



# BAY OF PLENTY

THROW AWAY THE OLD GUIDEBOOK AND BYPASS THE  
BEATEN TRACK TO EXPLORE THE BYRON REGION'S  
BEATING HEART, WRITES CHANTAY LOGAN

One of the hardest restaurants to get into in Australia is in the unassuming northern NSW coastal village of Brunswick Heads, and one of Byron's hottest resorts bypasses its traditional heart. Get out of town! No ... really ... everybody's doing it. With more tourism operators decentralising, you'll need a new plan if you want to be in the real heart of the action.

While Byron Bay still serves as the ideal base, the beachside bastion's newest resort is tucked on the township's unspoiled outskirts.

Elements of Byron is breaking fresh ground, but it's in good company, down the road from micro-community The Farm and a stumble from everyone's favourite brewery Stone &

Wood. The resort itself is a sprawling, self-contained oasis of 103 private beach villas dotted amid 22 hectares of absolute beachfront paradise. The individual villas have been designed to reflect the different ecologies on their doorsteps: dunal, rainforest, eucalypt and wetlands.

While they're kitted out with the latest tech, it's the freestanding bath that catches my eye over blackbutt timber floors.

I can't wait to sink into that giant tub, complete with pots of silky, sheeny bath caviar, and not come out again until my fingers and toes are thoroughly wrinkly.

It's one of many ways to savour doing a whole lot of nothing. Guests can unroll their

mats under a pandanus for sunrise yoga.

Cushion-laden lounges, suspended in a shallow section of the lagoon pool, are among a smorgasbord of sun-soaked nooks inviting you to curl up with a good book. They'll bring the cocktails – and crab-stuffed doughnuts – to you.

While Elements has the polished service and sophisticated dining to give any CBD five-star a run for its money, there's freedom in being away from the holiday-maker mecca of main beach. You won't have to fight for a spot to spread a towel on the private beach, where tea-tree-tinted waters run to the ocean and the iconic lighthouse (and its hectic carpark) is just a speck on the horizon.

You can pound along deserted stretches of

sand, wind in your mane, on a trail ride with the resort's neighbouring stable Zephyr Horses.

With no noisy neighbours – just the muffled melody of frogs, night birds and breaking waves – a good night's sleep is almost guaranteed.

You won't have to budge from your reverie, with a gorgeous breakfast served by the pool included in the room rate, but you could venture a few minutes down the road to pretty plant-powered eatery Folk for a beetroot, lucuma and maca root latte.

I manage to find some extra room for their organic buckwheat banana hot cakes, with house-made labne, fresh fruit and a drizzle of raw Bundjalung honey and maple.

From there we drove through town to the