

Bangalay Villas new on NSW South Coast

25 OCT 2018 · [CARLA GROSSETTI](#)



Sunnies? Check. Surfboard? Check. Golf clubs? Check. Bangalay Villas is a discreet getaway aimed at helping guests maximise their pleasure, whatever that may be. Whether you're into a round of golf every afternoon, a surf at dawn or a long-dreamed-of day spent glued to a sun lounger, this seaside retreat is the perfect escape. And it's as low-key as it is stylish.



Nod to nostalgia

Located just one hour's drive from the south of Sydney, Shoalhaven Heads is off the radar for a lot of Sydneysiders who motor past on their way to Jervis Bay or the Far South Coast of NSW. But the tiny beachside hamlet is now on the map thanks to the efforts of local husband-and-wife team Tom and Michelle Bishop, who both remain wonderstruck with the region where they spent their childhoods.



On the road to happiness

While Michelle used her interior design knowledge to inform the design of Bangalay Villas, husband Tom, of Evolve Building Group, was in charge of the execution. As a result, the boutique resort reads like a love letter to the landscape. The glass doors of the villas open out onto the Shoalhavens Heads Golf Course and contemporary Japanese gardens that include rivers of stone and careful plantings that complement the bush-beach environment.



Eco cabins

The resort, designed in collaboration with Studio International Architects, has been built with sustainable living in mind, from its north-facing solar passive orientation to drought-resistant planting and a solar-powered boar water pump.



Electric avenue

There are also compostable coffee pods in the room and a **Tesla** charging station out front. The large wooden entry door swings wide to reveal an expansive living room inside the red ironbark-clad walls. Inside, the villas are designed around a linear kitchen and a living and dining area with a cosy gas fireplace.



Form and function

The deck outside is another lovely feature: and everything about the soul of the place feels warm and inviting. There is also an expansive bathroom with a rain shower head and a storage facility outside each villa with room for surfboards and golf clubs. The pool presents another argument for staying put.



Coastal considerations

Altogether there are 16 contemporary villas set against the backdrop of the golf course and 7 Mile Beach sand forest of banksia, blackbutt and acacia trees. As Michelle tells it, the plants in the garden have been selected to grow and thrive in naturally challenging conditions near to the coast.

Country style

Michelle says she and her husband grew up biking and hiking around the area's many outdoor trails and their dream is for others to discover the rugged beauty of this part of the South Coast. "Bangalay Villas was designed to sit well within the landscape and the materials within the landscape. It's purposefully pared back and designed to age gracefully," she says.



Natural landscape

The resort features 16 private villas with golf course or garden views and a beautiful Bangalay sand forest as the backdrop. "When you're on the South Coast of NSW one of the most iconic things about the area is walking on a bush track to the beach. We wanted this resort to honour the environment. We've planted the banksia integrifolia with the silver underside and the banksia serrata, the lomandra grasses, the black butt gums to mirror the natural landscape," she says.



Softly does it

“The form of the buildings came from our brief to the architects to design the accommodation to sit discreetly within the landscape. The materials needed to age well and be of a high quality. The natural colour palette inside the villas also provides the perfect backdrop to the landscaping designed by Paul Scrivener Landscape Architect and brought to life by Matt Taylor and his team at Broughton Landscapes.



On course for success

While the golf course and nearby 7 Mile Beach are huge drawcards at Bangalay Villas, the dining room is also a major focus of the new operation. Here, chef Brent Strong is calling the shots in the kitchen and locals are keen to see what's in store. In fact, the dining room is so popular with the neighbourhood crowd that they have a side gate that connects the community to the restaurant, where they have well and truly staked their claim.



Strong principles

Strong, who trained under Dave Campbell at the Hungry Duck and Wharf Road, is another local boy done good. The talented chef was awarded the South Coast Tourism Young Achiever Award and was given an in at the upscale restaurant Orana in Adelaide when he won the Raymund Barrington Roberts Memorial Scholarship. Orana recently won Restaurant of the Year at the annual Good Food Guide Awards and Strong says he learnt a lot under Scottish-born chef Jock Zonfrillo.



Destination dining

Shoalhaven Heads is lucky to have him, says Michelle. In fact, with Strong at the helm, Bangalay Villas has been catapulted into the realm of 'destination dining'. The chef takes his inspiration from the environment, using ingredients such as the Illawarra plum with a dish of aged squab, native finger lime with lightly cured kingfish and wattleseed for the famous white chocolate cheesecake.



Regional celebration

“My team at Bangalay Dining is trying really hard to be approachable and win over the local crowd, who have straightaway embraced we’re doing. It’s been awesome. My style was definitely inspired by my time at Orana. I also like to use local produce, approach cooking in a sustainable way and use native ingredients. We want to create something that is of a time and place. I want diners to feel like they are in the Shoalhaven when they see what’s on their plate,” he says.



Heads up

“Already our guests are telling us they are loving that they are discovering something new. Many of our visitors have come to know other nearby towns like Berry, Gerroa and Kangaroo Valley but Shoalhaven Heads offers a different, relaxed atmosphere and opportunity for people to enjoy the beach, river and national parks without needing to get in the car.”



Bar bites

The bar menu is a simpler affair with options including local oysters, kingfish ceviche, crisp whitebait and grilled damper with braised wagyu shin. A few nights here with fabulous meals, rounds of golf and walks on the beach in between is a dream. Get there before the rest of the world finds out about it.

Carla Grossetti travelled to the South Coast of NSW as a guest of Destination NSW.



Further information

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