



travel
Getaway

Cruising north

Postcard from

▶▶ Dolphin spotting on the Hastings River will help you work up an appetite for lunch.

PORT MACQUARIE



GLEN WILLIAMS TAKES A TRIP BACK TO HIS CHILDHOOD AND FINDS PORT HAS TRANSFORMED INTO A GOURMET PARADISE

For many Aussies from the eastern states, Port Macquarie stirs up memories of dreamy childhood holidays in the sun. It still has that magic, but Port has also transformed into a sophisticated foodie haven with top-notch eateries and wineries.

We start the day with a scenic eco-cruise on the Hastings River with Cruise Adventures. We spot dolphins then have morning tea and are given a shucking demo at Oyster World.

If you're going to eat, drink and be merry while touring Port, it's a good idea to have a friendly local to show you about. Kylie Malligan from Lets Go Travel is our guide and she takes us enerringly from one taste sensation to the next.

Indulge in a sip of port among the giant bamboo at historic Douglas Vale Vineyard. Eat fat, red juicy tomatoes that are full of flavour at Ricardo's Tomatoes. Then take a fun, food-filled odyssey through the Wauchope Farmers' Market ... the secret is to sample everything!

Another must is Armstrong's Oysters in Laurieton, a family business that's been running for 40 years and has amazing Sydney rock oysters.

The promise of "rustic food that fuses flavours from around the world" has people lining up to get into Lindsey Schwab's Fusion 7. One taste of his grilled kangaroo fillet on hummus with pomegranate molasses and crispy onions - it's easy to see why.

Over at The Stunned Mullet, loosen your belt for the six-course degustation menu. Each course comes with a sophisticated choice of wines, and the food is enhanced by breathtaking surf views.

Breakfast is a feast at Rydges Hotel. I sit on the verandah drinking freshly brewed coffee and watch the fishing boats on the Hastings river.

Before I leave Port, I bask in the buzz of The Corner and feast on chef Chris Fagan's Mediterranean-influenced menu.

It's just as well there are great scenic walks to be had in Port. You can burn the kilojoules and get ready for the next feast.

WHERE TO STAY

For seaside luxury you can't go past ...

▶▶ **The Observatory Apartment Hotel**

40 William Street, has rooms and apartments with stunning views. Contact 1300 888 305, www.observatory.net.au

▶▶ **Macquarie Waters Hotel**

11 Clarence Street, is conveniently located in the Port Macquarie CBD. Contact 1800 702 535, www.mwaters.com.au.

3 of the best things to do



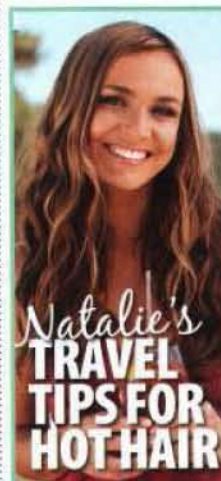
▶▶ Lorne Valley Macadamia Farm: Relax among 1400 macadamia trees and savour the sights of the lush Lorne Valley. Call (02) 6556 9653.



▶▶ Cassegrain Winery: Visit the cellar door, then venture into award-winning Ca March restaurant. Call (02) 6582 8377 www.cassegrainwines.com.au



▶▶ Join in the cooking classes at The Company Farm, as you gather in the kitchen and learn from guest chefs. Call (02) 6585 6495.



Natalie's TRAVEL TIPS FOR HOT HAIR

▶▶ Getaway reporter **Natalie Gruzlewski** has to have fab-looking hair, no matter how long the flight or what her destination.

"As soon as I arrive at my destination I like to relax with a TRESemmé Anti-Breakage Mask," Natalie says. "I apply it to wet hair for five minutes, then rinse it out. To keep my hair from drying out on a daily basis, I use TRESemmé Vitamin E Moisture Rich Shampoo and Conditioner."

"For short trips, I take TRESemmé travel-sized shampoo and conditioners."

"If I know I'll be heading out for dinner I always pack a TRESemmé Philips Salon Control Hair Dryer so I can give my hair a quick blowdry. It didn't cost much and is light enough to carry in my travel bags."

▶▶ Catch Getaway on the Nine Network this Thursday at 7.30pm.



PICTURES: NEWSPIX