

# Media backgrounder

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December 2021

## Silky Oaks Lodge in 2021

Following an extended closure for a \$20million refurbishment and the Covid-19 pandemic, Silky Oaks Lodge has reopened in December 2021.

The property is one of five Australian luxury lodges in the Baillie Lodges portfolio, making the Tropical North Queensland connection to Longitude 131° in the outback at Uluṛu-Kata Tjuṛa, The Louise in South Australia's Barossa Valley wine country and Capella Lodge on subtropical Lord Howe Island. Flagship property Southern Ocean Lodge was razed in the 2020 summer bushfires and planning for its rebuild is now underway, with opening expected in mid-2023.

The expanding Baillie Lodges portfolio has most recently acquired New Zealand's Huka Lodge and Vancouver Island's Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge as part of its partnership with US-based KSL Capital Partners.

Combining Baillie Lodges founders James and Hayley Baillie's inspired design aesthetic and attention to detail with the visions of Port Douglas-based architect Gary Hunt and interior design team Pike Withers, the new-look Silky Oaks Lodge is considered a leader in the regeneration of high-end experiential tourism in Queensland's tropical north.

The overarching aesthetic is one of light, open aired spaces with clean lines and contemporary furnishings. It's a signal of a new, more refined approach to design in Tropical North Queensland and a step away from Asian-inspired design influences, despite the similarities in climate. The refreshed Silky Oaks Lodge is a contemporary rendition on Tropical North Queensland architecture using floor-to-ceiling glass and high, angled rooflines to buy in light while allowing guests a real immersion in the rainforest.

## New Features

### The Daintree Pavilion

Designed to offer the ultimate in tropical luxury, the one- or two-bedroom Daintree Pavilion is designed as an exclusive 'hide' in the rainforest canopy, offering guests a private and luxurious sanctuary with the Mossman River cascading nearby.

The Daintree Pavilion follows the format of the new brand of premium suites across the Baillie Lodges portfolio, including the Lidgbird Pavilion at Capella and the Dune Pavilion at Longitude 131°.

Spanning some 320m<sup>2</sup> and setting a new benchmark for luxury in Tropical North Queensland, the Daintree Pavilion is one-of-a-kind at Silky Oaks Lodge with dramatic skillion ceilings held aloft by glass walls.

Designed for privacy, two separate sleeping areas each offer an ensuite bathroom opening to an outdoor atrium with bath under the treetops. Flowing from the shared central lounge extensive decks feature



multiple open-air lounging options, tiered infinity pool and plunge spa floating among the cool of the forest.

Furnishings by some of Australia's best design talent including Jordan, Pierre and Charlotte Julien, Ross Gardam and Kett add a sense of relaxed luxury to the expansive suite.

### Guests Treehouse Suites

The guest suites were pre-existing at Silky Oaks Lodge and have been refreshed leading with Queensland design heritage features including shiplap exteriors and vertical join interiors with polished timber floors, while new interiors offer a light and airy rainforest retreat.

Ensuite bathrooms feature rain showers and an easy indoor-outdoor interaction. Australian made Brodware fittings complement New Guinea rosewood wood finishes and freestanding outdoor stone bathtubs. Natural stone tiles, ceramics and porcelain are sourced from Artedomus.

### The Kitchen Garden

Chef Mark Godbeer has taken the lead of the Silky Oaks Lodge Kitchen Garden. The onsite garden offers guests an opportunity to visit a working garden where the staff cultivate tropical and Indigenous ingredients for use in the restaurant. This area is also a cool open-air venue for sunset evening drinks and canapés, where guests can meander through the garden and learn a little about what's growing and various plant's use in the kitchen.

The garden can also be booked for intimate functions and private dining for inhouse guests. The dining table has been created by the Silky Oaks Lodge team using repurposed timber from the original boardwalk.

### A New-look Central Lodge

On arrival at Silky Oaks Lodge guests are met with a striking entrance at the end of the rainforest-lined boardwalk. The new-look central lodge is framed by a dramatic skillion roof that reaches to the treetops creating an airy space open to the sights and sounds of the rainforest and the Mossman River below.

The central lodge sets the scene for the Baillie Lodges guest experience throughout Silky Oaks Lodge. The vibe is one of light-filled space with a refined feel and contemporary, clean lined finishes.

The hub for guest activity which includes guest reception, boutique, restaurant, bar and lounge area, the main lodge has seen a significant transformation as part of the 2021 redesign.

A reimagined reception area flows to an expansive lounge, contemporary bar and the more exclusive Jungle Perch lounging area which cantilevers into the forest canopy. Nearby, the private Kubirri Lounge offers a flexible air-conditioned space for quiet reading, private dining and meetings.

Some 45 ceramic tiles commissioned from the artists at the Kuku Yalanji Arts Centre offer a hint at the Daintree's rainforest flora and fauna, while a series of mesmerising photographs commissioned from Catherine Nelson appear in the lounge and restaurant. Artworks by award-winning Indigenous artist Danie Mellor complement artworks acquired from the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, creating a real sense of the rainforest's cultural heritage.

### Connections with Community - First Nations Kuku Yalanji people

Silky Oaks Lodge has nurtured a rewarding connection with the First Nations Kuku Yalanji people, the traditional owners of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area whose history dates around 50,000 years. The Kuku Yalanji people's ancient culture is centred around a deep respect for nature and an intimate

knowledge of its cycles. A tour with renowned local Indigenous operator Walkabout Adventures or a guided Dreamtime Walk through Mossman Gorge is a must-do.

Guests have a chance to discover first-hand the invaluable knowledge passed down through generations. Guests also connect with the Indigenous heritage of the land through the colourful, textured works of local Aboriginal artists which add a real sense of place to a stay at Silky Oaks Lodge.

In October 2021, the world's oldest living rainforest was returned to its custodians in a historic handback ceremony in Far North Queensland. The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people have taken formal ownership of 160,213 hectares of country stretching from Mossman to Cooktown, including the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Daintree National Park. They will jointly manage the country with the Queensland government and say it will lead to cultural learning and employment opportunities.

## Key Designers

James and Hayley Baillie are both passionate about contemporary design and together work with Australian designers and use international design elements to create their own breed of luxury lodges with a luxurious and welcoming 'at home' feel.

James and Hayley have developed long-term working relationships with several Australian designers over the years whose work is seen across the Baillie Lodges portfolio.

Working with local communities to discover the region's local and First Nations artists, designers and suppliers is an important way to support small businesses in the area and forms a key part of the 'sense of place' so essential to the Baillie Lodges experience.

## Designers at Silky Oaks Lodge

### Gary Hunt Architects

Baillie Lodges has engaged Port Douglas-based architects Hunt Design with the Silky Oaks Lodge design led by principal Gary Hunt. The team has in turn worked with local contractors and tradespeople for the significant works.

### Catherine Nelson

Catherine Nelson is an Australian artist who uses digital technology as her paintbrush to create landscape 'paintings' and animations. Baillie Lodges sought out Catherine for a significant commission which sees her detailed, hypnotic artwork throughout the lodge. Guests will see Catherine Nelson's incredible commissioned photographs featuring the Kuku Yalanji children playing in the Mossman River throughout Silky Oaks Lodge, including a pentptych and triptych installation as well as a lightbox installation in the central lodge, with individual pieces in each of the guest suites.

### Danie Mellor

Winner of the 2009 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Indigenous artist Danie Mellor is famous for his depictions of Aboriginal forest shelters. Three of Danie's mesmerising prints appear in the central lodge.

## Yalanji Arts Centre

Located in the Mossman Gorge Aboriginal Community on the border of the World Heritage-listed Daintree National Park, Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku (BBN) Aboriginal Corporations' Yalanji Arts Indigenous art centre nurtures and develops the region's artists to showcase culture and generate individual and community growth.

Baillie Lodges commissioned artists from the community to create 45 ceramic disc tiles to represent the Daintree flora and fauna in an installation in the entrance to the central lodge. The tiles depict designs that represent the names of the guest suites, providing a link between the lodge, the suites, the Daintree and its First Nations traditional owners.

## Cairns Indigenous Art Fair

The annual art fair is committed to strengthening and celebrating First Nations culture, creating professional development opportunities for local artists, and cultural exchange between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and visitors. The fair offers an ethical art marketplace and opportunity for emerging artists to develop. Several local Indigenous arts and crafts appear in the central lodge.

## Bula'bula Arts

Guests are entranced by the large conical weaving or Nganiyal by the Arnhem Land artist Mary Dhapalany of the Bula'bula Arts community.

## Cool Earth Ceramics

Cairns-based ceramicist Shireen Talibudeen operates a small studio and has been commissioned to create several works for Silky Oaks Lodge including the oil burners for the guest suites where the signature scent by Alkeme will create a rainforest sanctuary. Shireen has also created ceramics for the restaurant and Healing Waters Spa, and her pots and vessels can be seen in the Kubirri Lounge.

## Alkeme

Created by Aphra Hill, the local spa care range Alkeme is sustainably produced in small batches and using ancient remedies and wisdoms. Aphra has blended the Silky Oaks Lodge signature scent using Australian native botanicals and products also feature in some Healing Grounds Spa treatments.

## Baillie Legacy Designers

### Baillie Beds

Designed by leading Australian bedding company AH Beard, the custom-made Baillie Bed features throughout the Baillie Lodges properties.

### Bemboka

Loved supplier of towels, blankets and alpaca throws throughout the Baillie portfolio, guests will be happy to see Bemboka at Silky Oaks Lodge.

### EcoSmart Fire

Australian designed, environmentally friendly EcoSmart fires appear in various forms around Silky Oaks Lodge from the riverbank to selected guest suites. EcoSmart fires are also found at Longitude 131° and Capella Lodge.

### Julie Patterson

Popular at Capella and at Southern Ocean Lodge, Julie Patterson's fabric designs are seen in the restaurant soft furnishings at Silky Oaks Lodge.

## Lloyd Brothers

Lloyd Brothers creates the body products and spa amenities in suites across the lodges with the delicious Australian Native Wild Peach and Lime scented soaps a highlight.

## Malcolm Greenwood

Organic, hand-thrown ceramics by Sydney-based artist Malcolm Greenwood feature throughout Silky Oaks Lodge from the dining experience to vases in the Kurribi Room and installations at the entrance to the Healing Waters Spa.

## Pierre and Charlotte Julien

Silky Oaks Lodge's redesign includes a significant collaboration with Pierre and Charlotte who design and produce contemporary lighting and custom furniture using sustainable timbers. Guests will see the design duo's chairs in suites as well as tables, chairs and bar stools in the main lodge. Pierre and Charlotte have a long working friendship with James Baillie at P&O Resorts in the 1990s before providing furniture and lighting for Southern Ocean Lodge. At Longitude 131°, the couple has created coffee tables, chairs, stools and lamps in the main lodge and guest tents.

## Pike Withers

Baillie Lodges has worked with Sydney-based interior design company Pike Withers for more than a decade, engaging Amanda Pike for the interiors at Silky Oaks Lodge following her work over the years at Capella Lodge. James and Hayley also bring a personal interest to interior design, so working with Amanda and her team is a very complementary partnership.

## Ross Gardam

Australian Ross Gardam creates contemporary custom furniture and modern feature lighting. His lighting is a highlight in the central lodge while the guest suites feature custom bedside lights with handblown glass lampshades by artists at Adelaide's Jam Factory creative hub.

Other Baillie Lodges design mainstays present at Silky Oaks Lodge include Gervasoni, Satara, Vincent Shepherd and Armadillo.

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**Editors' Notes:** Baillie Lodges is a growing portfolio of luxury lodges renowned for setting benchmarks in premium experiential travel. Set in exclusive locations of unique natural or cultural significance, the boutique properties appeal to the discerning global traveller seeking a remarkable experience. The Australia-based collection was founded in 2003 by James and Hayley Baillie and includes Longitude 131° at Uluru-Kata Tjuta, Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island and Silky Oaks Lodge at the Daintree Rainforest. Flagship property Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island was destroyed in the 2020 bushfires and its rebuild is in progress, with an anticipated reopening date in mid 2023. In 2019, an affiliate of KSL Capital Partners acquired Baillie Lodges with the aim to further expand the unique collection of luxury lodges. The addition of Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge on Canada's Vancouver Island and New Zealand's Huka Lodge marked the collection's foray into international waters. Most recently, The Louise in the Barossa Valley has joined the family, heralding Baillie Lodges return to South Australia. For more information, please visit [baillielodges.com.au](http://baillielodges.com.au). Baillie Lodges' Australian properties are honoured as members of [Luxury Lodges of Australia](#).