



We've all heard the stories about people who came to visit and stayed a lifetime. With the sea change phenomenon continuing unabated, more and more Australians are taking the plunge - abandoning life in the fast lane and heading for places where time passes a little more gently.

Sea change is one thing but many families are finding that while remoteness often sounds romantic, in practical terms, a common sense approach to sea change is to ensure that the lifestyle is not only attractive but well serviced while retaining access to the major regional and metropolitan centres.

That is why coastal townships such as Yamba, on the New South Wales north coast are becoming favourites for those genuinely seeking a lifestyle changes while staying in touch with the 21st century.

Until a recent visit, I had never been to Yamba - in my mind its only claim to fame was that my parents spent their honeymoon there yeons ago and it is a safe harbour for boats plying the coastal route between Sydney and Brisbane.

I was soon to learn that this small fishing village was evolving into a tourism and residential hot spot. It truly is 'God's own country' - an idyllic coastal settlement on the Clarence River, the longest river system in New South Wales and home to that state's second largest fishing fleet. Yamba is within a comfortable drive from major regional centres and just three and a half hours by road from Brisbane.

Boasting a population of a little over 7,000 people, Yamba is one of the most popular holiday destinations along the New South Wales Coast. At peak holiday periods, the population of Yamba almost doubles as people come to soak up the sun, the lifestyle and enjoy the fabulous beaches.

While Bernard Salt may have declared Yamba the next coastal 'hot spot', life in this sleepy coastal town runs to 'Yamba time' as declared by the town clock. The Clarence Valley Council have been conscious in their promotion of the town to preserve its appeal. While there are some stringent town planning controls and developments are limited to three stories, Yamba is

enjoying an influx of exciting residential and resort developments.

A new \$30 million business park is planned and the \$180 million Dolphin Blue Resort will bring another dimension in serious lifestyle options to Yamba.

The Council have excelled in promoting Yamba as a sea change destination while preserving the relaxed lifestyle in an overall urban design plan.

Yamba is an eclectic mix of accommodation and residential styles offering everything from budget accommodation and holiday villages to five star luxury and gated communities. There are five star B & Bs, conference centres, resorts, a golf course and bowls club.

Yamba town centre retains its unique country flavour - it is where both locals and visitors come to eat, meet, play and relax. The town has also attracted a major supermarket chain, a country Target and many of the larger retailers such as ReTravison are also to be found here.

# Addictive Lifestyle

## Yamba

### New South Wales North Coast

Story PETER SCOTT Photography CLARENCE RIVER TOURISM & JANEY HARPER

A short drive up the hill to the ocean side, and places like Ocean Street and Pacific Parade are home to some superb holiday units, resort facilities and investment opportunities. There are so many beautiful beaches for swimming, sun baking and surfing or to just 'chill out'.

The surfer generations have left their mark on the town. Yamba is one of few places in Australia to boast a surfing reserve and a surf school. Some of Australia's best surfboards are manufactured locally. The town has excellent sporting facilities. The golf club has recently benefitted from a major renovation while the bowls club is a popular venue as both a sporting facility and conference centre. There are football fields, reserves and walking tracks for the young and active.

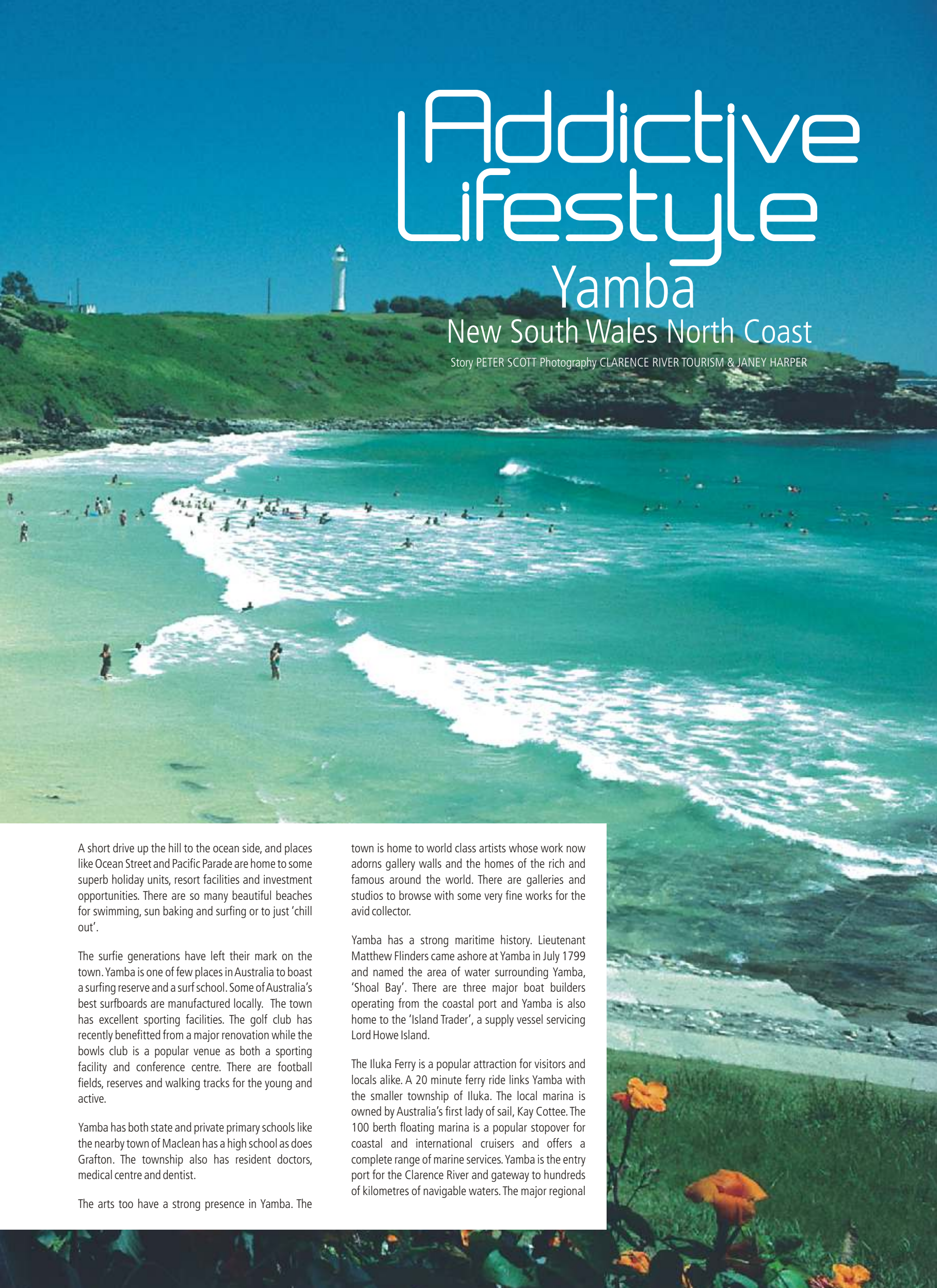
Yamba has both state and private primary schools like the nearby town of Maclean has a high school as does Grafton. The township also has resident doctors, medical centre and dentist.

The arts too have a strong presence in Yamba. The

town is home to world class artists whose work now adorns gallery walls and the homes of the rich and famous around the world. There are galleries and studios to browse with some very fine works for the avid collector.

Yamba has a strong maritime history. Lieutenant Matthew Flinders came ashore at Yamba in July 1799 and named the area of water surrounding Yamba, 'Shoal Bay'. There are three major boat builders operating from the coastal port and Yamba is also home to the 'Island Trader', a supply vessel servicing Lord Howe Island.

The Iluka Ferry is a popular attraction for visitors and locals alike. A 20 minute ferry ride links Yamba with the smaller township of Iluka. The local marina is owned by Australia's first lady of sail, Kay Cottee. The 100 berth floating marina is a popular stopover for coastal and international cruisers and offers a complete range of marine services. Yamba is the entry port for the Clarence River and gateway to hundreds of kilometres of navigable waters. The major regional





city of Grafton is some 44 kilometres upstream. In fact, Yamba is a dream come true for recreational boaties and fishermen. There are a number of launching ramps and trailer parks while rock fishing is popular near the mouth of the Clarence River.

Nowhere else on the east coast of Australia will you be able to enjoy the best and freshest seafood. The fishermen's co-op, conveniently located on the main road leading to the town centre, has the freshest of fresh prawns, fish and oysters. Every day, you can enjoy 'last night's catch'.

As Byron Bay did some years back, Yamba is finding its own niche as a centre rich in local produce. Local manufacturers are creating a brand awareness for a range of products to service the fresh food and gourmet markets across Australia and overseas. The Yamba Markets have developed their own unique flavour and following as a source of crafts and produce. The markets are held on the last Sunday in each month.

From a lifestyle perspective, Yamba offers a lifestyle which is truly addictive. As a holiday destination, there are few centres that offer such a range of accommodation to suit almost every budget. From an investment or residential perspective, my advice is to move quickly. Yamba has all the charm of a more remote centre but time won't pass by this magical place forever. Its pleasant, clean waters, beautiful beaches, country hospitality and infrastructure make living here a dream come true. Yamba really is a place you can come for a day and stay a lifetime!

## Fact file

### How to Get Here

#### By Car

Yamba is seven hours north of Sydney along the Pacific Highway and a little over three hours south from Brisbane.

#### By Bus

All major bus companies travel the Pacific Highway and have arrangements to stop either at Maclean CBD or on the Pacific Highway at the Ferry Park Tourist Complex on the outskirts of Maclean.

#### By Rail

Trains arrive at Grafton City Railway station daily with connections to CountryLink buses and arrangements can be made with the Clarence Valley Airport Shuttle Service. To contact the Clarence Valley Airport Shuttle phone (02) 6645 9200

#### By Plane

Passengers can either arrive at Grafton City Airport with Regional Express, Lismore City Airport with Regional Express and Ballina Airport with Jet Star, Regional Express and Virgin Blue. Arrangements can be made with the Clarence Valley Airport Shuttle service. To contact the Clarence Valley Airport Shuttle phone (02) 6645 9200

There is also a private air strip at Palmers Island available for aircraft landing.

### Fishing and Boating

#### Rock and Beach

Stretching from Woolli in the South to Evans Head in the North the Clarence Valley offers an amazing variety of headlands and beaches, which are easily accessible in comparison to other stretches of the NSW coast.

Yamba/Iluka being the best known locality within this region. Offering two of the biggest seawalls at the mouth of the Clarence River these two towns can boast some very good fishing.

#### Offshore

Deep Sea waters east of Yamba offers a huge variety of deep sea fishing ranging from Marlin and Tuna, right through to Snapper, Jew and Trag. Being on the edge of the tropical waters offers a diverse range of species together with a large commercial prawn industry. It's really a deep sea enthusiasts "mecca" of fishing ports! Plenty of good, safe boat ramps offer access to offshore fishing via the river mouth and there are also many beach launch opportunities.

Whether you are into off shore sailing or meandering along the Clarence River to drop anchor the waterways of the Lower Clarence offer endless days of adventure.

Over a 100 islands lie upstream from the mouth of the river in unpolluted waters with an abundance of fish and nature waiting to be rediscovered.

There are boat launching facilities situated throughout the shire while the Yamba Boatharbour marina offers a safe harbour for anchorage.

For those who don't own a boat there are boat hire facilities at the marina and to keep you safe on the waters there is the Iluka/Yamba Coastguard and the Waterways Authority.

If houseboats are your preference there are those to choose from as well, but if you prefer to have a driver jump on board, you can take the River Explorer 2 or the Iluka Ferry and cruise the Lower Clarence water wonderland in style.

### Arts

There are three galleries, Arthouse Australia and the Kay Cottlee Gallery and Gary Winter Marine Artist are located at the Yamba Marina and a number of restaurants have regular exhibitions.

Ulgahundi Art Gallery and Cultural Centre Maclean. This gallery has a wonderful selection of local indigenous art works for sale while housing important cultural artefacts for the local Yaegl tribe.

### Beaches

There are 11 glorious beaches to choose from as well as a surf club.

## Restaurants

Whether it's fine dining at award winning restaurants, fresh catches from the ocean or just good old fashioned meat and three veg, you'll have every meal catered for with a selection of restaurants and cafes within Yamba from which to choose. The Pacific Hotel Bistro has featured in the Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide.

## Population

Approximately 7,000 permanent residents with an annual population growth of 5%.

60 +	35%
40 - 59 years	26%
20 - 39 years	17%
0 - 19 years	22%

## Climate

Typical summer temperatures vary from 19 to 30 degrees Celsius while in winter it ranges from 10 to

20 degrees. The average rainfall is 1447 mm with a mild monsoon season from February through to April.

During the winter Yamba is much quieter than during the peak summer months and there are an endless succession of sunny, windless days to enjoy river, beach and sporting clubs.

In the summer the nor'easter arrives most days around noon and cools the town off in a far more effective and pleasant manner than air-conditioning could.

People swim in the ocean at Yamba all year round, and in fact the water is often warmer in July than it is in February due to a warm current finding its way down the coast at that time.

## Property pricing

Median prices for 12 months to November - \$362,500 with 8.8% long term trend

