



Press release

Globe trotting chef retreats to Eco Beach

Ryan Carey, the gregarious executive chef for the Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat, seems imbued with hospitality.

In fact, hospitality is so much a part of him that he encourages fellow chefs at the oceanfront Jack's Bar & Restaurant to engage with guests to ensure their experience is a memorable one.

Delivering such personalised attention is something Ryan became accustomed to during his three year stint as a chef, including several years as executive chef, on the world's largest privately owned super yacht.

Along with pleasing the palates of the world's richest people, Ryan and his team were often required to do cooking demonstrations for passing tourists and celebrities at the some of the globe's most glamorous harbours, including Monaco, Capri, Cannes and Venice.

Ryan says when Eco Beach owner Karl Plunkett approached him about setting up the restaurant and function centre at the wilderness retreat, he jumped at the chance to trade in his globetrotting role.

He joined the staff with the mission of delivering exciting cuisine and promoting greater interaction between the kitchen and guests.

Ryan says the produce he has to work with – including an abundance of fresh mud crabs, north west snapper, blue fin tuna and barramundi – is unsurpassed.

“This is amazing produce from a unique and quite stunning part of the world,” Ryan says.

“In many cases a guest can catch a fish at 4pm and they can then have it on their dinner plate at 6.30pm.

“The mud crabs from Jacks Creek come with a distinctive fresh clean and sweet taste that comes from being so close to the ocean.

“There is nothing like it and it’s especially rewarding to see the response from guests.

“The kitchen is totally open and we plan to cook in front of restaurant guests so there’s plenty of opportunities to show guests how to really savour this food.”

Ryan’s new work place on this remote part of the Kimberley coast – an hour’s drive south of Broome – seems light years away from the working life he had just over a month ago.

Before flying into Broome on the long weekend in June, his floating work place was docked at the Cannes Film Festival.

Cannes was among many exotic destinations, including French Polynesia, Antarctica, Africa, the Mediterranean and northern Africa, he regularly visited.

His former role gave him an incomparable culinary experience to bring to the tables of Eco Beach’s diners.

But Ryan is quick to point out his guests won’t be bombarded with a hybrid of cooking traditions from the destinations he’s visited.

At least not all at once, says Ryan.

“I am quite emphatic about taking the confusion out of the kitchen,” Ryan says.

“Aussie chefs are very popular overseas because we can do anything, but we also get confused sometimes in that we put a mixture of tastes from various parts of the world all together in one meal.

“After my extensive travelling experience I am more confident with a wider variety of flavours and their presentation. At the same time I am more of a purist now.”

Ryan says the quest for culinary harmony doesn’t mean he is shy of diversity.

The landscape and climate surrounding Eco Beach lend themselves to the flavours of Morocco, the Mediterranean and South East Asia.

“We pick places in the world with similar temperatures and then design appropriate menus,” Ryan says.

“It may be the case that we have a Moroccan theme one day with tajines and salads with a mint, coriander and yoghurt dressing.

“Then another day we’ll have a nice saltimbocca with a Milanese risotto and rocket and parmesan salad.”

Other culinary experiences enjoyed by guests include catching a fresh mud crab while on tour with indigenous guide Ayesha Cox and having it prepared by kitchen staff.

Picnic hampers, filled with gourmet sandwiches, frittatas and salads, are also created to take fishing or down to the beach.

Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat, which was wiped out by cyclone Rosita in April 2000, was completely rebuilt and reopened in May 2009.

With breathtaking views, stunning villas, an infinity pool, fine dining and rejuvenating health facilities, the retreat is a testimony to how luxury and ecologically sustainable tourism can be successfully married.

The retreat has its own landing strip giving guests the option to transfer from Broome by road, helicopter, boat or plane.

Owner Karl Plunkett says staff are resurrecting a tradition from the old Eco Beach of creating memorable experiences for guests attending conferences and weddings or those seeking a unique setting for the perfect proposal or honeymoon event.

In just over a month of being reopened Eco Beach hosted five successful wedding proposals.

“We’ll do anything to create a memorable and unique experience,” Karl says.

“In the past we’ve had an opera singer on the cliff and lit 3000 candles in the traditional Kimberley black bags to provide lighting and ambience for the event,” Karl says.

“One night our staff transported a four poster bed to a place along the beach, lit a fire and then put some champagne on ice for the honeymooners.

“We then went down to collect the honeymooners and furniture the next morning.”

Originally from the Isle of Man, Mr Plunkett arrived in Broome 22 years ago after spending several years backpacking around the world.

A builder by profession, he fell in love with Broome, opened a backpackers hostel, formed Eco Structures Australia and set about building environmentally friendly accommodation.

For more information about experiencing the Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat visit www.ecobeach.com.au.

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