

MEDIA RELEASE

EAT YOUR TROPICAL HEART OUT

If you're looking for new restaurants that both define and capture Port Douglas's culinary spirit, stop right here.

The chaos of last year has had an undeniable impact on the Far Northern dining scene, but an explosion of bold new dining experiences is putting a new delicious energy into the Port Douglas region for local and visiting food lovers. An Italian pasta and salumi bar, a Mediterranean eatery, a restored beach diner with soul, and a destination seafood restaurant are just some of the new culinary options spearheading a dining surge in the resort town in 2021.

Tourism Port Douglas & Daintree Chief Executive Officer Tara Bennett said the new, dynamic dining scene in Port Douglas offers visitors an exciting edge to their holiday in paradise.

"We're seeing an explosion of sophisticated, well-defined and carefully curated venues," said Tara. "Port Douglas is establishing itself as a food and dining destination with personality and flair, reminiscent of the much-prized pockets of Australia's big foodie cities."

"It's an exciting time to be in the thick of it, to have such a fabulous variety of venues and to share in amazing culinary experiences with family and friends whilst you holiday in paradise."

Brewing before the Covid era, the dining surge in the Far North's signature beach town is now in full swing with a swag of heavenly options ready to tantalise taste buds as new eateries settle in, and old favourites shine.

Take a seat at the table of newly opened *Wrasse and Roe*, an homage to the fishing village roots of the town. Expect southern water oysters, Morton Bay bugs, FNQ mud crabs and whole fried coral trout in a beautiful, alfresco space. Owner and chef Andy Gray is a long-time local and is thrilled to see the town bustling with life again. "There is so much variety - from fine dining to casual, there is something for everyone to suit every budget."

The Italian pasta and salumi bar, *Pasta e Vino*, opened in 2020 rightly claiming its place as an authentic and rich Italian dining experience. You can taste the love in chef Mauro Manenti's signature pappardelle with braised lamb and mushroom ragout. Wine from Italy's well-known regions dominate the wine list, which is carefully balanced with wines from Australia's best regions.

Tucked away amongst tropical gardens at the top end of Grant Street, you'll feel right at home at *Maman Bar & Kitchen*. French for mum, Maman is the brainchild of two talented mums, Lizzy and Karen Fines, who serve up delicious Mediterranean and middle eastern bites made from local and organic ingredients. Fresh, simple and homely, Maman is a delightful poise between sophisticated and nostalgic dining.

Storytelling is at the heart of all good dining experiences, and *Epicurean Port Douglas* is an exercise in exactly that. A relaxed spot for afternoon grazers, tipplers and Francophiles, hosts Marlene and Rohan Erard embrace elements of local provedore, cellar and café as they expertly showcase artisan terrines, pates, rillettes, and cured meats.

A stone's throw from the southern end of Four Mile Beach, *Kai* is a family friendly bistro with swagger and style. No fuss with a touch of cool, Kai is bistro pub dining and is a perfect spot to end a hard day on the beach. Owner and chef Jed Sneddon has a reputable cheffing history in the region, so expect to see classics like mussels in white wine and chilli, seafood yellow curry and dry aged beef ribs for a hearty meal.

Last but certainly not least, the iconic *Beach Shack* in Four Mile is a hotly anticipated opening. Just around the corner from Kai, the Beach Shack has been a local's favourite for years, and under the careful and talented eye of new owner Natalie Towers, the 'Shack has undergone a refined and sophisticated renovation "The renovation has been a labour of love and all about embracing the soul of this beach area," says Natalie. "We are creating a fresh, beautiful, and welcoming space where anyone can pop in, grab a drink and a tasty bite to eat, and feel at ease to unwind."

As for the dining surge in Port Douglas Natalie is in all support "We're all working together to make this happen. The calibre of dining in Port Douglas is well known, and needs to be a reflection of where we live. We're seeing venues create signature styles, spaces, and personalities; they're creating their own tribes of loyalty – it's an exciting time to be here."

Whatever whets your palate - from timeless classics and curated tasting boards of local produce through to the ever-iconic elegance of dining in local's favourite restaurants - one thing is for sure: Port Douglas's culinary spirit is well and truly alive, and it definitely pays to be hungry.

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