



THE NEW

SATELLITE TOWNS

## Pottsville and Burringbar

Channel the laid-back Byron Bay of yesteryear at these spots a little further north. By **Sarah Reid**

Laid out between the natural spoils of sea and hinterland, with an irrepressible dining scene that even locals find hard to keep up with, Byron Bay quickly became one of Australia's favourite pandemic-era escapes. But if you're pining for the low-key Byron Shire of days gone by – when same-day restaurant bookings and snagging a beachfront parking spot were easy – you'll need to venture beyond Byron's borders. Within about 30 minutes drive lie characterful towns in the Tweed region where life is cruisy... for now, at least.

### Pottsville

Chef Ben Devlin (above) can claim most of the credit for putting Pottsville on the map after he left Paper Daisy in nearby Cabarita to open coastal fine-diner **Pipit** ([pipitrestaurant.com](http://pipitrestaurant.com); above left) in 2019. While a steady stream of Devlin disciples make the 35-minute drive up from Byron (or down from the Gold Coast and Brisbane) to tuck into his seasonal set menus, Pottsville has retained its relaxed, family-friendly charm.

The town centre is set back from the main Tweed Coast Road, giving it a village-like feel, and although there's not a lot to do in the village beyond café-hopping, who's complaining? Light-filled 2020 arrival **Black Drop** (18 Philip Street) is the go-to for coffee and a casual bite (think: pork belly with Asian greens and housemade prawn XO sauce).

Aside from Airbnbs, the main places to stay locally are the old-school **Pottsville Beach Motel** ([pottsvillebeachmotel.com](http://pottsvillebeachmotel.com)) and two holiday parks. As the town has grown, it's crept further up the coast alongside a gloriously quiet beach that stretches from the mouth of Mooball Creek towards Cabarita – the home of laid-back luxury hotel **Halcyon House** ([halcyonhouse.com.au](http://halcyonhouse.com.au)).

On the first or third Sunday of the month, bring a reusable shopping bag to stock up on everything from local produce to art at the **Pottsville Beach Markets** held in Phillip Street Reserve. And don't miss the area's best-kept secret, **Pottsville Environmental Park**, a 54-hectare swathe of coastal bushland directly north of the town that's laced with more than four kilometres of walking tracks.

## Burringbar

Blink and you'll miss this tiny hamlet just a couple of turns off the Tweed Valley Way, 30 minutes north-west of Byron.

**Elwood Cafe** (1/33 The Broadway) opened a couple of years ago, joining the main-street stalwarts – a Mid-Century post office, family-owned butcher and general store. It's the kind of place you stop at for coffee and a housemade pastry then end up ordering brunch.

Hunt for vintage treasures at **Heath's Old Wares** (heathsoldwares.com.au) on Broadway and **Little Peach** (burringbargallery.com.au) just up the road on Tweed Valley Way, before wandering south of town to fourth-generation artisan dairy **Tweed Valley Whey**

(tweedvalleycheeses.com.au). Take a single-origin-milk cheese plate or freshly baked scones to a table outside, where only a fence separates you from cows grazing the lush green pastures.

The otherwise-sleepy town comes to life on Fridays, when takeaway taqueria **Mercado Juarez** (mercadojuarez.com.au), next door to Elwood Cafe, serves real-deal tacos from 4pm until sold out.

Pop into brand-new boutique bottle shop **Brooklyn Tasting Room** (brooklyntastingroom.com.au) for a great wine to enjoy with your meal then head across the road for a twilight picnic in the park.

Staying the night? Book into one of the nearby Airbnb offerings, such as **The Old Dairy** (qantas.com/airbnb).



Tacos at Mercado Juarez (right) and Elwood Cafe next door (below)



## THE NEW

### ECO RETREAT

## Crafters Cabin

### ▼ Thredbo Valley

Built by two mates with a passion for creating things the old-fashioned way (with elbow grease and know-how), Crafters Cabin (crafters.net.au) is a soliloquy to elegant simplicity as well as a tribute to the rocky Australian alpine bush that surrounds it. Hidden away in a nook in the Thredbo Valley but only five minutes from Jindabyne, the modern one-bedroom retreat is entirely off-grid but that doesn't mean it skimps on the finer things. There's a couple's shower, Leif toiletries and glimpses into the wilderness from every room. The region is best-known for its ski slopes but the rugged terrain is also ideal for horseriding, mountain biking and fly fishing. ALEXANDRA CARLTON