

# PRETTY BEACH HOUSE

*Business with purpose*

## Honouring the Indigenous Heritage of the Bouddi Area.

Pretty Beach House is set in the heart of Bouddi National Park, among ancient native angophoras and eucalypts, atop a Hawksbury sandstone bluff, with views to the sea over ancestral Darkinjung lands.

Given this majestic and strategic outlook, the site would undoubtedly have been significant to the traditional custodians – as evidenced by the 2,000-year old rock carvings of a fish, a dolphin and a whale, right at the lodge’s doorstep.

For Pretty Beach House proprietors, Brian and Karina Barry, honouring the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the site and its original inhabitants is a priority.

“Aboriginal people have lived and gathered in the Bouddi area for at least 10,000 years. We show our respect for the traditional custodians of this land by drawing on their traditional knowledge and customs and incorporating them into our guest experiences,” explains Brian Barry.



“We help to keep traditional knowledge alive while, at the same time, our guests gain an insight into the richness and significance of indigenous culture and reflect on the spiritual heritage of our country.”

Guests’ introduction to indigenous culture comes at sunset on their first evening in the lodge, with the option of partaking in a smoking ceremony – a traditional welcome – performed by a local indigenous elder. The ceremony is accompanied by didgeridoo and clapping sticks, and guests listen to Dreamtime stories and legends told by Aboriginal elders from the local Darkinjung tribe. For many, it’s a deeply moving experience, and a chance to ask questions and to connect with the elders, their culture and country.

“The smoking ceremony creates an intimate gathering in a private setting, where guests can comfortably connect with the indigenous elders,” said Brian Barry.

“We’re able to further support the local indigenous community by offering tailored, guided adventures in the National Park.”

There are over 100 significant Aboriginal sites in Bouddi National Park – with many yet to be discovered. They include shelters, grinding grooves and middens, while exposed areas of Hawksbury sandstone provided the ideal canvas for numerous rock engravings, drawings and paintings.



Pretty Beach House guests have the opportunity to accompany an indigenous ranger on guided walks on the property and in the Bouddi National Park. They can see, taste and learn about traditional bush tucker and medicinal plants, and listen to Dreamtime stories, while visiting rock art sites and spotting native flora and fauna. The walks give an insight into the Darkinjung people's kinship with the ocean and the lands encompassed by Bouddi.

The defining features of the landscape have been incorporated into the design of the lodge itself, with huge slabs of locally-hewn Hawksbury sandstone and an enormous, ancient angophora emerging through the patio by the pool. The walls of the main house are built with hand-made mud bricks, while re-purposed timbers from a de-commissioned bridge buttress the ceilings.

The menu also draws inspiration from Australia's indigenous heritage, featuring native ingredients such as pepper berries, finger limes, lemon myrtle, wattle seed and Davidson plum, as well as local bush tucker growing naturally on and around the property.

The seasonal menus at Pretty Beach House are designed featuring majority house-made, home-grown, organic and local ingredients and produce from local suppliers. Sister property, Bells at Killcare, has a huge lush vegetable garden, from which the daily harvest, provides the basis of the menu at Pretty Beach House. Chefs are continuously planting new seedlings and hand-picking produce to use the same day.

The Barrys' aim is to create an intimate setting where guests can gain inspiration and insight into Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

"Through all facets of the business, we want to show how luxury travel can authentically honour the Aboriginal heritage of the site and support existing indigenous communities while, at the same time, provide life-enriching experiences for our guests."

#### **Other Sustainability Actions (Our Mandatories):**

- Wherever possible, Pretty Beach House's purchasing policy is 'buy local, buy sustainable'. There is abundant sustainable seafood available from responsible farmers within the local coastal region. Endangered species such as swordfish and tuna are not purchased. Local producers provide fresh vegetables and farm gate treats such as home-made jams, and the lodge chefs follow the 'nose to tail' principle to minimise wastage.
- The lodge stocks chemical and preservative free wines and purchases from a number of international and local organic and bio-dynamic wine suppliers.
- The few cleaning chemicals used are fully biodegradable and toilet paper is made from bamboo, delivered plastic-free.