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Quiet and glitz

The New Tweed Coast is a mix of tranquillity and glamour, writes **Arjun Ramachandran**.

Sitting on a small patch of grass at Santai, my wife and I are put through our paces by the yoga instructor who conducts lessons at the resort. Dusk has descended on this north-eastern tip of NSW and the grass is cool with the evening's first drops of dew. As a virgin yoga participant, I'm grateful for the roaring waves crashing into nearby Casuarina Beach that drown out the sounds of my creaking bones.

Leisure and tranquillity are hallmarks of the New Tweed Coast. Just hours before our yoga lesson, my wife and I took a stroll along Casuarina Beach and marvelled at how few people we passed.

Our accommodation is at Santai, a five-star beachside Balinese enclave opened by Domain Resorts in February.

Pools and fountains line the path from the foyer to our room at the far end of the resort. The pools are so numerous that a large number of safety gates dot the resort. For us this is a minor inconvenience but Santai might be better suited to couples than young families.

The decor of our room isn't really Balinese but is high on luxury. It has a spacious king-sized bed and a large spa bath.

The rooms are well-equipped, with a large flatscreen TV, microwave, stove and dishwasher. Wireless internet access is being rolled out and mobile phone coverage in the room is patchy unless we step out onto the large balcony.

Santai's aquatic outdoor design and its indoor luxuries – the resort also has a day spa for massages, facials and other beauty treatments – can be very seductive.

But with a hire car, the only

practical way to get around, we head out to explore the coast.

The first thing we notice is development: half-finished resorts and large holiday homes occupy nearly every plot. A local later tells us the New Tweed Coast lies between Byron Bay and the Gold Coast not just geographically but in atmosphere, too.

Nearby Kingscliff, with its quaint shops and cafes, is a delightful beachside town. At Cabarita, one of the many popular surf breaks, we climb the headland and wait to spot dolphins or whales. We see neither but the view is great.

For dinner we visit Bamboo, Santai's five-star restaurant. Even though the newly opened Santai is less than a quarter full, Bamboo is bursting with couples. It offers a six-course degustation menu, featuring Bangalow pork belly, Kobe wagyu sirloin and matching wines for \$150.

Arjun Ramachandran travelled courtesy of Domain Resorts.

Destination Tweed Coast, NSW

■ GETTING THERE

Flights from Sydney to Gold Coast take an hour, then 15 minutes drive to Santai by hire car.

Santai is at Dianella Drive, Casuarina Beach. A one-room suite costs \$215 a night and a two-room suite is \$255. Both prices are for a minimum two-night stay, and are available until November 30. Bookings 1800 555 200 or see www.domainresorts.com.