

BAMURRU PLAINS

Business with purpose

Inspiring greater awareness and understanding of Australia's diverse and complex ecosystems

While the popular perception of the Australian Outback conjures images of red earth and arid lands, the **far north of Australia** presents a strikingly different version of 'Outback': one of vivid green and flooded plains stretching to the horizon.

At **Bamurru Plains**, a luxury wilderness camp located on a 300 sq km concession at the edge of the Mary River floodplain and World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park, the team at Wild Bush Luxury aim to highlight the diversity of Australia's uniquely specialised ecosystems.

"We provide small groups of guests with innovative experiences in the spectacular natural environment of the Top End. Our aim is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of Australia's diverse and complex ecosystems and our need to conserve them," explained Charlie Carlow, Founder of Wild Bush Luxury.

Defined by the seasonal extremes of the tropical monsoon, the wetlands and woodlands of the Mary River region form one of Australia's richest and most important ecosystems, home to 236 species of birds and a huge diversity of flora and fauna, including the highest concentration of estuarine crocodiles in the world.

Bamurru Plains sits lightly on the land

"We're acutely aware of the sensitivity of the wetlands and coastal habitats, so the lodge's presence in their midst, by necessity, must be low impact and in tune with the surrounding environment," said Charlie Carlow.

Bamurru Plains, consisting of just 10 bungalows in addition to the main safari lodge, makes minimal impact on the natural environment. Each suite blends with the surrounding bush and is shaded by native woodland and pandanus trees. Elevated on poles above the floodplain, with overhead fans and mesh walls on three sides to maximise breeze flow, the bungalows don't need air conditioning (though it is available at extra cost in three of the suites).

An array of 240 solar panels provides around 75 per cent of the lodge's power, which reduces both the carbon footprint and noise that could disrupt wildlife.

"The construction of the safari lodge affords guests an immersive, up-close-and-personal interaction with the environment - while still enjoying a high degree of comfort," explained Charlie Carlow.

"The mesh walls allow guests to see out, but no-one else to see in. And without the intrusion of generator noise, agile wallabies and buffalo have nothing to fear and approach so close to the bungalows that guests can almost touch them through the walls. Often, a morning wake-up call is the thump of a wallaby tail outside your door."

Meals at the lodge blend fresh (and often organic) local produce with native herbs and spices in a contemporary Australian 'bush' cuisine. Fresh mud crab and barramundi - caught on the property - are seasonal features on the menu.



Tailored natural experiences

Bamurru Plains has exclusive access to the floodplains and forests on the property and employs one highly trained wilderness guide per six guests to ensure a personal and tailored experience. In addition, they work with the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust to train Indigenous rangers and offer graduates employment opportunities.

Each day, guests have a choice of excursions – depending on the season - including river cruises, land-based wildlife safaris in 4WD vehicles and quad bikes, airboat rides and guided walks, where guides explain the intricacies of the bush and its inhabitants.

There is also a purpose-built 'hide', six-metres high in the tree canopy, from where guests can watch, undisturbed, many of the hundreds of bird species that make the Mary River catchment home.

"Where we can make a real difference is in connecting our guests to the bush through inspiring, educating and effectively opening their minds through the interaction provided by our guides. They interpret the plant, bird, mammal, insect and reptile life and how different species interact within the natural environment," said Charlie Carlow.

"We also encourage active debate of environmental issues such as the role of fire, water usage and the impact of introduced species."

Another excursion involves a light plane flight and full day exploring Arnhem Land or Kakadu National Park, the stronghold of Aboriginal culture in Australia. Under special permit from the Traditional Owners, guests visit some of the best rock art galleries in the NT - a record of 50,000 years of Aboriginal habitation - while a local guide explains traditional knowledge and the depth of history and storytelling in the world's oldest living culture.

"Through learning about the different elements that make up the natural and cultural environment here at Bamurru, our guests gain an understanding of the delicate balance – the fragility – of the ecosystem, and why our actions as humans matter," explained Charlie Carlow.

"If we can inspire understanding and appreciation of the extraordinary beauty and complexity of Australia's environment – and that leads to behavioural change – our business will have gone some way towards helping conserve our environment."

Other sustainability initiatives (Our mandates):

Each aspect of our property has been carefully planned to minimise our impact on the land. We are constantly reviewing and improving our strategies.

- Our linen is sand-coloured and, therefore, does not require harsh bleach or chemicals to maintain whiteness, but retain its luxe quality. Its composition allows for hang-drying with no ironing. Laundry detergents are eco-certified.
- Cleaning products are eco-certified and chemical containers are re-used.
- Drinking water is filtered bore water and re-usable bottles are provided for guest activities. Other glass bottles are recycled and we do not use plastic mineral water bottles.
- Reliance on the diesel generator is kept to a minimum. Seventy-five per cent of power is solar generated, as well as all hot water. A hairdryer is available only on request, and only three rooms have air conditioning, which is available at a surcharge to cover the additional fuel burn required.
- Wherever possible, local product has been used in the construction of the lodge and in what is available for purchase in the lodge boutique.
- To encourage deeper onsite education, there is a comprehensive library of bird and mammal identification books, as well as binoculars and a telescope for guest use.

