

CLOCKWISE FROM THIS IMAGE: *Palm Beach, a suburb on the Gold Coast, has been gentrified in the last few years; Breakfast spots like Mr Bengel bring a healthy, hipster vibe to the beachside neighbourhood.*



HIP HOOD



PALM BEACH, QLD

A GOLD COAST SUBURB with roots as a 1960s *HOLIDAY HOME DREAM* and a somewhat shady rep, PALM BEACH is having its time in the *SUN* with new developments and an *EMERGING DINING SCENE* writes *CELESTE MITCHELL*.

THERE WAS A TIME when you would have had absolutely no reason to stop as you drove through Palm Beach. Sitting like the forgotten middle child between Coolangatta – on the Gold Coast’s southern border with New South Wales – and its hip older sister, Burleigh Heads to its north, Palm Beach was at one time known more for its needle exchange site than a buzzing cafe scene.

Straddling both sides of the Gold Coast highway with a numbered system of street names that’s more Santa Monica than Queensland, ‘Palmy’, as it’s affectionately known, was always a bit rough around the edges, even in the 1870s when the area was designated pastoral land. The South Coast railway didn’t even stop there until 1922, when it was still part of Elanora.

A subdivision by the Palm Beach Company Ltd was what led to the beachside ‘hood gaining its own name and subsequently, fibro holiday homes started sprouting along Jefferson Lane. It was the affordable dream – in the early ‘60s *The Truth* newspaper in Brisbane advertised ‘holiday homes for the working man’ with blocks of land up for sale, with ‘whatever deposit suits you’.

But within the last few years, this suburb has been gentrified quicker than you can say “Range Rover” and a new wave of discerning young residents has washed in. New luxury apartment developments are taking over corner blocks and real estate prices are skyrocketing. “When my friends heard I was moving to Palm Beach they were like, ‘oh no, it’s dangerous, there are gangs, you can’t move there,’” manager Ludmila Achurch says as she sets down our meals at The Blue Door on 5th, a new restaurant fastidious about organic, local produce. “But it feels like a village, you know... I love it,” she finishes.

“Palm Beach is really coming good,” says Jeremy Davidson, co-founder of The Collective eating house. “It’s exciting as a local here, you can actually go bar-hopping in Palm Beach! There’s a bit of a funky dining scene emerging as well – great operators who have built their way up in the hospitality industry on the coast and are now starting to go ‘we’re going to move to Palm Beach and do our own thing’.”

That’s what’s led to a spate of openings within the past 12 months, so many, in fact, that you’ll be hard pressed to fit everything into a weekend. Start with these local haunts and see how you go.



Wildernis

IS IT A CAFE SERVING COCKTAILS OR A BAR SERVING BREAKFAST? IT'S BOTH! LOCAL TRADIES JOSH BAILEY AND ANDY CANFIELD DECIDED TO RIP OUT THE ADJOINING OFFICE SPACE THAT CAME WITH THE LEASE ON WHAT WAS ONCE LITTLE ST KILDA CAFE AND LIFTED THE ROOF TO DRINK IN ONE OF PALMY'S BEST ASSETS: ITS OCEAN VIEW. NOW RUNNING AS A CAFE DOWNSTAIRS SERVING HEALTHY EATS AND SMOOTHIES, IT'S THE ROOFTOP THAT STEALS THE SHOW, OPENING FOR WEEKEND BRUNCH AND SUNDAY SESSIONS, WITH A SNEAKY LITTLE LANEWAY LINKING THE TWO. LOCAL ALES ARE ON TAP, AND THERE ARE HOUSE COCKTAILS AND INK GIN FROM NEARBY HUSK DISTILLERS TOO. [FACEBOOK.COM/WILDERNISCAFEANDBAR](https://facebook.com/wilderniscafeandbar)

MR BENDEL

With a pedigree built in Burleigh Heads (with popular restaurant and rooftop bar, Justin Lane, and Harry's Steak Bistro & Bar) the guys behind Mr Bengel have injected a very GC vibe into this Gold Coast Highway spot. You'll find rainbow and green breakfast bowls brimming with kimchi and sauerkraut, and loaded with avocado, greens, smoked salmon and free-range eggs. mrbengel.com.au



LITTLE MAISY

What exactly is an Instagram store? That's the question asked most in the adorable new kids' boutique, Little Maisy. Stocking over 45 'Instagram brands' – all handmade and Australian-owned products, previously only available via Instagram – expect trendy silicone teething chews in the shape of pineapples and teepee tents, Rubz & Lolli leather shoes and hashtag slogan tees. littlemaisy.com.au



The Craft Parlour

"I'M NOT INTO UP-AND-COMING PLACES, EVERYTHING I'VE DONE IS ORGANIC," SAYS RACHAEL VALENTINE, THE GIRL BEHIND THE CUTEST HOUSE IN PALM BEACH, FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH PLANTS, CRAFTY CREATIONS AND OP-SHOP FINDS. THERE'S NO DENYING SHE WAS AHEAD OF THE GAME, THOUGH. AFTER ORGANISING WORKSHOPS AT MIAMI MARKETTA, RACHAEL CHOSE PALM BEACH TO BRING THE CRAFT PARLOUR TO LIFE PERMANENTLY AND NOW HOLDS 15 WORKSHOPS A MONTH IN EVERYTHING FROM MACRAME AND RESIN ART TO MEDITATION. [THECRAFTPARLOUR.COM.AU](http://thecraftparlour.com.au)



8TH AVE. TERRACE

Capitalising on cracking views over the Pacific Ocean, this two-level bar and restaurant from the owners of Espresso Moto feels like a luxury castaway's playground with timber flooring, brass bar tops, and thick wooden beams overhead. Hanging pots spill over with greenery and binoculars hang ready for action on one of the walls. Head here for sundowners and bar snacks, or book ahead for one of its wine dinners. 8thaveterrace.com.au

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THE COLLECTIVE

THE COLLECTIVE TAKES THE CONCEPT OF STREET FOOD MARKETS AND FOOD TRUCKS AND AMPS THEM UP WITH TABLE SERVICE AND ONE MENU THAT ALLOWS YOU TO CHOOSE FROM FIVE KITCHENS. OFFERING EVERYTHING FROM POKE TO PIZZAS, TACOS TO BAOS, AND CHICKEN 'N' WAFFLES TO JUGS OF PIMM'S, THIS TWO-LEVEL SPACE HEAVES ON WEEKENDS; ARRIVE EARLY IF YOU'RE IN A GROUP. thecollectivepalmbeach.com.au

WEEKENDS | *Hip bood*



Greenhouse, The Bathhouse

TECHNICALLY JUST OVER THE 'BURB BORDER, IT'S STILL FAIR TO GROUP GREENHOUSE, THE BATHHOUSE AS PART OF THE PALMY CREW. LEAVE YOUR SHOES AT THE DOOR FOR A MASSAGE OR FACIAL USING PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS, OR STAY FOR A FULL SESSION ROTATING BETWEEN THE WHIRLPOOLS, EUCALYPTUS STEAM ROOM, RED CEDAR HOT ROCK SAUNA, AND MAGNESIUM PLUNGE POOL AND SUN DECK, SNACKING ON VEGAN EATS IN BETWEEN.

[GREENHOUSEFACTORY.COM.AU/THE-BATHHOUSE](http://greenhousefactory.com.au/the-bathhouse)

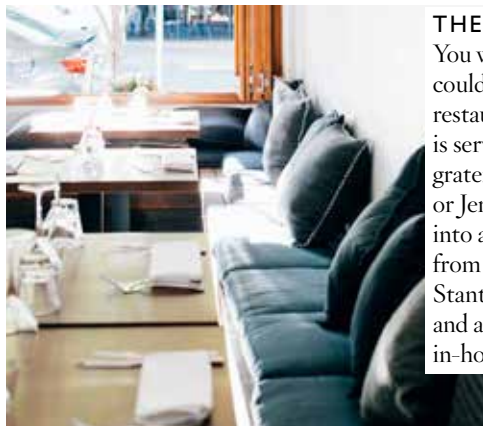


LA COSTA MOTEL

While there are no hotels in Palmy (yet) and you're more likely to rent a place on Airbnb, 10 minutes down the highway you can take a step back in time in one of the original '50s motels at La Costa. Rooms are simple but sufficient, and let's face it, it's all about the location – just a few short steps to the beach – and the cute beach umbrellas and cruiser bikes out front of the weatherboard digs. lacostamotel.com.au

Espresso Moto

START YOUR DAY AT THE BAR AND CHECK OUT THE MOTORCYCLE WORKSHOP INSIDE THIS CAFE ON THE GOLD COAST HIGHWAY; THE OWNERS FLEW IN A MECHANIC ALL THE WAY FROM ITALY TO TINKER WITH THE TOOLS INSIDE THE UNCHARACTERISTICALLY CLEAN GLASS-ENCLOSED SPACE. AN INDUSTRIAL THEME PERMEATES, WHILE THE ALL-DAY MENU – AFFIXED TO ESPRESSO MOTO NUMBERPLATES – IS MORE HIPSTER BIKER FUEL THAN GREASE MONKEY, WITH DISHES LIKE ACAI BIRCHER MUESLI WITH HOUSE-MADE LEMON CURD. ESPRESSOMOTO.COM.AU



THE BLUE DOOR ON 5TH

You wouldn't think bread and butter could become an event, but at this new restaurant homemade rye sourdough is served with great cubes of salt and a grater to sprinkle over smears of buffalo or Jersey milk butter. Diners then dive into a menu crafted with local produce from farmers between Byron Bay and Stanthorpe, with most of it organic, and as much butchering as possible done in-house. thebluedooron5th.com **AT**