

1 OAKS RANCH

Mossy Point, NSW

Summer roadtrips may be quicker these days but it's in the towns forgotten by highway bypasses where you can find idyllic summers of the past. Take Mossy Point – four hours from Sydney, or two hours from Canberra – a lovely South Coast riverside spot, home to the newly refurbished Oaks Ranch. Encompassing a nine-hole golf course (soon to be revamped by Greg Norman), magnesium pool and signature restaurant Arlo, the Spanish Mission-style buildings have been brushed with Palm Springs energy. Interior architects Partridge Daniels worked their magic on the 14 suites – adding Cultiver linen, handmade tiles, and for some, outdoor showers. oaksranch.com.au

2 QTQT AT QT GOLD COAST

Surfers Paradise, Qld

Summer and Surfers Paradise go together like families and Cool Cabanas. This is the spot for sun worshippers to go from surf lessons to beach clubs and brunch spots to spas. And for a sleeper with a difference, six new qtQT Cabins have just been unveiled atop the lower rooftop of the QT Gold Coast. Less cabin-in-the-woods and more urban beach bolthole, the tiny homes can be booked individually or combined for a group escape. Equipped with surfboards, board games and local amenities, there's even a "Curator of Sunshine" to help you plan your dream itinerary – private yoga class or sushi-making, perhaps? qtqtgoldcoast.com

3 28 DEGREES

Byron Bay, NSW

Forget the Hemsworth hype; despite what it seems from afar, Byron Bay is not all backpackers and baes. What it is, is still a cracking summer holiday spot. Adhere to the instructions on the Welcome to Byron sign as you drive in – Cheer Up, Slow Down, Chill Out – and slow things right down at 28 Degrees. As discreet as it is luxuriously styled, the house and four additional rooms (seven rooms total) can be booked individually or as a whole. After mindfully eating your complimentary paleo granola – made by owner, Deb – and a slow-brewed Moonshine coffee, grab one of the bikes and ride to The Pass with enough time to hike to the lighthouse for sunrise. 28byronbay.com.au

4 SMITHS BEACH RESORT

Margaret River, WA

Three hours' drive south of Perth, Smiths Beach is a stunning stretch of sand set between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin, right on the Cape to Cape walking track. Whether you're venturing off on foot to Yallingup or Injidup, or exploring the surf breaks or wineries this region is renowned for, the spruced-up Smiths Beach Resort, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World and set within a national park, makes a stylish base. Rooms are self-contained while the on-site Lamont's Restaurant and a deli and wine store will keep you sated when you don't feel like cooking. smithsbeachresort.com.au

5 DRIFT HOUSE

Port Fairy, Vic

Found at the end of the Great Ocean Road, Port Fairy was named No.1 Top Tourism Town in 2021, but families have been singing the praises of this pretty fishing village for many



generations. Ten years young, Drift House is the stylish conversion of a Victorian house and single-storey Edwardian villa united with modern, metal-clad buildings designed by leading architecture practice Multiplicity. With six lovely adults-only suites, bespoke service is the name of the game with intimate Spanish-inspired dinners in the salon a few nights a week, and complimentary breakfast loaded with fruit, sourdough crumpets, eggs and toast. drifthouse.com.au

6 SURFSIDE MOTEL

Yeppoon, Qld

Yeppoon flies under the radar when it comes to Queensland beaches but Surfside Motel has been changing that since beginning a head-to-toe renovation in 2020. Now, with a refreshed pool area, 13 rooms, and the neighbouring two-bedroom Surfhouse, this beachside bolthole is bringing a new generation of travellers to the Capricorn Coast. Park in front of your room and you can easily reach Yeppoon's swimming lagoon, restaurants and bars (try The Alley) on foot. Grab an umbrella and beach mat to hit the sand or jump on one of the town's new electric scooters and catch a flick with a glass of wine in hand at the new cinema. A day trip to the Keppel Islands is also a must. yeppoonsurfsidemotel.com.au

7 FINNS AT OLD BAR

Old Bar, NSW

Bordering Wallabi Point and Saltwater National Park, about an hour south of Port Macquarie, Old Bar offers renowned surf breaks and gorgeous swimming spots. In this lesser-known beach 'burbs, Finns has "surfing family holiday" written all over it. Book by the room or snaffle the entire seven-bedroom house, and make use of the magnesium pool and quiver of surfboards available to



use free of charge. Owners Kate and Vincent Prinel also own Saltwater Surf School and French-born Vincent can take you out for a wave or point you towards the best spots during your stay. There's good coffee next door at Buyi, too. finnsatoldbar.com.au

8 MOTEL MOLLY

Mollymook, NSW

There's a bit of buzz surrounding this South Coast spot, three hours' drive south of Sydney. House prices have jumped 60 per cent in the past 12 months, which only goes to prove its irresistible charm. The home of Bannisters and Rick Stein now plays host to hip eateries like Gwylo and The Ruse (technically five minutes away in



Ulladulla). And in December, doors opened at the Mediterranean-inspired Motel Molly – a reimagining of the Surfbeach Motel & Apartments. Unlike other motel conversions, self-contained apartments make up part of the 16 rooms, allowing families space to spread out and enjoy the custom furniture, Smeg appliances and kidney-shaped pool. motelmolly.com.au

9 THE SURF

Yamba, NSW

It frequently makes the list of next big things but blessedly, Yamba – about an hour south of Byron Bay – still remains full of its chilled, carefree vibe. A few laps in the ocean pool followed by brunch at Beachwood Cafe is what summer is all about. Presiding over Main Beach, The Surf introduced a new level of accommodation for the town when it opened in late 2021. Its striking curved exterior and rooftop pool are beautiful gift-wrapping on what is an exceptional hotel experience inside – 12 well-appointed rooms, some with ocean vistas, along with e-bikes, surfboards and beach umbrellas available to borrow from reception. thesurfyamba.com.au

10 SEA SEA

Crescent Head, NSW

This sleepy surf spot just north of Port Macquarie won't be rubbing its eyes when designer George Gorow (ex-Ksubi founder, also behind The Slow hotel in Canggu, Bali) and his wife throw open the doors to their new 25-room hotel in May. While the National Surfing Reserve is beloved for its long right-hander and the Chinese restaurant at the Bowls Club has had the stronghold on surfers and families who flock to the campground here, the slick new venue will feature '70s surf inspired interiors, a souvenir shop, live music, art exhibitions, and F&B by a roster of greats. Bookings are now open. seaseahotel.com



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