

# Short Break Mt Tamborine

## Falling in love with the Mount

Mt Tamborine's newest foodie tour is impressing first-timers and old-timers, writes **Alison Cotes**

IN THE days of my wasted youth, I had a boyfriend with a red Riley roadster. It was the poshest car I'd ever been in, except that the passenger door kept falling off, but I was still very impressed.

But even in the memory of that pales beside the gold Rolls-Royce that picked us up the other day from Witches Falls Cottages in North Tamborine to take us to a cooking class and then later whip us around the mountain to have a wine tasting at the just-opened Queensland Wine Centre, and see the sunset from the Rotary Lookout along the road. The enterprising David and Daniela Kennedy, owners of the fabled Witches Falls Cottages since 2007, have come up with a new way to experience one of southeast Queensland's most beautiful mountains, and even the old Tamborine hands I was with were blown away.

Among D and D's many special packages is the Tamborine Food and Wine Experience, where I played queen for a day and experienced my favourite kind of cooking class, strictly no-hands-on, and then sat back with convivial fellow guests and ate the fruit of Terri Taylor's labours while nodding wisely and silent absorbing all kinds of tips (Terri is off soon to represent Australia at the Slow Food conference in Italy) with which to amaze my friends and even impress my family.

It was such a lovely meal. We had the French menu: a twice-cooked cheese soufflé (local cheese, of course, like almost all the ingredients, including Terri's home-grown herbs and baby vegetables), a chicken liver pate enlivened with Grand Marnier, coq au vin, and chocolate mousse are some of the things I remember, although it was Terri's method of cooking Tamborine's favourite fruit, rhubarb, that's been the greatest hit with my friends.

We began with rhubarb teacake and coffee, walked around Terri's impressive garden and admired the view, and then sat around her huge kitchen table and watched her turn out minor masterpieces.

What with frivolous conversation and serious gormandising, this took us to 3pm, when Jacqueline and her rolled-gold Rolls arrived to drive us to the Queensland Wine Centre at Cedar Creek Winery. This is another splendid new enterprise on the mountain, with an elegant tasting room, a gallery of Arthur Hamblin's paintings and an opportunity to taste as many of the products of 14 different Queensland wineries as you wish, and you don't have to drive around all day in a semi-inebriated state from having sampled not wisely but too well, as Jacqueline is there to show you the sights.

We watched the sunset and then came back to our lovely stone cottage where the wood stove was well alight, and much later nibbled on some of the goodies we had bought previously at the food outlets along the way.

There are plenty of eating places very close to Witches Falls, which we saved for the next day, for this is a two-night package and we had plenty of time to explore the rainforest, visit Witches Chase Cheese Factory at the end of Gallery Walk, sample the boutique beers at their mini-brewery and lunch at the Liquid Amber Bistro and, of course, buy some of their award-winning cheese, including a Misty Mountain blue vein that's up there with the best King Island can offer.

Late spring is the time of the year to visit Mt Tamborine (well, possibly, although autumn runs a close second), and Witches Falls Cottages are among the best of the many accommodation options. The cottages are compact and practical while being very luxurious – visitors from the pre-David and Daniela days will remember the raised dais with its big sexy bed, but now there's also a huge bathroom with a spa and a private outdoor eating area.

Each cottage has a little garden with a pond and happy croaking frogs after all the rain and, although you've missed the blossom trees and avocado season, it's still one of the prettiest places less than 100km from Brisbane.

So go now while the nights are still chilly enough for a fire, and the days are warm and sunny, and I guarantee you'll fall in love with the mountain either for the first time or all over again.

### **Getting there**

North Tamborine is about 70km south of Brisbane

### **Staying there**

Witches Falls Cottages, 132 Main Western Rd, North Tamborine

Ph 5545 4411, email [chiefwizard@witchesfallscottages.com.au](mailto:chiefwizard@witchesfallscottages.com.au),

website [www.witchesfallscottages.com.au](http://www.witchesfallscottages.com.au)

The Tamborine Food and Wine Experience costs \$760 for two adults for two nights mid-week, \$860 weekends. It includes chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce transfers and tour, cooking class, two nights' accommodation and breakfast package. For general rates and other packages, check the website.

### **Doing there**

Rainforest walks in Queensland's oldest national park just across the road; tourist shopping; countless cafes and good restaurants; antique shops and a distillery.

Chez Jacqueline Limousines,

[www.goldrollsroyce.com](http://www.goldrollsroyce.com);

Tamborine Cooking School,

[www.tamborinecookingschool.com.au](http://www.tamborinecookingschool.com.au);

Queensland Wine Centre, Cedar Creek Estate, Hartley Rd, North Tamborine,

[www.cedarcreekestate.com.au](http://www.cedarcreekestate.com.au)

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