Fall under a spell

A weekend getaway to Witches Falls Cottages on Tamborine Mountain in the Gold Coast Hinterland bewitched SUE FULLER.

ARRIVING just before sunset, we slipped across the road from our destination to watch the Great Dividing Range lit with the day's last rays before the sun dipped below the horizon. Asian-style lamps cast a welcoming glow as we checked into Witches Falls Cottages.

There are five cottages hidden among lush tropical gardens which have a distinct Asian flavour with their stands of bamboo and peaceful water features.

Owners David Kennedy and his Swiss-born partner Daniela Kuratli have made some thoughtful renovations during the 12 months they have owned the property, which borders the Witches Falls section of Queensland's Tamborine Mountain National Park which this year celebrates its centenary.

Each stone gable cottage now features a bathroom with a glass ceiling and sliding doors which completely open up to a small garden. The conditions must be ideal for plants judging by the 'fern wall' flourishing on one side of the spa, adding to the feeling of bathing in the middle of a tropical garden. Private outdoor courtyards have also been added.

The fireplace is set to be lit on arrival, while freshly-ground local Tamborine Mountain coffee is supplied in the well set up kitchen and a decanter of complimentary port and chocolates is ready for after dinner.

For an additional $80, David and Daniela will supply a barbecue pack including steak, German sausages, potatoes in their jackets and corn on the cob (pre-cooked and ready to warm on the barbie), plus beautiful salad, dessert and a bottle of good local wine.

The next morning, a breakfast hamper is discreetly delivered complete with a freshly-baked loaf of bread. Guests can choose from continental, or bacon and eggs barbecue hampers. Our continental hamper included orange juice, fresh fruit, yoghurt, as well as local ham and cheeses, which we enjoyed sitting outside in the sunny courtyard.

Perhaps the most indulgent part of the weekend came next with the arrival of two therapists from Ripple Massage. Ripple, which offers mobile massages in the Tamborine Mountain, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and Byron Bay regions, has developed a signature Sea Shell massage.

While my husband soon fell asleep during his two hour 'blokes massage', I was treated to a deeply relaxing massage using mainly cowrie shells which were heated and filled with scented oils. The smooth surfaces of the shells are used for a massage that is incredibly relaxing and definitely ironed out some muscle knots.

The two hour treatments all include a full body exfoliation with lime, tangerine and walnut and an organic clay and cucumber face mask. Best of all, you can slip into the shower in your 'outdoor bathroom' while the therapists pack up.

Ripple also offers a range of treatments including hot stone massage, ka huna, Vietnamese four hands massages and Himalayan ayurvedic treatments.

The rest of the weekend was spent on equally indulgent pursuits. Food and wine is a big part of the mountain's appeal and three wineries are within easy walking distance of the cottages.

With its focus on fresh air, food and wine and welcoming hospitality, Witches Falls Cottages and Tamborine Mountain are perfect for a weekend 'spell'.

For bookings and more information:
Witches Falls Cottages, Corner of Hartley and Main Western Roads, North Tamborine
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