

# style

A woman in a white dress and hat is swinging on a swing set. The swing is suspended from a large palm tree trunk that leans diagonally across the frame. The background is a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. In the foreground, there is a white sandy beach and the turquoise ocean. The overall scene is tropical and serene.

Tropical North  
Queensland

AUTUMN / WINTER 2009

The European  
Village Life

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# EUROPEAN VILLAGE LIFE IN THE TROPICS

For a sneak preview of The Village Palm Cove, **Marie Barbieri** peeps ahead to envisage the birth of Queensland's European township.

As winter blossoms into spring, Europe is abuzz. Artists pluck dried paint off their fingers as they complete their canvases in Monet's idyllic Giverny, while violinists pluck their strings warming up for Salzburg's Mozart-inspired concertos. Pacing across Italy's piazzas, locals respond to the call of the bell tower, ending their day's work with aperitifs in porticoed wine-bars. And in style-icon Mykonos, the bronzed and aesthetically gifted eye-up the fashion boutiques in preparation for a night of hedonism. Across the miles, under the cackle of kookaburras, a similar picture is unfolding at The Village Palm Cove, in Queensland's tropical north. Brace yourself for a sensory immersion. The Village concept represents the closest thing to a European village east of Istanbul.

At first, it's unclear whether it is Greece's splendour, France's sophistication or Italy's elegance that becomes so palpably apparent. Entering The Village through the grand loggia, however, smacks of déjà vu. Glimpses of rural France's most quaint village, Giverny, flash by. Home to Monet's gardens, so unforgettably immortalised, Giverny remains an obligatory stop for any artist in search of their roots. The Village's loggia, a romantic infusion of waterways, footbridges and wading water lilies, replicates the scene. Little wonder an art school, along with an artist in residence program, is soon to join The Village's art galleries. Follow your feet through The Village's intimate walkways, where Hellenic reminders of the enduring charm of Cycladic islands hijack the senses. The labyrinthine streetscape of Mykonos' old town is observed by ogling balconies, just as The Village's upper level terraces do here.

Below, sunseekers adorned with artisan-crafted jewellery are seduced by the arresting aromas of authentic Mediterranean cuisine, from the continental deli to the organic grocery store. Later, they raise utterly delectable gelati as they pose for photos by the beckoning urn fountain. Now enveloped by the ochre hues of the village square, the town's epicentre, it's time to learn Italian. From open-air cafés, the muffled symphony of life fills the air; flaming grills hiss at their day's catch, cups cradle newborn espressos and blenders devour fresh fruits. The clinking of cutlery in this vibrant open space echoes that of Capri's La Piazzetta, perennially crisscrossed by table cloths and suited waiters. Connected by a cultural affinity, in the Village Square, with not a car in sight, affresco restaurants ply their irresistible trade – all under a tropical sky. Music is the essence of this place. Springing from The Palm Cove Academy of Music, off the northern piazza, music festivals will make The Village Palm Cove the Salzburg of Australia's far north. The school hosts talented Australian musicians through scholarships as they ride the notes of their musical journeys. The Village Palm Cove's piazzas will be dusted liberally with street performers, whilst classical musicians grace the first-floor Juliet balconies, an audible analogy to the finest concertos held in Salzburg's St Peter's Baroque Hall. Strolling through the cobblestone lanes, The Village's designer boutiques will remind you of the dazzling cuts of Milan's buzzing Via Montenapoleone. But on closer inspection, The Village soon takes you deeper into authentic Italian village life – such as that proudly guarded in Vigevano's Piazza Ducale. Bypassed by most international



The Village Palm Cove





visitors, Italians agree that Vigevano's Renaissance central square, referred to as "the city's living room," is perhaps northern Italy's most spectacular. Piazza Ducale is framed by the unusual dimensions of an elongated rectangle, becoming at once majestic, yet intimate. Along the piazza's perimeter is a striking army of granite columns, crowned by an equal number of ornate arches. Dominating Vigevano's colonnade is the 74 metre-high Torre del Bramante, which offers a striking vantage point from which to appreciate the complex, linear beauty of Piazza Ducale. This pattern is repeated in the contours of The Village Palm Cove, where porticoes hide the splendour of cafes, boutiques and art

galleries, exuding the same rustic appeal that the retailers in Vigevano have earned over five centuries of trade. Just like Vigevano's, the bell tower of The Village Palm Cove will be the choice spot from which to breathe in the life and soul of the town centre's piazzas. The Village's beating heart, this three storey-high conical bell tower, chimes its pulse at 5pm every evening. Fountains fire up into feisty cauldrons and flames dance in synchronicity, signalling the beginning of Romance Hour.

The bell tower also houses a champagne bar. Sip on its terrace immersed in all things Arabian. Follow with a trip up to the observation deck, to watch the silhouette of the rainforested McAlister mountains splice through the wilting sun. On the adjacent rooftop terrace, find the Moonlight Cinema, patchworked with deckchairs for nightly arthouse films - all hidden behind the landscape's veil of fragrant tropical foliage. International visitors know it. And Australians know it. Australia has it all. Scorched-red deserts, bleached-white beaches, world-envied national parks, with wildlife thriving throughout. And now, as Australia awaits with child-like expectancy, bell towers, Italianate piazzas, cloistered alleys and serenading musicians are about to take the world by tropical storm.

**For retail opportunities at The Village Palm Cove, contact:**  
 Shop 7, 123 Williams Esplanade,  
 Palm Cove, QLD, 4879  
 Tel: + 07 4055 3499  
[www.thevillagepalmcove.com](http://www.thevillagepalmcove.com)

## SIDE BAR

Architect Leigh Ratcliffe knew what he was doing when he envisioned this unique hamlet, complemented by an exclusive 4½ star luxury boutique resort. The Village Palm Cove Resort will feature a 100m-long swimming lagoon (centred by the Tropical Island Bar), necklaced by powdery white sand and framed by swaying coconut palms. The Lost World will seduce you through its water-maze and 25-metre lap pool, accessed through waterfalls that will dare you to swim through them. And when all is said and done, you can retreat for intimate moments with your partner in the Garden Pavilions.

## FACT FILE

With Cape Tribulation to the north, the Great Barrier Reef to the east, world-heritage rainforests to the west and Cairns International Airport only 20 minutes to the south, Palm Cove is a peninsula of pure paradise.