

Mountain Whispers - Varenna Review

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Leave the city behind and experience the decadence and grandeur of a bygone era in the picturesque Blue Mountains at [Mountain Whispers](#). Within 2 hours of Sydney, the Blue Mountains is the perfect weekend getaway to immerse yourself in this world heritage wonderland.

Mountain Whispers is a boutique collection of four luxury holiday houses owned by historic restorer Lorraine Allanson. Lorraine has painstakingly renovated these properties back to their former glory, having researched each property's history and the region's rich cultural heritage.

We're staying in [Varenna](#), a generously proportioned Edwardian home. The passion and style infused into the renovation of Varenna has created a little piece of luxury in the heart of Leura. Beautiful antique furniture and curious objects blend into a domain where every modern comfort is catered for.



Our warm host Lorraine provides a tour of the house, explaining the security system and patiently answering my questions as I swoon over the artwork, antiques and special pieces before disappearing so we can relax and enjoy our decadent surrounds. Lorraine explains that a personal chef & wait staff can be also be arranged for special occasions and has arranged in the past for memorable proposals...ahhh, how romantic!

The fully self-contained three-bedroom house caters for one to three couples in luxurious comfort and is for your exclusive use during your stay. Each bedroom is styled uniquely and we choose the opulent front room with romantic four-poster bed, decorated in rich red fabrics and brimming with antique furnishings.

The grand living & dining room is the heart of the house with cosy gas log fireplace and complimentary port, bottle of boutique wine and chocolates providing a warm welcome. There's a selection of magazines, games, books, CD's, iPod dock and the TV/DVD includes Austar to keep you entertained. In addition, the house is centrally heated and the bathrooms have underfloor heating.



The main bathroom has a 100-year-old claw-foot bath and the second bathroom features a spa bath, so you're definitely spoilt for choice.

When the sun is shining & the weather is warm, there's an alfresco dining area leading to 1,800 square meters of manicured gardens to meander. The back garden houses a real gem, a studio adorned with chandeliers, gas fire and massage tables perfect for couples or a girls getaway retreat!

The fully equipped kitchen has a cookbook open, inviting you to relax and cook a country feast. The original wood-burning stove still has pride of place, with the addition of modern gas cook top, electric oven and microwave for your convenience. Basic breakfast provisions are included and there's even hot chocolate and marshmallows for those cooler nights. I highly recommend heading to [Carrington Cellars](#) in Katoomba to pick up gourmet provisions and wines for your stay.

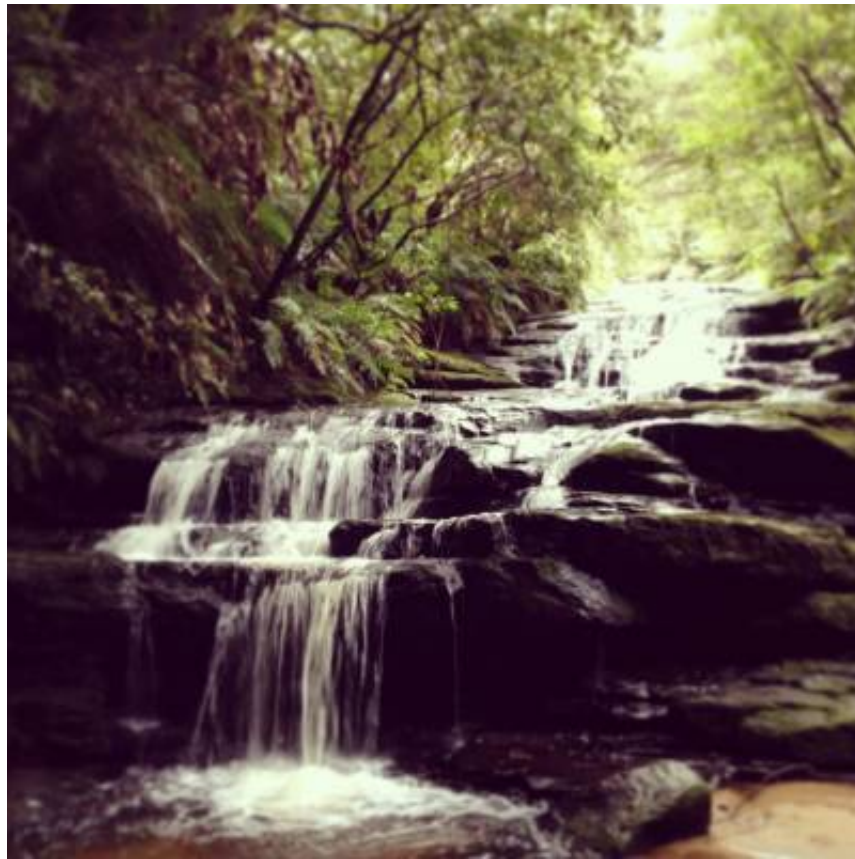
Sean Moran of Sean's Panorama fame has recently opened his new eatery at the [Blue Mountains Botanic Gardens](#) at Mount Tomah. Having lived in the region for 20 odd years, Sean brings a sense of community to this endeavour with locally sourced produce, furniture and design elements. The menu includes some Panorama classics such as linguine, rocket, lemon, chilli and parmesan as well as new rustic fare. Open for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, bookings are recommended especially for weekends.



Closer to home, you're just a two-minute stroll to Leura Mall to satisfy your desire for quality shopping and dining. Head to local favourite the [Red Door Café](#) for organic coffee by La Lunda and flaky croissants by local Hominy Bakery. Your closest dining option is the popular [Leura Garage](#), originally a mechanics garage it's been restored as homage to the buildings previous owners with displays of exhaust pipes, wrenches and car hoists. The menu includes tapas, pizza, pasta and their wine list focuses on local Central Ranges wines and European wines for interest and Champagne as a highlight.

Strolling back to Varenna feeling very much at home, we retire to bed to the plush bathrobes and heart shaped chocolates. The brilliant electric blankets & blackout curtains make for a satisfying nights sleep.

There are endless activities to while away a weekend in the Blue Mountains from shopping, bushwalking, dining, visit the famous Jenolan Caves or just get back to nature. Suitably fuelled up from the breakfast provisions at Varenna, we're ready to explore the pristine wilderness of the Blue Mountains. Within moments we arrive at [Leura Cascades](#), one of the prettiest short walks in the Blue Mountains. Walk beside the rapids on Leura Falls Creek down to the Bridal Veil Falls and Leura Falls. You can sit under the overhanging rock and watch the falls cascade down around you, then climb to Leura cliffline for spectacular views before the circuit track leads you back to the park.



Later that afternoon, we navigate winding roads through breathtaking valleys towards [Megalong Valley Tea Rooms](#). There's already a crowd of cars and motorbikes and a line up to order at the counter. It's worth the wait to sit under the trees in the sunshine and enjoy traditional scones with lip smacking blackberry jam and cream.

A stay at [Varenna](#) has you transported to a bygone era, creating a luxurious base from which country-lovers can explore the Blue Mountains. The home is impeccably restored, luxuriously furnished and the attention to detail and cleanliness is second to none. It's with much reluctance that we leave and with the house bathed in a light mist it feels simply magical.



The writer, Sally Scott was a guest of Mountain Whispers.

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