



ESCAPE Witches Falls Cottages, cnr Main Western & Hartley rds, North Tamborine | **Frances Whiting**

The last time I went to Tamborine Mountain I still wore knee-high socks, we went in the family station wagon, and the trip seemed to take forever: cue the back-seat chorus of “Are we there yet?”

I have vague memories of an unsealed twisting road my mother told my father to slow down on, and a futile quest to find somewhere good to eat. Returning recently with my mother, now telling *me* to slow down, I was pleasantly surprised to find the mountain’s beautiful village is an easy hour-or-so drive from Brisbane, and these days there’s an embarrassment of places to dine.

We stayed at the cosy Witches Falls Cottages, five stone, gabled buildings on 1.5 hectares of rose gum and lavender scented gardens. One of the best things is their location, across from the Witches Falls part of the Tamborine National Park. This section was declared in 1908, making it Queensland’s oldest national park and it’s a beauty. Piccabeen palm groves, stately eucalypts, and if you’re lucky, a rare glimpse of the Albert’s lyrebird picking its way along the rainforest floor.

The other side of the road is not quite as picturesque, with a small brick telephone exchange building, but it really doesn’t detract from the beauty of the cottages – and mobile phone reception is excellent!

While the identical four-star cottages are more charming than luxurious, their bathrooms are as impressive as any five-star effort I’ve splashed about in: glass-walled, fern-filled havens that bring the outside rainforest in.

Each cottage has a comfy queen bed, a fireplace, a well-equipped kitchenette, television and DVD player, and a spa bath to sink into at the end of a long day of eating.



We had lunch at the gorgeous Marks and Gardner Gallery and licensed Verandah Café, a short walk from our accommodation, a top spot to breathe in some great books and artworks, and sample local fare.

Our antipasto platter featured, among other things, toasted Turkish bread from the Tamborine Mountain Bakery (est. 1924), homemade tamarillo chutney, char-grilled vegetables and mimosa eggs (the produce sourced from one of the owners’ gardens), some heavenly locally made dukka with native pepper and lemon myrtle and a terrific local drop from Heritage Estate.

Speaking of wines, raise a glass to the newish and very impressive Queensland Wine Centre, uncorking some of the state’s finest drops at the Cedar Creek Estate and Winery.

It’s a stunning location, and with 14 wineries represented under one roof and roughly 100 wines to choose from, it was lucky we had a chauffeur-driven 1982 Silver Spur Rolls Royce to ferry us home, courtesy of the Chez Jacqueline Limousine Service.

Back at the Cottages, it was shoes off, fire lit, and a nice drop of red poured. This is the sort of mountaineering I could get used to.

thedeal

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RATES
From \$238 per couple per night, including breakfast. Check website for specials and packages.

THE VERDICT
A little mountain magic.