

Solving Life's Vexing Problems

by Eric P

Shoal Bay is part of the Blue Water Paradise of Port Stephens

Long-time members may remember some small, old, one-bedroom units named 'Bellevue'. I do, because I stayed in one of them. Despite their name, the only views were of the neighbouring property. The saving grace was their location. They were located directly across from a fabulous beach.

Leap forward to today, and I still admire that same beach. The kids have grown up, but I now take great pleasure from watching my two grandkids playing excitedly in the water and making castles out of the same sand. Kids and water are a marriage made in heaven, even out of the main seasons when the water is too cold for anything more than dipping toes into.

My son and his wife are making the most of having a break from parent duties, drinking a coffee, eating my dark chocolate Tim Tams and chatting leisurely. I can see them, sitting up on the balcony, taking in the view and looking out for dolphins. My word, life is good.

How times have changed, and for the better. Those small one-bedroom units have been replaced by the three-bedroom 'Tidemark' townhouses. Unlike Bellevue, Tidemark has magnificent views over the bay. We practically live on the front balcony, although I must admit to escaping to the rear balcony off the main bedroom for some quiet reading from time-to-time.

I am not sure if all API members realise how lucky they are to have access to such a high-quality property, in such a glorious location. I could not afford to pay the rates charged by other (not as good) rentals in the area, so I thank my lucky stars I joined API many years ago.



We practically live on the balcony and long shadows indicate 'happy hour' is approaching!

This evening we will all walk along the beachfront to Gianni's Italian Restaurant for a celebratory dinner. My wife's birthdays are a festival, rather than a one-day event. So, we have also had a very rewarding lunch at Zenith Café, a few metres further along, as well as a meal at the Country Club. I think my belt would be straining if we did not do so much walking on these holidays.



Take a picture of yourselves on this balcony - it will make your friends insanely envious!

“ Plan your holiday well in advance as these units are very popular. ”

Every time we come to Tidemark, we either go on a dolphin watching cruise, whale watching cruise or take the foot ferry to Tea Gardens and have lunch at a Café on the other side of the bay. There is always something different to see.

Even in the middle of winter, we enjoy coming to Shoal Bay as there is so much to do in the area. We enjoy the walk to Fingal Bay, where after a visit to the whale watching platform, we indulge in a cake or pastry and a flat white coffee at the café.

My son and daughter-in-law like to swing a club at the golf driving range, so my wife and I take the grandkids to the Shark & Ray Encounter Aquarium or the Camel rides or the sand dune tobogganing. How good is it to have an excuse to do fun things that oldies can only get away with doing when they are supposedly minding grandchildren! I can't wait for the youngsters to get old enough to go on the quad bike tours.



Memories are being made for life

Shortly, the grandkids will drag me along the beach. I will pretend to protest profusely of course. The aim of their game is two scoops from the gelato bar. All that sugar is like adding rocket fuel to them. By the time we get back along the beach suitably revved-up, I will happily hand them over to their parents for their shower time. It serves them right for stealing my Tim Tams.



Indoors or out?

It is time for me to adjourn to the front balcony, with some roasted nuts. Now, the biggest decision I face is, should I have a glass of crisp Pinot Gris or boutique craft beer? I take my hat off to those of you that solved this vexing problem by saying 'have one of each'.

PS. Love the new beds and chairs! API

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