



The Blue Mountains stands out as one of Australia's most popular tourism destinations all year round, but is especially buzzing in February.

Mountain **treasure trove**

JOHN ROZENTALS visits the Blue Mountains and takes a trip back to the 1920s.

When it comes to celebrating the fabulous 1920s – that extraordinary, over-the-top period that emerged out of the misery of World War I and disappeared a few years later among the dole queues of the Great Depression – the Blue Mountains really do stand out in an Australian context, at least partly because it was during that era that the area solidified its position as the country's first and foremost tourism destination.

The 1920s are an essential part of the district's fabric all year round but never more so than in February, when the Blue Mountains, and nearby Lithgow and Oberon, host The Roaring 20s and All That Jazz Festival.

This year's festival got off to a flyer last Saturday morning in Leura's The Mall, when 319 people registered for the Blue Mountains Charleston Challenge and broke the event's previous Guinness World Record for the largest number of costumed people performing the dance.

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Led by TV presenter Claudia Chan Shaw, a panellist for ABC's *The Collectors* program and a self-confessed

1920s tragic – the participants lined up in six long files to kick their heels and swing their hips for five minutes in a dance routine once considered very risqué indeed.

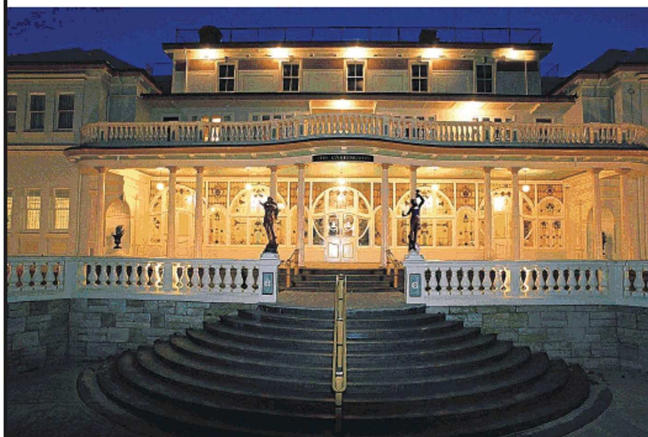
Blue Mountains towns abound with architecture and businesses built during, or closely associated with, the 1920s – The Carrington Hotel, The Paragon Cafe, and the fabled Hydro Majestic Hotel, under complete refurbishment and due to reopen on July 4, the 110th anniversary of its official opening as a health resort by Sydney retail king Mark Foy.

The passion that people have for the 1920s and its relevance to the Blue Mountains is no better exemplified than by Lorraine Allanson, who, with her husband Roger, bought a Katoomba cottage four years ago and lovingly transformed it into The Gatsby (phone 1300 721 321 or visit mountainwhispers.com.au) – a wonderful tourist accommodation and a charming treasure trove of period mementoes.

To stay there, within relatively easy walking distance of Echo Point and surrounded by just so many personal touches, certainly proved one of life's great pleasures.



ABC TV presenter Claudia Chan Shaw (in the red hat) shows how it's done at the Blue Mountains Charleston Challenge.



The Carrington Hotel is closely associated with the 1920s.

■ The Roaring 20s and All That Jazz Festival runs until February 23. For a full program of events, phone Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism on 1300 922 492 or visit roaring20s.com.au. Coming highlights include the Highlands Steam and Vintage Fair at Oberon on February 8, the Roaring 20s Glamour & Gowns Ball in Lithgow on February 15, a Historic Chifley Cave Tour and High Tea at Jenolan Caves on February 16, and Jazz in the Garden at the Norman Lindsay Gallery at Faulconbridge on February 22.



Lorraine and Roger Allanson outside The Gatsby where they indulge their passion for the 1920s.