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Whispering Elegance: Julia Harris

BY ANDERA TURNER-BOYS [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

Whispering ELEGANCE

Julia Harris

When Lorraine Allanson says she believes she was born in the wrong era you cannot help but agree. A passionate historical restorer, Lorraine has painstakingly nurtured a collection of period homes back to their former glory days and in the process developed a booming holiday rental business – *Mountain Whispers*.



"I really do feel like I was born in the wrong era," says Lorraine,

"I love the feeling of grandeur and the way people in the past could create things without using a textbook – because they had passion. I myself have a true passion for period homes."

The collection of historic houses that make up the *Mountain Whispers* are all unique and fully restored by the multi-talented Lorraine. The houses cover a range of time-honoured Australian building styles with each house showcasing their beautiful period features.

"I really love the process of being involved," says Lorraine, "insuring that a restoration is perfect and that every detail is correct is so important.

"Along the way I have taught myself so many new skills, such as gold leaf gilding and decorating. I love the challenge."

Over a considerable short period of time, *Mountain Whispers* has also gained widespread recognition and attention, winning a host of awards and featuring on *My Kitchen Rules* on Channel 7.

Lorraine's personal journey is one of true resilience. Surviving extensive domestic abuse in a previous relationship and various health scares, Lorraine has learnt to believe in herself and the strength of positive relationships with both her husband Roger and their three children.

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"Roger's commitment of love has allowed me to flourish and achieve, both with *Mountain Whispers* and my personal life," says Lorraine; "I honestly pinch myself quite often because I have had the complete opposite in my life. We work hand in glove and he is my absolute rock. I couldn't imagine my life without him."

The concept behind *Mountain Whispers* began as a simple one. Looking for a new project and a weekender for their growing family, Lorraine spotted a glimpse of an untouched period gem in Leura.

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"It was totally a gut feeling," says Lorraine "as soon as I saw it I knew it was the right place".

The simple weekender dream turned into a labor of love.

"We would pile the kids into the car and come up on the weekend," says Lorraine, "Digging trenches, painting, installing fountains – Roger and I worked on everything together.

"I have a real passion for interior design and know what I want visually for a space. I will go out and search for the right colour or piece to create a true luxurious feel within the home."

When friends commented that the home would be perfect for a holiday let, Lorraine initially balked at the idea.

"I was working in the corporate world at the time and I knew nothing about holiday letting – let alone about the Tourism market in the Blue Mountains. I was very unsure about it all".

However as the renovation was completed the idea grew in merit and *Mountain Whispers* was born.

"We were running the holiday let while I was working full-time," says Lorraine, "I was working, driving from North Ryde to prepare the house for guests the coming home to help the kids. It was exciting, but at the same time I was exhausted."

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Some time later Lorraine and her husband Roger bought a second period home in Leura to renovate specifically for holiday letting. They have since grown the business to include a total of four properties within the *Mountain Whispers* collection.

The evolving process of the business has been at times challenging but ultimately rewarding.

“Success comes from happiness,” says Lorraine, “If you don’t love what you do, it is impossible to derive happiness or success from it. *Mountains Whispers* is fabulous. I love what I do.”



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