

1 There's nothing more frustrating than joining a long queue at an airport to pick up a hire car. But Bespoke Noosa Car Rentals offers an ingenious solution if you're arriving into Sunshine Coast Airport at Maroocha (Maroochydore). The company's representatives rendezvous with customers at the baggage carousel, present paperwork to be signed, and then meet up out the front with the car ready to go. If you're already on the Sunshine Coast, inquire about a vehicle drop-off and pick-up. For the car's return, simply let the company know flight departure details and your expected arrival time at the airport and staff will wait at departures to pick up keys and finalise paperwork. If you're already in the area, the business offers a complimentary vehicle drop-off and pick-up.

[bncr.com.au](http://bncr.com.au)



2 For a getaway within a getaway, spend an indulgent few hours at Ikatan Balinese day spa. Amid the palm trees and greenery are treatment rooms where you can enjoy everything from chi massage (in which a herbal compress works its magic in slow, rhythmic strokes) to a heavenly facial using local Saya products. The bliss continues afterwards with a complimentary pot of tea or glass of champagne in the peaceful cabanas dotted throughout the garden.

[ikatanspa.com](http://ikatanspa.com)

3 One of only two such systems in the world, Noosa Everglades has a distinct advantage over its Florida equivalent – no alligators. On a guided kayak tour with Kanu Kapers, glide through forests of paperbark, native hibiscus and mangroves, their spindly roots appearing to tiptoe into the water. It's a meditative experience as the mirror-like water reflects the trees and sky. With luck, you might spot water dragons basking in the sun, the bulge of a carpet python draped on a branch, or a majestic white-bellied sea eagle circling.

[kanukapersaustralia.com](http://kanukapersaustralia.com)

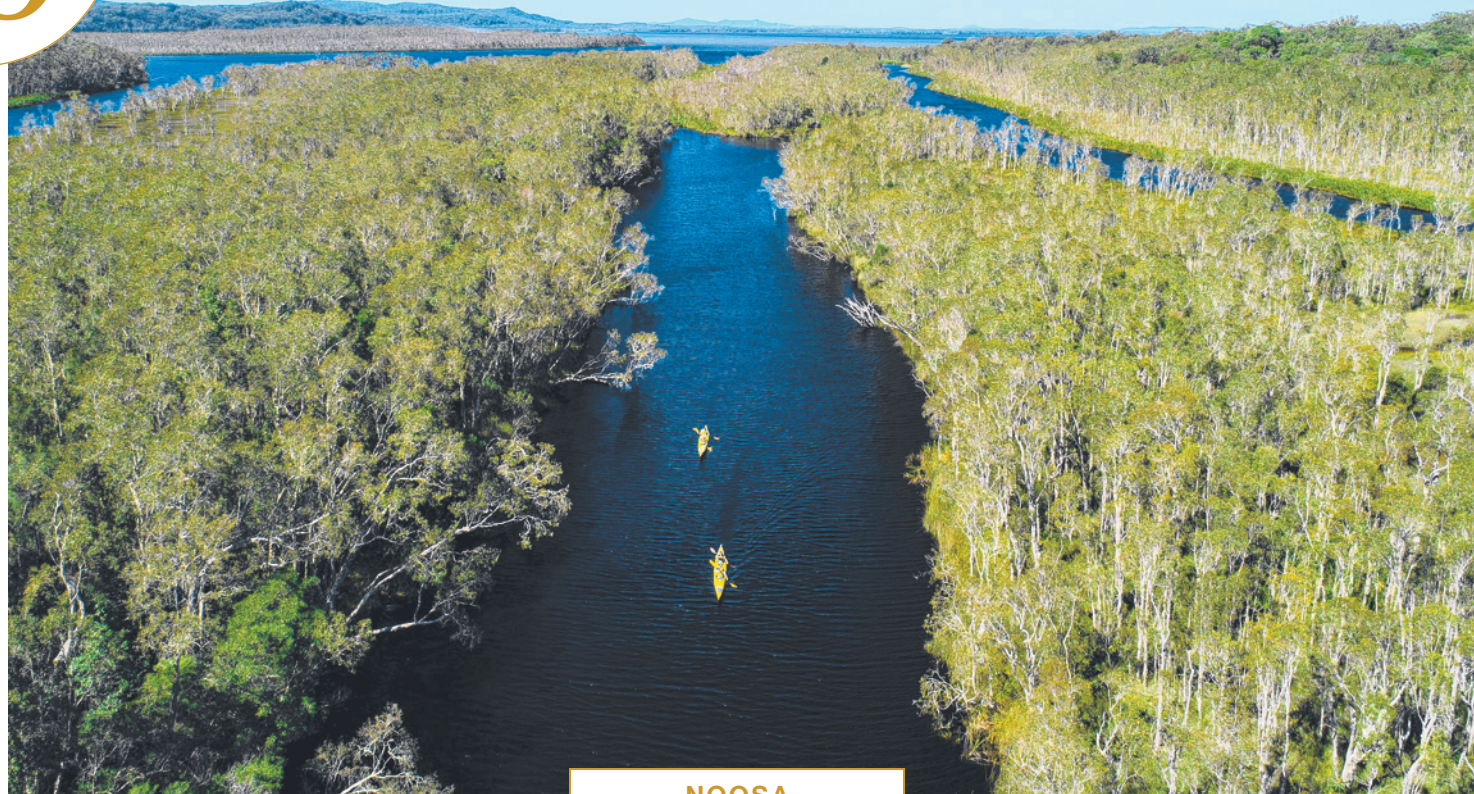


4 Chef, author and TV host Peter Kuruvita doesn't do things by halves. When presented with an opportunity to create a restaurant in the exclusive Parkridge Estate in Noosa Heads, he opened not only a sophisticated dining space, but a cocktail bar, pizzeria, providore and cooking school. "I did think it might be time to wind down, but I couldn't go past the immense potential of this place," he says with a laugh. ALBA by Kuruvita is a bustling, welcoming space with a menu featuring its creator's signature touches, such as the five pot curry banquet showcasing delicately spiced and refined dishes. From 4pm, there's a constant stream of takeaway orders for the blistered, pillowy pizzas, and throughout the week the charismatic chef shares his secrets in hands-on masterclasses.

[albanooosa.com.au](http://albanooosa.com.au)

PERFECT  
10

# BACK FROM THE BEACH



NOOSA

The Sunshine Coast town's drawcards extend beyond sand and surf

LINDY ALEXANDER

5 The red carpet is rolled out (literally) at the entrance to Frida's Sip n' Paint where, brush in hand, patrons can discover their inner artist. During the 2½-hour session, an established local artist guides guests brushstroke by brushstroke to create, say, a portrait of Frida Kahlo, a landscape or a colourful boho-inspired painting of florals. If you prefer to go off-piste, paint whatever takes your fancy. Drinks and nibbles are BYO, so choose whatever tippie gets the creative juices flowing. In this relaxed and convivial environment, it's all about fun art, not fine art.

[fridas.com.au](http://fridas.com.au)

6 Brothers Craig and Lance Masterton create exceptional specialty lagers at their Heads of Noosa craft brewery in Noosaville. From a crisp Japanese lager to the full-bodied Summer Dusk amber incarnation, these are easy-drinking, session beers that carry notes of tropical fruit hops. The taproom menu features dishes that pair perfectly with the brews on offer, such as crispy buffalo cauliflower dredged with creamy blue cheese sauce and pulled beef tacos with smoked cheddar and pickled onions. For those who prefer not to imbibe, the fruity, fragrant hop seltzer doesn't contain alcohol, sugar or calories, yet it's refreshing and more-ish, especially with a zesty slice of lime.

[headsofnoosa.com.au](http://headsofnoosa.com.au)

7 The humble Aussie milk bar has had a dramatic makeover with a providore of the same name, but with very different DNA. Tucked back from Hastings Street is Milk Bar, a cornucopia of locally made and sourced goodies, from specialty pantry items and everyday essentials to delicious house-made cakes (the New York cheesecake is a standout). It's not always easy to get a taste of a region in one place, but wandering the aisles at Milk Bar, the bounty of produce Noosa has to offer is abundantly clear. Browse the likes of organic ferments from Fermentation, fresh cut flowers from Campbell & Bradley, pre-made sourdough pizzas from Noosa Hinterland Pizza Co

and natural soaps from the Pure Soap Co. [milkbargrocer.com.au](http://milkbargrocer.com.au)

8 With a love for wine and interiors, property developer Jared Clout and clothing designer Chris Earngey set out to combine their two passions. The result is Atelier, a Scandi-chic wine bar where the action centres around one large table. Rare and esoteric wines are available, including a 1981 chenin blanc from the Loire Valley and a 1970 Biondi Santi sangiovese. Australian wines are not neglected, with premium offerings from states such as South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia. The genius behind Atelier comes in the form of Coravin, a wine-preserving system that allows wine to be poured without removing the cork, which means every wine on the eight-page list is available by the glass.

[atelierwinebar.com](http://atelierwinebar.com)



9 The scent of chocolate hits long before you walk into Noosa Chocolate Factory, where all (sweet) dreams come true. Visitors can watch chocolates being made through the viewing window, but it's hard to keep your eyes off the extensive range of treats for sale. A new vegan offering features chocolate-coated strawberries, coconut rough and a chocolate cherry slab, or you can fill a bag with glossy spheres of freshly roasted macadamias coated in mango-infused white chocolate. The factory is solar powered, so the decadent purchases are almost guilt-free.

[noosachocolatefactory.com.au](http://noosachocolatefactory.com.au)

Noosa Everglades, above; Ikatan Balinese Day Spa, top left; Peter Kuruvita's ALBA, far left; Atelier wine bar, below left

BEST BEDS



10 Your private island awaits and it's just a few minutes by speed boat from Noosa Heads. Named after former resident and vibrant local character Hannah "Shotgun" Makepeace, the heart-shaped island is a lush Balinese-inspired sanctuary, ideal for multigenerational gatherings. Originally developed by Sir Richard Branson and Virgin Australia co-founder Brett Godfrey as a private retreat, it's now available for exclusive hire for up to 20 guests. You'll find luxurious villas (with enormous carved volcanic boulder baths), as well as a 500,000-litre freshwater pool, 15-person spa, tennis court, walking trails and kayaks. An undeniable highlight is the food by Zeb Gilbert, the multi award-winning executive chef who creates personalised menus, ranging from a Japanese degustation to a European banquet or a gourmet barbecue with freshly caught Moreton Bay bugs. "We try not to have guests dine in the same location twice." Venues include by the boathouse, beside the pool, under the stars or in the Balinese-style "wantilan" pavilion.

[makepeaceisland.com](http://makepeaceisland.com)

Lindy Alexander was a guest of Tourism Noosa. [visitnoosa.com.au](http://visitnoosa.com.au)