

# Escape

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS *Apr/May 2021*



## STAY, PLAY, EAT, DRINK & EXPLORE

LIQUID NEWS  
& CELLAR  
DOOR VIEWS

BEDDING DOWN  
AT THE POTTING  
SHED, BOWRAL

FOREST BATHING:  
THERAPY IN  
THE FRESH AIR



A fairy-tale find, hard work and good taste transformed Bowral's Bunya House, and its adjunct, The Potting Shed, into an elegant place to stay.

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES ELISE HASSEY



Camilla Creswick has always had a thing for historic houses. Fortunate, she says, given other 2011 arrivals to the Southern Highlands might have viewed the deceased estate Bunya House as a money pit.

Instead, she saw her forever home. And neither protestation from her beloved aunt, "Darling, how could you? It's such a dump", nor the fact that former matriarch Dorothy was still in an urn in the front room, put her off.

"Looking back, I can't quite believe the challenge I took on," says Creswick, an antiques aficionado and now proud owner of the 1890s property.

"I had seen Bunya House in the real estate windows but counselled myself I could not inspect it as I knew I would fall in love with its history and high ceilings. But once I did, I loved its walking distance to town, and the fact that once inside I could almost pretend I was in the country."

Recently moved from London, Camilla spent four months re-wiring, re-plumbing and re-roofing the house. She also had some of the bunya pines, which gave the property its name, removed from



the overgrown garden to reveal views "to Oxley Hill with its magnificent sunsets". She installed a new bathroom and a small kitchen and moved in in early 2012 with her two children, Inigo and Isla. In 2014, she met Greg Turner and had son George. With the family of five bursting at the seams, in 2017, Camilla and Greg added a large extension, and with it an overdraft. To pay the mortgage, and with Greg a seasoned hand at Airbnb properties in Crookwell and Moss Vale, Camilla signed up to the short-stay platform, offering the front of Bunya House to wedding parties, mums' weekends away or families on holidays to the Highlands.

"It was such a success, we built The Potting Shed,





which opened in March 2020,” says Camilla, who runs styling and photography workshops from her home.

“The idea of The Potting Shed was to complete our beautiful garden, still a work in progress, designed by Paul Bangay and brought to life by Mick and Harriet Conway.”

Indeed, arriving for a night’s stay at The Potting Shed is akin to landing in a glorious European potager garden. Located in old Bowral, not far from Don Bradman’s childhood home, The Potting Shed sits at the end of a sandstone path in a garden of blooming flower and vegetable beds. It sleeps two – a couple, or as the king bed splits into singles, a mother and daughter, besties, mates.

I am travelling solo and open The Potting Shed’s French doors to a cool, restrained elegance. There is a polished concrete floor covered with a jute rug and the wood-panelled walls are whitewashed. The ceiling is high, with exposed beams. A king bed, with two covered bedheads, takes pride of place in the room. It is adorned with fresh white linen. A French-style armoire sits opposite, a sink and marble bench in the corner. On its shelves sit tea and coffee, bread, glasses, crockery, a discreet television. On a nearby shelf, jars of homemade biscuits, and granola muesli. Tucked away behind a hessian curtain is a fridge with more breakfast supplies; milk, Vegemite, jams and butter. A table with a bench seat sits snugly on the opposite wall; like a ship’s mess, it has a low hanging light if you are inclined to work while here. I am not.

With the light fading over Mount Gibraltar, I light the sweet-smelling olive leaf and thyme Bunya House candle, and eat another treat kindly supplied, two dark chocolate frogs by local chocolatier Ms Peacock. As I indulge, I think about the art of Airbnb. Camilla knows her stuff and market. Take her clipboard of local information.



Not only does she give an excellent rundown of local goods and services, she is happy to give a shout out to her family’s favourites. Were I inclined to wander out, I would happily head to the local Bowral pool for a swim before dining out at Eccetera Trattoria Pizzeria in Bowral on her recommendations.

As it happens, I have bought my favourite mum’s-night-alone supper with me. A bottle of riesling, biccies, and cheese. I pour myself into the huge free-standing bath, fragrant and steaming with decadent La Fiorentina bath foam provided, and sip my wine as I watch Leigh Sales present 7.30.

What a splendid way to spend a night in quiet luxury. Thanks Leigh Sales. Thanks Camilla Creswick. Cheers to clever women.

ESH was a guest of The Potting Shed at Bunya House  
@bunya\_house\_bowral  
airbnb.com.au

*ESCAPE  
also loves*

*If you like cute and cosy try*  
Watershed, Robertson  
The Humpy, Wildes Meadow  
Links House, Bowral





# LIQUID VIEWS

where wines flow and cellar doors beckon

*It's been a tough 12 months for Southern Highlands' high altitude vintners, hit by a triple whammy of drought, bushfires and the global pandemic. As our wine makers keep everything crossed for some autumnal sunshine as they harvest, now is the perfect time to visit a local winery's cellar door to taste test some excellent cool climate wines. Here are some vintage vino producers to savour...*

IMAGES ELISE HASSEY AND TONY SHEFFIELD

## Artemis Wines, Mittagong ▼

Named after the Greek goddess of hunting and the earth, Artemis Winery is run by winemaking brothers Anton and Mark Balog. Artemis Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio is stocked nationally by Dan Murphy's, allowing for artistic licence for some other varieties, Close Vine Pinot Noir, Sparkling Riesling and Gewurztraminer. Order a bottle of Artemis 2019 Saignée Rose from the cellar door, pair it with a local tasting board of ash brie drizzled with honey, fruit, walnuts and lavosh and take a pew under the umbrellas on the lawn. Or sign up for a tasting; be sure to include Artemis Goddess gins and rums on your wish list. An easygoing, inspiring local. Open seven days. 46 Sir Charles Moses Lane, off Old Hume Highway, Mittagong. [artemiswines.com.au](http://artemiswines.com.au)

## Tertini Wines, Mittagong ▲

Five-star rated home of acclaimed winemaker Jonathan Holgate, this lovely cellar door is a relaxed, understated affair with an emphasis on a "premium tasting experience", says Craig Moxey, Tertini's longstanding operations manager. Tastings sample a range of Tertini's award-winning wines, including its pinot noir, chardonnays and rieslings, and new additions, rare Italian red varieties, lagrein and refosco grown on Tertini's two Southern Highlands vineyards. Cellar door open every day 10am to 5pm. Bookings essential due to Covid restrictions. Kells Creek Road, Mittagong. [tertiniwines.com.au](http://tertiniwines.com.au)





## Centennial Vineyards, Bowral ►

On a prime hill position on 30 hectares, Centennial Vineyards is a showstopper, rated five stars by James Halliday. Winemaker Tony Cosgriff has created a cellar of breadth and pizzazz, including Centennial's celebrated 2017 Reserve Shiraz Viognier and Brut Traditionelle. Book in for a wine tasting at the cellar door, buy a bottle and do your own tasting on The Terrace, or get grass roots and take a guided tour through the vines. Want more? Take the Five Red Star Flight: five wines, including limited and museum vintages, with a Centennial sommelier. Worked up a bit of an appetite after all that wine sampling? Book in for lunch at chef Robin Murray's Centennial Vineyards Restaurant next door and continue the gustatory journey. Open seven days. 252 Centennial Road, Bowral. [centennial.net.au](http://centennial.net.au)



## Southern Highlands Winery, Sutton Forest ▼

Winemaking is in Eddy Rossi's northern Italian blood. The vintner of 12 hectares of grapes, Eddy makes Southern Highlands Winery's Oldbury Reserve and SHW wines on site at his impressive Tuscan inspired winery. Book a table at the restaurant and savour lunch by chef Marco Salvestrin, as he pairs his fabulous Italian fare with Eddy's wines. Do your own taste testing. Our favourite? The 2018 Oldbury Reserve Pinot. Or book in for a cellar door tasting with Eddy and work your way through the lot. Bellissimo! Cnr Oldbury Road & Illawarra Highway, Sutton Forest. [southernhighlandswinery.com.au](http://southernhighlandswinery.com.au)



## Mount Ashby Estate, Moss Vale ▲

The vineyard of Chris Harvey and Sally Beresford is a picturesque boutique affair; the vineyard sits alongside their French inspired La Palette Café, and Sally's famed French Farmhouse Tables showroom. Enjoy a French inspired lunch (confit duck à l'orange, green beans, fennel orange salad – fantastique!) with a bottle of 2019 Mount Ashby Pink Diamond Rosé in the paved courtyard and watch the resident geese strut their stuff. Open Thursday to Sunday. 128 Nowra Road, Moss Vale. [mountashby.com.au](http://mountashby.com.au)

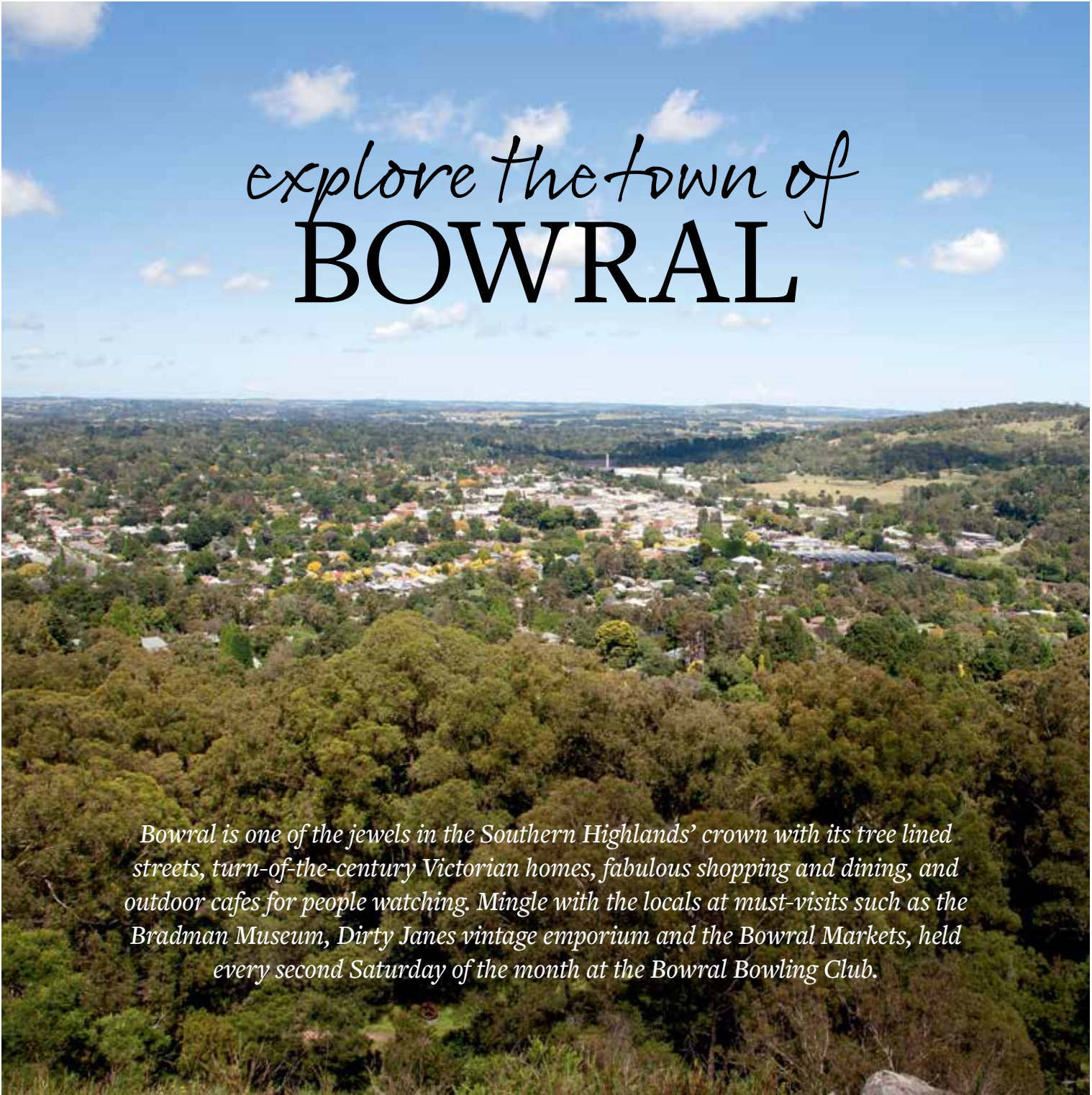
*Opening days and hours vary, so be sure to check out cellar door websites before visiting. For more cellar doors visit [escapesouthernhighlands.com.au](http://escapesouthernhighlands.com.au) [destinationsouthernhighlands.com.au](http://destinationsouthernhighlands.com.au)*

## Bendooley Estate, Berrima

Books have been at the heart of this bibliophile's mecca for more than 50 years. More recently, weddings, and a focus on viticulture and paddock to plate in its famed Book Barn and adjunct cellar door, has added to its appeal. The opening of Bendooley's new cellar door in June will provide a bigger stage to showcase a growing cellar of homegrown wines. Book in for a wine tasting and enjoy a relaxed lunch in the sun-kissed courtyard. A splendid location with a side order of book. Open seven days. 3020 Old Hume Highway, Berrima. [bendooleyestate.com.au](http://bendooleyestate.com.au)







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IMAGE TONY SHEFFIELD



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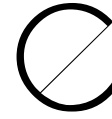
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# MARRIED IN THE *mellow meadow*

When Ernie Kim and Caroline Fung's wedding plans changed last minute, they turned to The Secret Garden in Wildes Meadow and found the autumn ceremony of their dreams. Photographer Ansh Bose played witness.

Most couples take up to a year to plan and prepare themselves for their wedding day. Ernie Kim and Caroline Fung, however, had to act a little more quickly when the plans for their original wedding day went south.

"Due to unforeseen circumstances, we had less than two months to find a ceremony venue in the Southern Highlands," says Ernie.

"It was Caroline who discovered The Secret Garden after things didn't work out the first time, and she quickly booked in an inspection of the property. Thankfully, the venue was available on the wedding date we had set, which was 19 May."

Lucky then the Sydney couple, who met and fell in love through a dating website, are used to making big decisions with minimum fuss. Ernie, a marketing and communications professional, says he knew he was smitten with Caroline after only a few dates,

and Caroline, a medical practice manager, felt likewise.

"Our second date went on for 12 hours. We just started talking and realised we didn't want to stop," Caroline says.

Ernie, who proposed to Caroline on their third anniversary while holidaying on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, takes up the story.

"What I loved about Caroline when I first met her was how practical she was. She wasn't a daydreamer and if she wanted something, she wouldn't stop till she achieved it," he says.

This quality served the couple well, says Ernie, when their original plans changed unexpectedly and they had to find a venue in the Highlands that was available on their predetermined wedding date.

Always keen to have a Highlands autumn wedding, the couple say they were blown away by

The Secret Garden, the life's work of green thumb Kathy Finigan, whose stunning five acres of gardens are set down a quiet lane in Wildes Meadow.

Says Caroline: "The Secret Garden is a horticultural paradise and Kathy was so lovely and helpful from the first meeting.

"One of the reasons we chose our wedding day in autumn in the Highlands was because of the beautiful colours and contrasts of nature during that season. The Secret Garden displayed all the shades of autumn and had multiple garden sections and a pond in one convenient location that featured different plants and themes, which made it a great place for photos before, during and after the ceremony."

Says Ernie: "We specifically chose autumn because that's our favourite time of year. We didn't want a cold winter wedding, or to have guests sweat through a hot Australian summer."

Caroline laughs. "Ernie was watching the weather forecast pedantically in the week leading up. On the day it was sunshine and clear skies."

The couple, who have ties to Hong Kong and Malaysia, had mini-wedding ceremonies in both countries. They tied the knot at The Secret Garden in front of 70 family members and friends, including one of Ernie's uncles from Malaysia and a friend who flew in from the south of France.

"We were tempted to include our two rabbits in the ceremony but were concerned if we brought them along they would want to make The Secret Garden their forever home and wouldn't want to come home with us," jokes Ernie.

"But seriously, I'll never forget watching Caroline walking down the aisle towards me."

Caroline loves one of the ceremony's funny highlights, the moment "when one of the flower girls got stage fright and after a few steps down the aisle with her sister she ran back behind the curtains!".

After their ceremony, Caroline and Ernie celebrated their marriage with a fully catered reception on a private property 15 minutes' drive away. They honeymooned in Queenstown, New Zealand.

And, like many things in life, in hindsight what seemed like a disaster at the time actually turned out better than anticipated.

"What made marrying at The Secret Garden so special for us was that it was a blessing in disguise," says Caroline.

"It was by accident that we discovered it, and the location became a talking point for the wedding long after," says Ernie. "We were also able to have our photos done across multiple locations and we have never forgotten how hospitable Kathy was, allowing us to set up the event

the day before and assisting on the day.

"We still joke about how glad we are today our original plan of having the ceremony at the reception location didn't work out. We'd choose The Secret Garden again in a heartbeat." ■







*For more magical  
Highlands weddings visit:*

[ESCAPESOUTHERNHIGHLANDS.COM.AU](http://ESCAPESOUTHERNHIGHLANDS.COM.AU)

## DETAILS

### Venue

The Secret Garden,  
Wildes Meadow  
[thesecretgarden.events](http://thesecretgarden.events)

### Photographer

Ansh Bose  
[@bosecreative](https://www.instagram.com/bosecreative)

### Groom's suit

KAZUNA  
[kazuna.com.au](http://kazuna.com.au)

### Hair and make-up artist

Martha Mok  
[dmakeupstation.com](http://dmakeupstation.com)

### Celebrant

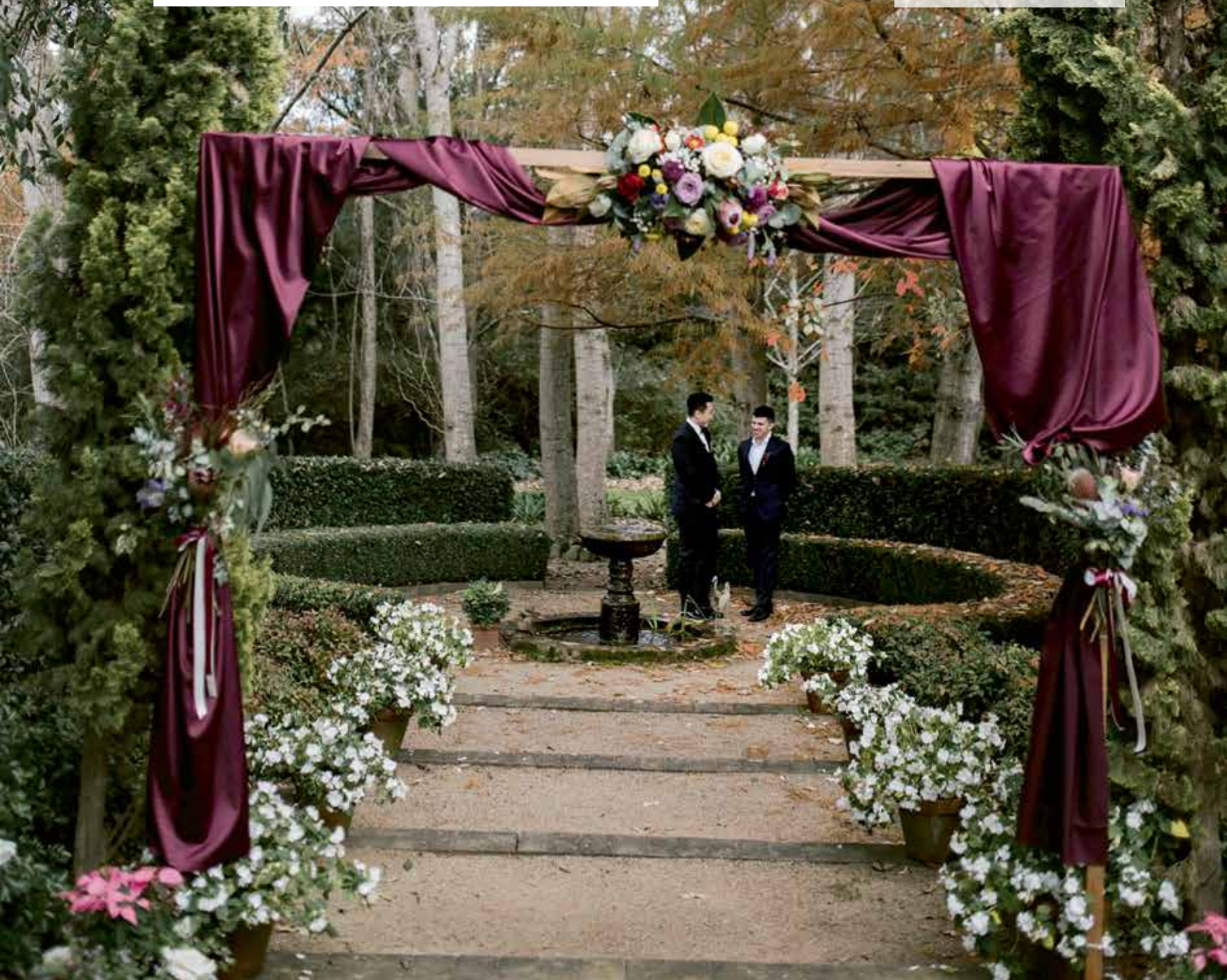
Mary Dorahy  
[@creative\\_celebrants\\_by\\_mary](https://www.instagram.com/creative_celebrants_by_mary)

### Music

Taylor Beadle-Williams  
[youtube.com/taybighair/](https://www.youtube.com/taybighair/)

### Videographer

Troy Beard, Blake Castle &  
Kristy Power  
[cinemotive.com.au](http://cinemotive.com.au)





# GO WILD *find mild*

*It's not a naked dip in a waterhole but forest bathing is just as refreshing*

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGE TONY SHEFFIELD

Forest bathing conjures up visions of skinny-dipping, Highlands style, under cool bush waterfalls in bottomless turquoise pools.

Not to knock that experience; I'd recommend it to anyone. However, this form of getting at one with nature involves keeping your clothes on.

Devised by the Japanese, forest bathing, or *shinrin-yoku*, is a therapy created in the 1980s by the Japanese government to help get an overly zealous workforce outdoors. To pause, take the air, smell the roses and literally stop working themselves to death.

Hopefully, 40 years on, Japan's workforce has more of a handle on the work/life balance. In forest bathing, where *shinrin* means forest and *yoku* bath, the health benefits of experiencing the great outdoors come to life.

Which is entirely the point, says Christie Little, a nature and forest therapy guide and expert at running forest bathing and wellbeing walks. Like the one I attend at Budderoo National Park, 10 kilometres from Robertson. In this group, organised by Experience Nature Group, a local provider of outdoor adventures, there are about 15 of us to bathe together. A mix of men and women of all ages; all, with the exception of me, are city out of towners, and have driven from Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong for the two-hour experience.

"Back in the 1980s, the Japanese government discovered time spent in nature naturally reduces

the biomarkers of stress and helps decrease blood pressure and has cardiac and pulmonary benefits," Christie says.

The main idea behind this morning's nature therapy? To demonstrate a way to slow down, spend time in nature while engaging mind, body and senses in the present. Our Indigenous peoples have appreciated the benefits of communing with nature for more than 40,000 years, and more recently the Australian Government Department of Defence published research on the positive effects for veterans suffering PTSD, says Christie.

"This morning is about finding your own nature in this place and thinking about how important it is to find some time solo."

As a working mum and wife, I never need an excuse to go solo for a bit. Nor does Sam, a fellow participant who is expecting her third baby. Her family from Forestville in Sydney's north discovered the bush just outside their backyard during COVID-19's lockdown. Today, her husband stayed home with the kids.

"It's my first-time forest bathing and my six- and nine-year-old were like 'So, what are you doing mum? Are you going tree hugging?'," Sam says.

Well yes, there is some tree hugging. There is also a practice called What's in Motion where we follow Christie slowly up a bush track, observing the life beneath our feet. Another, Pleasures of Presence,

we do with our eyes closed as we turn our attention inwards, and then outwards to the bush around us. The morning concludes with the Way of Council, a sharing of observations and reflections.

"Often being engaged with nature is about giving yourself the time and space to listen and hear your own wisdom," says Christie. "It's a process of just waiting rather than searching."

After hours in this bush setting, the mood is relaxed, introspective and friendly. A man comments on the background of birdsong, another on the gentle stillness and the quiet flowing of the nearby Carrington Falls.

*Connection* is what Christie hopes we take away. Connection with nature, with our thoughts, with ourselves. I walk regularly in the bush. However, I thank my forest bathing therapy for helping me notice the minutiae of life I usually stride past. Another thing Christie says will stay with me.

"A recent study showed when researchers put individuals in a room alone, 67 per cent of people chose to give themselves an electric shock within the first 15 minutes rather than spend time solo."

Now, those people definitely need to get out into nature more.

*ESH was a guest of Experience Nature.*


*To experience Forest Bathing on Saturday May 15 or to look at other great SH outdoor activities visit [experiencenature.com.au](http://experiencenature.com.au)*




 INSTA  
star

## MY NAME IS R. A. Spratt

Before she became a best-selling author of the Nanny Piggins, Friday Barnes and Peski Kids series, R.A. Spratt was a stand-up comedian and sketch writer for satirical television comedies such as *Good News Week*. Not a huge leap, then, to writing her 23 best-selling books, lauded and loved the world over for making children (and their parents) laugh. R.A. Spratt, a gym junkie refreshingly addicted to cake and chocolate, lives in Bowral with 'one husband, two daughters, a dog and three chickens'.

 @raspratt

**My life in five words is...** I do not do brevity. **We moved to the Southern Highlands...** in 2006. **I love the Highlands because...** everyone knows everyone. I like that people stop their cars for ducks when they cross the road. That the giant potato in Robertson looks like a poo and everyone knows it. That the staff at the Wingello general store will patiently wait 18 minutes (we literally timed her) while my nine year old picked out \$2 worth of pick and mix lollies. **Followers of my Instagram see piccies...** of me doing my podcast. I post a teaser every Wednesday. I also post pictures of my dog and any baby ducks I see. **I started writing for children because...** I got a job writing for a preschool TV show called *Bambaloo* and there was not a lot of work around for political satirists at the time, so my career took a seismic shift. **The first thing I always say to people who tell me they want to be a writer is...** get a specialist entertainment accountant. **When it comes to being a writer, the thing that has always driven me is...** my overwhelming desire to pay the mortgage. **Being one of Australia's favourite writers for young people allows me to...** visit schools all around Australia and the world. You get a unique insight into communities when you visit their schools. It's a privilege. **Nanny Piggins and Friday Barnes, some of my best-known characters, were inspired by...** the great aviatrixes of the 1920s and '30s, and Sherlock Holmes. **The one thing I have achieved I am most proud of is...** I get to make kids laugh. I'm very lucky that I have a job where I get to spread some joy in the world. **The thing I hope my books give my readers is...** the desire to read another book. **Away from my writing desk, I love to...** go to the gym. I seriously spend more time thinking about working out than I do writing. **When we have friends visiting the Highlands, we always take them...** to Bowral's Sweets and Treats. **My favourite place in the Highlands is...** Bowral swimming pool. **And finally, please finish this sentence: Old children's authors never die, they just...** never die. You can just end the sentence there. Our work lives forever in physical form though books, but also in the imagination of the children who read them. Also, I promised my children I wouldn't die, and I don't like to break a promise. 📖



# Plan your escape...



**It's Autumn Time**, plan your escape in the beautiful Southern Highlands this Autumn.  
Take a detour on our quiet country roads. Immerse yourself in nature.  
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**Don't miss the spectacular colour of autumn leaves this season.**

## Plan & Book

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



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