

Bliss in bush beauty

**break
away**

ELIZABETH BELLAMY

I am a lazy holiday person. This is what I tell myself as I lounge in an unfamiliar spa, gazing up at the stars with a surprisingly good bottle of plonk nearby.

I say this because usually, by the time the car has made it down a queasy Clyde, I'm more than ready to bolt for some fresh air and warm Batemans Bay sand between my toes.

So veering left and driving 40 minutes north to the Ulladulla region, and Milton's Bush View Cottage, requires some changing of habits.

The car doesn't pull up until late on our first night but hosts Roy and Judy Wood have come good on their promises of a fire out front and the spa is hot and ready to go.

There are dips in the fridge, chocolates on the bed and more breakfast provisions than we could reasonably consume. Which is not a bad thing.

We inspect the "cottage", if you could call it that, and note that it is more like a self-contained house.

There's a combined bedroom and living area, with a separate ensuite and well-appointed kitchen off to the side.

There's only a double bed and the layout means it's better suited for couples, who make up most of the clientele anyway, the Woods say.

It's certainly spotless (Judy's hand at work), decorated in shades of brown, beige and natural wood, and country-style but with a modern finish. The vase of bottlebrush flowers from the garden (a landscaped blend



Bush View Cottage at Milton is full of brilliant touches, has a great garden and offers wildlife delights, such as this frog.

Photos: DANIEL NUGENT

of mostly hardy natives) is a lovely touch. As are the "spa robes" waiting in the wardrobe.

After inspecting the fridge (and the sausages, bacon and eggs for tomorrow's cook-it-yourself breakfast) we go back outside to start up the barbecue.

And meet Sissie.

Roy puts her through her paces for us – and I'm particularly impressed when the kelpie-cross picks up a paper towel and drops it in a bin. Twice. I see the hand of Judy . . .

Roy also warns us about the spa-appreciating frogs, but it's not until later that

we make their acquaintance. I'm a sucker for animals. My other half is not so keen, but manages to tolerate the presence of a heat-seeking visitor. Just.

"I think he's cute!" I protest. "Hmmm," is the response I get, as he wedges himself on the other side of the tub until the frog disappears into the night, leaving us to contemplate the bubbles, the quiet and the odd wallaby thumping off into the bush.

The Woods have been here almost two years, after moving from Melbourne, where they also ran a B and B.

They have high hopes for the area, which they say is being discovered by increasing numbers of Sydney and Canberra holiday-makers.

Roy gets excited when he talks about Milton as "the new Berry".

Walking the town's main street the next day, I can see what he means. There are at least three antique shops, quite a few foodie emporiums, a number of pubs and cafes and a groovy "vintage" store (Nikki B's) full of op-shop finds like coronation-era biscuit tins and '50s frocks (I only get a little carried away).

And the drive in, over rolling green hills dotted with cows, is evocative of the area around chi-chi Berry (to the north near Nowra and popular with the weekend Sydney set).

But after a day of sightseeing it's nice to be back in the bush. I wrench off my shoes and walk out the back, where the wattlebirds carouse and the blue haze of the Budawang ranges beckons through the trees. The three-hour trip up Pigeon House Mountain is not on the agenda for this trip. (Thankfully, says my other half a little joyfully. OK, so I may have agreed.)

A stroll along nearby Mollmook Beach (including a visit to the golf club – and its views over the water) has resulted in an



Bush View Cottage, NSW

Where: Tallow Wood Road, Milton.

Driving time from Canberra: 2½ hours.

Website: www.bushview.com.au

Email: info@bushview.com.au

Phone: 4455 7060, or 0419 897 760

Fax: 4455 7064

Cost per night: Special rate for *Canberra Times* readers for the month of November. For a two-night stay, pay \$280.

appetite, so we consider our dinner options and opt for the Italian-style Bacchus on Milton's main street.

My beloved is still talking about his veal tortellini an hour and a half (and a game of pool) later and it's fair to say that we don't come away disappointed.

A little too full. But not disappointed.

So a night on the couch picking through the B and B's DVD collection is not such a bad thing.

Before we hit the spa anyway.

I wake up with no thought of food whatsoever. But the call of duty summons us to the Pilgrims vegetarian cafe in Milton's main street.

We're too late for the laid-back, slightly boho establishment's breakfast menu (which ends at 11am, a problem for slothful city dwellers) but the burgers are a sensation.

Arriving humbly in greaseproof paper, the Bliss burger is a mouthful of taste, with its curried lentil pattie, tahini and chilli sauce, and the satay tang of the Millennium is more-ish.

The Bob's Reef juice (a blend of orange, carrot and ginger which leaves the latter tingling on the palate) has me wondering why Canberra breakfast establishments can't match it – this is definitely full-strength.

And then we're full. Again. And in hope that a return to Mollmook Beach will help things along somewhat.

It does, a little, and as we walk I think about the things we've missed.

The wineries, Rick Stein's Bannisters restaurant and a lounge by the pool bar, and water warm enough to swim in.

And it seems the frogs have made an impression, because already there's been lobbying for a return trip.

If he can overcome frogs, I can get past laziness.

■ Elizabeth Bellamy was a guest of Tourism NSW.

TRACK THROUGH ITALY 20% OFF Eurail Italy Passes

Explore Italy's cities, immerse yourself in Italy's fashion, cuisine, culture, art and way of life. Italy is well connected with the rail network operating 1000 trains daily and high-speed Eurostar Italia servicing most major Italian cities. A Eurail Italy Pass is your passport to the entire country.



Price per person	Class of travel	Travel days in 2 months				
		3 days	5 days	7 days	8 days	10 days
Adult	1st	\$299 or 29,900 Membership Rewards points	\$369 or 36,900 Membership Rewards points	\$435 or 43,500 Membership Rewards points	\$470 or 47,000 Membership Rewards points	\$540 or 54,000 Membership Rewards points
Adult Saver Pass	1st	\$257 or 25,700 Membership Rewards points	\$315 or 31,500 Membership Rewards points	\$373 or 37,300 Membership Rewards points	\$402 or 40,200 Membership Rewards points	\$462 or 46,200 Membership Rewards points
Adult	2nd	\$247 or 24,700 Membership Rewards points	\$301 or 30,100 Membership Rewards points	\$356 or 35,600 Membership Rewards points	\$385 or 38,500 Membership Rewards points	\$439 or 43,900 Membership Rewards points
Adult Saver Pass	2nd	\$212 or 21,200 Membership Rewards points	\$259 or 25,900 Membership Rewards points	\$303 or 30,300 Membership Rewards points	\$330 or 33,000 Membership Rewards points	\$375 or 37,500 Membership Rewards points

CALL NOW for further details- Travelscene Manuka,

The Terrace, Flinders Way, Manuka,

PH 02 6260 8080 OR Email book@travelscenemanuka.com.au

†Only available to Membership Rewards Ascent Premium, Ascent, Choices or Blue Sky enrolled Cardmembers (an annual fee may apply). Subject to the Terms & Conditions of the Membership Rewards program. American Express International Inc., (ABN 15000 618 208), Incorporated with Limited Liability in Delaware, USA. ©Registered trademark of American Express Company. Conditions: Valid for sale 1 September – 31 December 2009. Valid for travel 1 September 2009 – 30 June 2010; passes must be validated within 6 months of the date of issuance. Saver Pass required 2 people travelling together at all times. Price is inclusive of \$12 pass issuance fee, any booking requiring seat reservations is subject to a \$35 reservations fee. Children 5-15 years pay 50% of adult price, infant under 5 years not occupying a seat travel free. Passes must be validated within 6 months of the date of issuance. All passes are non exchangeable and non refundable. Prices correct as at 31 August 2009. Prices may be subject to change due to currency fluctuations. Conditions apply.

09-1353175