



SUNDAY ESCAPE

Disney's new Hong Kong adventure

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STAY AT MY PLACE ...

WOODBINE COTTAGE BLACKWOOD

WHEN gold was found in Blackwood in 1855, the population briefly swelled to 13,000. These days its treasure is a rich seam of tranquillity amid the Wombat State Forest.

Street names such as Simmons Reef Rd hint at what put Blackwood on the map, but this charming little township now has a different kind of lustre – and it is just an hour from Melbourne.

ACCOMMODATION

The 19th-century Woodbine Cottage, owned by Brenda Hunter and Robin Bradley, sleeps six in three bedrooms and is a tremendous house for entertaining.

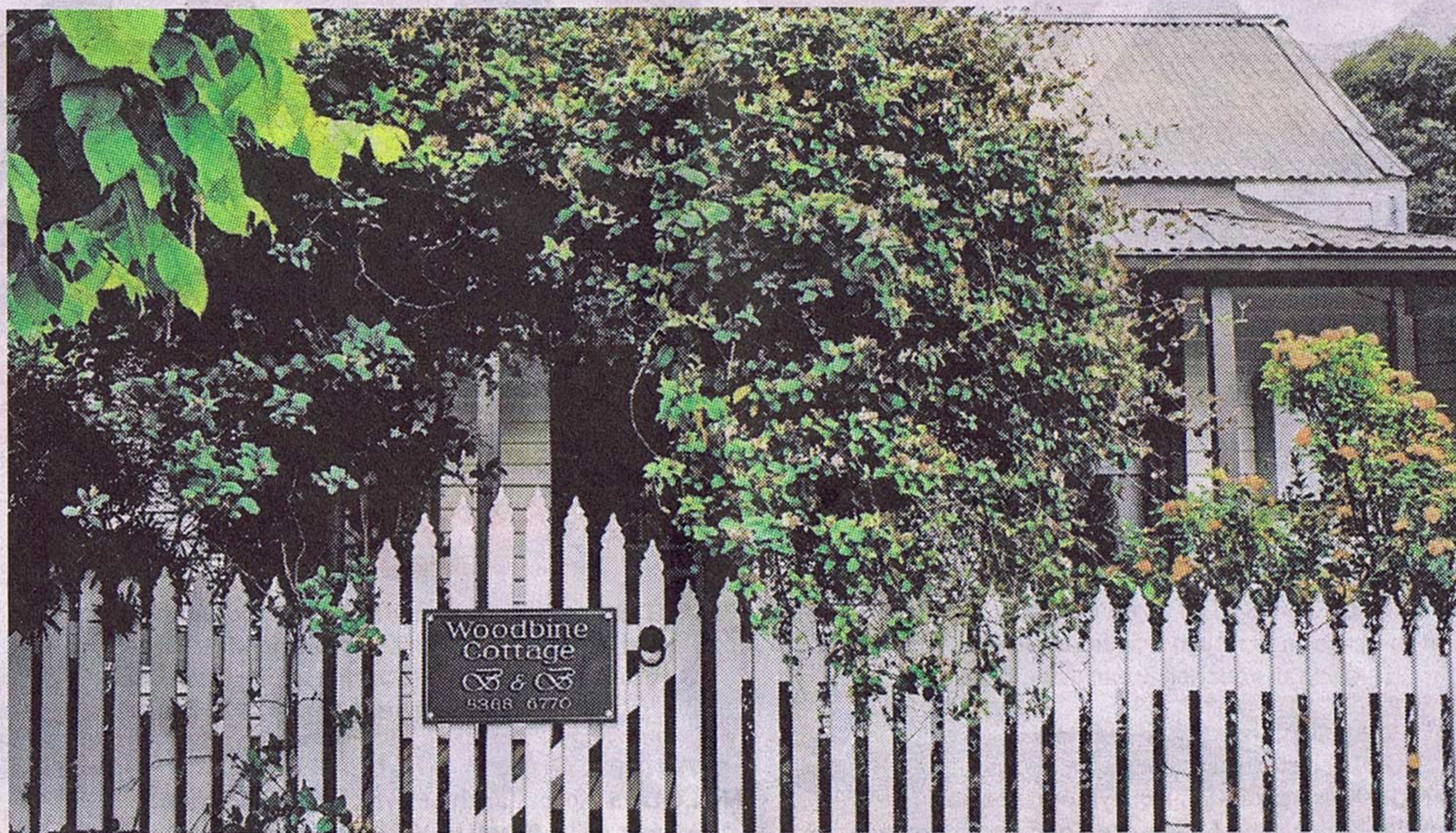
Cook in the superb kitchen or fire up the Weber on the balcony, then take a flute of bubbly down to the small dam and listen to the frogs.

FOOD

In a small town traders co-exist by staggering their opening hours. Lerdies (ph: 5368 6612) is the place for pizza on Tuesday and steak on Thursday – and the occasional band on Sunday, such as Blackwood resident Nick Dear and his Hardrive Bluegrass Band.

The Blackwood Merchant (ph: 5368 6525) is a licensed cafe and providore open Thursday to Monday (late for dinner Friday and Saturday), while the Blackwood Hotel (ph: 5368 6501) offers lunch and dinner Wednesday to Monday.

For destination dining, drive to the Wallace Hotel



Glory days: The historic Woodbine Cottage at Blackwood.

(ph: 5334 0322), where Andrea and Craig Wilson have created a modern classic with retro dishes.

FUN

You can pick strawberries, cherries and stone fruit at Naturipe Fruits at Bacchus Marsh until April (check availability by phoning 0419 340 363).

Ballan's farmers' market is the second Saturday of the month (9am-1pm) in the grounds of 150-year-old Mill Cottage, Inglis St. Produce from the region includes Field to Fridge lamb (Mt Wallace) and

Family Homestead free-range eggs (Myrniong) from happy hens.

THE DEAL

A weekend for two is \$440 (two nights), including breakfast plus a bottle of bubbly and chocolates on arrival; midweek is from \$185 a night. Ph: 5368 6770 or email brenda@woodbinecottage.com.au

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IAN GILBERT

Gentle cycle

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A good place to aim for on a summer evening in Narooma is The Whale restaurant, which sits up on the hill and has panoramic views over the bay and a good mod Oz menu.

And after all that cycling, don't feel guilty about a dessert of caramelised figs and spiced honey ice cream with almond baklava.

Or you could just cycle back to Beachmour and fire up the barbecue. Sit in the shade under the giant backyard tree and watch the majestic black swans glide across the wetlands. Tuck into your own home-cooked meal and listen to the surf boom: a holiday to perfection.

The writer travelled as a guest of Beachmour and Destination NSW

THE DEAL

Getting there: Dalmeny is 7km north of Narooma on NSW's south coast, an eight-hour drive from Melbourne.

Staying there: Rates at Beachmour start from \$275 a night low season, and from \$435 high season.

Concierge services attract additional fees. Visit beachmour.com, ph: (02) 9664 5505.

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ph: 1800 802 528.

