

ELIXIR *Journeys*

Offering thrilling, nature based experiences paired with fabulous food and wine, Elixir Journeys bring a touch of luxury to the NSW Central Coast.



The Central Coast is brimming with high-end holiday spoils. Just ask Elixir Journeys founder Nicola Billens.

With a background in luxury tourism, having previously worked for Alquemie who specialise in itineraries for high profile international guests, Nicola knows exactly how to please people who want an experience that's extra special.

As a well connected local, Nicola has partnered with a raft of premium Central Coast tourism operators to package a unique set of daytime and evening excursions. Her well thought out formula of nature experiences coupled with great food and wine hampers ensures you don't need to lift a finger.

From private yacht charters, to mystery beach picnics, helicopter wine tours and carefully crafted luxury experiences, Nicole's imagination and can-do approach seemingly has no limits.

"No request is too much, when it comes to a luxury experience. I love taking a client's idea and turning it into a tailored experience beyond the guest's imagination. I get a real kick out of blowing the expectations of my clients out of the water," Nicola said.

Elixir Journeys have partnered with Belle Escapes to offer X marks the spot secret picnics, exclusive to their holiday home guests.

Clients are whisked off for the afternoon to a beautiful nature spot, and set up with an exquisitely styled picnic that lays out a range of food and beverages from the region.

Tapping into local companies such as Bells at Killcare, Nicola has brought the best of the best together, showcasing to visitors all that the Central Coast has to offer.

The best part is that the experience is a complete mystery. Arrivals from Sydney simply drop off their bags, shed their city shackles and are taken to their surprise destination to enjoy a simple yet elegant picnic in a beach, bay or bush setting.

Each picnic setting is decorated to perfection, with an ambience that helps guests let go of life's chaos and drama, and settle into a dreamlike state of relaxation. Hampers are at the waiting filled with seasonal grazing platters and healthy beverages.

To book an X marks the spot secret picnic exclusively through Belle Escapes, contact the team on 02 4360 1717.

PREMIUM EXPERIENCES FROM ELIXIR JOURNEYS

Following are a number of premium luxury experiences offered by Nicola Billens and her team at Elixir Journeys.

Walk. Eat. Sail.

Combining a guided bush walk, great food and a relaxing afternoon sail, this experience is for people wanting variety and a bit of everything – nature, walking, eating and time on the water.

Highlights include a stroll through a conservation project in Pearl Beach, a hike to Patonga that includes one of the Central Coast's most scenic views (Broken Bay). Then a cold beverage and shared entrees at the Boathouse Patonga, followed by sailing aboard a 38ft yacht to a secluded cove for a delicious grazing platter.

Afterwards, the choice is yours – choose to explore deeper into the Hawkesbury, over to Pittwater, or simply enjoy some rest and relaxation swimming off the yacht before you sail back to Hardy's Bay.

Perfect for groups of friends or families, this experience can be shared or private. But please be aware that availability is limited so book ahead (two months ideally) to avoid disappointment.

Price is \$396 per person (when shared). More details on the Elixir Journeys website.

Helicopter Wine Hop

Enjoy a day out in the renowned Hunter Valley, lifting off in a helicopter. Take a low-level scenic flight over the Central Coast and get a birds-eye view of the inland waterways from the Hawkesbury river to the south end of Brisbane Waters. You'll also see Tuggerah Lakes to the north, in the distance.

Landing in the Hunter Valley you can choose from several very special wine experiences at Audrey Wilkinson, Brokenwood or Tyrells, which all include a 3-course lunch. Your experiences could range from meeting the makers, an exclusive behind the scenes tour, tastings direct from the barrels or visiting the 'Sacred Sites', ungrafted dry-grown vineyards which are over 100 years old.

This experience will be tailored to your whims, price P.O.A.

Please call Elixir Journeys to discuss on 02 8007 4475.

Paddle & Pearls

Explore the natural beauty of Broken Bay on an early morning kayak tour. First you'll paddle to a pearl seeding shed situated amongst the mangroves, where you'll learn about the pristine local environment that creates the ideal conditions needed to grow pearls. You can watch-on as pearls are harvested to see the intricate and detailed work that goes into producing a pearl.

As you kayak around the uninhabited nature reserve you'll see local wildlife such as the pelicans, or birds of prey, that thrive in this abundant natural habitat. You'll learn how the birdlife is intertwined with the pearl farm and the surrounding ecosystems.

Your kayak guide will take you past more oyster and pearl farm leases that surround the island before heading back to the pearl seeding shed.

At the pearl seeding shed, what you will see will depend on the seasonal activities. This is a working pearl shed and typically off-limits to the general public. The farming of the pearl is fascinating and the pearling technicians will answer all your questions. Ending, it's just a short kayak back to base.

Price is \$247 per person (when shared). More details on the Elixir Journeys website. www.elixirjourneys.com



NICOLA BILLENS

Nicola moved to the coast a couple of years ago and instantly recognised hidden potential for bespoke, luxury tourism experiences in the region.

Working for Alquemie, she travelled around Australia to get a grasp on the high-end holiday market and then travelled around the world pitching ideas for luxury experiences to clients.

But it was only when she moved to the Bouddi Peninsula, just a stone's throw from Palm Beach, that she realised how under appreciated the Central Coast region truly was.

"Every time I visited somewhere myself, around the coast, I thought about how perfect it would be for my clients that I've worked with previously," she said.

"Living here has shown me that there is actually so much to offer, so close to Sydney. I've travelled the world to all seven continents and I can speak with confidence when I say that the NSW Central Coast really is a hidden gem just waiting to be explored by both international and domestic travellers."

