

Escape

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS *Feb/Mar 2021*



STAY, PLAY, EAT, DRINK & EXPLORE

THE TINY
HOUSE WITH
BIG VIEWS

RAMBLING
AROUND
ROBERTSON

HORSEY
HIGHLIGHTS
GIDDY UP!



TINY GETAWAY

with bullish serenity

Escape Southern Highlands checks into a unique Robertson getaway to find there's been a double booking.

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES ELISE HASSEY

The popularity of Black Angus cattle in Australia is a relatively new phenomenon. Renowned for its prime beef, this ubiquitous breed reportedly cemented its reputation thanks to a concerted campaign by industry body Angus Australia over the past 20 years. Or so a respected local cattle farmer told me. And when he continued to say Black Angus are increasingly popular in the Southern Highlands because weekend farmers have taken an aesthetic shine to them ... black cow on green paddock, I was all ears.

Now this might sound an odd conversation to recall as I arrive for a one-night stay at tiny house, Edmond. Edmond is a 15 square metre off-grid, eco-friendly tiny house that perches gloriously on a rolling Robertson property, right at the end of a chocolate box country lane. I arrive as the sun begins to set over the Jamberoo escarpment and Budderoo National Park, and the views at this perfectly private, dinky little hideaway are million dollar. This is secluded serenity at its best.

But hang on. Something tells me Edmond might be situated on one of those weekend farmer properties my cattle mate referred to. It appears there has been a double booking. There is an unexpected guest

here, apparently sharing the night with us. It is a huge, though very handsome, Black Angus bull. Hung like the proverbial butcher's shop, he's here with his herd of cows and calves, and no fence or gate separates us.

Grateful I ignored instructions to park near the entry gate and walk the remaining 250 metres to Edmond, I keep a careful eye on him and go inside to explore. With Scandinavian design cues, downstairs is an open-plan living area with a table and an L-shaped bench seat lounge. These double as two single beds, and are good sizes for kids, cosy for two adults. Downstairs, there is also a bathroom with a compost loo and a walk-in shower, powered by solar and gas. Complimentary upmarket toiletries are a nice touch. There is an oven and fridge and basic tea and coffee supplies. Upstairs in the loft, accessible by a ladder, there is a queen-sized mattress. Linen, towels, games and bathroom toiletries are supplied, and the mobile reception is good. But who needs mobiles with a view like this?

I pour a glass of red and head outside to enjoy more of the peace around the firepit ... but wait; my bovine buddies have beaten me to it. I leave the carbon to the cattle and instead backtrack to the Robertson Pub for dinner. I arrive back at Edmond after dark, and climb up to my loft bed, opening the roof skylight. The sky is starry, and the wind is punctuated with occasional snorts from my outside bedfellows.

As I lie there, I conclude I love the premise behind In2thewild Tiny Holidays, which manages Edmond online. The company incentivises



participating landowners with a cash bonus, and then deploys one of its tiny houses on properties across NSW, Victoria and Queensland. However, when outsourcing the management of farm accommodation, and marketing it to people who may never have set foot on a working farm before, small things like big bulls can get overlooked. There was no mention of this fella's presence in my pre-arrival information but as a country girl, I know that when there's a bull about, you'd be well served to keep him in sight.

After my memorable Edmond stay, I contact my farmer mate, and send him a photo. What's his rule of thumb when it comes to bulls and guests?

He advises caution.

"Real farmers know about their animals' temperament, so this may be no problem, unless a pet of the holidayer becomes involved," he replies. I note the In2thewild website says no pets allowed.

"On the other hand, a horny bull (and I don't mean the ones on his head) can be aggressive. The bull is with the cows because it's time, with calves on the ground, to re-join with the cows. While it's nice for guests to have the experience of cattle, apathy could end in tears. That bull could weigh from 800 to 1200 kilograms. Hope that helps."

So, though it is good to get up close and personal with the locals, some of these tiny houses may be situated in working paddocks: check before booking.

ESH was a guest of in2thewild.

in2thewild.co 





It's show time in Robertson but this year the famed Highlands event will go ahead in pared down pandemic fashion. Lots of time then to read up on this great historically fun community event and get prepared for 2022!

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES TERRY BRUCE, ELISE HASSEY & TONY SHEFFIELD

This year will be one of the very few times in her young life that Robbo local Ellie Handley, 20 (opposite, middle) may not be entering exhibits in the famed Robertson Show.

That's because this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the show will only open to show members, competitors in the livestock and horse judging events, and entrants in four pavilion events. These are Woollen Garments, Photography, Quilts and Rich Fruitcake, with winners eligible to compete at The Royal Easter Show. There are no spectators allowed, and none of the usual entertainments such as the pavilion displays, sideshow alley, ring events or fireworks. It will also run over three days, not two as usual, to meet COVID regulations.

Disappointed but not too disheartened at potentially breaking her 17 year record of entering exhibits, Ellie is looking to 2022, which organisers hope will make up for this year's smaller affair.

Ellie says: "When I was tiny, I loved doing craft at home, helping my mum Tammy with baking and helping my dad Robert in the vegie garden and my parents encouraged me to enter some of these things in the show.

"When I was three, I entered decorated biscuits, a craft necklace, some cucumbers and a flower arrangement, and I helped make a cake with my preschool group to enter and it really grew from there."

With her house in earshot of the showground, Ellie grew up hearing the show commentary over the loudspeaker on the horse ring events. She still loves the "excitement of entering, the anticipation of the judging and the fun two days of being amongst it all with the whole community".

During her time as a dedicated show goer, Ellie has won 236 ribbons, trophies, sashes and medals, making her one of the most successful exhibitors ever. In 2018, she achieved her goal of "winning the award of Most Successful Exhibitor"

The first Robertson Agricultural Show took place in 1879 and according to The Winds of Change, a history of Robertson A. & H. Society and Agriculture of its District, the show and its founding show society are a direct descendant of the first organisation of farmers in the district, the Burrawang Farmers Club.

One of the best things about the show, agrees Rosemary Turner, former show society president, is kids' participation, which will be sorely missed this year.

"Everybody loves seeing the kids participate in all the terrific events," says Rosemary, a former nurse turned farmer.

"Friday is usually kids' day and lots of local schools come along and the kids become the entertainment. There are so many events for them to participate in and everyone sits and watches and gets a good laugh. There are the potato sack races, potato and spoon races, and then on Saturday the kids bring their parents back because they've had so much fun and participate in the pushbike races and the gumboot tossing competitions."

Other favourites generally include the art, craft and fresh produce pavilion displays, the dairy and beef cattle judging, the horse events in the main arena, the kids' pet show and, of course, the famous potato races, where men, women and children race with a full sack of spuds on their backs.

Rosemary says despite this year's setback, the secret to the show's enduring success is the fact it retains much of its true agricultural feel.

"We are not generally too commercial," Rosemary says. "In normal times we do have food stalls and rides but nothing too commercial and it's still very much a country show. Also, I think the fact we encourage people to participate, rather than just put on entertainment, is the secret."

Rosemary says due to COVID-19, organisers took the hard decision before Christmas to scale the Robertson Show right back to comply with government restrictions and keep people safe. Livestock judging of dairy cattle and goats, beef cattle, dogs and poultry and horse eventing will still go ahead.

Looking forward, Rosemary says people should make a mental note of the Robbo Show as a fabulous family outing for 2022.

"For the kids, there is the pet show, potato bag races, and the gumboot toss. For the adults there is pumpkin bowling, dog jumping, pie eating, ute pull races, hay stacking and the famous and iconic potato races. Watching people run around the ring with 50kg of potatoes on their back is not something to miss! And generally, the finale is the stunning firework display on Saturday night."

Robertson Show, Friday March 5 to Sunday March 7 (no general admission or gate tickets) robertsonshow.org.au





MOONACRES SCHOOL

Moonacres Farm and Kitchen in Robertson now welcomes Moonacres School, offering seasonal cooking classes, and sharing artisan traditions, including baking, cheesemaking, and fermenting. Classes are taught by chefs, bakers and home cooks in our custom-built space. The School's vision is to provide food and farming experiences that immerse the community in the value of good food. For details visit us at moonacres.com.au



ROBERTSON TRUFFLES

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info@robertsontruffles.com.au robertsontruffles.com.au

ROBERTSON *Village*

With fabulous places to eat and drink, great shops selling local produce, as well as galleries and gift stores, Robertson is an essential stop for those passing through – or locals exploring their own backyard.





Untitled, Acrylic on x-ray film by Jenny Lavender, 356mm x 430mm

Galerie Têtu, a fresh contemporary art space situated within The SHAC art complex in the picturesque village of Robertson.

Coming up at Galerie Têtu

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Galerie TÊTU

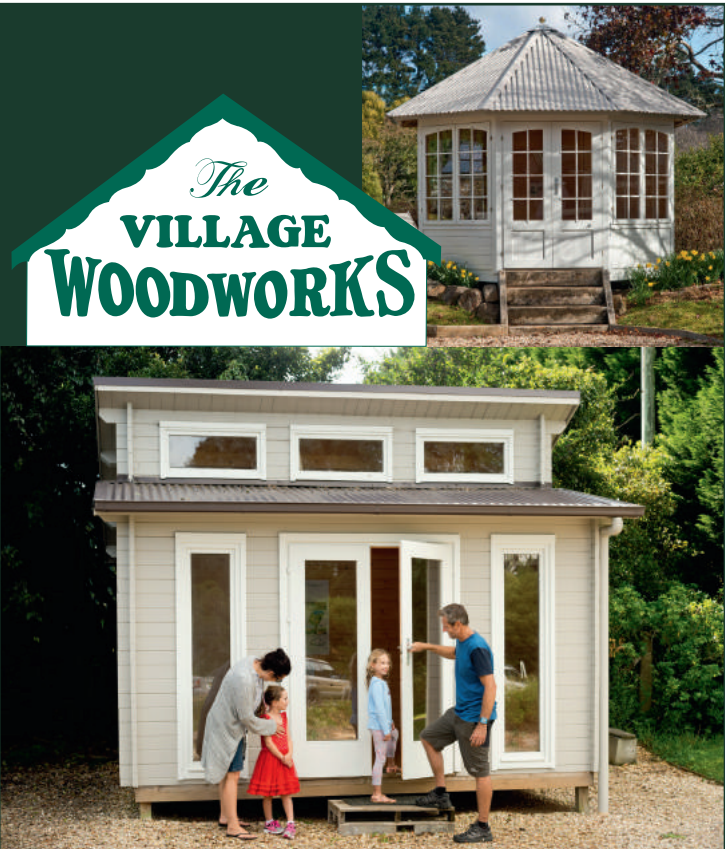


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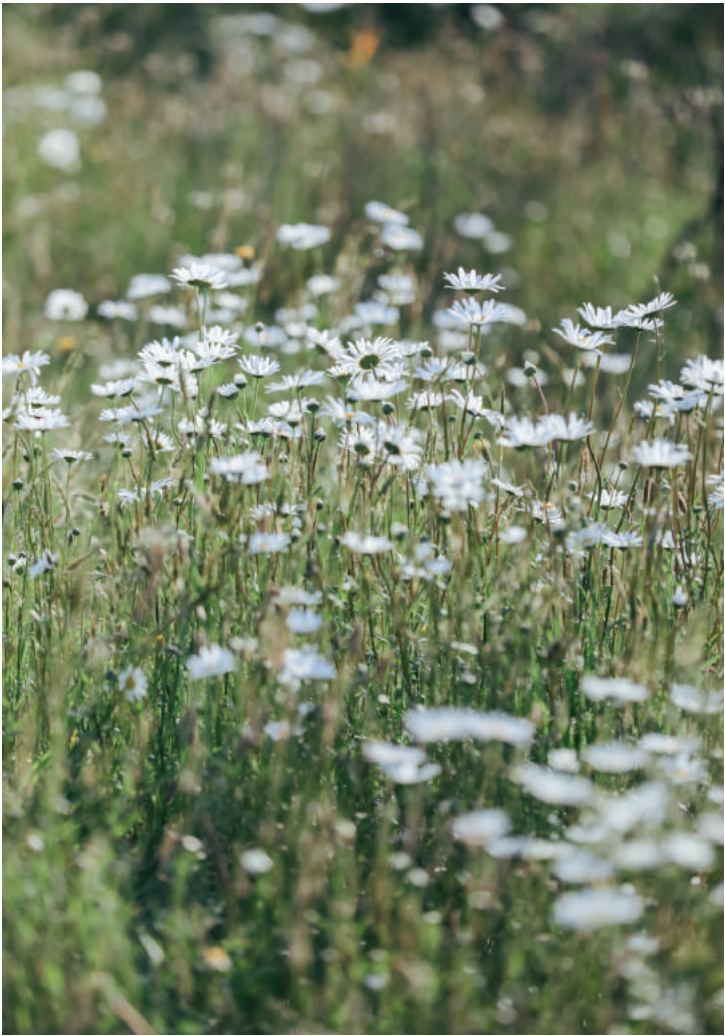


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jour d'amour

Ingrid Bianchi and Olivier Cromback met on an online dating site and fell in love over a shared love of food, wine and a lust for life. They married at the sumptuous Kalinya Estate. Photographer Matt Biocich was there to capture their *jour d'amour*.

It didn't take long for Ingrid Bianchi to feel the magic after meeting Frenchman Olivier Cromback.

"We met on RSVP. We were both living in Manly at the time and met at the Manly Wharf Bar for a drink that turned into dinner at Papi Chulo's," recalls Ingrid. "I had only been on the dating site for 10 days and Olivier was the only man I responded to and went on a date with, so I call him my 'one and only'. We both felt a great connection from that first date and fell in love pretty quickly."

Ingrid says she fell in love with Olivier's energy for life, his big heart and *joie de vivre*, "and his beautiful blue eyes".

"Olivier says he fell in love with me for 'my beauty, making him feel loved, my warm heart and passion for family and friends'. His words," adds Ingrid, laughing.

After two years together, Olivier moved into Ingrid's apartment in Manly before they bought a house together in Freshwater. Olivier owns and runs renowned French restaurant *Sous le Soleil* in Sydney's Roseville and today Ingrid, a former massage therapist, works in the restaurant, too, as a part-time pastry chef and front of house.

When the couple, who have both been married before, journeyed to Broome, Western Australia to celebrate their fourth anniversary together, Olivier pulled out all the romantic stops.

"Olivier proposed on the beach during sunset. It was March 24, 2019. It was very romantic. He had bought my favourite Champagne and bought

the most beautiful ring and had organised the staff at Cable Beach Resort to cook a meal in our villa. When we returned, it was full of rose petals and candles."

The newly engaged couple returned to Sydney and started planning a wedding.

"After doing a Google search of estates close to Sydney, we fell in love with Kalinya Estate for its beauty and with owner Mandy Barnes, who went above and beyond to please us," says Ingrid. "We both knew that Mandy would be there to make sure everything was perfect for the day. She really is an incredible host and I feel that we have made a friend for life."

Kalinya also fitted the bill in terms of family coming to the wedding from Melbourne, France and New York, from where it took one very close friend of Ingrid's 30 hours to travel due to last-minute Covid restrictions that blocked flights via Hong Kong. The couple married in late February in front of 140 guests. Ingrid's daughters, Madeleine and Isabelle, were their mum's bridesmaids and her two oldest friends, whom she's known since she was 12, were there. Olivier's two sons, Oscar and Gus, were his groomsmen. Olivier's cousin Stani, Stani's wife Sophie and fabulous friends Valerie, Gerard, Jen and Patoune arrived from France.

Ingrid's mum, who had suffered a mini-stroke three months earlier, walked her down the aisle. "She gave me away singing our ceremony song, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, all the way," says Ingrid.

DETAILS

Venue

Kalinya Estate, Bargo
kalinyaestate.com.au

Bride's dress

Made with Love
madewithlovebridal.com

Groom's suit

Hugo Boss
hugoboss.com

Bridesmaids' dresses

Bec + Bridge
becandbridge.com.au

Photographer

Matt Biocich and Jif Morrison
mattbiocich.com.au

Florist

Wild Flora Studio, Thirlmere
wildflorastudio.com.au

Celebrant

Mel Rey-Lescure
afcc.com.au

Music

Browntone with Scotty Teu
@BrowntoneSYD

Bride's hair

IconiX Salon
iconixsalon.com

Food catering

Labyrinth, Mittagong
labyrinthcatering.com

Bus Transport

Ian Day at Berrima Buslines
buslinesgroup.com.au

Poloroid Photo booth

Undisposable
undisposable.com.au

"I lost my Dad 20 years ago and my Mum has been a huge part of my life. She was so excited to be part of the wedding and talked about her wedding outfit while in recovery from the stroke. I took her the day after she returned home to buy her outfit from her favourite shop, Black Orange, in Melbourne."

Only weeks before their summer wedding, Kalinya Estate, which is near Bargo, had been under attack from the terrible bushfires the Highlands faced in 2019/20. But luckily, by the time their big day came around, the fires were out.

"The weather definitely played a big part in our wedding, as we both love summer and wanted to enjoy an outdoor wedding," says Ingrid.

"The weather could not have been more perfect with a full day of sunshine and about 25 degrees but enough cloud to keep us and our guests from sweating."

The venue, too, was perfect; everything the couple had imagined. "We loved the relaxed, intimate atmosphere and stunning setting at Kalinya that created a great sense of love and happiness," explains Olivier. "Also, our celebrant Mel spoke French, so she was able to do part of the ceremony in French for our French guests."

The couple later posed for photographs with Olivier's 1958 Jaguar XK150. Being in the restaurant game, food and drink were always going to be important part of the couple's wedding. Taking the suggestion of owner Mandy Barnes, the couple employed the services of local caterers Labyrinth at Mittagong and guests dined al fresco on oysters, prawns and ceviche and charcoal barbecue lamb, pork and baked salmon in Kalinya Estate's beautiful gardens.

"Being in the food and wine industry, we also really wanted some freedom to be able to bring our own wines and champagnes that we had delivered from France," says Olivier. "We also wanted to work with a caterer who would allow us to provide part of the menu."

Guests later enjoyed cognac and cigars and dancing into the night until the wedding officially finished at 11pm. Ingrid and Olivier stayed at Kalinya Estate with their children and 20 of their nearest and dearest, some of whom partied until 4am. It was the perfect end to the perfect day.

"We had an anxious month prior with bushfires and flooding but on the day, everything went according to plan," says Olivier.

"The grounds and houses of Kalinya Estate made it such a special environment that I think we will both remember looking out to a sea of people we loved, enjoying celebrating our special day with us," says Ingrid.

"All the suppliers were a joy to work with and made everything perfect and easy for us. We have had such amazing feedback from friends, saying it was the best wedding they'd ever been to, so I think we will never forget it as the most special day of our life together. There would be nothing that we would have changed, only that after three nights at Kalinya Estate, we would have loved to stay longer." ■



Rosthwaite Farm, Moss Vale

At Rosthwaite Farm, showjumping champion James Arkins has top competing and teaching form. James, who is chief instructor on this 48 hectare property, lives here with parents Michelle and Peter. In 2016, James was shortlisted as second reserve for the Rio Olympics, and qualified for the World Cup Final. He now has his eyes firmly on the FEI World Cup Final in 2022 and the World Equestrian Games in Herning, Denmark and Paris 2024 Olympics when his stallions, Rosthwaite Eurostar 1 and Joevaro R, will be eligible to compete. When not breeding champions or competing, James coaches and mentors' junior riders up to Grand Prix level including Anneliese Wansey, recent Young Rider winner at the Summer Classic. Rosthwaite Farm also offers lessons from beginners to advanced including tiny tots, such as the grandchildren of fellow local and renowned horsewoman and trainer Gai Waterhouse. It also runs day-long holiday camps, farm rides and after-school programs at Tudor House and Frensham schools. Ladies' social lessons and gift vouchers are also available. rosthwaitefarm.com.au

TROT *on*

Chafing at the bit to saddle up? Try out some of these local riding opportunities, perfect for the young, and young at heart. Giddy up!

Fitzroy Equestrian Centre, Fitzroy Falls

Looking to give your kids a true taste of Highlands country life, riding boots and all? Accredited riders and horse-loving coaches Angus and Neatie Malcolm have been running their school holiday riding camps for years. Situated on the edge of the Morton National Park at Fitzroy Falls, the five day boarding and horse camps are for school-aged kids. The Sunday to Friday camp includes morning and afternoon rides as well as lessons, trail rides across paddocks, horseback games and obstacle courses. There are also daily lessons in feeding, rugging, grooming, saddling up and general horse gear. Riders can choose to be assigned a pony or horse, according to ability, or bring their own. Fitzroy Equestrian Centre is also the local home of Moss Vale's Riding for the Disabled. Lessons for adults and children on offer too. fitzroyequestriancentre.com.au

Equestrian Connection at Ashton Park, Moss Vale

Owner and horse-lover Sarah Spence offers riding lessons, group riding lessons, pony picnics and trail rides as well as horse agistment. Also, if you have a horse-loving little-un, the Unicorn birthday parties and recently launched Cowboy pony parties are great fun at next door Ashton Park farm. Kids get to meet and groom the tame unicorn or cowboy steed (a very patient horse in fancy dress) and to share rides with friends. Catering is available for rainbow or cowboy-themed parties.


Facebook: [equestrianconnectionau](https://www.facebook.com/equestrianconnectionau)
ashtonparkmossvale.com.au

Shibumi Equestrian Centre, Bundanoon

Sheryl and Kim Leibowitz offer tuition Tuesday to Saturday for riders from two and a half to 75. There is a new cross-country training course on their 38 hectares near Bundanoon. Get along to their regular Dressage and Showjumping Fun Day for beginners to advanced riders and keep an eye on their website for their regular clinics and events, too. shibumi.net.au


Berrima and Moss Vale pony clubs

If you've got a horse-mad kid desperate to learn to ride, a great place to get them started in the saddle is at one of our local pony clubs. They are always fun, sociable, sporting and a great place to begin a lifelong love affair with horses. Both Moss Vale Pony Club and Berrima District Pony Club welcome new members with details to Berrima on its website. Membership is open to Moss Vale Pony Club throughout the year, although it is presently looking for a new home. BYO pony. Berrima: bdpc.org.au Moss Vale: [Facebook.com/Moss-Vale-Pony-Club-Page](https://www.facebook.com/Moss-Vale-Pony-Club-Page)

Image: James Arkins of Rosthwaite Farm with Kate Waterhouse, her children Sophia and Grace, and Gai Waterhouse. Photo by Abbie Melle. 

MY NAME IS Sue Hearn

Dressage rider and instructor Sue Hearn is unbothered by imagined age constraints. Five years ago, in 2016 aged 60, Sue became one of the most seasoned athletes ever to be selected to compete for the Australian Olympic team. "The thing about dressage is it really doesn't matter how old you are," Sue says. "I feel like I am doing the best riding of my life. In dressage, like a fine wine, you get better as you age." Today, while her contemporaries collect their seniors cards, Sue spends her time at her Sutton Forest property putting her beloved Grand Prix steeds Remington and Jude through their dressage paces, and teaching dressage to other riders. She hopes to make selection for the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Australian equestrian team.

 @goldenvaledressage

My life in five words is... horses, dogs, training, coaching, family. **We moved to the Southern Highlands...** in the 1980s. **I love the Highlands because...** I love the change of seasons, even winter. **Followers of my Instagram see pics of...** horses and dogs and the odd glass of wine. **I have been riding horses for...** 55 years. **Being a dressage instructor at our property Goldenvale Dressage allows me to...** earn enough to pay for my passion. **I started riding...** bareback as a child and would ride anything. I ran a riding school for many years. **Being around horses is...** a good leveller. **When it comes to horses, this is one truth I know...** you will never stop learning. **The first thing I always say to people who want a life in competitive riding is...** get a good coach. **When it comes to competitive dressage riding, the thing that has always driven me is...** to be better than I was last time. **If you want to succeed in dressage, you need...** to love your horse and be prepared to work hard. **Dressage is all about the horse and rider 'becoming one' but this takes...** years of practice. Be patient! **My three horses Remington, Jude and Barbie are...** my loves. **Being a reserve at the Sydney Olympics and then competing 16 years later at Rio required...** hard work and lots of support from my husband Andrew, family and friends. **The Southern Highlands is...** the fastest growing equestrian area in Australia, I believe. **Away from horses, my favourite thing is...** to hunt for treasures at the local old wares shops. **My special place in the Highlands is...** home. **My favourite horse event in the world is...** Chio Aachen, World Equestrian Festival in Germany. I loved competing there. **My philosophy with dressage riding is...** ride the horse you have and never give up. **The most precious piece of advice I ever received was...** rider position is most important. **And finally, please finish this sentence ... competitive dressage riders never die, they just...** become coaches. 🐾



INSTA
star

Plan your escape...



Plan your escape and **Share the Love** with our beautiful Southern Highlands.
Take a detour on our quiet country roads. Immerse yourself in nature with a bushwalk.
Meander through our boutiques, galleries and museums. Enjoy our fine food and local beverages.
We support responsible travel and social distancing to ensure a safe region for all our visitors.

Plan & Book

Our accommodation, shops and attractions are ready to welcome you. Though please plan ahead to check availability, opening times and booking requirements. We can help you plan your escape.



Visit for the Day

Just a short drive from Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong, it's the perfect day trip! We are so close, but a world away.



Book your Stay

Check out our website for accommodation and experience in the Southern Highlands. Plan ahead, book online.



Welcome Centre Open

Our Southern Highlands Welcome Centre is open to assist you in planning and booking your visit. Contact our friendly team on **(02) 48712888** or visit our website.

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