

SPECIAL
DRINKS

• 6PM APERITIVO \$18

• UNLITRO ROSSO \$16

• LIMONCINO
PORTOFINO \$13

Food
+
wine

Because neighbouring Byron Bay isn't the main course anymore

Bangalow, NSW

By Sarah Reid

Ciao, Mate!

It's the hatted neighbourhood Italian that's largely responsible for putting Bangalow back on the Northern Rivers food map. Ciao, Mate! (ciaomate.com.au), which popped up in mid-2021 with a woodfired pizza oven that's barely taken a breather since. The salami pizza is a standout, served with a gooey dollop of stracciatella in the centre. With snacks, a pasta (or two) of the day and a dessert (currently cannoli) rounding out the short menu, it's a place to gather mates, slide into a leather booth and order one of everything.

Eltham Hotel

The reliable pub grub at the historic Bangalow Hotel is a cut above but it's hard to resist the call of The Eltham (elthampub.com.au), a 20-minute drive deeper into the hinterland. Tim Goegan (ex Melbourne's Supernormal) has overseen the still-refreshingly-accessible bistro menu (think: eggplant parmy or grass-fed beef burger with dill pickle and housemade sauce) at this classic

watering hole, now often as lively as its early 20th-century heyday. Upstairs are five guestrooms if you want to stay over.

Bangalow Farmers Market

The town buzzes on Saturday mornings as families, chefs and foodies converge to stock up on local produce. Little sister to the Byron Bay Farmers Market (held on Thursdays), the Bangalow edition (byronfarmersmarket.com.au) showcases most of the same stallholders. Chat with farmers and makers as you fill your basket with Coopers Shoot tomatoes, Hayters Hill Farm eggs and more.

You Beauty

Bangalow's newest culinary slam-dunk comes courtesy of Western Australian chef Matt Stone, who last year teamed up with the Mosey on Inn Group (Ciao, Mate!, Eltham Hotel) to open this innovative ode to local produce (youbeauty2479.com). You Beauty's fit-out is a nod to the building's Federation heritage, with vintage



(Clockwise from above) Pumpkin ravioli with butter, sage and hazelnut at The Hut Byron Bay; You Beauty; Woods

pendant lights casting a moody glow on the bar and crackly records providing the soundtrack. But the ever-changing share plates are right up to the minute, spanning roo skewers glazed with fermented honey to fresh-caught kingfish tarted up with kefir cream – the type of dishes that recently earned the restaurant a hat. Nearly everything is housemade, from the stracchino to the salami.

Woods

Sister-café to Byron Bay's Folk, the similarly bohemian Woods (woodsbangalow.com.au) nestles in the heart of the artsy Station Street precinct. Grab a coffee (a bespoke blend by local Byron Moonshine Coffee) to sip while browsing the neighbouring boutiques and galleries, or take a seat in the sunshine and tuck into wholesome brunch dishes until 2.30pm daily, before Woods transforms into a pop-up restaurant on select summer nights.

The Hut Byron Bay

Making the best case for a long lunch is this slice of the Med tucked into the hills above Bangalow (thehutbyronbay.com.au). Occupying a century-old schoolhouse, the light-filled space evokes memories of prosecco on pebbly beaches even before the seasonal, share-style plates arrive in a flurry of crunchy fried sardines, salty saganaki and zingy spanner crab tagliatelle. Naturally, the wine list heroes drops from Italy and France. And vegans: there's a menu just for you.

Stay

Ha'veli House

Luxe Balinese villa meets classic Bangalow farmhouse at this central two-bedroom cottage (haveliofbyronbay.com.au) from the owner of homewares store Ha'veli of Byron Bay. Flanked by Bangalow palms, a Balinese day bed in the garden hut offers a serene spot to relax and digest a gourmet escape. ●

