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Escape

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

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SUMMER 2018/19

2ND
BIRTHDAY
EDITION



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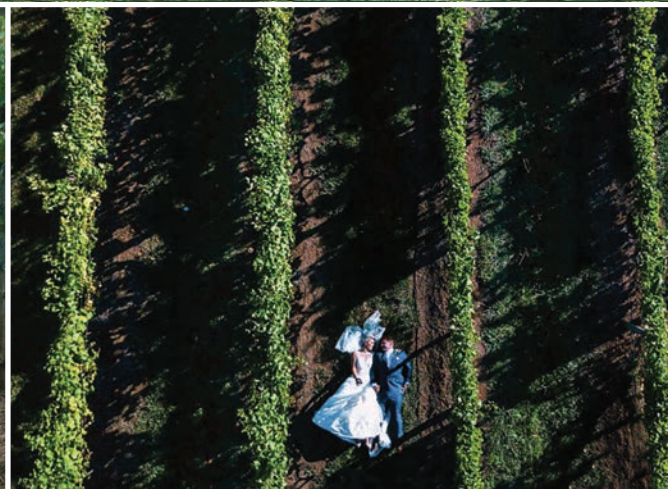
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COVER IMAGE

Elise Hassey

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Editor's welcome

Anybody else feel like it was only a nanosecond ago we were celebrating Christmas and enjoying summer, and now they're both approaching fast again?

Here at Escape Southern Highlands, as the end of 2018 hurtles towards us, it definitely feels like it's time to take some deep breaths and long overdue down time with family, friends and visitors.

In this issue we have lots of cracking good ideas for making your summer special. Places to take friends from out of town. Summer creative courses to try. Walking and swimming spots to discover. Unique Highlands staycations to book. Camps and workshops to keep the kids entertained. Locals doing fabulous things. Producers growing and making for our festive tables. The hardworking chefs going to work on Christmas Day and through the festive season so you can have a break.

Our stunning cover by photographer Elise Hassey was taken at wedding venue Mali Brae Farm near Moss Vale with jeep by Military Vehicle Tours and encapsulates beautifully the feel and theme of this summer edition: kicking back, being thankful for our lifestyle, and going, seeing and trying new things that showcase the rich pickings we have on our doorstep.

In this our second birthday issue we'd also like to say thank you to all our advertisers, supporters and readers. It always has been and remains our team's aim to help headline this beautiful region of Australia we are fortunate to call home. And we look forward to writing more about the people, places, pastimes and peculiarities that make the Southern Highlands such a popular destination to visit.

From all the team at Escape Southern Highlands, here's wishing you and yours a safe and happy festive season. *Alex*

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS map



OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS IS MADE UP OF MANY TOWNS AND VILLAGES, EACH WITH ITS OWN UNIQUE CHARACTER, CHARM AND ATTRACTIONS. HERE'S A CHEAT SHEET SO YOU CAN GET ACQUAINTED WITH JUST SOME OF THEM. TO DISCOVER MORE, AND FOR MORE DETAIL, MAPS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION, VISIT DESTINATION SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS ([SOUTHERN-HIGHLANDS.COM.AU](https://southern-highlands.com.au)).

BUNDANOON

Packed with old world charm, Bundanoon is a vibrant town with cafes, tearooms, antique dealers. Market days are held on the first and third Sundays, and bushwalking and mountain biking enthusiasts are drawn to the nearby Morton National Park. If you are overnighting or holidaying, stay and eat at the newly refurbished Bundanoon Guest House, or at tasty DeliLicious down the road. For body and soul, book a retreat at Quest for Life

EXETER

The Exeter Village Hall and adjoining park and oval lie at the heart of picturesque Exeter, a village of leafy streets and grand rows of trees. Exeter General Store performs its role as bookshop, post office, gourmet cafe and food store admirably. If browsing is on the cards, you'll find The Village Pump Antiques is worth a look and across the road, Bowerbird Lane at Halcyon Cottage is great for homewares and gifts. The Exeter village markets are held on the first Saturday of each month in the grounds of the village oval.

BURRAWANG

Quaint and historical, Burrawang is one of the Highland's most picture postcard villages. The newly renovated Burrawang Village Hotel (recently named Best Country Dining Venue - Country Southern in the Australian Hotels Association NSW awards 2018) with its huge grassy lawns overlooking rolling hills, is a popular accommodation and dining spot. As is the award winning Burrawang General Store Cafe across the road, with its great food served all day long and restored self contained accommodation. The 1883 School of Arts building in the main Hoddle Street plays host to the village's annual ball and don't miss the village's Easter markets, which are a highlight of the Highlands market calendar and attract more than 10,000 visitors.

HILL TOP

This northern village has a rich history as a former railway town and is now gateway to Australia's largest rail museum, Trainworks at Thirlmere. Don't miss terrific local lavender producer and cafe Belle Fleur Cottage, and the Cave Creek walking track too.

SUTTON FOREST

It might be small but Sutton Forest has stuff going on. Sutton Forest General Store, under new management, sells locally grown fruit & veg, pizza bases and homemade curries, The Everything Store, which lives up to its name, and the stunning Red Cow Farm gardens with its recently opened seasonal garden shop, definitely worth a visit or two.

BERRIMA

This pretty 1830s village has history (the heritage Old Berrima Gaol, iconic Berrima Courthouse and National Trust listed Harper's Mansion); nature (the Wingecarribee River runs through it); fantastic food (Eschalot, Josh's Cafe, Berrima General Store & Cafe and Feast at Berrima, plus excellent patisseries, cafes, local makers and artisans) as well as Australia's oldest continuously licensed inn, the Surveyor General. The Berrima Schoolyard Market is held on the fourth Sunday of every month from February to November in the grounds of the local primary school.



BOWRAL

Watched over by Mount Gibraltar, Bowral is the largest town in the Highlands. Full of historic public and private buildings, stunning country gardens and grand estates, this thriving country township is known for its vintage, interiors, antiques and homewares stores and precincts such as Dirty Janes and Green Lane, as well as markets, galleries, bookshops, nurseries and boutiques. Its dining scene has become all the richer recently with the opening of Dos Hombres, Grand Bistro and Bistro Officina, which complement winning stalwarts such as Biota Dining, Onesta Cucina, Cafe Rosso, Eccetera Trattoria Pizzeria, The Royal, Gumnut Patisserie and a raft of other local favourite restaurants, cafes and pubs. Visitors and locals are drawn to famous landmarks such as the Bradman Museum and International Cricket Hall of Fame, as well as the many festivals and events that include Tulip Time, the Bowral Classic and Bong Bong Picnic Races. And of course there is a plethora of award winning vineyards nearby, such as Centennial Vineyards, to visit as well.

CANYONLEIGH

Made up of large rural properties, Canyonleigh lies at an altitude of 700 metres and is fast gaining a reputation as a wine producing area of the Highlands. Situated on the drier western edge of the region, it is a great place to spot native wildlife.

MOSS VALE

Centred around the Victorian era railway station in Argyle Street, Moss Vale is known for being a down to earth country town. The annual agricultural show is one of the biggest in the area, and recently the main street has undergone a revival with the opening of many independent artisan and homewares shops. Fantastic cafes and eateries such as Bernie's Diner, The Vale, Highlands Merchant and Il Pranzo offer delicious eating choices, with newcomers Southern Highlands Brewing Kitchen & Taphouse, Birch and the Wine Mosaic Lounge bringing some well received glamour to old favourites such as Seafood Affair, and Briars Country Lodge and Historic Inn just up the road although the bar and restaurant is closed presently and expected to reopen early 2019 following a fire. All functions and events still on.

ROBERTSON

The small, character filled town of Robertson combines a rolling pastoral setting (did you know most of the movie Babe was filmed there?) with fabulous locally grown produce such as potatoes, truffles, pears, paddock raised eggs and award winning Pecora Dairy ewe's milk cheese. The newly changed-hands Robertson Inn is a great place for a family meal, and the stylishly revamped Robertson Hotel is a luxurious launch pad for a night, weekend or week in the Highlands. The iconic Robertson Pie Shop has a huge range of sweet and savoury pies and is open all year round, and Crop Swap every Saturday morning at the Bowling Club is a great place to mingle with the local Robbo green finger gardeners.


JOADJA

An area of farms and bushland on the periphery of the Southern Highlands, Joadja is steeped in history, once home to more than 1000 Scottish immigrants who mined shale oil in the late 1800s. The success of Joadja Estate winery, and more recently Joadja Distillery, has firmly put Joadja on the map.

MITTAGONG

Historic Mittagong, the site of one of the first iron ore discoveries in Australia, has plenty to offer. From parks (try Lake Alexandra) to walks (the nearby Box Vale track with its incredible views of Nattai Gorge) to wineries (including Artemis Vineyard and Winery and Tertini Wines). There's also the treasure trove that is the Mittagong Antiques Centre, and fabulous craft and design centre Sturt with its shop, cafe and wood school as well as gem Twisting Vintage for preloved designer and couture clothing and the award winning café, The Shaggy Cow. Stop off at Destination Southern Highlands Welcome Centre on the way into Mittagong and get informed about what's on locally and stock up on locally made produce.

FITZROY FALLS

The tiny village of Fitzroy Falls, surrounded by farmland and wilderness, takes its name from the 81 metre waterfall in adjoining Morton National Park. The nearby Belmore Falls are equally spectacular. Head to the Fitzroy Falls picnic area for great views of the falls and for bird watching opportunities – you'll experience the sounds of lyrebirds if you're lucky. The deck at the Falls Cafe is a nice spot for refreshments as is the nearby Fitzroy Falls General Store. 



MOVERS & SHAKERS

YOU ONLY HAVE TO SPEND A SHORT TIME IN THE HIGHLANDS THIS SUMMER TO REALISE IT'S **A PRETTY SPECIAL PLACE WITH SOME PRETTY AMAZING PEOPLE DOING SOME PRETTY FABULOUS THINGS.** AS 2018 DRAWS TO A CLOSE, WE CELEBRATE JUST A FEW DOING SOME PRETTY NIFTY STUFF.

DREAM COME TRUE

AS IS OFTEN THE CASE WITH PEOPLE OR PROJECTS TERMED 'OVERNIGHT SUCCESSES', THE PATH TO THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS REGIONAL GALLERY HAS BEEN A LONG ONE; 25 YEARS, IN FACT.

The hankered for gallery was pushed over the line recently by the formidable force of local artists John Olsen and Ben Quilty along with the National Trust. The gallery will be created in the heritage Old Dairy Building at Retford Park, following the buy in of the National Trust, gifted the property by the late James Fairfax, plus a commitment to recurrent funding by our local Wingecarribee Shire Council, philanthropists and a grant from NSW Government's regional cultural fund hopefully to be announced any day (fingers crossed). Local artist and teacher Sara Farmer has been on the Friends of the Southern Highlands Regional Gallery Committee since the idea was first mooted in 1994, and is thrilled the end is hopefully in sight: 'The gallery will be a not for profit cultural initiative with a variety of exhibition spaces and arts programs funded via government and private sector philanthropy. It will have the potential to house touring exhibitions, in house developed exhibitions, education programs and an artist in residence program. Local arts educators are very excited at the affordable arts opportunities ahead for our school students.' John Olsen, who has lived and painted in the Highlands for 20 years, said art in any community is vital because 'it is the difference between being blind and seeing the extraordinary'. 'The Southern Highlands Regional Art Gallery at Retford Park,' he says, 'is going to be a moveable, dynamic feast with exhibitions and educational programs for our school children that will greatly enrich this wonderful community.' Ben Quilty, himself father to two school aged children, said the gallery will provide affordable arts opportunities for all Highlands school pupils: 'Some people ask why we need a regional gallery when we are so close to Sydney. Well, it might be close if you are coming down here for a nice weekend to hang out, but if you have ever stood waving your kids

off to Sydney or Canberra at the crack of dawn on a bus excursion to see some art, you will know it's not that close. It's a long way in heavy traffic and on very busy roads. That argument also completely discounts the importance of a vibrant, diverse, healthy community really properly engaging with the visual arts. This regional gallery will add so much to our community.' Quilty, an Art Gallery NSW trustee, said he is hopeful work will begin on the regional gallery in the new year and the Travelling Archibald will be one of the first exhibitions staged. Sara Farmer said Friends of the SHRG are already collaborating with the forward thinking National Trust on a Made in Australia event in May: 'The Supporters would like to invite any interested locals to become members, and help with fundraising, community consultation and information events we are planning for early 2019. This is of course contingent on the State Government go ahead, so we all have everything crossed.' The Highlands is home to many acclaimed makers, artisans and artists, including Tim Storrier, Max Miller, Danie Mellor, Zoe Young, Clara Adolphs, Vanessa Stockard and 2017 Sculpture by the Sea winner David Ball. To become a supporter, like SofaSHRG on Facebook.





HOT STUFF

We love a good collaboration, so great news that talented blacksmith and artist Steve Hogwood of 1910 has teamed up with Amanda Fry of outdoor experience company WildFest. Their joint venture, Think Wild, is operating out of the Old Stables at Peppers Manor House and will be a weekend working space for local artists (read all about another local venture, Southern Highlands Artisan Collective at Roberston, on page 100). Catch Steve, a blacksmith of 40 years, make his magic with live demonstrations as he fires up the forge in the 1880s stable. You can also browse the shop and galley next door with its range of locally handmade ironwork, photography, sustainable and practical gifts, and a selection of WildFest's immersive Highlands wild food experiences. **Saturday & Sunday, Peppers Manor House, Kater Road, Sutton Forest 11am – 4pm** Saturdays, Sun – Fri by appointment @ThinkWILDAUS

HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE?

A dog is not just for Christmas. We all know the ad but it's a valuable reminder as Christmas rolls around again and the RSPCA tells us more cats and dogs are dumped over the summer months by owners off on holidays than at any other time. Which is why Escape Southern Highlands wants to give a special shout out to the dedicated team of staff and volunteers at the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter. Opened in 2000, the shelter is managed by our local council and run by a small group of staff led by Vanessa Montgomery. She is ably assisted by more than 20 volunteer members of Friends of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter (FOWAS). Self confessed dog and cat lovers, FOWAS members come in daily to spend time with the animals and have helped support the shelter for the past 13 years raising funds for surgery, medical treatment, dietary needs, retraining, transport and rescue costs for the animals. On average, the shelter holds 10 to 15 dogs and seven cats plus three litters of kittens at any one time. With a minimal euthanasia policy in place, they manage to rehome nearly 400 animals a year. The FOWAS gang will be holding their annual Christmas Raffle at Woolworths Bowral forecourt on December 21 and 22, with goodies for all the family (including the fur kids), and will hold their second A Dog's Day out with the National Trust at Retford Park in Bowral on April 28. If you can give a cat or a dog a loving life with your family, get along this summer or anytime and meet the residents at Wingecarribee Animal Shelter. Open Monday-Friday 10am-4pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am-12 noon. **177 Berrima Road, Moss Vale @wingecarribeeanimalshelter fowas.org.au @FOWAS ►**



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HAPPY HUNTING GROUND

If you are a bit of a 'unique finds' aficionado, you will probably know of Hunter & Gatherer Collections. Owned by Ben Gowing and Daniel Percival, the unique hunting ground for art works, interiors products and furnishings was a shopping hotspot in inner city Sydney for many years. But as our luck would have it, Ben and Daniel decided they wanted a change of pace and moved to the Highlands two years ago, opening their new store in Moss Vale in September (look out for the distinctive black walls and striped awning on the terrace building next door to Jim Hindmarsh & Co). 'At heart, we are all hunters and gatherers,' says Ben. 'We hunt out things that bring us comfort, security and joy, which we gather close to us in our homes.' Hunter and Gatherer Collections began in 2012, selling paintings and photography by local and overseas artists. Over time, Ben and Daniel who today share their Highlands home with Weimaraner Frida and cat Eddie, expanded their interests to include a broad range of eclectic home décor, furniture and furnishings, such as bold Turkish cushions, glazed pots from China, pots, light fittings and lamps. Ben, a former horticulturalist at Taronga Zoo, has added a range of topiaries, flowering plants and outdoor pieces in the store's rear garden. He and Daniel, who is a heritage officer, are big on stocking unique pieces by clever locals, including handmade jewellery by an experienced Bundanoon jeweller who uses gems sourced from private collections around the world and a range of handcrafted lamps from Michael & Susie Yabsley's Wombat Hollow. Welcome Hunter & Gatherer Collections! A festive shopping haunt not to miss.

Open seven days, 9am-5.30pm, 542 Argyle Street, Moss Vale hunterandgathercollections.com



PINUS RADIATA

Ron Geddes knows a thing or two about Christmas trees. Not only does he bear more than a passing resemblance to the Man in the Red Suit, he also has 40 acres on his Wingello farm where he grows pinus radiata, and a special machine from the US to trim them into the traditional Christmas shape. 'We plant them as 10 centimetre seedlings and fertilise them,' he says, 'and then God waters them for us.' Some of Grampy's Christmas Trees, as his business is known, go to Sydney, and others to local hotels like Links House in Bowral, but most go to local sitting rooms to delight kids. **Hand pick yours now until December 24 from 22 Waite Street, Moss Vale, 9am-5pm. All trees under 8 foot are \$55 each. For bigger ones, call Ron on 0427 829 253.**



CHRISTMAS CHARITY

Of course Christmas is not a happy time for everyone. Here are some ideas for ways to help those in need in our community.

Giving Trees

Donations of new toys, vouchers, and nonperishable foods for gifts and Christmas Care Hampers can be left under the trees at BDCU Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale, Mittagong RSL, Wingecarribee Shire Council in Moss Vale and the Salvation Army in Bong Bong Street, Bowral. Gifts will be distributed by the Salvation Army as far as Goulburn to people in need and in hospital. 'People are so generous to younger kids,' says Salvation Army minister Jake Horton, 'but we find it hardest to provide gifts for older kids and teenagers aged 10 to 18.' Also, volunteers are needed to help wrap the gifts on December 17 at Bowral BDCU. **Contact Matt Sewell at MSeowell@bdcualliancebank.com.au**

Community Christmas Dinner

Held by local churches, charities, the council and local producers, and catered for by Wheels on Meals, this free annual event reaches out to people in need through Argyle Housing and other agencies. It provides guests with a roast dinner and pudding, carols and gifts for everyone 18 and under. Organiser Jade Barr says, 'It is always a fantastic night of great company and really leaves guests knowing they belong to a community who see them and value them.' Pick up and drop off transport available. All welcome but RSVP essential to Chris Barr on 0402 033 282 or Penny Pilt on 0410 401 089. **December 23, 5.30pm-8.30pm, Southern Highlands Christian School, Kangaloon Road, Bowral** 📍



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WHAT'S ON Summer

SUMMER IS A FUN TIME IN THE HIGHLANDS, FULL OF THINGS TO DO AND PLACES TO STAY. WE'VE PICKED A FEW EVENTS WE THINK YOU'LL LOVE BUT WITH SO MUCH TO CHOOSE FROM, KEEP A LOOK OUT FOR OUR UPDATES @ESCAPESOUTHERNHIGHLANDS AND CHECK OUT SOUTHERN-HIGHLANDS.COM.AU/EVENTS/WHAT'SON

DEC



Triple Treat

For a special summer Sunday head to Artemis Wines for Flow, Flowers & Food. Join Annie Di Natale to be guided through a one hour Hatha flow yoga class for the body and mind. Follow this up with a 90 minute demonstration by Alison Kennon on how to make a summer bouquet with seasonal blooms. Finish up with a healthy lunch and a glass of limited release Artemis Methode Traditionelle bubbly. December 9, January 13, February 10, 10.30am-1.30pm, \$25opp, bookings essential (call Alison on 0401 199 075) or just come for the yoga at 10.30am (\$25pp, no bookings necessary). Artemis Wines, 46 Sir Charles Moses Lane, Mittagong. artemiswines.com.au



MARVELLOUS MELTING POT

Thespian company the Melting Pot Theatre's Christmas variety show has become something of a Bundy tradition. Hosted by brilliant scene stealer Miranda Lean, the show is an evening of song, theatre and comedy featuring Bundanoon and Southern Highlands talent. Another fabulous community event not to miss is the Melting Pot's Oscar Wilde farce, The Importance of Being Earnest. Variety show, December 15, 7pm The Importance of Being Earnest, January 19, 7pm, \$10pp. **Soldier's Memorial Hall, Bundanoon.** meltingpottheatre.org.au

JINGLE BELLS

If you love Christmas and carols, Bowral Family Carols on Thursday December 6 from 5.30pm to 8.30pm is for you. Bring a rug, a picnic and your sense of community to Bradman Oval in Bowral for a memorable night of live performances, a nativity parade with horses, donkeys and camels, and a fireworks finale. There are also free lolly bags for the kids and loads of room for them to charge about. Carols start at 7.30pm. The Moss Vale Community Carols happen on Saturday December 15 at Leighton Gardens with music, singing and entertainment. A week later on Saturday December 22 you can jingle those bells again at Berrima's Carols by Candlelight in the grounds of Holy Trinity Anglican Church. Bring chairs, rugs, a torch, picnic baskets and your singing voices. Expect an appearance from the big man in the red suit. **Bradman Oval, St Jude Street, Bowral; Leighton Gardens, Argyle Street, Moss Vale; Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Argyle Street, Berrima**



KAPIL TO KOHLI

As India's cricket team knuckles down to play a summer of scorching cricket on our shores, our famous and fabulous Bradman Museum is honouring India's love of the game and its national team's rise to greatness. The Kapil to Kohli exhibition in the museum's International Cricket Hall of Fame includes cricketing artefacts, ephemera and memorabilia belonging to Indian cricket legends from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. A high point of the exhibition includes a portrait of Sachin Tendulkar by Australian artist Dave Thomas. Visit the museum until January 6 and go into the draw to win two VIP passes to see Australia v India at the One Day International at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Daily until February 28, 2019. Entry part of general admission (\$20pp, concession \$15pp, child \$11pp, family ticket \$55. Open 10am-5pm, except Christmas Day. **St Jude Street, Bowral.** internationalcrickethall.com



CHRISTMAS MAKERS MARKET

If an object's provenance is important to you, don't miss Sturt Gallery & Studio's cracking annual Artisans Night Market. Set in the design centre's gardens (read our feature on page 91 for more about those), dozens local artists and makers including leatherworker Trevor Jones, ceramicists Simon Bowley, Aleida Pullar and Katherine Mahoney, weaver Penny Simons, and jewellers Latisha Cassar, Anna Wales and Corinne Snare will be selling their unique wares. The Sturt wood school and ceramics students will also have work for sale. December 14, 3pm-8pm, also food and live music.

Cnr Range Road & Waverley Parade, Mittagong. sturt.nsw.edu.au

OI, OI, OI

Berrima is the place to be on Australia Day in the Highlands. A citizenship ceremony at the historic Berrima Courthouse kicks off the day, followed by the announcement of this year's Wingecarribee Australia Day Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the year. This is followed by the famous grand parade through the main street at midday with classic and vintage cars, marching bands, tractors, fire engines and flag waving galore. Plus, there are market stalls, live entertainment and rides for the kids. If gnarly beers are more your poison, head into Bowral's Bradman Oval for the inaugural Highlands Beer and Cider Festival on Jan 26 & 27. Put on by the Southern Highlands Wine and Food Association, this event showcases craft and boutique brewers. **Australia Day in Berrima, January 26 wsc.nsw.gov.au/australia-day Highlands Beer and Cider Festival, January 26, Bradman Oval, St Jude Street, Bowral**

THE STABLES REVEALED

Hot on the heels of the opening of five star onsite cottage accommodation recently, the Berkelouw family of Bendooley Estate have plans afoot for further growth. Come along to this event for a sneak peek event at The Stables, to be officially opened in March. A large space for conferences, private events, group bookings and weddings, The Stables caters for up to 180 people. Like Bendooley's new cottages, The Stables has been constructed by local builder Tim Davis Rice, with an emphasis on wood and a giant brass fireplace by Rick Stanton. Be the first to dine in these splendid surrounds at the one-off lunch event, *The Stables Reveal*. January 27, 12 noon, \$75pp for set course menu for tables of 10 or more. Contact mark@bendooleyestate.com.au or go to bendooleyestate.com.au ►



JAN

What's On...

For all the latest information for 'What's On' in the beautiful Southern Highlands, please go to the Destination Southern Highlands website.
www.southern-highlands.com.au



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Tel: 02 4877 2071 Email: info@harpersmansion.com.au www.harpersmansion.com.au



SMALL FARM FIELD DAY

MOSS VALE



2nd & 3rd February, Moss Vale Showground

See horse and whip cracking shows with Tim from Boggy Creek,
reptile talks, working dog demos, air rifle range and more!
Fun for the whole family with loads to see, do and learn!

\$5 per adult, kids under 15 free.

Gates open 9am - 4pm.

Free onsite parking

Visit smallfarmfieldday.com.au





WIDE HILLVIEW HORIZON

AS HILLVIEW SCULPTURE PARK AT SUTTON FOREST INCREASES ITS COLLECTION OF WORKS BY ACCLAIMED SCULPTORS, THE LATEST TO FIND A HOME AT THE HISTORIC 100 ACRE PROPERTY IS GREG JOHNS' HORIZON FIGURE. 'MADE IN CORTEN STEEL,' SAYS GREG, 'THE PIECE HAS TWO OUT OF SCALE ARMS REFLECTING OUR HUGE HORIZON LINES, AND AT THE END OF EACH ARM SMALL GROWTH FORMS APPEAR, SOME HEADING TOWARDS THE GROUND PLANE, SUGGESTING A CONNECTION WITH IT.' **SATURDAY, SUNDAY & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, 10AM-4PM, OR BY APPOINTMENT. 7277 ILLAWARRA HIGHWAY, SUTTON FOREST, 0487 123 778**

FEB

Garden Growth

Support the vision of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens at the charity's Movie Under the Stars fundraiser. Three course pizza dinner with bar facilities. Movie on show: *Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* (Rating M). Bring own chair and rug rain, hail or shine. **Sat Feb 23 gates open 6pm. Tickets \$50pp shbg.com.au**

The Dating Game

Right in time for Valentine's Day, the enterprising Clare Macarthur Stanham of CMS Productions continues to bring stellar theatre to the Highlands. In *On Stage Dating*, which received acclaim at Edinburgh's Fringe Festival recently, actor Bron Batten literally goes on a date after luring an audience member up on stage, and using American psychologist Arthur Aron's famous, 36 Questions That Lead to Love. Previous reviews say it makes for compelling and clever theatre that is simultaneously hilarious and cringeworthy. Just how theatre should be. **February 8 & 9, 8pm, \$40pp. Mittagong Playhouse, 114 Main Street, Mittagong. cmsproductions.com.au**

Having a Field Day

Whether you own one acre or a couple of thousand, or just like to check out a tractor or two, *The Small Farm Field Day* caters for all who love the agri-sector. Two days of exhibitions, demonstrations and displays of all things pertaining to the land and life on it. We especially love the sound of the Hawkesbury Kelpie Show on the Sunday, and the award winning Boggy Creek Show, with horse riding, whip cracking and sheep shearing. Lots of kids rides, free face painting and food stalls. Leashed dogs welcome and free onsite parking available. **February 2&3, 9am-4pm, \$5pp, kids under 15 free. Moss Vale Showground, Illawarra Highway, Moss Vale. smallfarmfieldday.com.au**

A MIXTURE OF MAKERS

The much loved Berrima District Historical and Family History Society celebrates its new digital gallery with inaugural exhibition *A Butcher, A Baker, A Bunch of Makers*. The show brings to life the stories of some of our most skilled artisans, captured through the striking photography of Ashley Mackevicius, on 10 state of the art ultra high definition screens. Exhibiting and profiled artists include award winning sculptor David Ball, ceramicist Tania Rollond, leather worker Trevor Jones, weavers Brooke Munro and Natalie Miller, and metal artist Heidi McGeoch. **Begins February 20, 10am-4pm, Entry \$10pp. Kids free when accompanied by an adult. berrimadistricthistoricalsociety.org.au**

MUST SEE MANSION & MAZE

Not only one of the oldest surviving Georgian homes in the Highlands, Harper's Mansion has some of the most fascinating history and beautiful gardens. Built by former convict James Harper and his wife Mary, and now a National Trust owned property, the mansion is set within two acres and has the largest hedge maze in the Southern Hemisphere. Harper's Mansion's gardens are home to more than 100 heritage roses, a woodland walk, a pond framed with giant rhubarb, and much more. Open Saturdays, Sundays and most public holidays, 10.30am-4pm, \$8pp, \$7pp concession, children free. **9 Wilkinson Street, Berrima, harpersmansion.com.au**



Love Letters

The National Trust of Australia and Bowral based Creative & Co are presenting a season of the A.R. Gurney's Love Letters at Retford Park in the Morning Room. The play brings to life the correspondence of two characters over 50 years. Scott Pollock, manager of Retford Park, and Michaela Bolzan, well known director of the Highlands Book Festival, will play the roles of the dedicated pen pals. Champagne and canapes after the performance. Feb 14, 15 & 16, 7.30-9.30pm, Retford Park, 1325 Old South Road, Bowral. nationaltrust.org.au/place/retford-park

FOR THE DIARY

THE ROBERTSON SHOW

Roll up, roll up... Get behind our local farmers and get along to Robbo's 135th annual agricultural show. Featuring livestock judging, horse eventing, potato sack racing, fruit cake judging and fireworks finale, as well as new events like Young Farmers Challenge and Special Needs Education Arts & Crafts. A family event not to miss. **March 2 & 3, Robbo Showground, 2312 Kangaloon Road, Robertson. robertsonshow.org.au**

SLEEP RETREAT

Escape for a three day retreat designed to reset women's sleep rituals through workshops, yoga, meditation and good nutrition. **March 7-10, Springfield Farm, Avoca. thegoodnightco.com.au**

TALKS, TOURS, WORKSHOPS, FORUMS, CLASSES, EXPERIENCES, RETREATS

CARVED IN STONE

SET ASIDE A SUMMER SATURDAY TO LEARN TO CARVE SOMETHING ORGANIC OUT OF SOAPSTONE WITH SCULPTOR KAREN ALEXANDER AT HER COLO VALE STUDIO. YOU WILL USE CARVING CHISELS, RASPS, FILES AND OTHER SPECIALIST TOOLS, AND TAKE HOME A UNIQUE HANDMADE PIECE. BRILLIANT. **DECEMBER 8 & JANUARY 12, 10AM-3.30PM, \$220PP (INCLUDES MORNING TEA AND LIGHT LUNCH, A DUST MASK AND SMALL SOAPSTONE)** CONTACT KAREN AT KLALEXSCULPT@GMAIL.COM



AND THEN CAME BUBBA

Having a baby is a precious thing and the start of an entirely new game, but for many the very idea of childbirth can seem frightening. Midwife Karen McClay and her dad, founder of the Calmbirth birthing program Peter Jackson, believe it doesn't have to be that way. So join one of Calmbirth's weekend retreats in Mittagong and learn how to calm those birth nerves, empower yourself and your partner, and give baby a confident, calm and safe entrance to the world. **9.30am-6pm, \$550 per couple, December 15 & 16; January 12 & 13, 19 & 20, 26 & 27; February 9-10, 16-17, 23-24** calmbirth.com.au

RING RING

A pair of earrings, a pendant or a ring are all a fabulous present to make for yourself or someone you love. Renowned jeweller and artist Tracy Hopkirk is holding five special summer workshops in December, January and February with a maximum of five students on Saturdays and Sundays. We especially love the sound of the workshop designed for couples to make their partner's wedding band. **10am-3pm or 4pm, \$165-\$170pp. For dates and details contact Tracy at** alloy@hinet.net.au

KIDS IN STITCHES

Threading a needle is a life skill we reckon every kid should have. And artist and teacher Lucy Turner agrees. Her three day sewing and making workshops in her private garden studio in Welby will teach children to sew a huge variety of felt toys, make miniature toy shops and sew clothes for a loved bear or doll. For kids aged 8-14 years, eight places per course. **Dec 12, 13 & 14 and Jan 15, 16, & 17, 9am-4pm, \$360pp includes all materials and afternoon tea (\$100 deposit due when booking) Contact Lucy for details and bookings at lucyturner@ozemail.com**

HEAL YOUR HEART

Founded and run by the inspirational Petrea King, Quest for Life's five day summer residential retreat programs in Bundanoon include Healing Your Life (for those suffering a diagnosis, divorce, death, depression or disaster) and Quest for Life (for people living with cancer, MS, Parkinson's disease, fibromyalgia, chronic pain, MND, SLE and other chronic illnesses). Wonderful professionally run programs that educate, empower and encourage within lovely accommodation and tranquil gardens.

For retreat dates and further information go to questforlife.com.au

SAY CHEESE

Get along to acclaimed Pecora Dairy's Cheese Making and Appreciation Masterclass by local ewe's milk cheese makers Cressida and Macca. They're holding the class in a state of the art student kitchen in Bowral where you will make and take home your own camembert, mozzarella and ricotta, and find out why their Robertson produced cheese is the bees knees. Price includes morning tea, lunch and cheese baskets, plus recipes to take away. **January 13, 9am-3pm, \$240pp pecoradairy.com.au eventbrite.com.au**



EXPRESS YOURSELF

Unleash your inner artist and explore different mediums and techniques in a stunning Highlands setting with accomplished artist and teacher Penny McManus. Classes are held at Springfield Farm in Avoca in eight week blocks on Wednesday or Friday mornings (morning tea provided), or a full day Sunday workshops (afternoon tea provided). Small classes and all abilities welcome. **Wednesdays & Fridays, 9.30am-12.30pm, \$360pp for 8 classes; first Sunday of month, \$160pp per class. Contact Penny for details at penelope.mc7@gmail.com**

BARRE FACED FIT

Combining exercises from ballet and Pilates with cardio moves to music, Barre Attack uses resistance bands, small weights and a barre to get your heart pumpin', your blood racin' and your body tonin'. Developed by a Bondi master Pilates instructor and former ballet dancer whose clients include Hollywood stars, Barre Attack is all the go in Sydney and Melbourne. Get ahead of the crowd with instructor Liz Rees, who practices what she preaches and looks as fit as a fiddle. **Simply Fitness Moss Vale, Clarence Street, Moss Vale \$17 per casual class; multiple class and membership available at simplyfitness.com.au**

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SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS

Luxurious surroundings, a sumptuous spa experience, and a cheeky cocktail or two make for a memorable overnight Highlands escape.

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES ELISE HASSEY

It's a Thursday evening and the carpark is full as we pull into the grounds of the Gibraltar Hotel in Bowral. After a long day shooting, photographer Elise Hassey and I are ready for a mini break. We head inside, greeted by a seeming oasis of calm. It's East meets West in here, with Eastern styled decor, Buddhist inspired sculpture, and long cool halls with high ceilings and polished floors.

Ree and Rahil at reception greet us like old friends and waste no time in taking us to our rooms. I am in 210, and after a day of rushing about, the feeling of space and serenity is fabulous. There is a giant king size bed, a great armchair, bathroom with double walk in shower and jet powered bath in the same vestibule, a mini bar and, for a night, thankfully only me. No dirty clothes on the floor, no Lego scattered underfoot, no one to pull the doona off during the night. This is bliss. I make a cup of tea (without being interrupted once), switch on the enormous TV (no-one playing on the Xbox) and open the

balcony door. If I was happy before, I am delighted now. On the balcony, overlooking Gibraltar's 18 hole Country Club golf course, I enjoy my tea as twilight falls and the sun sets over Mount Gibraltar in the distance.

I've stayed in quite a few Highlands accommodation options. Many are historic beauties with ancient bones that gurgle and rattle during the night, but Gibraltar Hotel in contrast is a new build. This is a room for an exec with a capsule wardrobe and lots of frequent flyer points. It's a five star location five minutes from Bowral but is also incredibly rural.

My room is well designed with a modern black and grey colour scheme. There are lush toiletries in the large bathroom. Near the fully stocked mini bar, the complimentary bottle of Cherry Tree Hill Shiraz from the local vineyard is a nice touch but I have a date with a Day Spa.

Therapist Ianna is waiting for me, and directs me to a bathroom where a fluffy robe and slippers await. After some

SUITS: Urbane travellers who expect top service and mod-cons; couples in search of a one stop wedding venue with accommodation; locals looking for a grown up staycation on our doorstep

DON'T MISS: A treatment in the Day Spa, a walk up the hill to nearby Gibbergunyah Reserve; a cocktail in Harvey's Bar.



peppermint tea, it's an hour of unadulterated bliss. As I sink my tired toes into the footbath, I remind myself to return to the Gibraltar Day Spa as a non guest. This desire is reinforced during the back, leg and neck massage with botanic oils. I try to stay awake to savour every moment but Ianna's hands are deft, and before I know it she is waking me from a deep massaged sleep.

Like many top accommodation venues in the Highlands, the Day Spa is a big sell for wedding parties, and Ianna and her fellow therapists have been kept busy all day massaging and preening a wedding party with a range of body treatments, alternative treatments, organic facials and spa rituals.

I hightail it back to my room. I have a zing in my step and it's time for a cocktail in Gibraltar's Harveys Bar. The bar is named after local and pianist Geoff Harvey, famous for his role as band leader on Ray Martin's *Midday* TV show. But tonight as Elise and I take a seat, someone else is playing and he's got the bar jumping.


This is one of the late night hotspots in the Highlands. Often kept open for wedding guests or events, it is licensed until 3am. Tomorrow's wedding party is already here. The bride and her maids are surrounded by enormous white boxes tied with enticing pink ribbons. We hypothesise about what's in the boxes as we wait for our cocktails. Shoes? Corsets? Lingerie?

As we order our shared platter for dinner, the groom is singing karaoke with the pianist. Weddings are big business

in the Highlands and the Gibraltar has three in the next three days, with presumably most finishing up here with joyous renditions of Khe Sanh and other Cold Chisel classics.

Our shared platter is a good option if you don't want to eat more formally next door in licensed restaurant San Fior, and I'm delighted to see that local maker, Mrs Bucket's pate is part of the spread. Tired but relaxed we leave the groom's party to it. Tucking myself into bed, I hope they find the Berroca Performance Drink in their mini bar. I think they will need it. My king sized bed has the most comfortable pillows I have ever slept on away from home in the Highlands, and I fall asleep to the croaking lullaby of the frogs outside.

I wake as clear as a whistle and fill up on an extensive hot and cold breakfast buffet., and watch as the now not so sprightly groom and his mates also come for breakfast. With wedding ceremonies often held on the lawns outside, you can do the whole kit and kaboodle here, from putting up your guests (76 rooms in total) then celebrating into the wee hours.

The Gibraltar Hotel offers five star service, great facilities and an easy elegance. As I say goodbye to my room, I glance at the welcome folder, which says, 'Welcome to the best kept secret in the Southern Highlands'. Time to talk it up guys. This is five star accommodation that holds its own in any town. 





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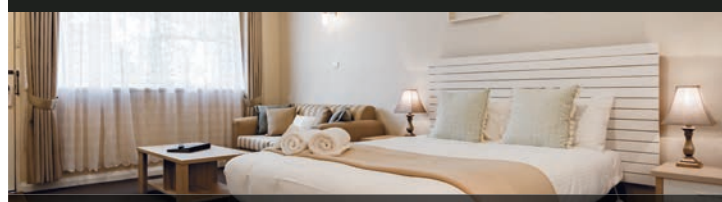
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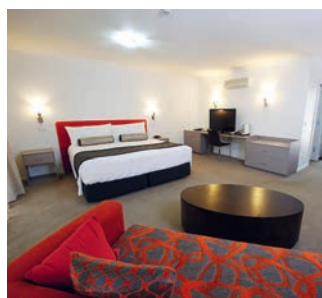
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Do you come from an arty, design savvy family?

There's a lot of artistic talent on my mother's side, and I grew up in a home full of creative flair. My mum taught me colour and basic design principals without

even realising she was doing it. **Any childhood memories that helped you**

become a creative adult? One of my aunts lived with us while she studied architecture, and I spent hours pouring through her books and magazines, using her drafting board to design my dream home. The passion started there. **How do you describe your style?** I don't align myself with one specific style but given most of my work is now based in the Highlands, there is an overriding rural/rustic and often traditional setting to my projects. My design principal is to blend contemporary with classic. I love the juxtaposition of old and new but for me it's all about helping clients create a home that is uniquely theirs, and meets their functional needs. **Do you help your clients**

find their style? Often by the time a prospective client contacts me they have spent months, even years trolling the internet to find the style direction they are after. My job is to edit through their ideas, and reference images to find our way to an aesthetic that suits. **How has living in the Highlands helped your business?** I moved here from Sydney and at first was terrified at going out on my own, but soon realised the unique opportunities on offer. Firstly the historic homes, estates and contemporary builds and the incredible network of creatives, which I've called on time and time again to commission unique pieces for my projects. Today I have a community of local trades, artists and makers I rely on 100% to do right by me and my clients. **What's your golden rule when it comes to styling your own home?**

I am very eclectic and I love the mix of old and new. As far as a quick fix golden rule, always have fresh cut flowers or some greenery indoors. **Not so many years ago the idea of contemporary interior designers working in Moss Vale seemed improbable. What's changed?** People in the cities are catching on to how good we have it down here. So many of my clients are tree changers from Sydney. This new wave of city slickers bring with them a thirst for a more contemporary aesthetic than what has traditionally been on offer in the Highlands. They are also often younger families inspired by current trends and design developments. Their needs have helped support some of the new businesses (including mine) locally. **And finally where do you sit on the handmade versus mass produced argument?** I try to incorporate commissions for handmade pieces in all my projects. I do this to support my local peers whose work I admire and uphold, and I love the design process of working with these makers and my clients to create something completely bespoke and specific to a space. For me, it's a stand against mass produced, disposable design that is flooding our market.

LUCI.D INTERIORS studio & showroom, 3/458 Argyle Street Moss Vale
lucidinteriors.com.au @lucidinteriors





BED AND BREAKFAST AND BLISS

THE LOCH AT BERRIMA IS WELL WORTH A STAY FOR ITS **UNIQUE APPROACH, COMFY ACCOMMODATION AND FRESH FOOD** FROM SOURCES SUCH AS A CLUTCH OF HENS ALL CALLED HELEN. WORDS **JANE O'CONNELL**

When chef Brigid Kennedy first looked around the bare paddock of what would become The Loch, dozens of thought bubbles emerged. But it was the unique idea of creating a bed and breakfast venue for horses and their owners that momentarily caught her fancy.

'As it turns out, people don't really want luxury accommodation with their horses. If they can afford luxury, they normally have a very flash truck and stay with their horse rather than their horse stay with them.'

But the ideas kept coming, and in partnership with husband Kevin Nott, her Berrima project emerged as four charming self contained suites, spectacular chef's gardens and one of the most popular long lunch venues in the Southern Highlands.

Each of the bedroom suites is named after a Scottish town beginning with 'A', reflecting Kevin's lineage and the Scottish friend who introduced them to the property in 2011. So they are Aberdeen, Arran, Ayr and Argyle (my room for the night.)

Antique furniture and furnishings, including a stately French tapestry in the Argyle suite, are courtesy of family collections. Three of the four suites have queen sized beds, and the fourth (Ayr) can be configured as either a king or two single beds. Bathrooms complement the style of each room; the Argyle's ensuite has a freestanding bath, spacious shower recess and views over the paddock where horses and cattle graze. Savon de Marseille soap is a lovely touch of luxury.

At the other end of the building, separated from the guest rooms by a mezzanine bridge, is the chef appointed kitchen that has been set up for guests to cook to their heart's content. A long timber dining table transitions to the lounge area where a selection of seating options are centred around a large fireplace. If the mood calls for solitude, there are nooks to curl up quietly and read, or for those feeling more social, space to set up a board game or strike up conversation with other guests.

One floor down, the stables have been beautifully converted and filled with antique furniture and bric-a-brac for guests to browse and buy, along with a market stall with baskets of fruit and vegetables picked from the surrounding fields.

Guests are encouraged to explore the many different chef's gardens, planted by Brigid to rotate through the seasons and take advantage of the cool climate that first drew her to the Highlands. She points out different beans and berries, herbs, salad leaves and tiny edible flowers. Down the back, the orchard grows quince, four or five different varieties of apples, peaches, plums, apricots and pears. We wander past the citrus trees and a small olive grove, and say a quick hello to the chooks (they're all named Helen).

Accommodation includes a delicious home cooked breakfast (for our stay it was eggs on a bed of kale and potato hash cake, sweetmeat kibbeh and truffle shavings). The fridge is stocked with jugs of juice and milk, and on the island bench is laid out a hearty buffet for guests to help themselves with bowls of gluten free granola, poached pears and creamy butter to spread on warm, crusty bread.

Breakfast is a decadent sample of the gourmet approach at the centre of The Loch's offerings. Every Sunday, Brigid opens the doors to her Tasting Room and cooks for up to 60 diners. Produce is harvested from her gardens a day or so earlier and beverages showcase the wares of local wine, beer, cider and sparkling water producers. When the weather is warm, lunch is served on the property's back verandah with leafy sultana vines overhead, just a stone's throw from the source for the freshest of paddock to plate dining.

The Loch is an ideal weekend getaway for couples, small groups or multiple generations of family, and children are welcome. Each season delivers a different farm adventure, enhanced by Brigid's creative touch and thoughtfully designed to offer guests an authentic and memorable Highlands experience. **12**



DETAILS

The Loch
581 Greenhills Road,
Berrima
theloch.net.au
0411 511 244

Accommodation is open all year round. The Tasting Room is closed last two weeks of December and first two weeks of January.



Formerly the manager's residence for the historic Burrawang General Store, Bower Cottage is a lovingly restored 3 bedroom self contained cottage that sleeps 6 people comfortably. With an open fire, reverse cycle air conditioning and bathroom underfloor heating, a cosy stay is guaranteed. Morning coffee delivered and enjoy breakfast, lunch or afternoon tea at the store.

Bower Cottage
11a Hoddle St, Burrawang 2577
4886 4496
bgsc.com.au



Down a long driveway lined by apple trees, Luxstowe House, is nestled between Catavento Sculpture Studio and the paddocks. Rich in history, character and stories, and beautiful antiques and original artworks, Luxstowe House bridges qualities of the past and the present in a rural setting, yet only five minutes away from the pulse of things in the Southern Highlands, Bowral area. Luxstowe House accommodates four people.

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ESCAPE TIP

Hit our local & Christmas markets (see our What's On pages and market guide page 101) to find all manner of unique gifts and locally made delights.

SHOP LOCAL

Where did the year go and how can Christmas and summer entertaining be here already? Never fear. We've uncovered some locally made lovelies to add to your shopping list

UNIQUE PIECES

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PIECEBYPIECEHOME.COM



Always cheese please

Too much is never enough cheese in our book so it's great to see local Bowral company Fox & Whistle offering up their new natural black serving boards, which are coloured by a natural reactive process that brings the tannins in the wood to the surface. No pigments, dyes for stains involved. Just in time for Christmas and summer cheese platters get yours now from Suzie Anderson Home Bowral & Moss Vale or online from maker Fox & Whistle which produces traditional handmade gifts & homewares suzieandersonhome.com foxwhistle.com.au



STOCKING FILLER

We have just discovered local apiarist Bulwarra Bees Honey Skin Hydrating Cream. Hand made in Bowral by combining Bulwarra's raw honey with rosehip, argon oil and frankincense, this is a moisturizer that is rich in vitamins and antioxidants, and smells beewitching (sorry!) Get yours from Bulwarra Bees at the Bowral Public School Markets the second Saturday of the month or get in touch online and pop one in your Christmas stocking.

bulwarra bees.com.au

Desert treasures

Australia's first peoples have created painted and woven masterpieces since time immemorial. These unique baskets are made by the Tjanpi desert weavers, a social enterprise to afford indigenous women financial independence, in the NPY lands of central west Australia. Get yours from the Mossy Store, Argyle Street, Moss Vale @mossystore_mv

ESCAPE
LOVES



Soft summer padding

It is a truth universally acknowledged... you can never have enough cushions, especially in summer when a fair amount of lolling about is generally on the cards. Escape is loving these fresh fauna print numbers made by local maker Willobar Designs. Get yours from the delightful Exeter Village Markets the first Saturday of the month or Mittagong Markets the third and fifth Saturday of the month or get in touch with local Bargo maker Chris who also makes a fab range of water-resistant reversible bags, insulated bottle holders and roll up picnic rugs.

@willobardesigns exetervillagemarket.com

SUMMERTIME & THE HIGHLANDS LIVING IS EASY

Nothing like getting a new piece for the house to see in the New Year and give yourself somewhere to laze about in the summer sun. Cotswold Furniture's Roy Cocoon outdoor lounge chair is made in synthetic rattan with a bold graphic vibe – perfect for reading, chilling, lounging.

cotswoldfurniture.com.au ►





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TOTE IN TIME

Nothing like a little bit of Paris to put us in the festive shopping mood and we are loving these blue grain 100% natural linen with woven grain sack stripe totes by former journalist Karen Miles of French Consul. Just the thing to carry all those Christmas goodies. **Get yours from frenchconsul.co or Suzie Anderson Home.**



More totes

*And while we are talking shopping and markets and all things delicious, there is nothing guaranteed to get you in the Christmas shopping mood quicker than one of these French beauties from The Potting Shed, Green Lane. Sturdy, chic and guaranteed to carry oh so much these beauties are ooh la la. **The Potting Shed, Green Lane, Banyette Street, Bowral** thepottingshedbowral.com*



AUSSIE AUSSIE AUSSIE

Looking for something that says *Australia* to send to friends abroad or visiting from overseas made locally? We love these beautifully drawn cards and tea towels by Highlands artists Ray Carter of The Fingerprint Tree. Beautiful and easy to pack in a jiffy mail bag or a suitcase. Get from Ray's stall at Dirty Jane's Bowral or Cameron's Newsagency in Bong Bong Street, Bowral. thefingerprinttree.com.au



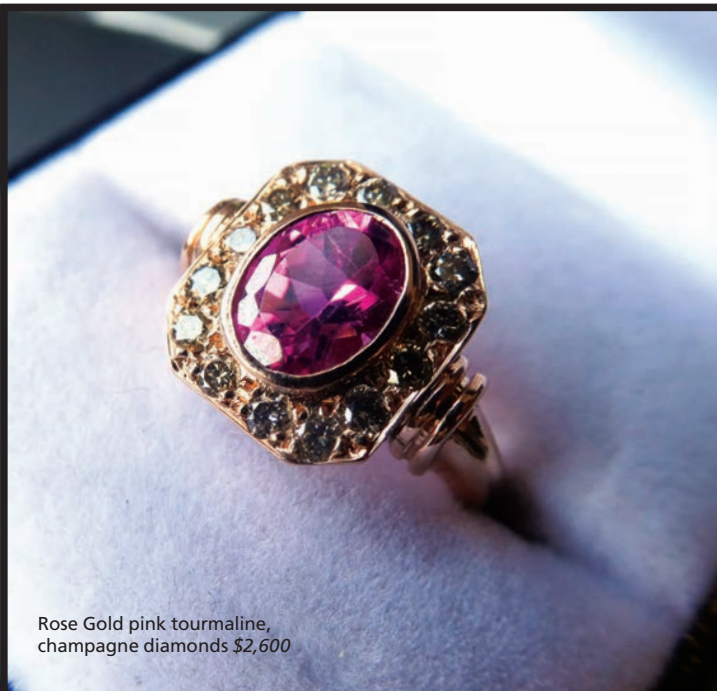
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polish... the list goes on. This past year has seen Mrs Oldbucks Pantry become an important destination for those who appreciate the fine culinary extras from the Highlands and abroad that now adorn the shelves. Their wonderful hampers either premade or bespoke are also a great gift idea for any time of year.



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He's been told he looks a lot like the Honey Badger lately, but Aussie Fly Fisher instructor and guide Angus Reynolds just grins when I mention the resemblance and says he's not bothered by it.

For while his doppelganger and former Wallaby Nick Cummins continues to receive a social media caning after his disastrous appearance on *The Bachelor Australia*, Angus is living his dream guiding and fly fishing across the Highlands. Given his troubles, maybe the Honey Badger would be advised to take some time out with Angus and a fly rod down in our neck of the woods...

'Everyone's welcome,' laughs Angus. 'Fly fishing originates from the UK, where it used to be an elite sport as many people couldn't afford the time to fish because they were always working. But today it's different. The earlier you or your kids get hooked, the better I reckon for later in life.'

Angus is a local born and bred who has been fishing all his life. Growing up in Burradoo and Moss Vale, he got hooked on fly fishing at age 13. His dad, Roy, is also a keen fisherman.

'Dad always had a fly rod about, so I'd pick it up and have a go, and me and my mates would take our hand lines and ride our pushbikes out to Penrose looking for secret tracks leading to streams and creeks to fish. It wasn't until late high school, though, that I started to get a big interest in fly fishing, and at university I started tying flies.'

An industrial design course led to a stint with a yacht design company, which in turn saw Angus start work on a private 60 metre purpose built fly fishing boat in the Seychelles. After two years he came home from catching giant trevally and tuna, and began guiding locally for Josh Hutchins. Acclaimed in





the world of fly fishing and founder of Aussie Fly Fisher, Josh started taking Angus out to help with up to four paying clients for a full day of fishing.

'I had heard of Josh and knew he was really good, and that he had completely pioneered the way fishing guiding is done in Australia, so it was great to start working with him,' recalls Angus. 'When he came into work one day and said, "I've got another baby on the way, how would you feel about doing some guiding here?" I leapt at the chance.'

Fly fishing, explains Angus, is a sport of skill, patience and persistence, where 'thinking like a fish definitely helps get the fish into your net'. The mechanisms used to help with the job are a fly rod, fly reel, fly line and hand tied fishing flies. As Angus expertly ties and puts a black nymph (perfect for trout and tied to imitate a newly hatching fly larvae) onto the end of his line, the tippet, he tells me the role of the hand tied flies is to 'match the hatch' (the fly to what the local insect larvae resting on the water, which in turn is what the local fish are eating).

'The fly line is a pretty marvellously engineered bit of technology, even though it looks simply like a rubber cord,' says Angus. 'On the reel it starts thin and then tapers in various ways to a very fine and delicate tip where the flies and hook are positioned. That is so you can discreetly cast these little bits of feather tied to a hook that look like a bug onto the water without the fish seeing the person fishing, the line or the hook.'

Casting his line out in that famous back and forwards motion, Angus makes it all appear supremely easy. It's not. That's ok, he reassures me as my next cast goes askew. Becoming proficient at fly fishing takes years, he tells me, but the sport is growing exponentially in Australia thanks to the efforts of stalwarts such as Hutchins and fishing legend Rex 'Yibbettey Yibbettey' Hunt.

'A lot of the lure of fly fishing is the short but very intense relationship you build with the fish as you try to catch it by trying to work out what it's thinking and where it's heading,' says Angus.

In terms of other NSW fly fishing locations like the Snowy Mountains and the Blue Mountains, Angus believes the Southern Highlands is underrated. Here we have trout, bass and his favourite, carp ('they are bigger than trout, smarter than trout and they fight harder than trout').

'Flying fishing here is unique because it offers a very different landscape to those other places in NSW and Australia. We have special microclimates like rainforests, unique creeks and rivers. And although the average is two to three pound fish, there are also big fish here, and all will give you a great day of sporting fishing. It's all about knowing where they are at any one time, really.'

A day with Angus and Aussie Fly Fisher includes guiding and tuition, lunch, snacks and beverages, a fly rod, reel and line, waders and boots if required. And, of course, the flies.

All fish caught are released with the 'catch and release' mentality Rex Hunt made famous. And finally, says Angus, don't expect him to tell you his secret fishing spots beforehand (although he does let slip the Wingecarribee River and Pejar Dam near Goulburn are favourites).

'We get a lot of repeat clients so I think people really like the experience of having someone there to tie their flies who has done the research, and who knows where to go and where the fish are at that time of year.'

'You might go out on your own for a day's fishing and think it's a free day out. But you still have the costs of transport and the flies you lose, getting lost, the cost of lunch and not having the local knowledge of where to go. With me you are pretty much guaranteed to find a fish. I can't promise you'll definitely hook it, but that's an altogether different story.' ■

DETAILS

Aussie Fly Fisher
aussieflyfisher.com
@bong_bong_fly

food & wine

CHRISTMAS. NEW YEAR. SUMMER. IT'S A GREAT TIME OF YEAR TO PUT ON A FESTIVE SPREAD AND FEED THOSE HUNGRY HORDES OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO LIKE TO DESCEND TO VISIT AND EAT. AND WHAT BETTER WAY TO DO IT THAN BY **SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL FARMERS, GROWERS AND MAKERS,** WITH THE DROUGHT MAKING LIFE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT THIS YEAR. WE CAUGHT UP WITH SOME OF OUR **TASTY LOCALS PUTTING FABULOUS FOOD ON OUR TABLES.**





Gumnut Patisserie & Eden Brewery, Mittagong

We love us a local collaboration, and Tracy and Vicki Nickl at Gumnut Patisserie and Jacob and Deb Newman just across the road at Eden Brewery in Mittagong are once again making some wonderful Christmas/summer music together. Get your laughing gear around Eden's Yule Christmas Ale, made with Gumnut's delicious fruit mince pies – no lies! Or fancy a meat pie for your summer table? Try Gumnut's Eden Beef Pie made with, you guessed it, Eden Brewery's beer. Or just get into both places and buy a gingerbread house or yule log from Gumnut and one of Eden's mixed family packs with three different beers from their own fabulous core range. We'll drink and eat to that!

gumnutpatisserie.com.au edenbrewery.beer



Medway Farm, Sutton Forest

Fancy going true paddock to plate and arriving at a local farm to pick up your Christmas beef fillet or New Year's leg of lamb? Get in touch then with local fourth generation cattle and sheep farmers James and Belinda Galbraith. 'We don't use antibiotics, hormones or growth enhancers on our animals,' says Belinda. 'They just eat grass, which is what they're meant to do as ruminants, so they tend to be healthier than grain fed animals. That comes through in the taste.' Meat is hung for 10 days before being butchered at Oxley Butchery in Bowral and can be locally delivered or picked up from their farm, Medway. 'We find most people do prefer to visit the farm to pick up their meat. They like to see where their meat is coming from, meet the farmer and see the animals happily grazing.' So when it comes to summer cooking, what do the Galbraiths recommend? 'Our favourite cut would have to be beef fillet,' says Belinda. 'Seared in a pan and finished off in the oven and basted with butter. Simply succulent! Or a lamb shoulder smothered in garlic and seeded mustard, roasted low and slow for at least five hours until the meat falls off the bone.' medwayfarm.com.au

Lady Bucket's Kitchen, Moss Vale

If the name isn't enough to get your attention (Hyacinth Bucket, Lady of the House), the cooking of Biddy and Jean-Pierre Maupin of Lady Bucket's Kitchen should be. Best pate south of the Great Dividing Range in our book, and their fruit cakes with no added sugar, butter, oil, eggs or dairy that also come gluten free aren't half bad either. Working out of their Moss Vale kitchen, this French-Australian couple are the real deal, chef de cuisines. 'We produce about 17 jams, relishes and chutneys plus chicken and duck pates and pork rilette,' says Biddy. 'We also make a fruit cake that basically comes with no hidden extras in three sizes, and nearly all the fruit we use is organic.' Jean-Pierre was born near Giverny in France (where Claude Monet lived) and after meeting in 1968 the couple lived in Paris before returning to Australia in 1975. They now sell their delicious fare at the Exeter, Berrima and Mittagong markets, and supply the Gibraltar Hotel with pate (see our review on page 26). The couple are set to celebrate their 50th anniversary soon. So what's the secret of happy cooking and cohabiting? 'Well, we do work as a team, but JP tells anyone who will listen that he is the kitchenhand,' laughs Biddy. 'In point of fact he makes the fruit cakes and prepares the livers for me to make the pates. He also helps cut the fruit and helps with the washing up.' biddymaupin@yahoo.com.au ►



Pecora Dairy, Robertson

A summer without a cheese platter is no summer at all. So next time you're thinking cheese, think local and seek out Yarrawa, Australia's first noncooked raw milk cheese. Made by clever Robertson cheese makers Cressida and Michael McNamara of Pecora Dairy, and named after Robertson's unique cool climate rainforest Yarrawa, this is a pure ewe's milk cheese. 'Yarrawa is a zippy Spanish style semi hard cheese with herbaceous, citrus and floral notes,' says Cressida. 'It has exceptionally clean flavours and a lingering finish.' Yum. Pecora's Yarrawa is available from Cheese Etc at The Mill in Bowral and The Old Cheese Factory in Robertson. We also love their Bloomy White and Jamberoo Mountain Blue. pecoradairy.com.au



Maugers Meats, Burrawang & Moss Vale

Word of mouth is a powerful marketing tool. It also works well to promote buying local, which is why Maugers' hams are so popular. 'We are the exclusive Highlands supplier of Borrowdale Free Range Pork, a larger pig, full of flavour,' says butcher Mat Mauger. 'We soak our hams after pickling to make sure they are full of flavour, and we use the traditional smoking technique with real wood chips in our custom built smoker over a long period of about 14 to 20 hours per ham. It's the same process we have used for 40 years and it's true you can really taste the difference.' Although Maugers hams are in high demand over Christmas and summer, Mat says supplying locally makes the team strive to produce the highest quality all year round. 'Being small and local we want to make a living, but more importantly reputation is everything, and the people we serve are as much friends as they are customers. To us, supporting local businesses means a stronger community where we work for each other, not just a profit line.' maugers.com.au

Redleaf Farm, Fitzroy Falls

Katrina and Sam Sparke aren't ones to blow their own trumpet when it comes to the quality of their fare, so a gold medal in the National delicious. Produce Awards for their free range suckling pigs did it for them. Katrina says it is off to market now for their little piggies: 'We have a couple of our suckling pig litters available for on the spit and we have a few packages available where we provide the pig, then Sam comes and sets it up at your place, gets it going and leaves the customer to be hero when it's cooked. We also have smaller piglets that can be done whole in the oven for special festive events, and free range lambs which won a gold medal in the delicious. awards last year that are also great on one of our spits for a party, family function or celebratory barbecue. We have some of our own salami ready too, which is delicious and perfect for summer cheese boards and antipasto platters.' redleaf-farm.com





WELCOME TO THE BARN

James Viles doesn't keep still for very long. Now the acclaimed chef and founder of two hatted Biota Dining in Bowral is pushing the boundaries again with 'Biota's wild little sibling' in a shearing shed in East Kangaloon. James chatted to ESH.

ESH: The idea for Barn by Biota has been brewing for some time? JV: Yes, definitely. The idea started more than a year and a half ago, and working on finding the ideal location took time. I am so excited because I have had a while to think about every detail and now it's a reality. ESH: What was the impetus? JV: We wanted to create a place where everything was hyper local, and where the seasons and local produce dictate what we serve and when we open. It's a restaurant with a much looser structure and a lot more freedom. My friendship with Louise and John Keats, the people who own the land where Barn by Biota is located, was also a big factor. They are locals and longtime supporters of Biota, both are really passionate about

produce, and Barn is a joint venture with them. I also had the ideal head chef in Ryan Kovac. ESH: How will it differ from Biota? JV: The food and atmosphere at Barn will be really different. Because we are open for such a limited number of days, we have a lot more freedom and flexibility with the menu. It's all communal dining, and guests will be given a set time to arrive and have a full experience, including a walk around the property, fishing for yabbies, then all sitting down together at a big table for a feast. They can stay on site too. ESH: It seems very important for you to feel really connected to the land that grows the food you cook. JV: It's vital to me to be really hands on and have that connection with Mother Nature, and it continues to grow in importance for me the more I travel this amazing country. We already

grow our own stock for use at both Biota and Barn; we have a meat program with John Keats where we are fattening pure bred Angus. The first beef from that program will be served in January when Barn opens, and will be served at Biota, too. We are also purchasing all the male lambs from Pecora Dairy, and using them at different stages, from spring lamb to hogget and mutton. ESH: You have always been a great supporter of local producers, like the Good Garlic Guy, Pecora, Redleaf



and Quarter Acre Farm. Are you working with any new local producers to help with this new venture? JV: Yes, we will still be working with all our favourites at Barn, plus some new ones like Taluca Park. We're also expanding our use of some producers, for example Redleaf are now supplying our eggs too. A lot of locals have always given us small quantities of their own produce from their own backyards or tiny farms. Boxes of fruit like figs and apples or 20kg of the most amazing tomatoes. And now we can really take advantage of such produce at Barn by building our menu around it. ESH: How will Barn by Biota fit into the SH dining scene? JV: I think Barn is something new for the area. It's not a concept that exists, but it adds to the richness of what is here already. ■

Accommodation starts at \$280 per night and dinner is \$190 per head. Dinners scheduled for January 11 and 25 include food and alcohol. For bookings go to barnbybiota.com or contact events@biotadining.com barn@biotadining.com

The Young family has been serving the Southern Highlands since 1988, when they expanded their Hotel and restaurant, Crackenback Farm in the Snowy Mountains to host country travellers at The Bowral Country Grill (now Biota). Ahead of its time with a fresh herb garden and a menu of local produce, matriarch Margie was mentor to many now established chefs, bringing her rustic, vibrant fare to life with local flavours and a French twist. Now Margie and her artist daughter Zoe, two times Archibald finalist and recent Portia Geach winner are experimenting on the Aga in Zoe's studio to create a delicious book of recipe cards. Below is Margie's fail proof, last minute Christmas pudding.

'We're quite renowned for leaving things til the 11th hour,' laughs Zoe, 'so this is our kind of Christmas pudding, best served with Wild Brumby's Butterscotch schnapps n' brandy sauce.'



IMAGE ABBIE MELLE



ZOE YOUNG'S ANNUAL LIMITED EDITION CHRISTMAS SHOWBAG

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The Night Before Christmas Pudding

by Margie Young

½ cup blanched almonds	½ cup pitted dates, chopped
2 cups plain flour	2 cups milk
1 tsp mixed spice	2 tbl butter
½ tsp ground nutmeg	1 tsp vanilla
½ tsp ginger	2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar	Icing sugar to dust
375 pkt mixed dried fruit	

Preheat oven to 180C.

Spread the almonds over a baking tray and toast in oven for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from oven and roughly chop and set aside. Sift the flour, mixed spice, nutmeg and ginger into a large bowl. Add the almonds, sugar, mixed dried fruits and dates and stir to combine. Place the milk and butter in a saucepan and bring to the boil over medium heat. Remove from the heat, add the vanilla essence and bicarbonate of soda and stir well. Add to the fruit mixture and stir well. The pudding mixture will be quite wet. Place a square 60cm piece of calico on a work surface and spoon the pudding mixture into the centre. Gather the cloth up around the mixture and tie tightly with white kitchen string to seal, leave a space of about 3cm above the mixture for expansion during cooking. Add enough water to a large saucepan to reach a quarter of the way up the side, and bring to the boil. Add the pudding, the water should reach halfway up the side of the pudding. Cover with a lid and boil over medium heat for three hours adding more boiling water if needed. Transfer the pudding to a plate and set aside for 10 minutes. Carefully peel away the calico, turn onto a plate and decorate as desired Served dusted with icing sugar and accompanied with sauce below. The square calico cloth in which the pudding is cooked is not lined with flour in the traditional way. As a result the pudding will last only a few days in the fridge after cooking.

Brandyscotch Sauce

1/2 cup of milk	1/4 cup golden syrup
1/2 cup cream	1 tsp cornflour
Vanilla bean	1/2 cup whipped cream
2 egg yolks	Wild brumby butterscotch schnapps

Scald milk and cream with vanilla bean in saucepan. Beat egg yolks and golden syrup together. Add corn flour. Add this mixture to the milk and cream. Cook over low to medium heat, stirring constantly until thickened. Strain and chill. Just before folding in the whipped cream stir a dash of brandy then a dash of butterscotch schnapps in until it's scrumptious. Double for extended family.



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Enjoy a five course lunch by chef James Viles and his team at the two hatted and multi awarded Biota restaurant. Book for an early 11am to 1.30pm lunch, or linger longer at the later 2pm to 5pm sitting. \$190pp plus drinks biotadining.com

MILTON PARK, Bowral

Enjoy a glass of French champagne or summer fruit cocktail on arrival, then settle in for a sumptuous contemporary six course menu prepared by new chef Thomas Ege. Expect orange cured salmon, sous vide poached lemon myrtle duck breast, and tempting vegetarian and children's menus too. \$170pp for adults, \$75pp for children under 12 miltonpark.com.au

THE LOCH, Berrima

For the second year Brigid Kennedy at The Loch is offering two traditional Christmas Sunday lunches with all the trimmings on December 9 and 16. A great opportunity for groups of family, friends or work colleagues to have a relaxing pre Christmas catch up. Guests can pick up a selection of gourmet Christmas gifts or ingredients for their own Christmas feast as well. **\$68pp** theloch.net.au

BISTRO OFFICINA, Bowral

Italian chef Nico Coccia is putting on a three course Italian style lunch at this special hatted restaurant. It will include house smoked legs of ham, aged risotto, lobster and much more. \$150pp bistroofficina.com.au



The Loch, Berrima

PEPPERS CRAIGIEBURN, Bowral

Plenty to choose from here, with an extensive hot and cold buffet and beverage package in the Carrington Room (from \$199pp) and a four course shared platter option in Hickory's Restaurant & Bar (from \$189pp). From \$199/\$189pp for adults, \$85pp for children 10-17 years, \$55pp for children 3-10 years peppers.com.au/craigieburn

BURRAWANG GENERAL STORE CAFE, Burrawang

Housed in the original general store, this special cafe is a favourite with locals and visitors alike. Awarded Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence for 2017 and 2018. Owner Erica Leeming is hosting a traditional Christmas dinner on Saturday December 22. bgsc.com.au

GIBRALTAR HOTEL, Bowral

The Christmas Buffet Extravaganza will include a large selection of traditional and not so traditional choices covering three courses from 12.30pm to 3pm. Drinks available will include two local craft beers and you'll enjoy live music from Geoff Harvey. \$198 pp for adults, \$120pp for teens, \$80pp for children gibraltarbowl.com.au

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS WINES, Sutton Forest

Wonderful sounding festive feast under the stars in the lovely Tuscan courtyard in Southern Highlands Wines Christmas Under the Stars on December 15. This traditional Italian party includes 15 courses, wine and live music 5pm – 8pm. \$120 per person. **Bookings essential on 4868 2300.** southernhighlandswinery.com.au

Four Seasons Bistro, Mittagong





Birch, Moss Vale



PARTY PICKS

PEPPERS MANOR HOUSE, Sutton Forest

The Christmas Day Special here has families coming back year after year. Loads of atmosphere and chef Thomas Pirker's buffets are known for their quality and abundance. Bookings from 12 noon for the three course buffet that includes Marian's outstanding croquembouche and a beverage package. \$199pp for adults, \$85pp for children 5-12, under 5s eat free peppers.com.au/manor-house

FEAST AT BERRIMA, Berrima

Annie and Philip are offering their famous Christmas buffet again this year. Expect canapes and a complimentary drink on arrival, followed by a range of fresh seafood, roast beef and turkey breast, with all the trimmings. Finish with traditional Christmas pud and brandy anglaise. \$140pp for adults and \$90pp for children 12 and under feestatberrima.com.au

FOUR SEASONS BISTRO, Mittagong

Derek and Sue at Four Seasons Bistro are offering a two course vegan/vegetarian Christmas lunch from December 1 to 23. A new addition to Mittagong, they have a loyal following and an interesting menu. Their Retro Nut Roast will be served with housemade sauces and relishes, and the vegan Christmas pudding comes with a special brandy sauce. **\$45pp (BYO, corkage \$2)** fourseasonsbistro.com.au

ESCHALOT, Berrima

The new owners of this Berrima icon are planning a Christmas inspired degustation dinner Dec 8 and local wine tastings in their courtyard. \$75pp dinner, \$115pp with matching local wines. From Dec 20-24 they will also serve a Christmas inspired menu. Five course degustation \$75 with matching wines \$115 and eight course degustation \$110 with matching wines \$165 eschalot.com.au 4877 1977

PRE-CHRISTMAS STARTERS BIRCH, Moss Vale

Festive celebrations start early at Birch with options for groups Thursday December 6 for dinner, and Saturday December 8 for lunch. Option 1: A canapé on arrival followed by a main meal for \$40pp. Option 2: Relaxed three course meal for \$70pp. Option 3: Five course meal featuring seasonal dishes for \$85pp. birchrestaurant.com.au

CENTENNIAL VINEYARDS RESTAURANT, Bowral

If you are looking for somewhere to celebrate the festive season with a bunch of family or friends, Centennial is taking bookings for festive high tea, lunch and dinner in their restaurant, courtyard or private room from November 24 to December 24. centennialrestaurant.com.au

FARM CLUB, Werai

Christmas mezze board meat terrine, smoked ham, cheese, salad and breads \$25 until December 23. farmclubaustralia.com.au

KICK UP YOUR HEELS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

BISTRO OFFICINA, Bowral

The party starts on New Year's Eve at 7pm with aperitivo and a glass of sparkling. The three course meal is followed at midnight with Cotechino and Lentils, an Italian tradition. **\$160pp** bistroofficina.com.au

MILTON PARK, Bowral

A relaxed evening away from the hurly burly of the city. Enjoy a five course tasting dinner prepared by chef Thomas Ege. miltonpark.com.au



DETAILS

Bistro Officina
6 David Street,
Bowral
bistroofficina.com.au



WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

THE FABULOUS FLAVOURS YOU SAVOUR AT **BISTRO OFFICINA** ARE THANKS TO THE **TRADITIONAL WOOD FIRE OVENS** BURNING IN THE BACKGROUND AT THIS **SUPERLATIVE EATING PLACE**.

WORDS **ALEX SPEED**

Nico Coccia grew up immersed in food. He recalls being a tiny boy and watching his mother and grandmother cook. The sea and the natural produce grown in the rich countryside of Southern Italy were his family's larder.

'Ever since I was a baby my grandmother would start to cook from the morning,' says Nico. 'My mother is from Naples but my father comes from Puglia, the heel of Italy's boot, and Puglia is surrounded by three different seas, the Adriatic, the Ionian and the Mediterranean. Plus in Puglia you have one of the big lakes, Lago di Varano, where my grandfather would farm for mussels and eels and my grandmother would cook the fish.'

'My father owns 250 olive trees, some of which are more than 400 years old, which he harvests to make his own olive oil.'

Nico is owner of twice hatted restaurant **Bistro Officina** in Bowral with partner Alex, mother of their three children. The pair met at fine dining stalwart **Otto** in Sydney, where Alex was front of house, and went on to open their Highlands restaurant in 2016.

Next door to the boutique **Berida Hotel**, their urbane restaurant fast earned a reputation as one of *the* places to eat in the Southern Highlands. Nico is a bear of a man, with tattoo sleeved arms and dark eyes, and the restaurant is a masculine space. Think welcoming man cave with wood fired ovens burning, stags heads on the walls, leather armchairs, dark wood, and moody works by artist **Thomas Bucich**, including a large charcoal portrait of Nico. Even the front of house here has a name to match the virility of design and decor. **Ulysses**. How utterly fabulous.

It's a Monday evening, traditionally a quiet night in the restaurant game, and we've chosen the 6pm slot to eat. The empty tables don't bother us at all, though. Far from it. We've eaten here when this place is jumping, especially come midweek lunch times and weekends when the locals take up residence in the bar area.

Bistro Officina takes its name from the 20th century when dictator **Benito Mussolini** was in power in Italy from 1922 to 1943.

'In a time of deep corruption, censorship, control and lack of freedom,' the restaurant's website explains, 'many underground garages opened up at the back of houses, where Italian grandmothers would cook their delicious homemade pasta to sell to the poor people riddled by war.'

These little garages were called **Officina**, and although the *raison d'être* is very different today, the meal we enjoy certainly has its roots in proud Italian cooking and nourishing fare. Sourdough bread with hay smoked butter, both house specialties, are brought to the table along with the starters, **taramasalata** with seaweed crackers and kingfish sashimi with fermented lettuce, citrus cream foam and beach bananas, a sea vegetable also known as **karkalla** or pig face. This native succulent with its briny taste adds some crunch to the melt in the mouth kingfish. A glass or two of local winery **St Maur's** chardonnay is a lovely accompaniment.

The kitchen is open to the bistro through a large serving hatch, and we watch and chat as Nico plates up as the tables fill up. Three traditional Italian wood fire ovens burn behind him. Nico cooks all his dishes on fire, with wood smoke and flames, another throwback to his family heritage. After working previously in Spain, Italy, England, New Zealand and finally Australia, he says getting back to basics is what helped him rediscover his love for food with this restaurant.

'I worked for 17 years in fine dining all around the world but I had start (sic) to be tired,' he says. 'I was tired to go in the morning to work. I felt like a robot and I was almost losing my love for the food.'

'The food is the first thing and I thought about my grandmother. She still has the wood stove and she always cooks with wood. If you think of the few things you need to cook on it, fire, water and produce, that's it. So when we opened here we made a big decision to make food from the wood stove and the produce, that's all. Whatever the farms bring me.'



He is a big supporter of local producers such as Redleaf Farm and Pecora Dairy. Tonight we feast on his gnocchi with four cheese fromage fondue. Rich and delicious, it is a perfect example of what he and Alex set out to do here. It's a thoroughly modern take on an Italian classic... you can almost imagine his Nona in Puglia spooning this out for the pickers come olive oil harvest in October.

But the main event of the meal for us has to be the West Australian marron served with burnt orange butter and lemon zest on a bed of avruga. A brilliant red with a concertina carapace, this luminous freshwater crayfish is almost too beautiful to eat. But we do, of course, and the sweetness of the meat is offset by the piquancy of the burnt orange. It is a master dish.

Dessert is Nico's take on tirasumi, leaving us feeling fully replete after this fabulous meal. It's something you will want to take home and remember. And now you can, thanks to Nico and Alex's first book, *Farm to Flame*. Published by Quicksand Foods, and available at Bistro Officina and The Bookshop Bowral, this sumptuous 230 page hardback with photography by Ashley Mackevicius features 70 of Nico's big, ballsy, fire fuelled recipes. It is the culmination of another long held dream, and pays homage to Nico's heritage and the local Highlands producers he depends on to create his unique dishes.

'It has always been my dream to do the cookbook because firstly I am far away from my home country and, secondly, if you write something down it will last for ever. Restaurants can come and go but with a cookbook it is written into history.' 📖

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Brigid Kennedy

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Mrs Oldbucks Pantry: gourmet chutneys, jams, marmalades, mustards

Wild Food Adventures: unique adventures bringing people to produce

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Berrima Schoolyard Markets: 50 stalls with local goodies to uncover

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The Settlers Hut: colonial cottage and gardens on the banks of the Wingecarribee

Harpers Cottage: lovely brick and stone cottage in the heart of Berrima

SHF&W
CLUSTERS

Chef Brigid Kennedy from The Loch, Berrima teamed up with FoodPath pioneer and Escape Southern Highlands food writer Jill Dyson to identify nine different Southern Highlands Food and Wine Clusters. Think of the clusters as an insider's guide to eating, drinking and shopping like a local, as well as the opportunity to meet producers and discover the backstory of the foods of the region. The clusters are an initiative of the Moss Vale and Rural Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than 150 small farmers and artisan producers. Download your cluster maps at southernhighlandsfoodandwineclusters.com.au



Bare Body Beauty



Berrima Schoolyard Market Nursery



Gunu Berrima



Courtyard Cafe



Eschalot team



Mrs Oldbucks Pantry



Wild Food Adventures



Stones Patisserie



Berrima General Store & Cafe

Adventurous Spirits

Meet the Jimenez family who went camping, bought a town and started distilling single malt whisky. All as daring and magical as it sounds!

WORDS JANE O'CONNELL

Tucked away in a valley at the end of Joadja Road, the former mining town of Joadja has a long history of innovation, entrepreneurship and a splash of spirited misadventure. A lone field of bright green signals renewal amongst the crumbling sandstone ruins, and provides a clue to what lies ahead.

Valero and Elisa Jimenez camped here with their children more than a decade ago and fell in love with the area. When the historic town was up for sale in 2011, Valero attended the auction, although he had no intention of buying.

'The auction stalled,' he says, 'I looked over at Elisa, and the next thing I know I've got my hand up and I'm signing a contract.'

Along with the land and the historic ruins came the Scottish heritage of the workers who moved to the Southern Highlands in the 1870s to mine and refine shale for the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company. Legend has it they also set up a sly grog operation on the side, and more than a century later, that hobby is being legally revived.





The patch of green we spotted on the way in is a nine acre crop of barley, which coupled with the spring water collected from their nearby reservoir, provides two of the base ingredients of a unique local brew. After securing an excise licence in 2014, Joadja Distillery now offers paddock to bottle Australian whisky.

Valero and Elisa are waiting at the entrance of a cavernous shed when I pull off the dirt road bringing a cloud of dust. Inside is a collection of copper pot stills and fermenters, and an alcove crammed with old oak barrels. In a past life the barrels stored Spanish sherry and the sticky residue is the magic ingredient for ageing whisky, a technique the Scots have used for generations. According to Valero, all the taste and complexity comes from the barrel: 'It turns into liquid gold.'

The most sought after barrels are ex Oloroso and ex Pedro Ximénez from the Andalusia region of southern Spain, where both Valero and Elisa were born. (They moved to Australia with their respective families as young children, but didn't meet for another 17 years.) Elisa later discovered she had Spanish relatives who made the barrels, and the couple agreed there were too many signs to ignore. They sold their backpacker hostel in Sydney and Joadja became their full time business.

Visitors may be lucky enough to see a kangaroo poke its head through the shed door when Valero is mashing the barley with an oversized paddle, as some are so drawn to the smell they'll even venture inside. During the distilling process, Valero tinkers constantly, controlling energy levels to optimise flavours.



The spirit is aged in barrels for a minimum of two years before it can officially be called whisky. Joadja's first batch, released in 2018, sold out within hours, fuelled by word of mouth and a few popular whisky blogs.

When sampling single malt whisky, Valero has the following tips: 'Taste it first, neat, at room temperature. Nose it, think about it, get to know the whisky. Then you can add a bit of water to open up other flavours. After that, do whatever you want.'

Later they launched Joadja Dry Gin, with its shorter production process, as a stop gap product in between batches of whisky and now it is a big seller. The aroma of juniper berries and botanicals, including cardamom, angelica root and anise, is delicate and delicious. The Joadja Distillery also produces Anise liqueur, Outlaw malted grain spirit and Crossbones Freebooter cane spirit, all available to buy online or at the distillery.

More than one hundred years have passed since the mine closed and the community dispersed, but the spirit of those first Scottish settlers has had a 21st century boost and lives on through the Jimenez family. 🍷

Joadja Distillery is open Saturday and Sunday over summer from 10am-4pm subject to weather. Valero advises visitors to call ahead or check online.

DETAILS

Joadja Distillery
1760 Joadja Road, Joadja
joadjadistillery.com.au
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Lot 5 Kells Creek Rd,
Mittagong. Open 7 days
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4. Joadja Estate

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Thurs, Fri & Mon 12-5pm.
4878 5236

5. Joadja Distillery

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6. Bendooley Estate

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9. Mount Ashby Estate

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10. Southern Highlands Wines

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11. St Maur Southern Highlands Estate

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4.30pm. 4883 4401

12. Sallys Corner Wines

257 Sallys Corner Rd, Exeter.
Open Sat-Sun & P.Hols
10.30-4.30pm. 4883 4999

13. Cuttaway Hill Wines

212 Sally's Corner Rd, Exeter.
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Other times by appointment
0409 902 982

14. Sutton Forest Estate Wines

21 Black Horse Ln, Sutton Forest.
Open Fri-Sun & P.Hols 10-5pm.
4878 9278

15. Eling Forest Winery

& Cellar Door 12587 Hume
Hwy, Sutton Forest. Open 7 days
10.30-4.30pm. 4858 1788

16. Cherry Tree Hill Wines

12324 Hume Hwy, Sutton
Forest. Open 7 days.
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Tues & Wed 12noon-4pm

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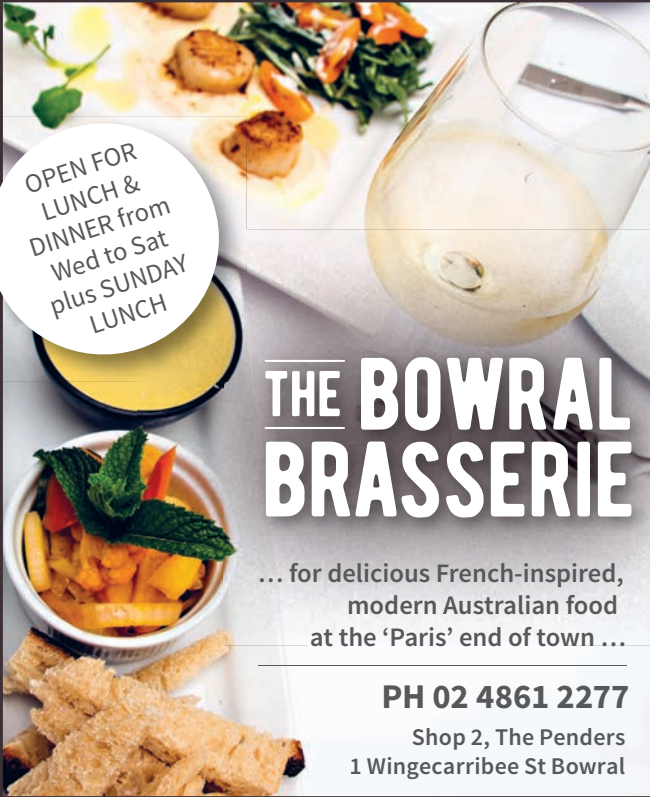


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www.thegrapeescape.com.au



JOIN THE PARTY



We specialise in chardonnay, merlot, and merlot blends. About 5 weeks ago we received notification from the Canberra Regional Wine Show that our 2016 chardonnay had won a gold medal in their wine show. Later the same day we received notification that our 2016 merlot blended with a small amount of cabernet franc had won a gold medal in the Australian Highlands Wine Show. To get 2 gold medals and to be advised of both wins on the same day was very special. **Tasting is free and we give generous discounts for purchases of 6 or 12 bottles and now if you purchase any of our wine and say "I am joining the party" or similar we will give you a 10% discount in addition to any discount for multiple bottle purchases.** Festive season is fast approaching.

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www.sallyscornerwines.com.au
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www.suttonforestwines.com.au
sales@suttonforestwines.com.au

We offer a boutique collection of hand picked wines, as well as a range of beer & spirits.



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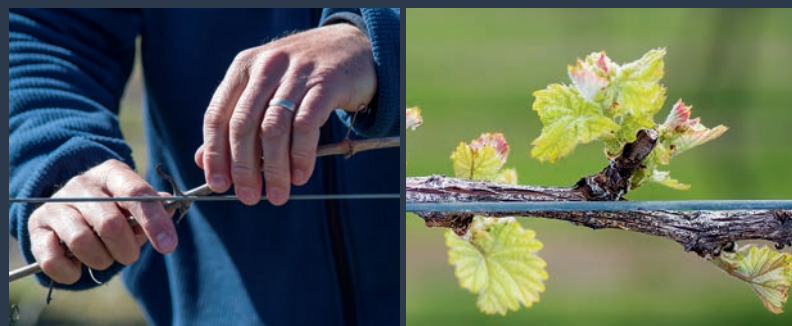
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BERRIMA DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.



OUT & ABOUT

VISITING THE HIGHLANDS WITH KIDS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS? HERE FOR A MINI BREAK TO CONTEMPLATE A TREE CHANGE? OR ARE YOU A LOCAL LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW TO DO? HERE ARE SOME GREAT THINGS TO TRY OUT AND ABOUT.

UP A RIVER WITH A PADDLE

If you are looking for something amazing to do solo or as a family, get in touch with Travis Frenay at local outdoor firm Paddle and Portage Canoes and book a Highlands canoe trip for a day or overnight adventure you will never forget. Travis can custom tailor trips to suit nearly any group, such as an instructional day for a small family of four, a birthday present to remember, or to do something special with the kids. Being a keen canoeist himself, Travis often goes out with partner Sarah and their two kids to places like the beautiful Kangaroo River and its sunken valley. Definitely a summer activity for the bucket list.

paddleportagecanoes.com.au

FAIR LOVE

Looking to join the ranks of the newlyweds soon? Well weddings are big business in the Southern Highlands and there's not a nicer place to tie the knot, as you'll discover at Love a Fair, January's Southern Highlands wedding fair. The fourth year of this event at Bradman Oval in Bowral will be bigger and better than ever before (check out gorgeous venue Mali Brae, on our cover, for starters). You'll meet caterers, florists and celebrants, and learn everything you need to know from the Highlands wedding industry to make your special day very special indeed. Also happening is the Wedding Trail, where you can meet the hosts and then go check out their venues. Fashion parades, prizes to be won, live entertainment and food. Pre marital bliss!

Sunday January 20, 10am-3pm, Bradman Oval, St Jude's Street, Bowral. \$25pp, kids under 14 free.
southernhighlandsweddingfair.com.au

Pet Walk

Farm Club Australia at Werai is holding its farmyard walkaround for kids every Sunday at 10am. And if your kids are looking a little like fur babies, the on site barber is open every weekend too. The market garden is booming too, so stock up on home grown organic veg, eggs and farm raised beef from the terrific farm shop, along with other local treats, mostly grown within a 20 km radius. If you want to immerse yourself in more rural life, check out Farm Club's accommodation options too. 1 Werai Road, Werai farmclubaustralia.com.au



IMAGE: WILDFEST.COM.AU

DON'T
MISS!

DISTILLED SPIRITS

Take a drive out to the end of the road at Joadja. It's so worth the effort. Beautiful rural countryside and the Joadja Distillery at the end of your trip. On page 60 read all about the life change wonderful whisky makers Val and Elisa Jimenez made when they fell in love with their unique property, then go out and visit. The distillery is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays over summer. Give yourself plenty of time to try and buy the delicious gin and single malt whisky the Jimenez family creates on site, have a meal in their licensed cafe and take a fully guided 90 minute tour of the old town, home to more than a 1000 Scottish scale miners who lived there in the late 1870s to mine oil shale from the surrounding hills. Val will share lots of fascinating ruins and stories. On your way back through Moss Vale, stop and try new beer The Highlander, a fabulous collaboration between Joadja Distillery and Southern Highlands Brewing Company. It's made completely from Highland produce (water, hops grown by brewers Ben and Cammo at Sutton Forest and barley grown at Joadja Distillery), and you can sample yours at Southern Highlands Brewing & Taphouse, 490 Argyle Street, Moss Vale. **Joadja Distillery, Saturday & Sunday 10am-4pm (subject to weather so call ahead to check on 4878 5129), Guided tour \$29pp, \$15pp for children aged 5-15. Historic Joadja Town tour dates listed on website joadjatown.com.au**



VINE-L MUSIC IN THE SUNSHINE

What could possibly be nicer than kicking back in the summer sunshine and sampling some wonderful local wine, pizza and tunes. Joadja Estate is a family owned winery and vineyard (the oldest in the Highlands) and as ever is putting on a terrific calendar of Summer Chill Out Sessions on Saturdays 1-4pm for us to enjoy with free wine tastings, alongside purchases of their great wood fire pizza, wine and cheese plates. There's a great playground for the kids but please leave the four legged fur kids at home. Bookings not taken and table and chairs limited so bring your own picnic rug. You can also make Australia Day one to remember with Kiss the Frog performing classic Australian rock songs at Joadja Estate. **Music acts: January 5, Paul Hodgkinson; January 12, Darren Powell; January 19, Paul Hodgkinson; February 2, Angus Murray; February 9, Paul Hodgkinson; February 16, Angus Murray; February 23, Paul Hodgkinson; March 2, Angus Murray. 110 Joadja Road, Berrima joadjawinery.com.au** ►

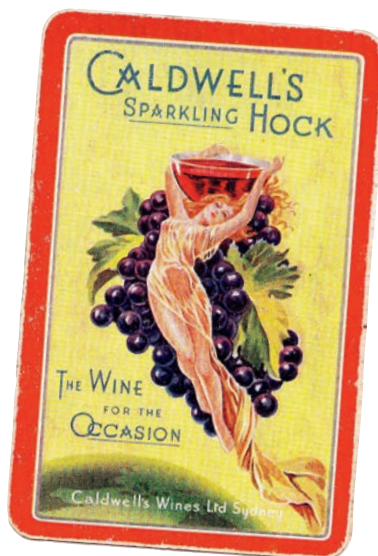


Paint Process

Once you've exhausted all the galleries in the Highlands (see page 100) you may fancy hot tailing it to Goulburn Regional Art Gallery to see Bundanoon artist Clara Adolphs' first show there. Widely acclaimed as an emerging painter of great talent, Clara's most recent body of work, *Remembering Words*, captures her unique process of reproducing works from forgotten photographs she finds in books, at flea markets and in albums bought on eBay. Clara recently returned from Paris with her talented musician husband, Simon Relf of The Tambourine Girls, (who play Forage Fest 2018 at Armidale this month) where she was recipient of the Eva Breuer Travelling Art Scholarship through the AGNSW. **Remembering Words, December 7, 2018 to February 2, 2019. Free entry. Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Civic Centre, 184 Bourke Street, Goulburn goulburnregionalartgallery.com.au**

EPHEMERA ALERT

Consider yourself a bit of a wine buff and foodie who likes the historical stories behind culinary bits and pieces? Then get yourself along and see John Cunnington, wine enthusiast, collector and owner of The Art of Wine & Food at Mittagong Antiques Centre. John has dealt for many years in wine and food related antiques in his former Paddington place, and has some amazing treasures which he has now brought to Mittagong, many of which he sources in Europe and the UK. Explore his truffle related objects and ephemera, including postcards from Perigord, a truffle cutter, prints of *Tuber melanosporum*, truffle pig books for kids, postcards with recipes. If you are an oenophile (aka a wine buff) his amazing wine related antique collection is definitely worth a look too, with decanters, carafes, decanting machines, corking devices, old Australian wine labels and coopers' tools, as well as early texts on viticulture and winemaking. He even supplied the absinthe glasses for Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge*. **Mittagong Antiques Centre, Shop 8, 85-87 Main Street, Mittagong. Open seven days, 10am-5pm. mittagongantiquescentre.com.au artwinefood.net.au**



Wild & Free

National Parks NSW are running their educational Discovery Ranger Summer Program these school holidays from Fitzroy Falls Visitor Centre. Experiences include a range of activities, including Aboriginal bush tucker tours and an introduction to the outdoors with a ranger. Get your name on the mailing list to keep in tune with what's going on Saturday mornings in January, 10am to midday at Fitzroy Falls Visitors Centre. **nationalparks.nsw.gov.au**

GET YOUR LA LA ON

LOVE SINGING IN THE SHOWER? JOIN THE ARGYLE SINGERS THIS SUMMER AND IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, AS WELL AS YOUR BATHROOM RENDITIONS AND YOUR SOCIAL CALENDAR. MONDAYS 6PM-7.30PM IN SCHOOL TERM AT MARULAN CWA HALL, GEORGE STREET, MARULAN. CONTACT BRIAN ON 0419 983 445 FOR FEES AND DETAILS.

ONE FOR THE DIARY

Highlands Harvest Feasts has just released its calendar of great events for 2019. The first is the Wine Harvest Feast to welcome in the harvest in autumn, so put that in your diary, organise your table and book some local accommodation. Salute! Wine Harvest Feast lunch, March 23, 2019. highlandharvestfeasts.com hello@highlandharvestfeasts.com

experience the love of
nature and the freedom
in which to enjoy it...
naturally!



River Island Nature Retreat has set a standard of clothing -optional Holiday Park, promoting a relaxed atmosphere in a peaceful and natural setting and accommodation to suit all lifestyles, tastes and budget.

River Island Nature Retreat offers a relaxing social environment, the friendliness of the people, combined with the abundant wildlife and natural beauty of the Australian countryside, makes the **River Island Nature Retreat** the perfect place to spend your holidays.

River Island Nature Retreat offers accommodation ranging from luxury fully equipped cedar cabins overlooking the valley, quality caravans and grassed camp sites by the river, the park also has amenities blocks, laundry facilities, spas, pools and BBQ areas nestled in 2,000 acres of private, secluded unique property located in the Southern Highlands, 40km from Mittagong, on the banks of the Wollondilly River.



River Island Nature Retreat

Phone: 02 4888 9236

Fax: 02 48889242

e: skinnydipping@riverisland.com.au

River Island Nature Retreat

PO BOX 456 MITTAGONG

www.riverisland.com.au

PARADISE FOR PROS AND PUTTERS

YOUR HANDY GUIDE TO THE MANY FANTASTIC GOLF COURSES OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS REGION.

KANGAROO VALLEY GOLF AND COUNTRY RESORT

18 holes – par 71

Mt Scanzi Road, Kangaroo Valley

Open to the public seven days; both members and visitors are welcome to play in competitions. **Cost to play:** Weekday \$60 & weekend \$70 includes motorised cart hire. Clubs and additional carts available for hire. **Dress:** Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 7th – par 4.

Difficult driving hole with narrow fairway that rolls right to left. Second shot is up a steep incline and the green has two tiers.

Toughest green: 13th. Slopes back to front with two tiers.

Additional facilities: Practice fairway, chipping and putting practice areas. Full club and bar facilities. Functions and conferences catered for.

Accommodation is available in rustic wood cabins and luxury two and three bedroom villas located right around the resort. See website for Stay and Play packages.

Contact: 4465 0200; kangaroovalleygolf.com.au

MOSS VALE GOLF CLUB

18 holes – par 71

Arthur Street, Moss Vale

Open to the public seven days around competitions. Bookings essential.

Professional: Steve McRae

Cost to play: \$45 for 18 holes.

\$25 for 9 holes. Clubs and carts available for hire.

Lessons: From \$60. Groups and clinics catered for.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 18th – 378m, par 4.

Dog leg hole turning left around a large gum tree with a natural waterway in front of the green.

Toughest green: 14th. Very undulating with a bunker to the left.

Additional facilities: Clubhouse bistro serves lunch Tuesday-

Sunday and Sholz dinner Friday and Saturday or all week next door at Dormie House.

Available for weddings and functions.

Contact: golf reservations 4868 1503 or 4868 1811 mossvalegolfclub.com.au

BOWRAL GOLF CLUB

18 holes – par 69

Kangaloon Road, Bowral

Open to the public seven days, including competitions. Bookings essential.

Professional: Kevin Kenny

Cost to play: Visitor 18 holes

\$45. Visitor \$50, twilight

\$28.50. Clubs and carts

available to hire.

Lessons: \$50 individual. Groups

and beginner clinics catered for. Lessons on demand.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 18th – 409m, par 4. A narrow fairway with a 240m carry off the back tee to get over the water, then uphill to a sloping green.

Toughest green: 16th.

Two bunkers and a right to left slope.

Additional facilities: Putting green, practice area, croquet lawn. Full club and bar facilities. Functions catered for.

Available for weddings.

Contact: 4861 1042; bowralgolfclub.com.au

MT BROUGHTON GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

18 holes – par 72

Kater Road, Sutton Forest

Open to the public seven days around competitions.

Professional: Larry Canning

Cost to play: Weekday \$50, weekend \$70. Clubs and carts available for hire. Lessons: \$50

per hour. Groups and clinics catered for.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Strictly no denim.

Hardest hole: 2nd – 227m, a long par 3 with lots of water. Often plays into the wind.

Toughest green: 15th. Slopes right to left and guarded by two big bunkers.

Additional facilities: Full driving range, chipping and putting practice areas. Full club and bar facilities. Functions catered for by Southern Highlands Winery. Accommodation available at Peppers Manor House, and à la carte food at Katers restaurant. See website for membership specials.

Contact: 4868 3200; mtbroughton.com.au

STAY &
PLAY

GOLF PASS SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS NSW GOLF PASS INCLUDES 6 ROUNDS X 9 HOLES OF GOLF TOTALLING 54 HOLES THAT CAN BE PLAYED AT ANY SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS GOLF COURSE PLUS KANGAROO VALLEY GOLF AND COUNTRY RESORT. THE PASS COSTS \$89 AND IS VALID SUNDAY TO FRIDAY UNTIL DECEMBER 31 2019. PURCHASE THE STAY & PLAY GOLF PASS FROM THE DESTINATION SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS WELCOME CENTRE IN MITTAGONG SOUTHERN-HIGHLANDS.COM.AU

PEPPERS CRAIGIEBURN

9 holes – par 32

Centennial Road, Bowral

Open to the public seven days.

Cost to play: \$15 for 9 holes.

\$15 for club hire.

Lessons: On request.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 4th – 180m, par 3. Up a hill and over a ridge. To make par you can have only one shot on the approach to the green.

Toughest green: 4th.

Needs a good approach.

Additional facilities: Full club and bar facilities. Weddings, functions and conferences catered for. Luxury accommodation available at Peppers Craigieburn.

Contact: 4862 8000;

peppers.com.au/craigieburn

PENROSE GOLF CLUB

9 holes – par 31

Kareela Road, Penrose

Open to the public seven days.

Cost to play: \$17 for 9 or 18 holes. Clubs and carts available for hire. Guests of Sylvan Glen play for free.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 5th. Plays over water to a narrow green with a steep face.

Toughest green: 5th. Rolls back to front with a steep bank.

Additional facilities:

Coffee shop. Wedding, accommodation and function facilities are available at the Sylvan Glen Country House. Consult website for stay and play packages.

Contact: 4884 4306;

sylvanglen.com.au

GIBRALTAR COUNTRY CLUB

18 holes – par 70

Boronia Street, Bowral

Open to the public seven days around competitions.

Bookings essential.

Cost to play: Weekday \$35 for 9 holes or \$45 for 18 holes with a cart; weekend \$45 or \$55

Lessons: Groups and beginner clinics catered for.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 9th – 380m, par 4. Uphill all the way.

Toughest green: 2nd. A tough slope back to front and bunkered on the right.

Additional facilities: Putting green, practice area, full club and bar facilities including children's menu at San Fior restaurant. Driving range and aqua range facilities available. Functions catered for. Available for weddings.

Contact: 4862 8645;

gibraltarbowral.com.au

HIGHLANDS GOLF CLUB

18 holes – par 70

Old Hume Highway, Mittagong

Open to the public seven days around competitions.

Professionals: Tegan and James Purcell

Cost to play: Weekday \$29.50 for 18 holes, weekend \$35.

Clubs and carts available to hire. Lessons: \$55 per half hour. Groups and clinics catered for.

Dress: Neat golf attire.

Hardest hole: 6th – a long 390m drive slightly uphill to a raised green guarded by fairway bunkers.

Toughest green: 14th. Features treacherous slopes to the left and right.

Additional facilities: Full club fitting service, driving range, putting green, pro shops club and bar facilities. Wedding and functions catered for.

Contact: 4871 3274;

highlandsgolfclub.com.au

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Maximum number 20 Guests
Enquiries: office@geoffjansz.com.au



Photo: Ray Joyce

Retford Park

The late, Mr James Oswald Fairfax AC gifted this magnificent property to the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 2016. These stunning gardens open on the first weekend of each month (the house will also be open on the February weekend). If the 1st of the month falls on a Sunday then it is that weekend that the property will be open. The gardens open from 10am to 4pm. Refreshments available. Dog friendly. Picnics Welcomed.

See website for Calendar of Events.

 **NATIONAL TRUST**
(02) 4861 1933 | e: retfordpark@nationaltrust.com.au
www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/retford-park/

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SCULPTURE PARK



HORIZON FIGURE/Greg Johns

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EVENT PARTNERS



Simon Bathgate
ARCHITECT



VENUE HOST





SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CONFERENCE VENUES

Peppers Manor House, Sutton Forest

VENUES WITH ACCOMMODATION		CONFERENCE CAPACITIES						
	Accommodation (no. of rooms)	Boardroom	U shape	Classroom	Theatre	Cabaret	Banquet	Cocktail
Berida Hotel, Bowral	42	26	22	60	100	30	60	120
Briars, Bowral	32	40	30	80	120	80	150	180
Bundanoon Country Inn Motel	21	24	36	60	60	60	60	60
Bundanoon Guest House	16	34	30	25	60	20	40	60
Dormie House, Moss Vale	32	40	30	60	120	45	90	140
Gibraltar Hotel Bowral	76	75	75	180	300	200	280	400
Killarney House, Bundanoon	15	16	25	30	60	25	40	70
Links House, Bowral	17	X	25	30	40	X	40	60
Milton Park, Bowral	46	45	75	150	300	130	200	250
Mittagong RSL	71	80	80	200	450	200	350	500
Peppers Craigieburn	72	50	60	120	200	130	180	200
Peppers Manor House, Sutton Forest	43	40	38	80	120	40	60	140
Sylvan Glen, Penrose	20	40	45	60	50	60	100	100



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1 ROMANTIC
BRIDAL SUITE



42 PEOPLE CAN BE
ACCOMMODATED



60 PEACEFUL
ACRES

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You'll be surrounded by 60 private acres of woodland, golf course and vineyard, with kangaroos bounding across the gardens as the sun goes down. At the heart of Sylvan Glen is a historic country guesthouse with 15 lovingly decorated ensuite rooms.

Your wedding or conference group will enjoy the guesthouse exclusively - it's absolutely private for your stay.

Get cosy on the couches in front of the fireplace, have a laugh over a game of pool or take your coffee onto the decking and look out of the countryside.

When motivation hits, how about racing through vineyards on our off-road motorised scooter tour, testing your skill with our Archery Strike game, trying the new Foot Golf or simply enjoying a 9-hole round of golf.

An easy 90 minute drive from Sydney, Canberra or Wollongong will get you through the Sylvan Glen gates and into your new favourite place.

Sylvan Glen

Visit www.sylvanglen.com.au for an instant quote for your wedding or conference

Sylvan Glen, 570 Kareela Road, Penrose NSW 2579, 02 4884 4306, bookings@sylvanglen.com.au

Love Unlimited

BEC AND AMY WERE FRIENDS BEFORE THEY FELL IN LOVE, BUT THEIR JOURNEY TO BECOME MARRIED WAS HARDER THAN MOST. THE NEWLYWEDS SHARE THEIR LOVE STORY WITH ESCAPE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS. PHOTOGRAPHER THOMAS STEWART WAS THERE TO CAPTURE THEIR JOYOUS WEDDING DAY.

It was The Beatles who sang the words ‘The long and winding road that leads to your door’, and Bec and Amy know better than most that life can be a twisting trail. Amy, a nurse, and Bec, who works in communications, live in Canberra. First they were friends, then they became lovers, and then came the day that Amy decided they should make their love official. ‘Amy took me on a walk up our favourite hill, which has gorgeous views over the mountains on the outskirts of Canberra,’ recalls Bec. ‘It’s a beautiful, peaceful place and we love walking up there to escape from the world for a few moments. It was the most perfect place to be proposed to, with those beautiful views, and such a lovely moment – I wasn’t expecting it at all!’ Despite the initial surprise, Bec says her answer was a no brainer.

‘I love how caring Amy is, fiercely so. She can’t walk past a person who needs help without offering, and nothing is too big or small for her to help out with.’

The couple immediately looked to Kangaroo Valley, a place on the edge of the Southern Highlands and close to their hearts, to host their special wedding.

‘We spent a year in a long distance relationship when we first became a couple,’ says Amy. ‘During that time we spent a lot of weekends in Kangaroo Valley, which is a perfect halfway point between Canberra and Sydney. There is very little phone reception there, which meant when we were first going there on weekend trips to get to know one another, we were forced to completely switch off from the outside world. So it is a very special place to us and the no phone reception on our wedding day appealed too. We wanted our guests to be able to appreciate being present with us on the day and not worrying about anything else that was going on. It always had to be Kangaroo Valley for us.’ ►



DETAILS

LOCATION

Ceremony at a private property,
reception at Upper Kangaroo
River Community Hall
upperriverhall.com.au

BRIDES' OUTFITS

Maggie May Bridal and BHLDN
maggiemaybridal.com bhldn.com

CATERING

Cantina Movil Mexican food
truck, My Little Peony vintage
caravan bar
cantinamovil.com.au
mylittlepeony.com.au

WEDDING CAKE

Sweet Bones Bakery Café
sweetbonescompany.com

CELEBRANT

Nina de Borde
ninedeborde.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Thomas Stewart
thomasstewart.com.au

VIDEOGRAPHER

La Lune Cinema
lalunacinema.com

MAKE UP & HAIR

Makeup by Megan and
Niki Simpson Hair & Makeup
makeupbymegan.com.au
nikisimpson.com.au



Bec and Amy's wedding on March 17 felt extra special to them, their family and friends after a long campaign for marriage equality. They were elated when on November 14 last year the Australian public voted to legalise same sex marriage and on December 7 when Australia's federal parliament legislated to allow two people, regardless of their sex, to marry.

'Our wedding was a few short months after the marriage equality vote and it ended up being one of the first legal same sex marriages in Australia,' recalls Bec.

'We wanted our ceremony to reflect how hard we had fought for equality and to recognise how grateful we were for all of our family and friends who had been by our side every step of the way through the campaign.'

'Our celebrant, Nina, helped us to recognise and acknowledge the LGBTIQ community who had paved the way and fought for our right to marry long before the vote was announced. We included a quote from Penny Wong in our ceremony, talking about the importance of equality and its contribution to the Australian community.'

Amy takes up the story. 'Ours was the first same sex wedding that many of our guests had been to, and that made it a pretty special event. It brought to light why we had all fought so hard for marriage equality. It was an emotional ceremony, and so personal and special to us. I think it's fair to say there wasn't a dry eye in the house.'

The couple held their ceremony on a friend's property and then moved to the nearby Upper Kangaroo River Community Hall for the reception. Situated next to the historic footbridge that spans the Kangaroo River, the hall is a cultural foundation of the local community.

'We fell in love with the Upper Kangaroo River Hall. It was exactly our style. We felt so privileged to be able to celebrate our marriage in a venue with such history and importance to the Kangaroo Valley community,' says Bec.

The couple added lots of DIY elements to personalise the day. 'We are lucky to have lots of crafty friends who helped us out,' laughs Bec. 'One of Amy's very talented sisters did all of our flowers for us, and another handmade our beautiful arbour. Two of our friends made jams and relishes from produce grown in their own garden for our wedding favours. My nanna altered my wedding dress and made my sash by hand. And we spent months collecting vintage amber glasses and decorations for the tables from op shops all over the ACT and NSW, and combined them on the tables with olive branches from my mum's garden and eucalypts from my nanna's garden. We felt incredibly lucky to have so many talented friends and family members willing to help us out, and it made the day feel so much more personal and special.'



As the temperature climbed to an unseasonably hot 35 degrees, Bec and Amy walked down the aisle separately, each accompanied by their mum and dad, and surrounded by love. Eighty guests, including an uncle who flew in from Los Angeles the night before and two friends from Cambodia, witnessed them saying their vows to one another.

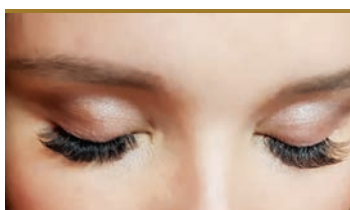
'It was important to us to write our own vows, and they were perfectly easy to write, but neither of us had anticipated how terrifying it would be reading them out in front of our family and friends,' says Bec. 'In the end, though, it was one of my favourite parts of our day, and I would recommend writing your own vows to anyone. It makes the ceremony so much more meaningful.'

The couple went for a relaxed vibe for the reception, with a taco van, just a few speeches and dancing until late under the stars. They eschewed traditional wedding traditions such as a first dance after they became a source of anxiety during the arrangements.

'So why do them?' says Amy. 'That was one of the best decisions we made. 'Also, my mum read a beautiful Bible passage that had been read at her own wedding. It was important to us that this little piece of our upbringing and her history was incorporated into the day.'

Bec and Amy said they would relive their wedding day a thousand times over if they could. 'Seeing the people most important to us all in the one place, all so happy and carefree after what had been such an intense period during the marriage equality vote was incredible,' says Bec. 'It really felt like everything we had fought for had finally worked out, and it was our first opportunity to get together with everyone who had campaigned during the vote to really thank them and celebrate with them. There was such a feeling of love in the air the whole day.' ■





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WORDS ALEX SPEED



Gunu Berrima, Berrima



Linden Hall, Robertson

Deluxe Dream **LINDEN HALL, ROBERTSON**

Ever fantasised about driving up to a palatial country estate through vast gates down a long gravel driveway? Well, dream no more, and head for Linden Hall. Set in acres of manicured gardens full of sculpture and with breathtaking views out from the Robertson escarpment, this property offers two self-contained luxury accommodation options. One of two sumptuously furnished Guesthouses that sleep four or six guests, or the inside/outside Pool House that sleeps two and features a bathroom with floor to ceiling sliding glass walls and a St Tropezesque patio that spills into a glamour pool. This is chichi holidaying at its finest.

lindenhall.net.au

Close to: *Cocktails hour at Pizza in the Mist; The Old Cheese Factory; Southern Highlands Artist Collective in Robertson*
Suits: *Glamour girls, sun divas, garden lovers, Alexis Carrington fans*

Rare Retreat **GUNU BERRIMA, BERRIMA**

Gunu Berrima is a boutique Tuscan inspired getaway located on 100 acres only minutes from historic Berrima. Built by local artist Richard Allen, who lived there with his family for 20 years, this holiday haven sleeps up to eight people. With a salt water swimming pool, a clay tennis court, vast open spaces for the kids to run mad in, a veggie garden, fruit trees and resident chooks providing homegrown eggs every morning, this is a great place for a very special family break.

gunuberrima.com

Close to: *Harper's Mansion, great local shops, cafes and restaurants, Berrima River Walk*
Suits: *Laid back al fresco types, families, bare feet* ►



Exeter Farm Stay, Exeter



Exeter Farm Stay, Exeter



Baynton Cottage, Mittagong

First Class Cottage **BAYNTON COTTAGE, MITTAGONG**

Don't go booking Baynton Cottage if you are thinking shabby chic country charm because this is one architecturally designed cottage on steroids. Sitting on the side of Mount Gibraltar and built in the late 1800s, this building's rambling gardens with trimmed hedges and sandstone exterior belies its architecturally designed insides. Sleeping up to four in two king sized beds, this is a holiday stay with a marble bathroom boasting a claw foot bath and double walk in shower. The open gourmet kitchen is impressive. Enjoy al fresco brekkie with a glass of champers on the terrace before an early morning swim in the outdoor pool. viewretreats.com

Close to: Bowral shops, local wineries, Sturt Gallery
Suits: Execs with a taste for rural glamour, girls trip away

Ritzy Rural **EXETER FARM STAY, EXETER**

Eager to show the kids that eggs don't just appear in the supermarket and milk doesn't originate in a plastic container, many a parent has staying on a farm at the top of their Highlands summer holiday wishlist. Exeter Farm Stay has an elegant self-contained apartment that sits on this 140 acre property just outside the charming village. With lovely flowering gardens and 60 acres of natural bushland that hosts plenty of native wildlife, this property is also home to lots of farm creatures that kids can get up close and friendly with. There are chooks and sheep, and lambs this time of year, as well as small breed Dexter cattle and Angelique the alpaca. Sleeping up to four in ultra comfortable surroundings, this lovely hidden gem also has a wood fire, a hidden valley cabin where you can watch the sun go down and acres of space for the kids to tear about in. Continental breakfast included. exeterfarmstay.com.au

Close to: Exeter General Store, local vineyards, Exeter Village Markets (first Saturday of the month), Bundanoon
Suits: Farmophiles, animal lovers, families with kids, couples

Farm Club Australia, Weraï



Big On Space, Comfort & Style **FARM CLUB AUSTRALIA, WERAÏ**

If you have a big extended family, and your idea of a perfect summer break is getting everyone together in the one place, this option is ace. Sleeping up to 50 adults and children it includes a seven bedroom family farmstay, a three bedroom charming cottage, two four bedroom farmhouses and barn and studio accommodation all situated on 400 farming hectares near Moss Vale. All stylishly decorated with mod cons, outdoor eating areas and masses of space they are all a hop, skip and a jump from Farm Club's excellent Farm shop and Canteen selling homegrown produce and excellent food all day. Catch the Brazilian barbeque and the barber on selected weekends, and the farm walkabout every Sunday morning from 10am. farmclubaustralia.com.au

Close to: Moss Vale & Exeter

Suits: People who like their family, groups of friends, wedding parties, generational catch ups, city kids

BELOW Edmond, Robertson



Pocket Rocket **EDMOND, ROBERTSON**

Think small on living space and go big on location, simplicity and beauty in this tiny house a stone's throw from Robertson. It's an off the grid beauty that comes with a queen and two single beds, a hot shower, loo, stove and fridge, and a view to die for. No need to worry about packing too much, or anything at all, really, because there's not a soul in sight, except maybe the local kangaroos and wombats who are happy to share the amazing vista, and your outside firepit. in2thewild.co

Close to: Carrington Falls, Moonacres Kitchen, The Illawarra Fly, Crop Swap, Saturday at Robertson Bowling Club

Suits: Nudists and naturists, light packers, tiny families

ESCAPE STOCKISTS

LOCAL HIGHLANDS ESCAPE STOCKISTS

General Store & Café Berrima, Berrima
Harpers Mansion, Berrima
Berida Hotel, Bowral
Cameron's Newsagency, Bowral
Dirty Jane's, Bowral
Gibraltar Hotel, Bowral
Harry's at Green Lane, Bowral
Janeks Café, Bowral
Milton Park, Bowral
NewsXpress Bowral, Bowral
Palate Pleasure, Bowral
The Press Shop, Bowral
Bundanoon Newsagency, Bundanoon
Exeter General Store, Exeter
Artemis Wines, Mittagong
Destination Southern Highlands,
Mittagong
Fitzroy Inn, Mittagong
NewsXpress Mittagong, Mittagong
Highlands Merchant, Moss Vale
Il Pranzo, Moss Vale
Moss Vale Newsagency, Moss Vale
Suzie Anderson Home, Moss Vale
Lucinda's Fine Food, Robertson
Red Cow Farm, Sutton Forest
Sturt Gallery, Mittagong
Southern Highland Wines, Sutton Forest
Wingello General Store, Wingello

OUT OF TOWN ESCAPE STOCKISTS NSW

Abbotsford Point News
Mackas Griffith News, Alexandria
Allambie Heights News
Annandale Village News
Booth Street Newsagency, Annandale
Mum N Dads Newsagency, Annandale
Atarmon Newsagency
Warehouse No 2, Artarmon
St Leonards Newsagency
Asquith Newsagency
Balgowlah Heights News
North Balgowlah News
Elliott Street News, Balmain
Hill Of Content Bookstore, Balmain
Worsley Newsagency, Banksmeadow
Beaconsfield Newsagency
Belrose Village News
Belrose Newsagency
Berowra News
Berry Newsagency, Berry
Birchgrove Newsagency
Nowra News, Bomaderry
Bondi Centre Newsagency, Bondi
Sixways Newsagency, Bondi Beach
Newsnew Newsagency, Bondi Junction
Eastgate Newsagency, Bondi Junction
Bondi Junction Newsagency

Botany Newsagency
Bronte Newsagency
Warringah Mall Newsagency, Brookvale
Buxton Newsagency
Camden Newsagency
Win Camden Newsagency, Camden
Cammeray Newsagency
Camperdown Newsagency
Castlecrag Newsagency
Chatswood S/Centre
Newspower Chatswood
Chase Nextra, Chatswood
Clovelly Local Newsagent
New Star Newsagency, Clovelly
Cobbitty General Store
Collaroy Beach Newsagency
Collaroy Plateau News
Coogee Village Newsagency
South Coogee News
Cremorne Newsagency
Davies Newsagency, Crookwell
Marketplace Newsagency, Crookwell
Crows Nest Newsagency
North Curl Curl News
Oxford Street Newsagency, Darlinghurst
Green Park Newsagency, Darlinghurst
Fire Station News Agency, Darlinghurst
Dee Why Newsagency
Double Bay Newsagency
Birkenhead Point Newsagency
Drummoyne Newsagency
Edgecliff Rail Bookstall
Eastpoint Newsagency, Edgecliff
Enmore Newsagency
Erskinvile News
Fairlight Newsagency
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Five Dock Newsagency
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Skyline Newsagency, Frenchs Forest
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Wycombe Road Newsagency, Neutral Bay
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North Sydney Newsagency
Northbridge Newsagents
Sturgiss Newsagency, Nowra
Paddington Newsagency
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Picton Newsagency
Potts Point Bookshop
Pymble Newsagency
West Pymble Newsagency
Killara News Distributors
Central Pyrmont Newsagent
Randwick Village News
Frenchmans Rd Newsagency, Randwick
Randwick Plaza News
Randwick Newsagency
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Wahroonga East Newsagency
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Waitara Newsagency
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Sengly Newsagency, Waverley
Iga Waverton
Nextra Wollongong City
Willoughby North News
Hospital Hill Newsagency, Wollongong
Centretown Newsagency, Wollongong
Wakeford Wollongong, Wollongong
Keira Street Newsagency, Wollongong
Queen Street Newsagency, Woollahra
Boulevard Newsagency, Woolloomooloo
Wh Smith Aust Pty Ltd, Woolloomooloo

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EXPLORE & PLAY AT STURT

Be prepared to learn and unleash your creativity at the world renowned Sturt School in Mittagong this summer.

WORDS AMANDA MACKEVICIUS

‘A beautiful, unpretentious and welcoming place where you are wonderfully cared for and have the time and space to make stuff.’ That’s how one participant described the immersive creative experience of attending Sturt’s annual summer school of contemporary craft courses.

Given classes start just nine days after Christmas, it’s a perfect antidote to an exhausting silly season. An opportunity to spend a week devoted to learning new creative skills (or refreshing old ones), in a serene environment, with inspiring teachers and like minded people.

Lives are changed here. Just ask basketry artist and Sturt Summer School teacher Catriona Pollard, who first attended as a student in 2012. Rediscovering and unleashing her creative potential proved such a profound experience she is now a professional artist, in addition to managing a successful public relations agency in Sydney. ►



Catriona has been in numerous selected group exhibitions and four solo exhibitions, including one at Sturt Gallery earlier this year.

'I was so honoured to be asked to exhibit my sculptural basketry at Sturt,' said Catriona, whose works has gained an international following. 'It's such a well established and highly regarded gallery and design centre.'

'I love teaching at Sturt, as the five day courses really allow for an immersion. My workshops aren't just learning a technique, they're about a rediscovery of our creativity.'

Established in 2000, Sturt Summer school is unique within Australia, offering as it does the complete package of courses across a wide range of art forms, internationally acclaimed tutors, meals and accommodation, and an idyllic location with great facilities. Add a community of fellow creatives and catered social events, and there is no need to leave the campus. Students come from around Australia and beyond, with many returning more than once.

'Some students book the same classes with the same teachers each year,' says Head of Sturt, Mark Viner. 'We book the best teachers we can find from all over the world. Teachers that can take their students on a journey of discovery.'

Among the approximately 230 students who attend, teacher and technical textile historian Angharad Rixon has observed how many families and groups of friends take time out together, and how this compels a certain curiosity and exchange.

Twenty-three different courses in a myriad of mediums are on offer this summer, including plein air, still life, watercolour or self portrait painting; wood turning, print making, various drawing classes; photography, historic textile techniques and Neo-Greco Roman mosaics.



Learn how to fold and fabricate metal for jewellery and object making; weave striped or patterned cloth; explore ceramic glaze applications, the techniques of plant based dyeing and stitching, the art of calligraphy and more. There is even a course in designing and constructing interactive sculpture with 'ingenious automata' maker David Archer. Like most of his fellow tutors, David's career as an artist spans decades and his work is well known nationally and internationally.

Classes run from 9am to 4.30pm and are followed by tutor presentations or social events each evening. Students can live and eat on site, with boarding accommodation provided at Frensham, the secondary girls school adjacent to Sturt, founded by visionary educator Winifred West (1881–1971) in 1913. West also founded Sturt in 1941 making it the oldest continually operating craft centre in Australia. 'It might become a colony of artists and craftsmen, potters and printers...' she wrote to a friend after Sturt opened with one room and eight students.



For those aged 16 years and over, small class sizes of about 10 students encourage an easy camaraderie and allow teachers to provide plenty of individual attention. Course fees vary (between \$745 and \$835) and materials are provided for a modest additional fee. There are also daily workshops for children during the week (\$95 a day with morning tea and lunch included, or \$440 for the week) and children can also be accommodated if accompanied by an adult.

'Exploration and play' is what the week is about, says Catriona Pollard, 'and reconnecting the hand and the heart.' sturt.nsw.edu.au or 4860 2083

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Fashion doyen Leona Edmiston is the Australian Queen of the Frock. The celebrated designer, known for flattering feminine garments in rich fabrics (as well as her signature up-do), first came into public consciousness in the 1980s. Then followed her eponymous label and boutique stores across Australia. When not in Sydney designing in her Alexandria headquarters, Leona and husband and business partner Jeremy Ducker spend their free time in the Highlands at their beautiful rural home with twin daughters Dusty and Dylan.

 @leonaedmiston

My name is LEONA EDMISTON

My life in five words is... Busy. Filled with everything I love! **I spend my time between Sydney and the Southern Highlands because...** It's such an escape from the craziness of Sydney to come to those luxuries of time and space. **I have been coming to the Highlands for...** More than 20 years. **Our property here holds a special place in my heart because...** We have put so much love and effort into it over the years and created a beautiful environment. **My favourite things to do in the Southern Highlands are...** Going to the Bronte Tram and Dirty Janes, hunting for treasure. **Dusty and Dylan's favourite thing to do here is...** Going to Farm Club Australia at Werai to pet the animals. It has great atmosphere and yummy food too. **Followers on my Instagram page see images of...** Lifestyle, inspiration and fabulous frocks! **When it comes to fashion, this is one truth I know...** Fashion is fleeting but style remains. **You will never see me at the office without...** Great accessories. I've always loved the extras that elevate an outfit. **My life philosophy is...** Angels fly because they take themselves lightly. **My business philosophy is...** Run your own race but be adaptable to market changes. **My all time style icons are...** Audrey Hepburn and Jane Birkin. Polar opposites but both exemplary in their own way. **The most loved item of clothing in my wardrobe is...** A vintage Leonard dress from the sixties. I wore it to my wedding party. **Every woman's wardrobe should consist of...** Frocks. They make dressing so easy. **The one piece of advice I give women when it comes to buying a dress is...** Confidence is the best accessory, so if it feels great, buy it! **The most precious piece of life advice I have ever received was...** Honey is more powerful than vinegar. **The qualities I possess that have helped make me a top fashion designer are...** Resilience, tenacity and a passion for what I do, plus the ability to maintain a constant element of excitement. **When in the Highlands I always take visitors to...** The Burrawang Village Pub, Bendooley Estate and Mount Ashby, but there are so many other great places too. **My special place in the Highlands is...** Our home. It's a constant source of delight. **I never leave the Highlands without...** Bags of our own home grown fruit and veg. **The most precious things in my life are...** My family. **The lessons I hope my children learn from me include...** Be kind, respectful and accepting of others. **If I hadn't spent a lifetime designing and creating beautiful fashion, I might have...** Been involved in interiors in some way, which I love. **The most surprising thing motherhood has taught me is...** How busy it is!!! And that sometimes near enough is good enough. 📸

EATING OUT IN SUMMERTIME STYLE

WHILE THE MERCURY CAN CLIMB HIGH IN THE HIGHLANDS OVER SUMMER, COME EATING TIME THERE IS A **DIVERSE SELECTION OF SHADY PLACES TO DINE ALFRESCO**. WITH VISITORS DESCENDING TO MAKE MERRY, HERE'S OUR HOT LIST OF **GREAT OUTDOOR DINING OPTIONS**.

MOSS VALE

Highlands Merchant

This beauty with its ace roadside position and tables outside has helped transform Moss Vale's Argyle Street with its fresh urbane food and designer feel. Not one to rest on her laurels, owner Lisa Wisken recently branched out into fresh catering for people holding weddings, parties, anything. Menu choices include gourmet finger sandwiches and premium mezze platters to mini house-made sausage rolls and mixed baked goods and cake platters. No event too big or small, and sure to be amazing in typical Highlands Merchant style. **405 Argyle Street, Moss Vale** highlandsmerchant.com.au

Southern Highlands Brewing & Taphouse

Drive past this place, which has also added so much to Moss Vale and Highlands life, and you will be sure to wish you were sitting outside sampling a craft beer, local wine and something delicious from its extensive food selection. The taphouse serves brunch, lunch, dinner, bar food, dessert and a kids' menu and some of the best seats in the house are out front. A fabulous newish comer to familiarise yourself with today. **490-494 Argyle Street, Moss Vale** southernhighlandsbrewing.com.au

BURRAWANG

Burrawang General Store Cafe

Got city friends visiting? Take 'em to Burrawang General Store Café and they'll soon be relocating to the Highlands. This eating gem was recently named best NSW regional cafe in Australia's Restaurant and Catering Awards for Excellence. Fully licensed, it provides brekkie and lunch plain air under flowering crab apples in the back garden, or on the wisteria framed verandah out front. With an extensive menu, including all day breakfast and many vegan options, feast on house speciality soft shell crab spaghettoni with a glass of cold local rose. Lip smacking good. **11 Hoddle Street, Burrawang** bgsc.com.au

Burrawang Village Pub

Across the road, the Burrawang Village Pub has one of the best open air vistas in the Highlands. Go with friends and family to enjoy an afternoon of great pub grub (we love the Maugers pork and fennel sausages with beer gravy) and a few bevies as the kids charge about the beer garden. Happy days. **14-16 Hoddle Street, Burrawang** burrawangvillagepub.com.au

MITTAGONG

Mittagong Hotel

Like a bit of spice with your fresh air? The Mittagong Hotel offers some of the best Mexican food about from its La Cantina Mexican Bistro. Enjoy tapas outside in the lovely beer garden with a refreshing Corona or two. **89-91 Main Street, Mittagong** mittagonghotel.com.au

Sturt Café, Sturt Gallery & Studios

If you haven't been to Sturt yet, put it the must do list, and check out our story on page 91 to whet your appetite or swing by for some shopping. Feeling peckish? Grab a light lunch from the pop up cafe, which offers sweet and savoury goodies, tea, coffee and cool drinks, and take it out to the lovely gardens. Sturt was built in the gardens of founder Winifred West's home. During WWII it became a community vegie plot but afterwards began to take shape to become what it is today; a testament of West's love of gardening and her vision for Sturt. **Cnr Range Road & Waverley Parade, Mittagong** sturt.nsw.edu.au



Harry's on Green Lane

BERRIMA

Surveyor General Inn

The oldest continually licensed pub in Australia, the historic SG has had a recent facelift and is looking good. Cook your own steak on the barbecue or order from the Bush Ranger's Bistro and eat outside in the beer garden in the sun or on the verandah outside and watch busy Berrima life bustle by. **22 Old Hume Highway, Berrima** surveyorgeneralinn.com.au

Berrima General Store & Cafe

Take a seat outside Diego Arata's Berrima General Store and order a cappuccino. One of the best in the Highlands in our book. Originally from Modena, Diego brings a welcome cosmopolitan taste of Italy to the Highlands with his food, service and amore della vita (love of life). **13 Old Hume Highway, Berrima 0449 728 179**

ESCAPE ALSO LOVES

FOR FRESH AIR AND FOOD SUTTON FOREST PUB AT SUTTON FOREST, FARM CLUB AUSTRALIA AT WERAI, THE LOCH AT BERRIMA, PIZZAS IN THE MIST, ROBERTSON

EXETER

Exeter General Store

A local institution with a big community heart great food, fabulous atmosphere and an outdoor courtyard. The friendly staff serve brekkie or lunch but be sure to leave room to squeeze a piece of Lauren's cake in, too.

1 Exeter Road, Exeter
exetergeneralstore.com.au

ROBERTSON

Moonacres Kitchen

If this buzzy cafe with bakery is full inside (and it is more often than not), take a pew outside in the sun at one of local maker Colin Munro's beautiful rustic tables. Recently renovated, the cafe is a delicious place to chow down for brekkie or lunch on Stephen Santucci's ever changing menu, which includes unique dishes like the beetroot burger. The produce used is grown down the road on owner Phil Laver's organic Moonacres Farm. Moonacres was overall trophy winner of the delicious. food award this year for best seasonal fresh produce NSW. Congrats guys. **79-81 Hoddle Street, Robertson** moonacres.com.au

BOWRAL

Royal Hotel

In the centre of town, the ever popular Royal spruced its beer garden up a few years ago to include an undercover seating area and remains a bit of a local institution. Serving great pub grub, this is a perfect place to settle in, take a load off with a cool bevy and recoup. **255 Bong Bong Street, Bowral** royalhotelbowral.com.au

Raw & Wild Market & Cafe

Up the road, if you are looking for wholesome and inventive organic food to eat in a lively courtyard, don't go past Raw & Wild. The meals here are scrumptious, as is the organic market and health food store out front. And we love the Wild Juice Bar and cut flowers for sale. **250 Bong Bong Street, Bowral**

Harry's on Green Lane

The epitome of elegance, Harry's on Green Lane (cafe and wine bar) is an ode to Victorian traveller and botanist Sir Harry Veitch, founder of London's Chelsea Flower Show. Located inside and out in a charming area under umbrellas near Maureen Gardiner's Potting Shed and The Orangery, alfresco dining here is sophisticated and fresh. **The Acre, 15-17 Banyette Street, Bowral** harryswinebarbowral.com

Biota Dining

One of the area's most acclaimed restaurants, Biota Dining consistently receives two hats as head chef and owner James Viles continues to explore new ways to use local produce in a stylish designer setting. Sit outside on the verandah and enjoy a botanical cocktail and prized food in lovely sculptured gardens. For something truly paddock plein air, read about James's new venture on page 47. biotadining.com

The Hospital Shop

Do it like the locals do outside and head to this fab cafe with its covered outdoor verandah. Lovely atmosphere, great food and fabulous homemade chutneys a stone's throw from Bradman Museum and the Bowral District Hospital. **4 Mona Road, Bowral 4861 7253** ►



Burrawang Village Pub

PRIVATE DINING

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING A BIT BESPOKE THIS SUMMER, HOST YOUR OWN SIT DOWN PARTY IN ONE OF THESE SPECIAL DINING SPACES.

Bendooley Estate, near Berrima

One of the loveliest venues in the Highlands, Bendooley has so much to offer with its fabulous restaurant, alfresco terrace, book barn and accommodation. Book its fabulous private dining room overlooking the vineyard and choose from a selection of group menus, including mains, sides and dessert from \$50 a head. Lots of delicious wine and the best view from the loos in the Highlands. **3020 Old Hume Highway, Berrima**
bendooleyestate.com.au



Bendooley Estate



Eschalot, Berrima

New owners Cassandra Wallace and Matthew Roberts have a big reputation to live up to, but the young couple are undaunted. They have given the pretty colonial restaurant a major facelift with many rooms perfect to host an intimate family or friend get together. An exciting fresh and contemporary dining option to try or revisit. **24 Old Hume Highway, Berrima** eschalot.com.au



Centennial Restaurant vineyard room

Centennial Restaurant, Bowral

Centennial Restaurant's chef Robin Murray does small as well as he does big. Enjoy Centennial's gorgeous Tuscan feel outside in the courtyard in summer or head upstairs and go more intimate in the private dining area that seats up to 70 but is as nice for 20. Lovely wines grown onsite too. **252 Centennial Road, Bowral** centennialrestaurant.com.au

Bundanoon Guest House, Bundanoon

The intimate private dining room in this tastefully redecorated guest house is cooked for by the very talented Eon Waugh, formerly of Josh's and The Studio, Exeter. Seating up to 16 and with Eon's classic seasonal fare, this is a special place for a special occasion. **101 Railway Parade, Bundanoon** thebundanoonguesthouse.com.au 

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FACEBOOK | INSTAGRAM

ARTS FOR ALL

SUMMER IS THE PERFECT TIME TO DO A BIT OF LOOKING AND SHOPPING AT SOME OF THE GALLERIES WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE IN THE HIGHLANDS.

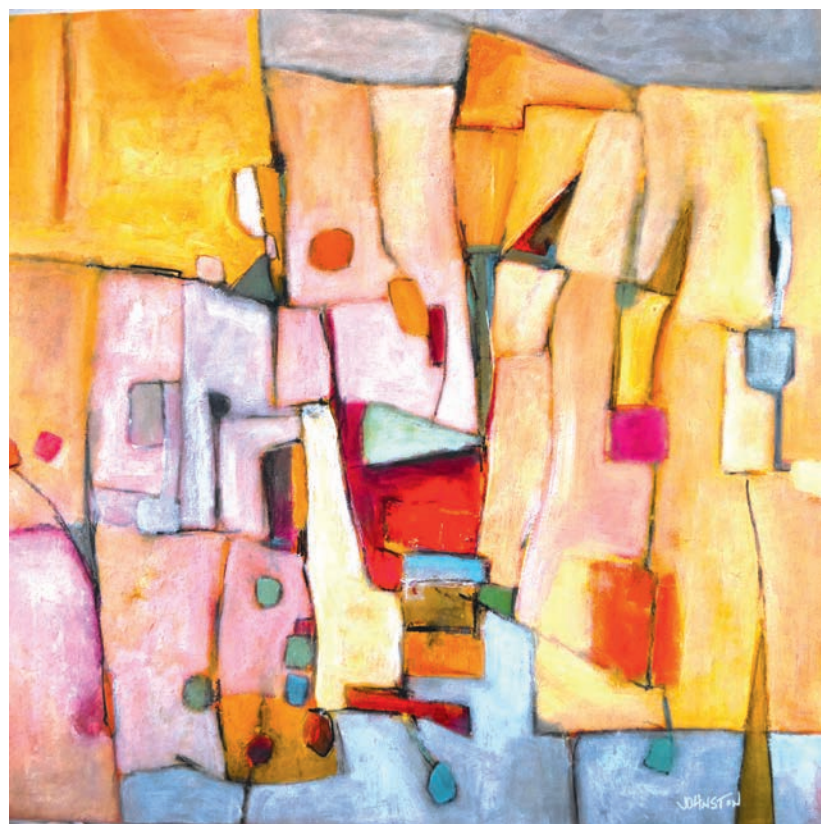


The Milk Factory and Exhibition Space

Shirley and Jim Becke, curators and owners of the largest gallery in the Highlands, Milk Factory Gallery are holding their annual, The Summer Exhibition at their Bowral gallery stalwart. It shows a mix of works from the Gallery Stockroom and exhibitions held throughout 2018, including paintings, etchings, limited edition prints, photography, sculpture and glass from Fiona Craig, Greg Hyde, Glen Preece, Paul Battams, Bruce Chanter, Elizabeth Langreiter, Richard Morecroft, Ros Goody, Alan Healy, Felicia Aroney, Ivan Goodacre, Lorraine Brownlee, Elizabeth Burton and Penny Lovelock. Renowned international wildlife artist Garry Fleming will also be exhibiting in the Milk Factory's Pop Up gallery during December. **The Summer Exhibition, Dec 1 – Feb 28. 33 Station Street, Bowral milkfactory.com.au**

Southern Highlands Artisans Collective

It is always exciting to see an embryonic gallery and artspace coming to life. The Southern Highlands Artisans Collective (SHAC), located in the historic Old Potato Shed in Robertson, is still a fledgling but it has already attracted some very talented local makers. The brainchild of painter Ric Abel, SHAC includes sculptural weaving and furniture making duo Mr & Mrs Munro, painters Maria Gorton and Kate Vella, unique assemblage artist Freya Jobbins, as well as Hodak + Young jewellery maker Zvoni Hodak and partner Phil Young, timber light and object maker. Fresh from fitting out the new Harbord Diggers Club in Sydney with more than 40 enormous sculptural woven lightshades, Brooke Munro has her studio in SHAC and says the gallery will be an interactive space to showcase local makers and artists. 'It's also all about incorporating the local community,' she says. 'We will be running lots of workshops for adults and children here, and having open days where people can come and see us and the work being made. We're about collaborating and connecting, and will have exhibition and retail areas.' So if you are an artist or maker looking for a space, get in touch. **The Old Potato Shed, 74-76 Hoddle Street, Robertson. theshac.com.au enquiries@theshac.com.au**



Bowral & District Art Society Members Exhibition.

Bowral & District Art Society

Come and see the world as our children see it in the Kids on Show exhibition. Showcasing the artworks of primary school students across the Southern Highlands, this is a great opportunity for our young creatives to see their 2D and 3D artworks in a proper art gallery, and for their parents to crow about it! The Sturt Pottery Group will then be in the house with their Celebrating Yule Clay exhibition, which includes all things made of clay. Perfect opportunity to buy some unique functional Christmas presents direct from the artists. The gallery closes from December 11 to January 16, then reopens with a show for the 500 plus members of the BDAS to exhibit and sell works completed during the past year at artist direct prices. **Kids on Show until December 2; Celebrating Yule Clay, December 5-11; BDAS Artists Direct, January 16 to February 11. 1 Short Street, Bowral bdasgallery.com**

Sturt Gallery, Mittagong

Lots going on at Sturt this summer including two exhibitions, Newdesign 3 featuring work by light designer Matt Harper, paper artist Gunjan Aylawadi, ceramicist Sarah Ormonde and glass artist Scott Chaseling, among others, as well as the National Contemporary Jewellery Award, a biennial acquisitive award exhibition produced by Griffith Regional Art Gallery. This exhibition showcases the best in Australian contemporary jewellery, including Brooke Coutts-Wood, who was awarded the Sturt Artist in Residency Prize recently. Both exhibitions run until February 10. Also, don't miss Alumni 2, new work by selected graduates of the Sturt School for Wood 2005-2015 from February 17, and Tools & Techniques Weekend on February 16 and 17. **Sturt Gallery, cnr Range Road and Waverley Parade, Mittagong sturt.nsw.edu.au**

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS markets

Love unearthing locally made delights to put under your Christmas tree or to take to hosts for summer entertaining? Then look no further. The regular markets held in our villages and towns across the Highlands are a great way to gain real insight into the creative side of the region, and to find yourself some unique goodies. Whether you are in search of fresh produce, home furnishings, art, plants or fashion, you'll find everything you are looking for and more. Happy shopping! For further information and details, see southern-highlands.com.au

MITTAGONG MARKETS

THIRD AND FIFTH SATURDAY 8AM-2PM
CNR ALBERT AND ALICE STREETS, MITTAGONG

Held in the grounds of the Uniting Church, this market features plants, collectables, fresh produce, children's toys and clothing, as well as handcrafted goods, jewellery, and items for the mind, body and spirit. Details 0424 095 195

CROP-SWAP

SATURDAY 9.30AM-10.30AM

ROBERTSON BOWLING CLUB, HODDLE STREET, ROBERTSON
BRING YOUR EXCESS VEGE, FRUIT, MAGAZINES, EMPTY OR FULL JAM JARS, EGG, EGG CARTONS, OR PLANTS AND SWAP WITH OTHER LOCAL GREEN THUMBS FOR WHATEVER IT IS ON OFFER AND OR IN SEASON. ALL WELCOME BUT PLEASE BE AWARE EXCESS PRODUCE IS SWAPPED. NO MONEY EXCHANGES HANDS. BUY A EGG BACON AND SAUSAGE BUN/TEA/COFFEE IF YOU FANCY ONE.

RAILWAY STREET FARMERS MARKET

THURSDAYS 3.30PM-5PM (3PM-6PM DURING DAYLIGHT SAVING AFTER OCTOBER 1). OLD BOWLING CLUB GREEN, RAILWAY STREET, MOSS VALE
THIS POPULAR PRODUCE MARKET RECENTLY CELEBRATED ITS FIRST BIRTHDAY AND BOASTS EVERYTHING FROM FRESH SEASONAL VEGETABLES, EGGS, FISH, BREAD, QUICHES AND PIES, JAMS AND PICKLES, AND FRESH CUTS OF BEEF, TO COMPOST, PLANTS AND SEEDLINGS. DETAILS 0468 331 738

ROBERTSON MARKETS

Second Sunday of the month 9am-2pm
(except January). Hoddle Street, Robertson

A variety of stalls, food and refreshments at the School of Arts in the busy community of Robertson. Great trash and treasure finds and, of course, lots of local produce, including famed Robbo potatoes. Details 0408 238 575

BERRIMA SCHOOLYARD MARKET

Fourth Sunday of the month
9am-2.30pm (except January)
and second Sunday in December.

Oxley Street, Berrima

More than 50 stalls with everything from fresh local produce to artisanal wares, gourmet goodies for the pantry or as a great gift, plus plenty to keep the kids entertained, including a jumping castle and art classes, and the fabulous Stephanie Alexander cafe run by the school.

Details 0488 004 421

Exeter Village Market

First Saturday of the month 9am-2pm

Exeter Village Oval, Exeter Road, Exeter

One of the most picturesque markets, it is held at the local hall beside the community oval in Exeter. Features local producers, artisans, foodies and craftspeople, and there's a fabulous playground for the kids.

Details 0409 152 022

Colo Vale COMMUNITY MARKETS

First Saturday of the month 9am-2pm (except January)

Colo Vale Village Hall, Railway Avenue, Colo Vale

With lots of new stallholders, and older ones including handicrafts, handmade goods, jams, fresh local produce, as well as a Justice of the Peace on hand to help locals out with legal matters, this cornerstone of the community is thriving and is a great market often with monthly themes. Details 4889 4129

Bowral Public School Markets

Second Saturday of the month 8am-1pm
(except January). Christmas Market Dec 22

8am-1pm. Bendoorley Street, Bowral

A lively and eclectic market with local produce and plants, handcrafted toys and children's clothing alongside fabulous food stalls to suit every taste.
Details enquire@bowralpsmarket.com

MOSS VALE COMMUNITY MARKETS

Fourth Saturday of every month 8am-1pm

(except January). Moss Vale Showground, Illawarra Highway, Moss Vale

Dealers and private sellers set up stalls with trash and treasures including homewares, books, records, clothes and furniture. Perfect for treasure hunters and those looking to unearth a bargain. markets@mossvaleshow.com.au

BUNDANOON MAKERS MARKET

First and Third Sunday of the month 8.30am-2pm (except January).

Bundanoon Memorial Hall, Railway Parade, Bundanoon

Sewers, knitters, woodworkers, photographers; leatherwork and silver jewellery; fresh fruit and vegetables, freshly baked bread, Lebanese take home meals, hot Indian dishes, Japanese pancakes, honey and eggs, cakes, pies and melting moments all make this market well worth the scenic drive to Bundanoon. Details 0411 297 963



ASK A
LOCAL

Calmbirth. The very idea may sound like an oxymoron, but since it was started in Mittagong by one of Australia's first male midwives, 26,000 couples have taken part in this program to learn how to remain calm during birth. **Karen McClay, local midwife,** daughter of founding father Peter Jackson and now driving force behind Calmbirth talks birth, babies and the gift of life.

What is Calmbirth? It's a program that provides expecting couples with the knowledge and tools to move past any fears or anxieties to birth their babies confidently and positively. When you understand the physiology of childbirth you realise just how important it is for the birthing woman to remain calm and trust in her body. When she does, birth becomes much more manageable and positive. **How long have you been delivering babies and how many?** I've been a midwife for nearly 10 years and it would be more than 400 babies I've assisted into the world. **Did you grow up in the Highlands?** I finished high school here, then my husband and I lived in various places in Australia and Papua New Guinea. We came home six years ago to be close to our parents. **Your dad Peter was the founder of Calmbirth. What was his idea?** Dad trained as a midwife in 1974, when birth was still considered a mechanical process. He went on to work in mental health and returned to midwifery in 1989 with a new understanding that giving birth is as much an emotional journey as a physical one for women, and the system was not supporting them emotionally. He saw birth was feared, and that women and their partners were walking away traumatised instead of empowered. In 2004 he set out to change that. **As a mother and a midwife, what have your birthing experiences been like?** I became a midwife after having had my own children. All my birth experiences were empowering in their own way. Do I wish I'd known what I do now? Absolutely! Which is why I am so passionate about educating couples to prepare for birth. **Are we too pampered? Hasn't the female body been giving birth for thousands of years?** Yes, although in a lot of countries pregnancy and motherhood are celebrated and cherished, something our culture doesn't seem to do very well. I think our culture tends to like to stay in our comfort zone, rather than what I call our courage zone. Childbirth is all about moving into our courage zone; it is challenging and at times uncomfortable and intense. When a woman has the tools, knowledge and belief to move into her courage zone, with an educated partner and support team holding space for her, she is able to discover a strength that lays a good foundation for her to transition into motherhood. **Do you think there is still a code of silence and lack of information about childbirth, given many women report they are truly shocked by their first experience?** Absolutely. Our culture doesn't value the importance of preparing for birth and parenting, so many couples don't put the necessary preparation in. One of my favourite authors and midwives, Ina May Gaskin, says, 'Humans are the only mammal with the intelligence to convince ourselves that we can't give birth.' We also have the intelligence to empower ourselves to trust in birth. **What do you hope you equip couples with when they attend your workshops?** To embrace this time and to have confidence knowing they have the tools and knowledge to rise to the challenges of labour, birth and beyond. **Is it true to say Australia is increasingly becoming a nation where women choose a caesarean over a natural birth? Are we too posh or too entitled to push?** I don't believe that we are too posh too push, but rather decisions around this are based on fear, ill informed decision making and misinformation. I do feel that the majority of women would still prefer a vaginal birth. **Many partners say they felt like a spare wheel during childbirth. What does Calmbirth encourage partners to do while their child is being born?** The role that partners can play in labour and birth is huge! Women need to feel calm and safe for birth to unfold as it should, and who better to hold that space for her than her partner? But without the proper education and toolbox, partners can feel out of their depth and even traumatised by the experience. When a partner has the confidence to support the mother in birth, not only does she manage labour and birth better but the bonds between the parents and their newborn are enhanced. **And finally, does seeing a baby born feel like the ultimate gift?** It is amazing! I learn something new from every mother and every birth. calmbirth.com.au 📍

Are you pregnant?

How are you feeling
about giving birth?

Do you feel emotionally, mentally & physically
prepared for your birth?

Does your partner know what to do to support you?

Do you want to make informed decisions
with your Caregivers about birth choices?

Do you want to feel Safe and Calm?

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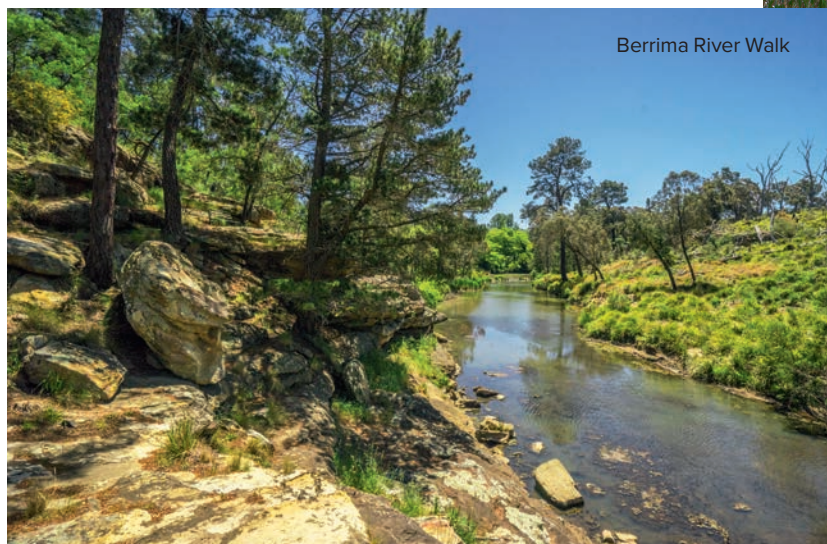
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Berrima River Walk

STEP OUT & SPLASH IN

'Tis the season to get back to nature. So grab your backpack, your cossie, your family and your sense of adventure, and explore some of the best and most beautiful outdoor spots in the Highlands this summer.

Berrima River Walk, Berrima

Take this delightful walk along the Wingecarribee River and read about the German internees who lived there during World War I. Reports of water quality may have deterred some swimmers (although it never seems to worry the younguns launching off the hanging ropes there) so check with local authorities or launch a kayak instead. Or head over to Moss Vale and set off downstream from the weir at Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve. *Tip: Take binoculars to spot birds and wildlife such as water dragons and platypuses, but hopefully not joe blakes (snakes).*

Goodman's Ford, Wollondilly

Getting to this fabulous spot on the way to the Wombeyan Caves takes a little tenacity but it's worth it. You can camp at the nearby private campsite or visit for just the day. The brackish water of the Wollondilly River is deep and slow moving, perfect for summer days. This is what childhood memories are made of. *Tip: Don't forget paddle boards, floaties, canoes and life jackets, and marshmallows for the campfire. In fact, don't forget anything because it's a fair hike back.*



Belmore Falls

Nellies Glen, Budderoo National Park, Robertson

If you can catch this place after good rain and there's no one else around, it's charming. Put your swimming towel on one of the surrounding rocks and swim up to the waterfall.

Tip: Nearby Blue Pool is good for littlies.

Gunrock Creek Falls, Meryla State Forest, Moss Vale

You'll have to seek out this beauty on Meryla Road, one kilometre up a fire trail, because this swimming hole, complete with waterfall and escarpment, is a favourite haunt of locals for good reason. *Tip: The rough terrain in this State Forest makes it a favourite for 4WD enthusiasts.*



TOP SPOT

Fairy Bower Falls, Bundanoon

Travel down Bundanoon Creek Track through rainforest scenery and take the left turn along Nicholas Pass to these magical falls. Depending on water levels you can stand under the falls and swim, paddle or at the very least get your feet wet. An ancient place, sadly it is believed to be the site of a colonial massacre against the local Indigenous peoples, immortalised by local artist Ben Quilty in his Rorschach style work Kuta Rorschach No. 2, so tread lightly and respectfully. *Tip: Take care. The rocks can be slippery.*



Mares Forest Creek, Wombeyan Caves

A short walk from Wombeyan Caves, this free cave is a good place to explore and take a cooling dip. Stay at one of the National Park's onsite cabins. *Tip: Winter or summer, the water here is icy. Make it a quick swim.*

Forty Foot Falls, Mittagong

This seven kilometre walk from Lake Alexandra requires grit and good fitness as there are many steep steps and flights of stairs. But just when you think you'll never come out of the lush forest, you'll navigate rocks downhill to reach the waterfall. Lots of options for wild swimming in deep pools. *Tip: Ensure you and your companions are up for a challenge and take plenty of water and snacks. It's a long way back, and you'll probably end up carrying small kids.*

Bangadilly National Park, Joadja

A little visited treasure on our doorstep. Bangadilly National Park has the four Ws: wilderness, wildlife, walks and the Wingecarribee. *Tip: Look up. Koalas live here.*



WIND IN THE WHEELS

If you fancy seeing the Highlands on four wheels, think four very special

wheels cos you won't have a more memorable al fresco experience than being zipped about the place by Vinh Tran, owner of Military Vehicle Tours. Vinh, who also owns Ms Pho Canteen (a Vietnamese kitchen restaurant at The Mill in Bowral), came to Australia following the devastating war in his home country of Vietnam. He began importing and then restoring relics of the war, including the American Jeep he kindly lent us for this issue's cover, to raise awareness and support a charity in Vietnam that helps war affected orphaned children. He makes his jeeps available for tours here and in Sydney. A unique and fun mode of transport for anyone who wants to see the Highlands in unique style or wants to leave a lasting impression arriving or departing from a do. Weddings, parties, everything springs to mind! military-vehicle.org
vinhtran3@bigpond.com 0405 397 345



LEARN
TO SWIM

SWIM LITTLE FISH

It's a frightening fact but in 2017 the annual Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report revealed a 38% increase in national drownings among children under five. Learning to swim in Australia is vital but private swimming lessons can be expensive. So kudos to our local council for putting on an intensive school holiday program, Swim and Survive. The Active Holiday Program will run from January 8-18 at Mittagong Swimming Centre, and costs \$99pp for nine lessons (9am-midday). Other lessons are also on offer in Term 1 from February 4 for 5 weeks at Bowral Pool and for 7 weeks at Mittagong Pool. wsc.nsw.gov.au/services/swimming-pools/learn-to-swim

FUN FOR KIDS

YAY! SUMMER HAS ARRIVED, AND THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS STREEEEETCH OUT AHEAD OF US. IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR **INSPIRATION TO KEEP THE KIDS OCCUPIED**, HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS WE LOVE.



YOU GO GIRL

It can be a hard time being a tween or a teen. Life moves fast and the social pressures our youngsters face can be challenging. Charlotte Pointeaux, a trained youth mentor, formed Sister Souls Mentoring to help empower girls through building a strong sense of self. She is holding back to school workshops Confidently You for tween girls aged 8-12 and Inspiring You for teen girls aged 13-17. Both will talk about (among other things) how to make smart decisions and maintain positive friends, and give tips for managing stress. Held at the CWA Hall in Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale. **Ticket price includes all learning materials, lunch and afternoon tea, and a goodie bag.** Confidently You, January 16, 10am-4pm, \$135pp early bird or \$150pp. Inspiring You, January 23, 10 am-4pm, \$135pp early bird or \$150pp. sistersoulsmentoring.com.au

OUTSIDE!

The Outdoor Education Group is putting on another week of their popular holiday day camps at Camp Wombaroo, a 15 minute drive from Mittagong. Activities include archery, canoeing, orienteering, jewellery making, bush walking, giant swinging, mountain biking, zip lining, team challenges, abseiling, and fire, shelter and raft building. A great chance for kids to challenge themselves outdoors. For ages 8 to 14, or 7 if accompanied by a sibling over 8. Cost includes morning and afternoon tea and hot lunch. If your kids are aged 7-14 and are keen to try an overnighter, Tallong School Holiday Camp is offering a five day and four night adventure with activities like self defence, mountain biking, cooking, flying fox and hiking at its Santa Sabrina's Highlands Retreat in Tallong near Barber's Creek. Cost includes accommodation, meals and equipment. Day and short stays also available. **Camp Wombaroo, January 14-18, 8am-6pm, 1-2 days \$70pp per day; 3-5 days \$60pp per day. Tallong School Holiday Camp, January 21-25, \$430pp for 5-day package (bookings close January 4, 2019). oeg.edu.au tallong@ssc.nsw.edu.au**



GIDDY UP

If you have a horse mad kid, book them into a horse camp. Equestrian Connection's qualified horse riding instructor Sarah Spence is offering day and overnight camps at her Moss Vale property, where riders will learn how to groom, tack up and ride ponies and horses. Activities include walking, trotting, cantering, mounted games, sporting, jumping, flatwork, trail riding and rider position training. \$130pp for the day or \$150pp overnight; \$400pp for 3 days and 2 nights. If overnighting, children need camping and sleeping gear along with their riding equipment. All meals provided. Down the road, Fitzroy Equestrian Centre also offers boarding school holiday camps for children aged nine and over where they can bring their own horse. **Sunday to Friday, January 6-11 & January 13-18. Equestrian Connection, 6111 Illawarra Highway, Moss Vale equestrian.connection.sarah@gmail.com Fitzroy Equestrian Centre, 1171 Nowra Road, Fitzroy Falls fitzroyequestriancentre.com.au**



LEATHER ON WILLOW

Summertime is cricket time and there's nothing like a family knock around at the beach or in the garden. If your kids are a bit more serious, book them into the Steve Waugh Cricket Clinic at the fabulous Bradman Oval in Bowral. Held over three days, this clinic includes 18 hours of skill development, strategy and tactics talk, and they get to play on the famed field. Fully supervised. **January 8, 9 & 10, 9am-3pm, \$399pp bradman.com.au or stevewaughcricket.com.au**

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HIGHLANDS ESSENTIALS

A QUICK LIST OF USEFUL CONTACTS IN THE HIGHLANDS

EMERGENCY:

Bowral Fire Station 16 Merrigang St, Bowral, 4862 1446

Mittagong Fire Station 10 Bowral Road, Mittagong 4871 1002

Moss Vale Fire Station Elizabeth St, Moss Vale 4868 1288

Bowral Police Station 53 Wingecarribee Street, Bowral 4869 7899

(stations only open Saturday 8am-4.30pm)

Southern Highlands Police Centre, newly opened Hume Police District area control. Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale 4862 7899 Open 24 Hours.

State Emergency Services (SES) 13 25 00

Emergency Bush Fire 000

HOSPITALS / HEALTH:

Bowral Public Hospital Mona Road, Bowral 4861 0200

Southern Highlands Private 99 Bowral Street, Bowral 4862 9400

Doctors:

Bowral Street Medical Practice 70 Bowral St, Bowral 4861 3183

Mittagong Healthcare Centre 58 Bowral Road, Mittagong 4872 3933

Southern Medical Centre 61 Elizabeth St, Moss Vale 4868 1500

Eastbrooke Medical Centre 4-10 Funston Street, Bowral 4862 7666

VET CLINICS:

Bowral Vet Hospital 78 Station Street, Bowral 4861 1444

Mittagong Vet Hospital 109 Main St, Mittagong 4872 2028

Southern Highlands Vet Centre 48 Berrima Rd, Moss Vale 4868 1310

AUSTRALIA POST:

260 Bong Bong St, Bowral 13 13 18

3/63 Main St, Mittagong 13 13 18

9/15 Clarence St, Moss Vale 13 13 18

TRANSPORT:

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05 Club Hire Cars & Mini Bus 205 Lackey Rd, Moss Vale 0400 505 113

Berrima Bus Lines 90 Old Bowral Rd, Mittagong 4871 3211

Highland Chauffeured Hire Cars 4872 3038 or 0400 921 239

Highlands Personal Transport. Call And Book 0408 211 267

Transport Info Line (Trains) 13 15 00

Railway Stations: Bowral Station St; **Mittagong** Regents St; **Moss Vale** Argyle St

HELPFUL:

Electricity Emergency Endeavour Energy 13 10 03

Gas Emergency Jemena 13 19 09

AGL Emergency 24/7 on 131 245

Telstra Emergency 13 22 03

Wingecarribee Shire Council Open 8.30am – 4.30pm

(Monday to Friday) **Civic Centre**, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale 4868 0888

Resource Recovery Centre Open 7.30am – 4.30pm

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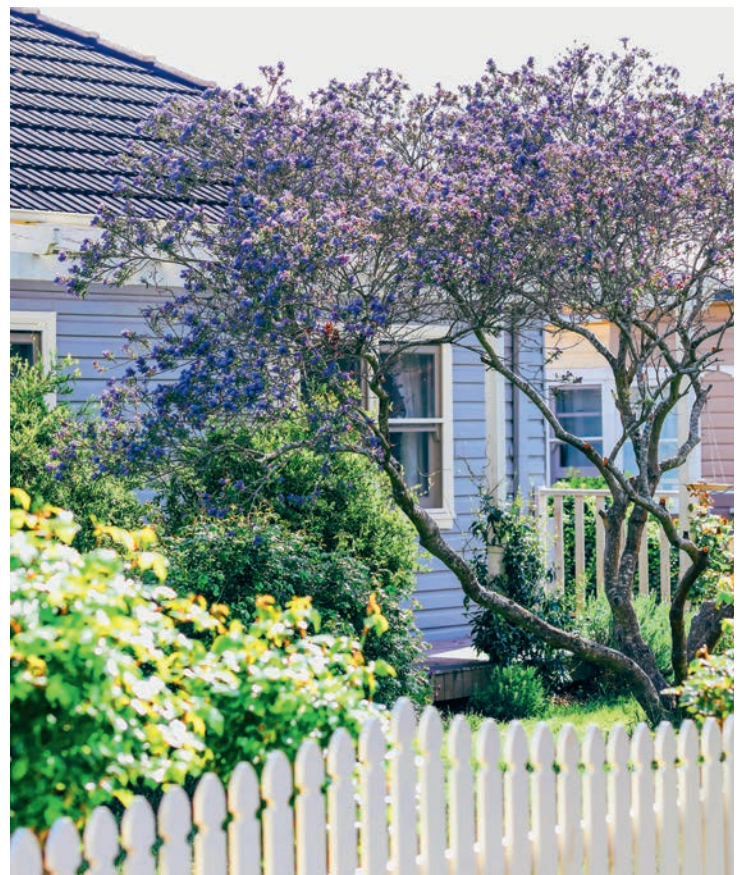
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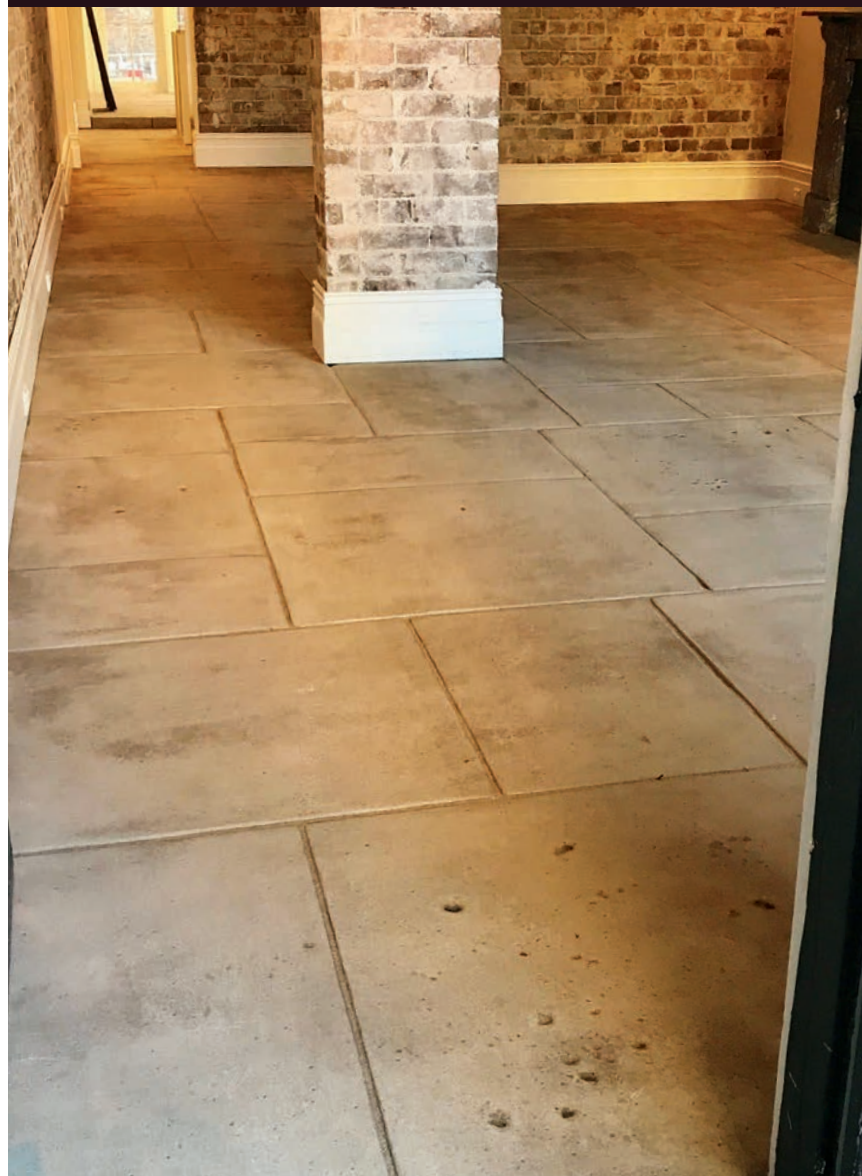


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IN OUR BACKYARD

Ali Mentesh and Wayne Morrissey fell in love with Red Cow Farm at Sutton Forest when it was a rundown cottage surrounded by a few bare paddocks. Now, 27 years on, they speak to ESH about their magic Highlands country garden that attracts visitors from around the globe.

‘We moved here from Bronte in Sydney looking for somewhere to escape the city life,’ remembers Wayne Morrissey, owner with his partner of 32 years, landscape gardener Ali Mentesh.

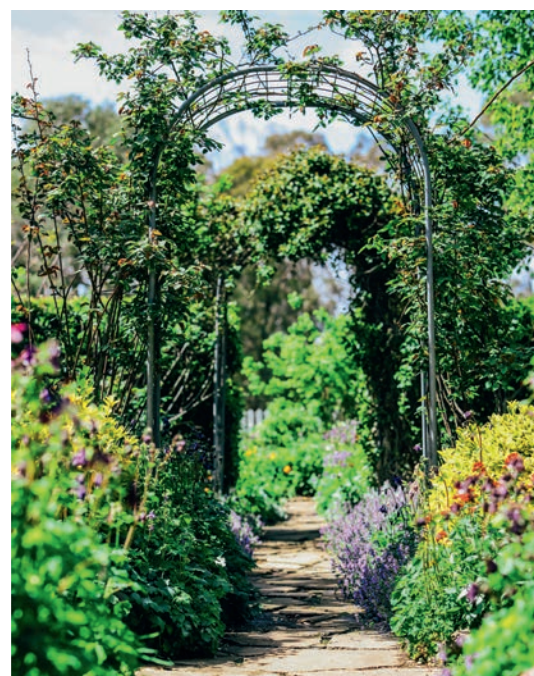
‘We wanted to make a permanent move but we weren’t sure what we wanted in that move and where we would go. We just happened to be travelling round here one day, and there was this little derelict cottage, which had been built around the 1820s, saying please do something with me!’

Of course we never thought of having a garden on this scale, that sort of just happened. After we had moved in and spent a bit of money on the poor old cottage, we decided to plant different things around the front of it, and they just took.

It sort of evolved from there into the six acres of different gardens we have today. Every winter we’d build another wall, or part thereof, and extend the garden, and once we really got into it we knew we had to form areas, or garden rooms, so to speak. Today we have 20 rooms, which include the monastery garden and the abbess’s garden.

We didn’t really take inspiration from any garden designers. It was just very organic, divine madness I guess you’d say, because turning a cow paddock into what we always thought we wanted, an English country garden, was incredibly hard work. I guess, if anything, it’s a lesson for younger generations about what you can achieve with hard work.






The cool climate of the Highlands lends itself beautifully to what we wanted to plan. We have perennials and herbaceous, many rare and unusual plants, thousands of roses, and lovely old plants like forget-me-nots, lovelies waiting and bleeding hearts. Romantic flowers.

We also have a beech walk, hedges, woodlands, an orchard with heritage apples, pears and cherries, and a lake with a bridge. We've been told that bit looks a bit like Monet's garden and although I knew he was an artist, I'd never read much about his garden beforehand.

As I say, we don't really buy gardening books because it's your soul, really, that should tell you what to do and what to plant. When we started off, we did have a little formality, but I don't think you can have a garden that is too controlled. I think we've enjoyed what it's become... controlled chaos in a very deceiving space. It doesn't look like a lot from the road but then you come inside and you'll see it's full of nooks and crannies.

We have Sebastian who helps us one day a week but apart from that, Ali and I do it all. And of course we have our border collies Pascale, Renard and Paris, and they are generally a big hit with the visitors.

We get many repeat visitors who seem to come then return with friends, and also lots of people from overseas. So for the moment we keep on going, planting and working in the garden. It's our home and it's been a great love of ours. It's also been bliss making that change here from the city.' 

DETAILS

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A fabulous addition to any library or coffee table, this tome gives you access to 18 of the Highlands' most stylish renovations, restorations and new builds, including four homes that have never been published before. Written by longtime *Highlife* editor Deborah McIntosh and shot by renowned photographer Tony Sheffield, the book features a wide variety of Highlands architecture from Georgian coach house to classic country to passive solar. Opulent, spectacular and irresistible to the inquisitive and the aspirational, this book really is perfect for those who love design, interiors, country living and, well, dream homes.

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