

# LIVE THE ESTATE LIFE

Hermes Estate brings five-star sophistication to the Coffs Harbour hinterland, writes Ivy Carruth.

“Anything that’s possible, we’ll make happen,” says the owner of one of the newest, and most sumptuously appointed, accommodations in Australia, Hermes Estate. Located in Gleniffer, it’s just a 15-minute drive from boho Bellingen, but truly a world unto itself. Purchased in 2017, the property went through three years of renovations costing more than six million dollars, before achieving the exquisite finishes that it and the gardens offer today.

One thing is for sure – guests will never feel like ‘one of the many’. Indeed, our experience begins a week before we set out, when I receive a call to inquire as to our preferences: These questions go well beyond the pedestrian queries of allergies and estimated arrival time, and ensure that our stay will be as if we are in our home away from home – except much (MUCH) better. Favourite flowers? Should breakfast be served in bed or at the table? The house will be scented – which fragrance would we fancy? Wine to have available? Treats and canapés to have on hand? We request pillows for side sleepers and I ask for vegan food options for myself, and carnivore ones for my travel partner. This is an uber-exclusive, personalised pampering package, with the focus on achieving the exact experience each guest desires.

**Attention to detail**  
“We like saying ‘yes,’” the owner says, and guests will find themselves echoing the sentiment. Yes to perfectly chilled Dom Pérignon, yes to a chauffeured Land Rover at the ready, and yes to 24-7 butler service catering to every whim. Should a security detail be required, it’s available, and the property is protected by alarms and CCTV. It’s a strictly no paparazzi

environment, and one need not leave the estate, to *leave the estate* – there is ample space for helicopter landings and departures.

The attention to detail is absolute, and service is charmingly presumptive, though never obsequious. Our meals are created from hyper-local ingredients: microgreens, meats and vegetables all having arrived with nary a carbon footprint. Meals are prepared on-site by a French chef. My companion tastes my dinner main and says if all vegan food was this delectable, he’d happily succumb to my plant-based entreaties. (He narrowly misses losing a hand – just a *taste*, I’d said...)

**No expense spared**

Being in the villa feels like being wrapped in a cashmere cocoon. I’d worried it would seem too precious, too contrived, but those fears were for naught. Calm, cool ivories and beiges soothe the eye. Lighting is well thought out and creates nooks for reading or napping. Sparkling chandeliers from Europe throw shards of light that shine like diamonds. No expense has been spared in the luxuriant decor and provisions.

The imported bedding is of the highest thread-count; the rugs underfoot, soft silk. The cutlery is solid sterling silver from Carrs of Sheffield, branded with the Hermes Estate logo. A broad range of high-quality spirits is provided along with an extensive Penfolds wine cellar just waiting to be poured into Waterford crystal glasses. Bath amenities are from the heralded ethical Australian brand, iKou, and the sparkling water is Cape Grim, the purest on Earth. For those who partake, a curated selection of cigars is available, carefully chosen with an aficionado’s guidance, and nestled at a perfect temperature in their humidior.

And the surroundings? That grand splendour continues beyond the confines of the villa. Green. Lush. Peaceful. Two hectares of refuge and indulgent retreat. The sky at night, as viewed from the bubbling spa surrounded by quivering candlelight, reveals stars we never knew existed. The day grants us flitting songbirds, the occasional bellowing of a cow in the distance, and strolls to the Never Never River to absorb nature’s gentle symphony. The water is so clear and clean you can drink it right from the cup of your hand – many locals believe it to be a healing force.

The formal gardens beckon a stroll, hydrangeas with mop heads so big they bow in front of you, and boxwoods shaped into globes are interspersed with mother herb and natives that we can’t help but grope. The experience fills our senses with such clarity, and we feel cleansed and rested in a way that’s impossible in the city. It feels easy, in this quiet tranquillity, to breathe out and leave behind the heaviness we carry with us in the filter of the forest.

The serenity here is largely predicated on the lack of human presence, so this isn’t the place for crowds. With two master bedrooms (located on opposite ends of the villa), two couples make for a full house. The retreat was never intended for mass volume occupancy – rather, the objective is to cater to a select few, at the very highest level and in the utmost privacy. We choose to opt-out of the wide range of wellness therapies available in-house, and instead treat this provision of sanctuary as time to reconnect; with one another, with ourselves and with the world around us. When we leave, albeit reluctantly, we do so feeling lighter – but extremely grounded. [hermesestate.com](http://hermesestate.com) ♦

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Clockwise from top left: Toast your good fortune to be staying at Hermes; Rooms come fitted with the finest fabrics; Soak up the serenity of the estate’s green grounds; No expense is spared in living spaces; The estate is set on two hectares of gardens; Evenings by the fire; Views over the Gleniffer grounds; Designer flourishes