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Tallow Beach; ABOVE: the
Byron Bay Film Festival,
held in February



akmal saleh

Comedian and Byron Bay resident Akmal Saleh tours in February, and is an ambassador for his hometown's marquee movie event, the Byron Bay Film Festival

I've chosen to live in Byron Bay because it's beautiful. All year round I'm travelling and I get to spend a bit of time here, so even though I live here, it's like a holiday when I'm home. It's the mentality that goes with the beauty as well; it's not just pretty, there's a real intelligence and acceptance of differences.

The longer I live here, the more I find out little secrets. Tallow Beach is near my home, and near that there's a lake infused with tea tree oil. The trees secrete this oil – the lake looks

like Coca-Cola, but once you get in it's a thick, oily feeling and it's always warm. It's like having this natural bath. No one ever goes there! You have to go through a bit of forest to get to it, and that's why people don't tend to find it easily.

There are local markets that happen on the fourth Sunday of each month in Byron. They move around every week, but when they're in Byron they're huge. There's so much creativity here, so a lot of amazing and obscure artists create these

works of art and sell them. You can find these really unique pieces.

There's a mix of places to go out. On one hand you have the herbal people who are spiritual and into the land, then you have people who are a little more crazy. If you're into live music go to Buddha Bar, which has some great performances from local and international bands. Pete Murray, Tex Perkins and a lot of really talented musicians and artists live here.

Akmal Saleh won Best Byron Film at the 2013 Byron Bay Film Festival with Pharaoh vs. The Egyptians, a documentary about social media and uprisings in Egypt. This year's festival runs from 28 February–9 March; bbff.com.au