

Escape

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS *Aug/Sept 2021*



STAY, PLAY, EAT, DRINK & EXPLORE

**FROMAGE!
THE LOCALS WHO
LOVE CHEESE**

**BUSH, BIKES &
WATERFALLS
AN OVERNIGHT
WINNER**

**DAYS OUT &
DISCOVERIES FOR
FATHER'S DAY**



CYCLE *in the woods*

On two legs or two wheels, this unassuming Highlands accommodation stay is a bit like its owners: winningly understated.

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES ELISE HASSEY

Is there a more soothing sound than rain on a tin roof? How about rain on the tin roof of a cabin on the edge of one of NSW's most pristine and wild national parks?

Twin Falls Bush Cottages in Fitzroy Falls sits on the boundary of Morton National Park in eight hectares of bushland. As its moniker suggests, it backs on to Twin Falls, the smaller cousin of the 81 metre high Fitzroy Falls just up the road. This is the Highlands hideaway home of the McGee family: four times Olympian and World Champion cyclist, Bradley OAM, wife Sharni (right), their family and an assortment of resident animals. A lovely weatherboard house that sits off the beaten road, Twin Falls also has five cabins available for holiday and short stays.

My 10-year-old and I arrive to road test one as winter's shadows lengthen and the sun sits low in the afternoon sky. We are in Cabin 3, a hexagonal wood affair. We are immediately taken with it, sitting quietly as it does in its bush setting, a good cooee away from the next one. Inside, all is neat, cosy and functional. There is an open plan kitchen and living room and two bedrooms and a bathroom. The living room looks out to the bush through a large double window. There is a dining table, armchairs to fall into and a big day bed with plush throws and cushions to stretch out on. There are games to play and DVDs to watch, but internet connection can be hit and miss. Bedroom one is carpeted with a double bed, built-ins, and side lights. Bedroom two has double bunks for four. There is a verandah outside the front door and an enormous firepit and barbecue with chairs for those long holiday evenings shooting the breeze. It's the perfect, unpretentious set-up for a couple of families with kids to escape, or for a catch-up with friends who long to get away from the city rat race and immerse themselves in the bike tracks and walking trails that



crisscross this unspoilt property. Up near the main house where the McGees live, there is an inground swimming pool, a tennis court and a covered barbecue area for guests to enjoy.

"Mum, this place is awesome," the 10-year-old says as we light the wood burning stove. Firelighters and chopped wood are provided; there's a forest full of kindling on the doorstep to collect.

"It's actually more like a little house than a cabin isn't it? Do you think I could buy one?" he says.

Naw. Well maybe, years ago, before the McGees stumbled on this lovely place. A power couple of Australian cycling for decades, Sharni and Brad bought the property in 2005. A professional road cyclist from 1998 to 2008, Brad was still working with Team Saxo Bank in Europe when Sharni returned to Australia with the couple's children, Tahlia and Rory, in 2010.

"It feels like a dream these days but we were living in Monaco and the kids were both at school there," says Sharni. "But we had always promised Tahlia



she could go to primary school in Australia so when she was going into 4th class we moved back. She and Rory went to Robertson Public and Brad spent the next few years commuting between here and Europe."

When the multilingual Brad retired, he had sealed his place in history as one of Australia's most successful cyclists. In 2003, riding for then team Française des Jeux (FDJ) he won the prologue of the Tour de France and led the race for three days. He also wore the leader's jersey in the Giro d'Italia and the Vuelta a Espana in Spain; the first Australian to wear the leader's jersey in all three Grand Tours. Still working with NSW Institute of Sport today as a high performance director across all sporting codes, Brad knocks on our cabin door as we unpack, enormous spotlight torch in hand, to see we have everything we need.

"Wanna go on a wombat walk," he asks the 10-year-old, who looks dubiously outside as the rain starts to come down. "Yeah, might be a bit wet now," Brad concedes affably.

"Well, meet me with your mum in the morning at 8.15-ish and you can come and feed the goats, chooks and pigs with me before you leave."

The rain continues unabated as we make ourselves at home and construct our homemade pizza. For a minute or two, we toy with the idea of a 15-minute drive to nearby Robertson, where the bowling club



Photograph Rory McGee

has \$8 schnitzels on Wednesdays. "It's also a great place to play some pool with the kids," Sharni tells us beforehand.

By now however, the 10-year-old is embroiled in discussing scary movies that feature cabins in the woods (great!) and whether to eat the chocolate mousses now, or later as we watch tele. No time like the present, he decides, so it's mousse for him on the lounge. Our cabin is well kitted out for a self-catering holiday. Big fridge, gas oven, microwave and all the necessary kitchen guff, and the bathroom has a great shower with plenty of hot water and excellent pressure to boot! The perfect end to a wet day. As I tuck the 10-year-old into bed, I promise next time we'll bring our bikes and strike out in search of those resident wombats. The rain continues on the tin roof through the night but like those wombats in their burrows, we are snug and happy here, bunkered down for the night.

Twin Falls Bush Cottages, Throsby Road, Fitzroy Falls. twinfallsbushcottages.com

FROMAGE for ever



According to Dairy Australia, each of us eats 13.6 kilograms of cheese on average a year. Dairy foods are high in protein and calcium, and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating recommends that children aged four to 18 eat up to three and a half servings and adults consume two to three servings per day. We speak to three enterprising locals helping us meet this delicious daily quota.

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES ELISE HASSEY

The Teacher

Lucy Nias grew up in Cornwall in England, where her grandmother lived near a small dairy farm. From the age of 11, she recalls getting up in the dark to collect the cows from their paddocks and bring them into the dairy.

"I learnt to milk them by hand and what made them feel secure," says Lucy, who now lives on a farm in Woodlands, near Mittagong.

"I loved cows and always wanted one to milk and to love but followed a career in the city."

It wasn't until Lucy and her family moved to the Southern Highlands and "we had some grass", that the opportunity presented itself.

"When my second child was tiny, I was given a three-week-old beef heifer by our neighbour and raised her to adulthood and motherhood and milked her."

Growing as much produce as possible for her family and even hand-making the children's clothes, Lucy was also keen to supply the family's milk, and had learnt to make cheese in 2007 from Moss Vale local Nathan Burke. But as a beef breed, their hand-reared cow didn't have spare milk after she fed her calf, so Lucy swapped her for a jersey cow.

"She gave us so much milk I had to make cheese three or more times a week to keep up with production," says Lucy.

"The cheesemaking process basically involves keeping milk at an ideal temperature of bacterial growth and then inoculating it with the desired bacterial cultures. Some cheeses need rennet to make them set; some are just strained. Both processes expel the whey from the cultured milk so that you are left with the curds, which can be eaten fresh or matured."

Lucy, who has organised and held workshops for the past 10 years, says making cheese is a simple process. Consistency can be hard though and cleanliness, patience and curiosity are key.

"Everything must be sparkling clean to avoid getting the wrong bacteria in the milk because everything in there will grow. You can't hurry cheese, so you must be patient and you won't ever find out what you can do with milk if you aren't interested. Also, you need a very reliable thermometer."

Lucy's favourite? Halloumi, with camembert/brie a close second. On the flipside, she finds cheddar the most challenging.

"You make it, then you break up the curds and remake it. It's very hands on. It takes a long time; you have to be incredibly careful not to have anything up your fingernails when you do the tearing and re-knitting. It requires a press (which is a challenge in its own right!) and then it needs to be wrapped and matured for up to two years."

Lucy's workshops, for 10 to 14 people with access to a large kitchen, run for about six hours from 10am and are very hands on.

"Each workshop addresses three cheeses (one renneted and two soft cheeses), and all ingredients and equipment are included in the cost," says Lucy. "At the end of the day, you will take home the cheeses you have made during the day, so bring along a large rigid watertight box to travel with."

For more information lucynias@hotmail.com



The Cheesemonger

The Highlands can thank France for aficionado Hugh Nicholas' glamorous cheese and wine abode, Cheese etc in Bowral.

"Emmy, my wife, and I travelled a bit in Europe and also lived and worked in Paris for a while and one thing we loved was the very undramatised attitude towards eating and drinking," says Hugh, who opened Cheese etc in Bowral's High Street Arcade in November 2020 after testing the waters down the road at The Mill.

He says: "In Paris, you can be grocery shopping or at a market and just pull up a stool at the fromagerie or tapas bar and have maybe a bowl of olives and a glass of wine or a charcuterie plate with your beer and move on."

Hugh and Emmy, who have two small children, moved to Burrawang in 2017 from Sydney, where Hugh had opened his first cheese venture.

"My background is pretty varied; there's no through line really. I did work for a few years in delis, bars and restaurants throughout my 20s but that was mostly to support an aspirational music career," says Hugh.

"I opened a music venue and café with some mates in Sweden while living in Gothenburg, but it was fairly

short-lived and then I finally went all in for cheese in 2015 when I opened my shop in North Sydney."

Cheese etc is a traditional cheese providore that sells around 60 cheeses from "hyperlocal

and other Australian producers as well as from overseas".

"We're very lucky to have cheesemakers like Pecora Dairy in Robertson and then The Pines and Cupitt's (Estate) on the coast, not to mention other great stuff from further afield in NSW and then Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. I also love the European and UK stalwarts. Classics like comte, gruyere, cheddar, stilton, roquefort, taleggio to name a small handful and there's some incredible cheese coming out of the (United) States as well. Frankly, it's hard to keep it to 60!"

Hugh says bringing a European business model to the Highlands had its challenges: "a licensed cheese shop? Semantically it's tricky" but he has been encouraged by how well Highlanders have embraced the opportunity to enjoy a new take on a toastie (Swiss Melt: emmental, gruyere, raclette, smoked leg ham with pickled onions) accompanied by a glass of red on the side.

So, what's the global appeal of cheese?

"Its deliciousness of course," says Hugh. "It's also an incredibly versatile food with endless variations — of region, milk origin, style, aroma. And for all that, it's also somehow incredibly honest and simple and earthy, tied to the land and the farmers and producers. It's been popular for thousands of years already; here's hoping it's around for a few thousand more."

Cheese etc, Shop 4 High Street, 310-312 Bong Bong Street, Bowral. Wednesday and Thursday, 10am to 5pm; Friday and Saturday, 10am to 7pm; Sunday, 11am to 4pm. cheeseetc.com

The Producer Providore

Having spent a decade building a reputation as one of Australia's most exciting small dairies, and being the sole sheep milking dairy in NSW, two years ago Pecora Dairy decided it was time to branch out.

Opening its Pecora Dairy Cheese Shop & Providore on Robertson's high street, farmers Cressida and Michael Cains wanted to do their bit to help the struggling artisan dairy sector.

"In 2019, 486 small family-owned dairy farms



Photographs Tony Sheffield



"It felt like a natural fit for us to stock a big fridge with beautiful Australian cheeses in our shop," says Cressida.

"Michael and I are passionate about the Australian cheese industry and our little shop allows us to tell the stories of our colleagues, the artisan makers, and help people understand the cheeses and, most importantly, why they need to buy Australian cheese. We import a huge amount of cheese into Australia every year."

Winner of the 2020 NSW-ACT AgriFutures Rural Women's Award for her plan to launch



an online platform to help small dairy farmers operate up the value chain and produce branded product, Cressida launched Dairy Cocoon in May. In November 2020, Michael was awarded a prestigious Nuffield Scholarship, which post COVID-19 will allow him to travel overseas to continue his studies into the benefits of raw milk cheese production to help Australia's local cheese industry to diversify.

In 2018, Pecora Dairy became the first Australian producer to make a non-cooked raw milk cheese, Yarrowa. Named after the Indigenous word for Robertson's cool climate rainforest, where Pecora Dairy sits, the cheese was named Champion Cheese at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. Pecora Dairy Cheese Shop & Providore also includes other cheeses from Australian producers, The Pines, Pyengana, Berry's Creek, Holy Goat, Vannella, Section 28, L'Artisan and Milawa, "as well as beautiful artisan products from farmers and makers whom we know personally".

"Among them include Pepe Saya butter, Olsson's salts, Alto olives and oils, Singing Magpie produce, Malfroy's Gold honey, Prickle Hill sugar plums, Gumnut chocolate and freshly baked Moonacres baguettes," says Cressida.

"We've been thinking for a long time about having a retail outlet in town. We feel strongly about being part of our community in Robertson and wanted to offer not only our cheese, but other Australian artisan cheeses as well as beautiful local and artisan produce."

Pecora Dairy Cheese Shop & Providore, 91 Hoddle Street, Robertson. Friday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm. pecoradairy.com



closed down, the largest annual exodus," says Cressida.

"The Australian dairy industry is in crisis, and one way for small family-owned dairy farms to stay in the industry, and have a profitable future for generations to come, is for them to transform up the value chain into making cheese."

Determined to reap the fortune of their own hard work caring for their flock of East Friesian ewes from which they create a range of sheep milk products – four delicious cheeses, a yoghurt and a fresh curd – the Cains opened their retail shop to promote theirs, and others' produce.

explore the town of MITTAGONG

The gateway to the Southern Highlands, Mittagong is a country town rich in history and outdoor places to visit. Alive with antique, vintage and fashion boutiques, spend some time shopping and pick up that unique piece to add to your wardrobe or home before stopping off for brunch or lunch at one of the many restaurants and cafes. If you fancy something stronger or sweeter, Eden Brewery and Gumnut Patisserie across the road from each other in Cavendish Street are musts. For vegans and vegetarians, check out Four Seasons Bistro on Bowral Road. If art and design is your thing, don't miss

Sturt Gallery & Studios on Range Road, and if you have young kids in tow, wander through Mittagong's colonial architecture lined streets to Lake Alexandra Reserve, where they can run around in the play park and see the birdlife. Time to rest and recuperate? Head to the terrific Mittagong RSL just down the road to refuel.







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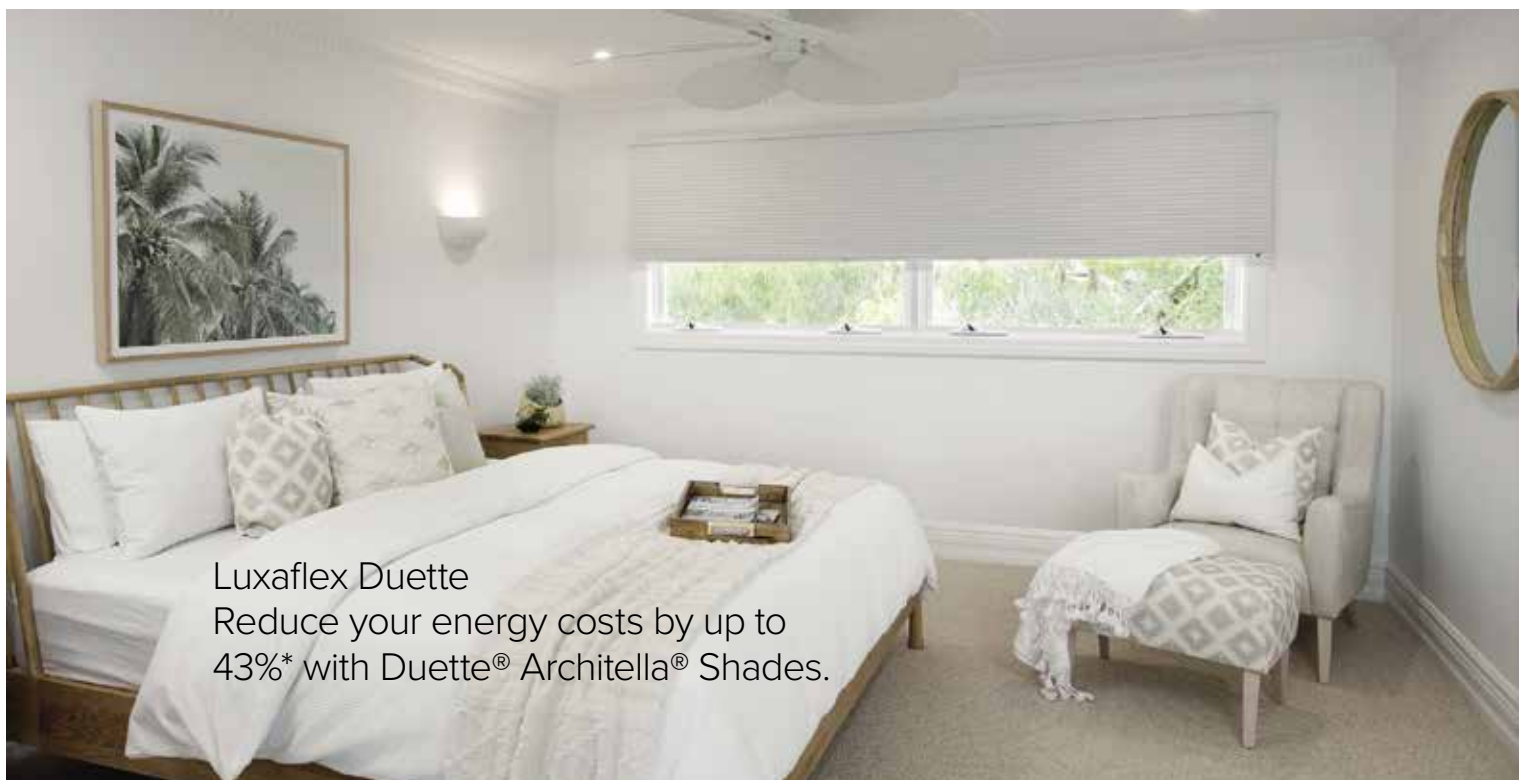


MittagongRSL

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Fresh local produce your thing? Mittagong markets are held the third and fifth Saturday of the month, 8.30am to 2pm, Uniting Church, Cnr Albert and Alice Streets, Mittagong.




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SCENT OF A *truffle*



Truffles are black diamonds of the earth, and the Southern Highlands grows some true gems. ESH spent a tasty evening learning more.

WORDS ALEX SPEED IMAGES ELISE HASSEY & ABBIE MELLE

There is good reason, explains truffie farmer Patrick Moroney, that Australia's mushrooming truffle industry relies on dogs, not pigs, to root out these subterranean delicacies.

"You try stopping a 100 kilogram pig when it gets the scent of a truffle," Patrick says. "Dogs are more obedient and are not generally interested in eating the goods."

Patrick and his wife Tanya Moroney own Robertson Truffles, near Belmore Falls. It was here in 2014 on their 85 hectare farm, then owners Barb and Ted

Smith unearthed a 1.172kg Perigord black truffle (*Tuber melanosporum*) under seven-year-old Ilex and Robur oak trees. It was the largest to have been uncovered in Australia at the time. Ted is now back at Robertson Truffles advising Patrick and Tanya, who bought the property in early 2020.

The Australian truffle season runs for eight to 10 weeks from the end of May. This year has been a good season, says Patrick, on hand to enjoy some of his homegrown Perigord black truffles, at Southern Highlands Winery Restaurant's annual Truffle Night. This gastronomic four course affair is cooked out front by chef Marco Salvestrin and comes accompanied by Southern Highlands Winery vintages, chosen by vintner Eddy Rossi. Both Marco and Eddy have Italian heritage and are au fait with truffles; Italy is the second largest producer of these black diamonds, after Spain but before France and Australia. For the rest of us here to enjoy this aromatic fungus, truffles remain elusive and expensive, selling for up to \$3000 a kilogram.

Entree is truffle polenta and mushroom cheese fondue. It's a delicate affair with a subtle taste not ordinarily associated with the pungent smell of these funky, aromatic fruits of the earth, which to some smell like heaven, to others, footlocker hell. First course is spaghetti carbonara with shaved truffle, which Marco whips up expertly on a gas ring. He tells us carbonara was created in Italy to feed coalminers when they came up for lunch. Lucky miners. Second course is sirloin steak with truffle pepper sauce and mashed potato, and, for dessert, a delectable truffle panna cotta drizzled with honey infused with truffle.

It is a decadent meal, a truffle feast. Patrick, whose truffle hunts are becoming increasingly popular (see below), lets slip his favourite ways to eat are more low-key, though.

"I love a truffle butter, and you can't beat a ham and cheese toastie with shaved truffle." ■



Marco Salvestrin



TRUFFLE TRIVIA, TRAIL & TASTINGS

Truffles are mysterious mushroom-like fungi that grow underground. In the wild, they rely on the pungent scents of their fruits to ensure animals dig them up and spread their spores. In Australia, truffles grow on tree roots which have been inoculated with truffle spores and on average take five to seven years to produce. They are grown in NSW, the ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and in the south of Western Australia. Tasmania hosted the first Australian plantations, in the early 1990s. *Tuber melanosporum* is the French Black, aka

Perigord, truffle sought after by chefs. The White Truffle (*T. magnatum*) is the king of all truffles, fetching the highest prices, but it is not widely available. Despite trying, growers have been unable to cultivate white truffles.

On August 14 and 15, the NSW truffle industry is holding its inaugural Viva La Truffle festival at The Loch, Berrima. The weekend truffle fair, marketplace and trail will showcase growers from around NSW and their produce, which will be available for sale. It will also include masterclasses by chefs Fast Ed Halmagyi, Thomas Gorringe

of The Gantry, Pier One, Sydney and Matty Roberts of Eschalot, Berrima.

Interested in doing your own hunting?

Robertson Truffles holds two-hour truffle hunts in its truffiere from June to August. Hunts include a live truffle hunt and dig with dogs, and refreshments. Bookings for 2022 season open in February and keep an eye out for Southern Highlands Winery's truffle nights next year. For bookings: theloch.net.au, robertsontruffles.com.au, southernhighlandswinery.com.au

DAYS OUT & DISCOVERIES *for dads*

Father's Day is a traditional holiday, celebrated each year since the Middle Ages to honour fathers and to pay homage to paternal bonds. Here are some Highlands ideas to help celebrate your dad on September 5, and every day.



TOOL TIME: If your dad is one of those fellas who loves to potter in his shed/garden/backyard making things with his hands, a trip to Sturt Gallery & Studios in Mittagong is a must. Book dad into an approaching short course at the famed Sturt School for Wood, where this year, he can learn to restore hand tools or explore the ancient Japanese wood art of kumiko. Cnr Range Road & Waverley Parade, Mittagong. sturtgallery.nsw.edu.au

CAR CLASSIC: *If your dad sits in the rev-head camp, help him give the speed cameras the slip for the day and book an open track session at Pheasant Wood Circuit. Located on the fringes of the Highlands near Marulan, this motor racing circuit caters for race cars and road cars and really lets dads let down their hair, and their lead foot. Wednesday to Sunday, 8am to 4pm. For terms and conditions, check out pheasantwood.com.au*

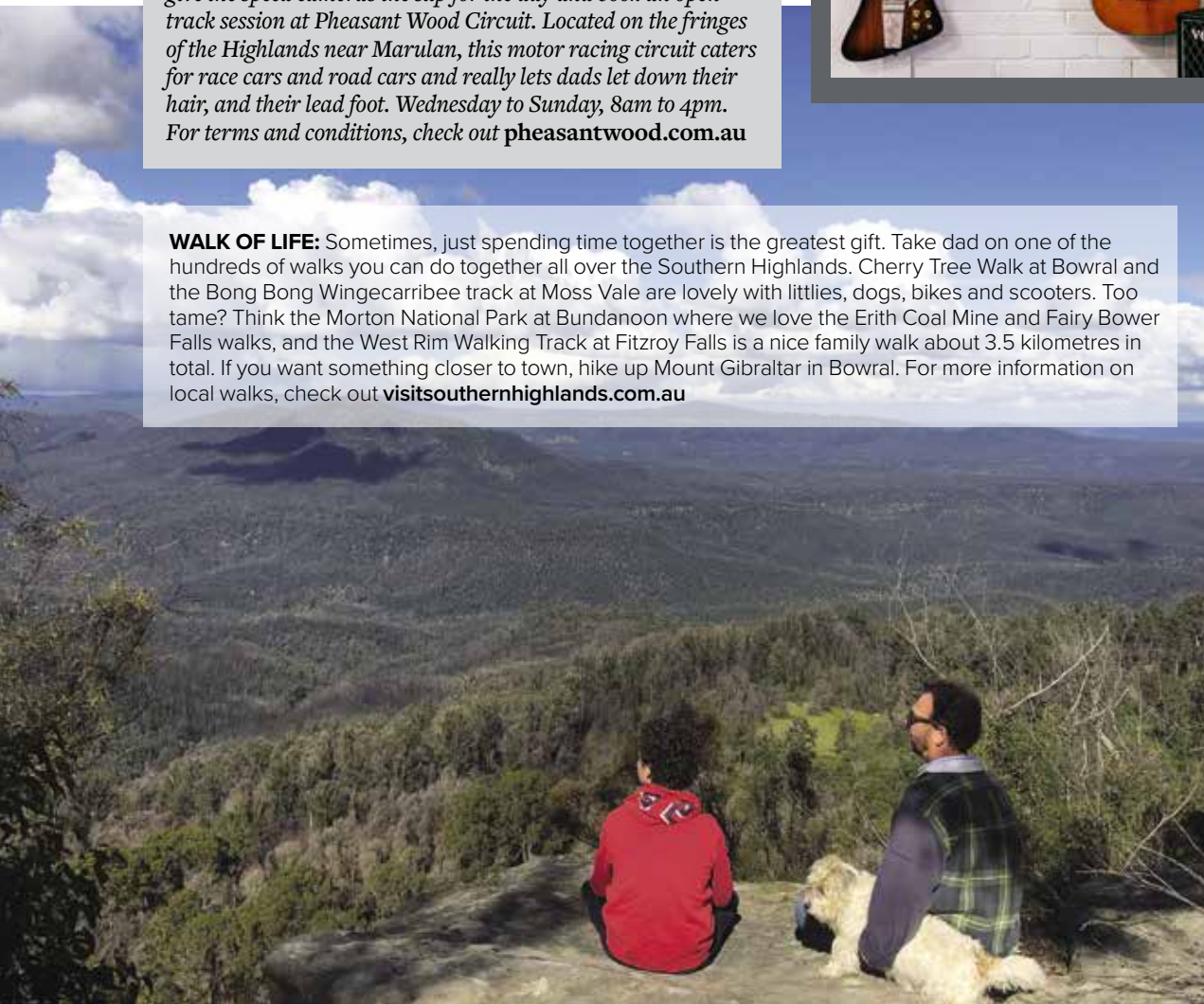
WALK OF LIFE: Sometimes, just spending time together is the greatest gift. Take dad on one of the hundreds of walks you can do together all over the Southern Highlands. Cherry Tree Walk at Bowral and the Bong Bong Wingecarribee track at Moss Vale are lovely with littlies, dogs, bikes and scooters. Too tame? Think the Morton National Park at Bundanoon where we love the Erith Coal Mine and Fairy Bower Falls walks, and the West Rim Walking Track at Fitzroy Falls is a nice family walk about 3.5 kilometres in total. If you want something closer to town, hike up Mount Gibraltar in Bowral. For more information on local walks, check out visitsouthernhighlands.com.au

BARREL BOY: *Is single malt Scotch whisky, the water of life, as the Scots call it, your dad's thing? If so, take him on an outing to Joadja Distillery, Joadja, where he can taste and buy some of Valero and Elisa Jimenez's very fine single malts, distilled on site. If beer is more your dad's scene, book in for Eden Brewery's three-hour Beer, Cheese and Food Extravaganza. Dad will get an in-depth tour of this boutique Mittagong brewery, an in-depth talk on the brewing process, a beer tasting masterclass on how to pair Eden's selection of ales with a variety of world cheese, and lunch to soak it all up! Wednesdays and Thursdays, 11am to 2pm, 1/19 Cavendish Street, Mittagong. edenbrewery.beer*



PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC: GOT A DAD WHO LIKES STRUMMING TUNES ON THE GUITAR? EVER CONSIDERED GETTING HIM HIS OWN BESPOKE INSTRUMENT? LUTHIERS (GUITAR MAKERS) ARE RARE BUT WE ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE A FINE ONE IN THE HIGHLANDS; T•GUITARS, FOUNDED BY LUTHIER ANDY THOMSON. T•GUITARS ARE HANDMADE FROM SCRATCH AND HAVE BEEN PLAYED BY BANDS SUCH AS GANG OF YOUTHS, THE SMITH STREET BAND AND HOCKEY DAD. GET IN TOUCH WITH ANDY TO BOOK A VISIT WITH YOUR RESIDENT MUSO. 2 SHERWOOD AVENUE, BOWRAL. TGUITARS.COM.AU

TREATS TO TAKE OUT: *Why not make a day of it and take lunch with you on dad's special walk? If you want something local and delicious, pre-order a high tea for two to take out from Highlands institution Gumnut Patisserie at its Mittagong, Bowral and Berrima bakeries. Gumnut's high teas include a selection of their award-winning pies, scones and delectable petit fours. If dad's more of a feed-the-man-meat kinda guy, order up a Double Bernie's Burger at Moss Vale favourite, Bernie's Diner in Argyle Street, and be sure to share a chocolate sundae with maraschino cherries on top. Scrumptious ways to commemorate time striding out together.*
gumnutpatisserie.com.au
berniesdiner.com.au



MY NAME IS *Tim Olsen*

Gallerist Tim Olsen could have chosen to hide his light under a bushel given the family he was born to. The son of artists Valerie Strong and John Olsen, the elder statesman of Australian art, instead Tim strived to find his own place within the art world. His memoir, *Son of The Brush*, published a year ago, details Tim's struggle with identity, self-worth and the bottle, and how he carved his own path alongside his father's at times blinding brilliance.

 @timjolsen

INSTA
star

ARTWORK *BLACK COCKATOO* BY LEILA JEFFRIES PHOTOGRAPH ERYCA GREEN

My life in five words is... art, food and interesting people. **We moved to the Southern Highlands...** in 2000. **I love the Highlands because...** my father lives here. **My favourite thing to do in the Southern Highlands is...** enjoy all the options of restaurants and cafes. Exercising at the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre. **Followers of my Instagram see piccies of...** art, my gallery, my cooking and the history and current document of my family life. **When it comes to art, this is one truth I know...** that the background to creativity is the ability to draw. **I got into the art world because...** I had the talent, knowledge and the belief I had something to offer. **My biggest achievement as an art dealer and gallerist...** has been to be constantly evolving and becoming an interesting venue, whilst supporting and elevating the careers of young and established artists. **The first thing I always say to people who tell me they want to be an artist is...** draw, draw, draw. Learn about colour and develop your aesthetic. Never stop reading and learning from other artists. **Growing up the son of one of Australia's most famous artists was...** a double edge sword. My family is a great dynasty but it never excluded me from having to work hard for everything I have. **I wrote my first book, *Son of The Brush*, about that life because...** I have had an amazing life full of rich experiences and hard lessons. My only regret is I wish I knew it sooner. **When it comes to showing and selling other people's work, the thing that has always driven me is...** seeing an artist blossom into a much respected creator and seeing the subsequent success. **Being one of Australia's best known art figures allows**

me to... give more and use my profile for philanthropic purposes. **If there is one thing that catches my eye about an artist's work, it is...** how it feels as much as how it looks. It must have the wow factor. **Artists who inspire me...** include Ian Fairweather, Giorgio Morandi and Willem de Kooning. **Now I have written one bestselling book...** I intend to help others from my mistakes and experiences. **The things I hope my book gives my readers are...** an insight into an art world that has passed. **Away from art, I love to...** swim, cook, travel and write. **If there is one lesson my father taught me it was...** give, love more and avoid mediocrity. **If there is one lesson I hope to impart to my own son is...** integrity and to believe in himself and love himself un-narcissistically. **Living in the shadow of a famous father can be a...** mixed blessing in overcoming low self-esteem, but a great reward in learning who you are aside of that daunting figure. **The things I am most proud of include...** my family, my business and the incredible life I am blessed with. **My mother Valerie Strong was...** also a brilliant artist. Bringing attention to her work is revealing another talented creative, who brings so much to the current art world, even posthumously. **I stay in the Highlands...** at least three days a week with John. **When we have friends visiting, we...** always take them to Caffé Rosso in Bowral for breakfast or lunch. **My favourite place in the Highlands is...** home. **The most precious piece of advice I ever received was ...** do something creative every day. **And finally, please finish this sentence. True art aficionados never die, they...** leave behind a legacy of a visual experience that is truly only theirs. ■

Plan your escape...



As Winter comes to an end and Spring begins, the Southern Highlands will see its frosty mornings become sun filled and bright. Don't miss out on the last of our crackling log fires and crisp days, and look forward to the milder conditions that Spring brings to the Highlands, like open gardens, Tulip Time, longer days and watch as the landscape changes with green hues.

Take a drive on our quiet country roads, immerse yourself in nature, meander through museums, boutiques and galleries, and take time to really enjoy our local produce and cool climate wines.

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.



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 experiences 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 4871 2888 or visit our website.

