with Italian sunlounges and umbrella tables, perfect for an aperitif. The whole vibe is charming and picturesque, yet not precious. Guests also have access to the convenient communal laundrette which is just as beautiful as everything else. ildelfino.com.au

THE ISLA

Established by a group of friends from Canberra who grew up holidaying in the area of Batemans Bay on the south coast of NSW with their families, The Isla is the result of good old-fashioned Aussie mateship. The founders — a few builders, a lawyer and a real estate agent — banded together to makeover an existing motel, infusing the 18-room property with a joyful new energy.

The Isla is a barefoot walk from the sand, and a stone's throw from beaches

including McKenzies, Guerilla Bay and Broulee.

September to November is perfect for spotting whales migrating from Antarctica, and further south you can see seals year-round.

Renovated by Those Architects, the revamped 70s motel is fresh and white, with modern amenities, retro breeze blocks, palms, terrazzo, and oak feature walls. There's an electric car charging station and shared barbecue facilities.

For those seeking privacy, the King Courtyard Room has a private pool. Some of the rooms are kitted out with kitchenettes and, instead of a minibar, there's the Cantina, a bespoke vending machine stocked with craft beer and ST ALi espresso martinis.

The Isla exudes a friendly communal vibe, and seamless self-check-in means guests can roll up directly to their door and start relaxing pronto.

theisla.com.au

To create The Isla, a group of friends transformed a 1970s motel into an architecturally designed destination with a friendly communal vibe.



COURTESY OF THE ISLA

Set in the Byron Bay hinterland, Sun Ranch has been dubbed 'The Hotel of Good Times'.



SUN RANCH

It may be new, but Sun Ranch is an old soul. Tucked into the Coopers Shoot area in the hinterland of Byron Bay, it's a hot addition to the local hotel scene. The designers, who are also co-owners, were inspired by the Californian ranches of the '70s, with a sprinkling of Spanish influence.

Founded by a team of 13 creatives, including musicians, artists, cinematographers, fashion designers and publishers, they've affectionately christened it The Hotel of Good Times.

The good times start from the moment of arrival as guests are treated to complimentary icy cold beers and salty margaritas with an invitation to continue on to the Whiskey Lounge, a cool, modernist den perfect for detoxing from reality.

Carpeted in green lawns, the 55-acre regenerated farmland rocks a luxe,

commune-style vibe. Its raw, natural beauty is ripe for outdoorsy pursuits, and there's even a badminton court under the gumtrees, and a grassy knoll for meditation and yoga. Carved into the hillside, the 25-metre pool is a masterpiece of basalt stone. At the heart of the property is The Field House, an alfresco kitchen and eating area with a brick Argentinian barbecue and a firepit.

In addition to the Pool Suites there are six, two-bedroom off-the-grid barns and one big private suite. The interiors are a dreamy haven of hipster bohemia with pieces sourced from LA and Mexico. It's a little bit rustic, a lot vintage, and plenty full of imagination.

And if you're itching for some sea water, Byron's beloved beach The Pass is a 15-minute drive away.

sunranch.com.au



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