

Paradise on the edge of the lake is pure poetry

Hover over the water in absolute luxury for a special treat, writes **Alison Cotes**

LOVE many, trust a few, and always paddle your own canoe.

Never has the old aphorism proved truer than during our stay at Gooloowaa, the newest addition to the accommodation at Eumarella Shores Retreat. We were six dear and loving friends who've known each other for 30 years, and we trusted one of us to barbecue, another to prepare the salads and cook breakfast, three of us to wash up, and one to complain about the driving. But we couldn't trust any of us to navigate, or to work the elaborate DVD system, so we had to get the daughter of the house, Erin, to come and program it for us, so that we could watch and sing along to *Kiss Me Kate*, which we had brought with us.

I've been to Eumarella Shores before, but Gooloowaa is different from the normal one and two-bedroom cottages that line the lake. It's a new five-star luxury lodge that hovers over the waters of Lake Weyba, with a huge deck for barbecues, adobe walls made by owners Christine and Bill Tainsh and internal beams and load-bearing poles made from the timbers of the old cottage that made way for this paradise.

And it has equipment that sent our group of six almost wild with excitement, to the extent that even I, the eternal travel cynic, couldn't keep away from the taps, the kitchen gadgets, the back-tilted basin-less hand-washing facilities in the bathroom and the double refrigerator with everything that opened and shut and then some.

I've never seen so many chairs of so many different types, either – tall stools on the deck just right for propping yourself up on the chest-high shelf around the railings, elegant sofas for lounging, at least a dozen dining chairs, canvas sun lounges, woven chairs for sunbaking and low-set padded jobs.

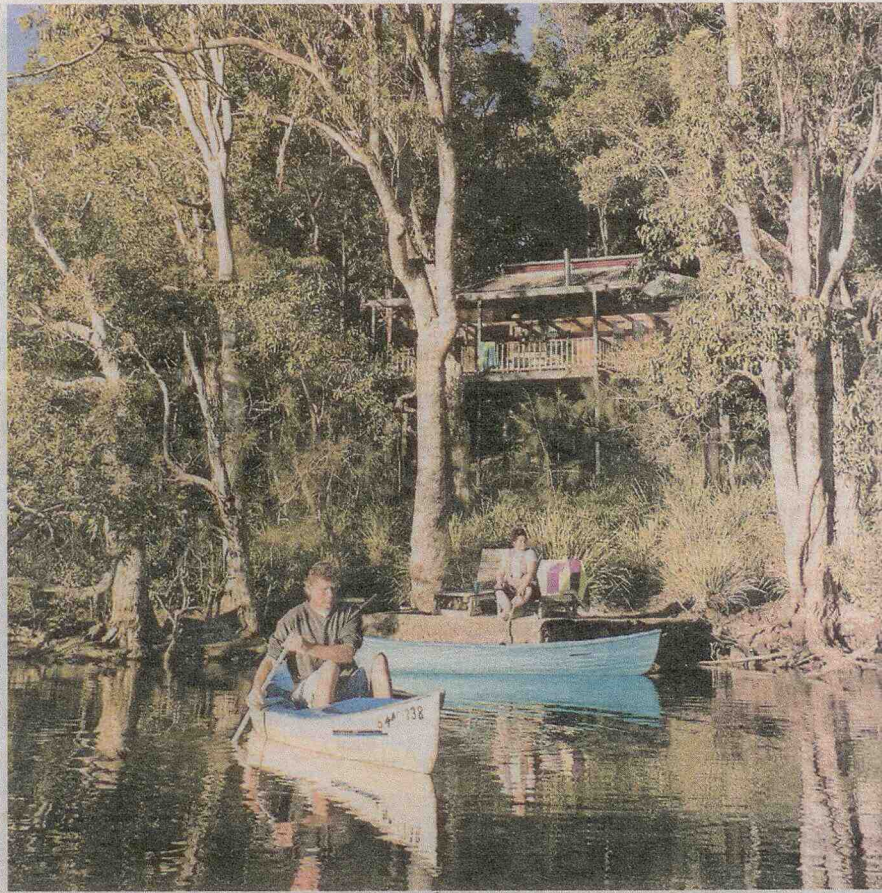
One night the wondrous poet Harry

Donnelly came over and entertained us with his tricky logic and magical way with words. No bush poet is Harry, but a deep thinker who can express his thoughts in accessible but gob-smacking rhetoric and there's nothing smutty about his stuff either, although much of it is hysterically funny. He doesn't live on the property any more – the original log hut that he used to live in was demolished to make way for our luxurious lodge – but he's happy to drive over from his own bush hut at Mudjimba, and we gave him a good feed, as well as just enough good red wine to keep him well-oiled but still able to drive home, and a fun night was had by all. You can book an evening with Harry through reception at Eumarella Shores, and although he doesn't demand a feed, as he usually doesn't come over until after dinner, it makes the evening much more companionable if you offer it to him.

We drove to Sunshine Beach for a swim next day, then stopped off at Belmondos Fresh Food Market for more provisions, in case we were in danger of running out, then came back for a two-hour rest before we were paid a visit by the delightfully kooky Loani Prior, who wanted to show off her zany tea cosies knitted in the shape of emus, flowerpots, SpongeBob SquarePants and God knows what else.

The samples she brought were even more fun than her new book, and she almost persuaded the knitters among us, including me, to enrol in her class at Gooloowaa next month to develop our own creative woolly teapot jumpers.

The rest of the time it was checking out the shoe shops along Gympie Tce at Noosaville, taking the obligatory ride on the Noosa Ferry and spending the rest of the evening watching the moonlight over the lake while nibbling on leftovers, thus making a perfect end to a perfect couple of days.



BUSH LUXURY: Gooloowaa at Eumarella Shores Retreat.

I didn't even feel the need of a massage, especially as it wasn't me (for once) who had up-ended the canoe.

Gooloowaa can be hired for a single couple, but I really think it's too big for just two, who would be better off in one of the smaller cottages, equally luxurious although with fittings not quite as elegant. But it's ideal for a group holiday, because there are three bedrooms and heaps of living space, and a family would go well there, too. Just keep an eye on the smaller kids if they go exploring near the lake, because although it's barely deep enough to drown in, it's exceedingly muddy. But if you paddle the canoes along the shore and turn into Murdering Creek, having read the story of the unprovoked massacre of the Kabi Kabi people there in the 1860s, you may well be haunted by the sober atmosphere of this beautiful spot.

Wish you were here

Go

Eumarella Shores is about 130km (two hours) north of Brisbane. For air and bus info, check the website.

Contact

Bill and Christine Tainsh, Eumarella Shores, 251 Eumarella Rd, Lake Weyba Downs. Ph 5449 1738, email stay@eumarellashores.com.au, website www.eumarella-shores.com.au No pets, but children welcome – babysitting available.

Cost

Gooloowaa Luxury Lake Pavilion

from \$310 a night for one-bedroom (two people) to \$3090 for five nights for six people. Other rates on the website.

Do

Ten minutes from Noosa, Eumarella and Peregian for golf, beaches and shopping. Canoeing and fishing in Lake Weyba (canoe provided), self-guided bushwalking interpretative trail, birdwatching, bikes for hire, in-room massage. Resident poet Harry Donnelly will come over and read his quirky poems (bookings and prices on application). Art gallery on site has work of Doug Tainsh (who drew the Cedric cartoons in *The Australasian Post*), Bianca Tainsh and Robyn Tainsh.