



Clockwise from top: Kayaking at Queensland's Mount Mulligan Lodge, and lounging in one of its private outdoor tubs; Collette Dinnigan's White House on the NSW South Coast.

Pastures new

One of our most memorable family holidays was also one of the most modest and unexpected. It was a last-minute booking, after deciding we would join friends for a getaway on the coast at Mollymook in New South Wales.

Alas, it was Christmas and pickings were slim – this was pre-Covid. We searched for accommodation inland, away from the coastal hotspots, and found what appeared to be a cute farm stay called Narrawilly Cottages in bucolic Milton. Nonetheless, I was apprehensive. Booking farm stays online can be hit and miss, and it was our annual holiday – I wondered whether I was right to put all our eggs in the one basket (pun intended).

On arrival, we turned off the highway and up a long driveway to a picturesque working farm. It turned out to be one of the largest dairy farms in the region, Narrawilly Farm, owned by generations of the Miller family for more than 160 years. There were two quaint, fully equipped guest houses set out of sight from the main property, and the owner took us on a tour and encouraged the children to collect eggs from the hen house each day and to use what we wished. Cows grazed in a lush paddock metres from our door, wildflowers flirted in the wind, there was a sunflower "highway" for selfies, and it was all peaceful and relaxing.

It was also affordable, and I was pleasantly surprised. It was nice to have a retreat to head back to after the intensity of a busy beach in the peak of summer, and offered the kids a different kind of vacation. Aside from waking each morning to find Carl, the little boy from our neighbouring cottage, eating cereal at our breakfast table – he would let himself in like clockwork around 7am – I had no complaints.

We were onto something, albeit by fluke. In the years since, farm stays have become hot property, elevated to luxury destination experiences. It's an Australian tourism trend that offers the ultimate in relaxation and a genuine immersion in the

land, animals, people and the culture.

Celeste Mitchell rounds up the best farm stays for our cover story this week, albeit slightly more exciting versions – some where you can chopper in and out, taking the novelty to a whole new level. With a few new options on the market, the bespoke brand of hospitality and isolation these lodges, "glamps" and farms offer is hard to go past.

I've experienced a few more farm stays since, including Collette Dinnigan's elegant White House, which also happens to be in Milton. There's a level of indulgence and generosity involved in being able to wander a property and feed the alpacas or pick lemons.

My eye is on Mount Mulligan Lodge in North Queensland, or Dairy Flat Lodge and Farm in Daylesford next. Painstakingly restored, planted, home to a fantastic bakehouse, and tended to by that giant of regional hospitality Alla Wolf-Tasker of Lake House, it's a place I know I would be well looked after. Alla fusses over anyone who comes her way, and you'd head to bed stuffed to the gills with the best regional produce and a stiff Negroni. My kind of farm stay!

Керrie McCallum
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



THE ESCAPE TEAM'S HITLIST



Having a field day

Celeste Mitchell / Contributor



You may not fly into Rathmore Farm like some other farm stays I write about on pages 8-9, but my son is still talking about our time at this property in central Tasmania earlier

this year. For me it was all about Champagne by the fire and dinner with our hosts Richard and Cally Lyons, but for Ziggy, feeding Hercules the cow was the stuff of bucket-lists.



Springs eternal

Laura Waters / Contributor



I love discovering something new about a familiar place. If it weren't for a stay at Deep Blue Hotel & Hot Springs in Warrambool, three hours west of Melbourne, I'd never have

known hot springs bubble 800m under the seaside town. Soaking in outdoor pools and caves on a winter's day is something to savour, best followed with a walk to the beachfront Pavilion Café & Bar.



Suck it and see

Baz Goodwin / Creative Director



Next time you return from a camping trip and the kids have created mayhem in the car, tents, caravan and all are in need of a serious clean, reach for Dyson's most powerful

cordless vacuum, the V15 Detect. The LCD screen shows real-time proof of a deep clean plus it has an hour's power life. It makes cleaning easy and, strangely, very satisfying.



Park and rides

Samantha Stewart / Writer



As soon as we get the green light to travel, I'll be on a flight to LAX and Disneyland. For now, I'm hooked on the Disney+ documentary series *Behind the Attraction*, which explores how

"Imagineers" (the official term for the geniuses who create the rides) come up with their ideas. If you want to know more about the history of Disney's theme parks, this is the show for you.



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Disclaimer: Please note that *Escape* is printed a few days in advance of Sunday's publication date. We have done our best to ensure the stories in this edition are as current as possible, but apologise if the ever-changing coronavirus news cycle means content is outdated. Check Covid-19 restrictions before making your travel plans.

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