

THE SUNSHINE COAST PLAYS HOST TO A PLETHORA OF ACCOMMODATION AND HOLIDAY OPTIONS, FOR VISITORS AND LOCALS ALIKE. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE LITTLE PROPERTY NESTLED IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE HINTERLAND THAT STANDS OUT – THE NARROWS ESCAPE. GENINE HOWARD DISCOVERED THIS SHINING GEM ON A RECENT WEEKEND AWAY AND LEARNT THAT IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

## the little things...

words Genine Howard

I'm a big fan of a romantic weekend getaway. Who isn't? But I am talking a romantic weekend away with all the bells and whistles. You know the kind: the open fire, the seclusion from the rest of the world, the chocolates, the spa, the cosy big bed, the glasses of red wine and the cheese platter, and of course, the romantic walks.

Well, I found just the place for an escape with all the typical weekend away bells and whistles ... and more. This little gem, tucked away in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, offers everything you can dream of for a picture-perfect romantic weekend away. I am talking about the award-winning, luxurious, romantic, secluded and majestic The Narrows Escape. I was lucky enough to spend two nights at this little hideaway recently with my husband for some time away and to shake off the woes of the working week, and we absolutely fell in love ... not with each other (that's a given) but with The Narrows Escape.

We meandered through the quaint town of Montville, an easy hour's drive from the coast, and down the headily steep Narrows Road on the way to Lake Baroon. Then it was just a short drive down rainforest-lined track to the main house, manned by Mark and Jo Skinner ... and their loveable border collies, Toby and Leyla. After a guided tour through the property, we were shown to our new home for the next two days. Now, I have been to some rainforest cottages in my time, and this one rates up there with the best. Set creek-side, the private wooden cottage with its own deck, looks directly over a gorgeous bubbling rainforest creek, lined with mossy granite boulders and tall rainforest trees.

No sooner had Mark and the doggy crew left us to start our weekend of relaxation than we were greeted by a few other resident locals ... fabulously bright coloured king parrots. Just as suddenly as they arrived, they shot off into the treetops, leaving us to get to know our new digs.

And what digs they were. Each timber cottage was nestled in the rainforest, with only the trees for neighbours. The open-plan central area was surprisingly large with soaring timber ceilings and plenty of big windows looking directly out over the rainforest surrounds. The quaint kitchen was complete with stove, fridge, coffee machine and filled with every glass, bowl or platter you could need, to cook up a gourmet meal! However, we soon found there was no need. Having worked in the corporate sector for many years, Mark and Jo know what busy city-folk want, and provide an option for a home cooked meal to be served at night ... prepared lovingly by the couple and brought to your cottage.

The lounge area sounds like a cliché with its wood-burner and fur rug, but there was nothing clichéd about the pièce de résistance ... a big corner spa; yes, right in the lounge room. How fabulously decadent! I could just see us sipping a glass of bubbles in there later that night in front of a roaring fire.

Owners Mark and Jo stumbled across The Narrows a few years ago and it's easy to see why they fell in love with the place. After a few tweaks here and there, including the addition of wide screen TVs and iPod docking stations, the pair scrubbed and polished this little gem 'til it was beaming with charm and quaintness. The term 'made with love' certainly applies here.

The property is quite expansive, with its own saltwater pool and deck chairs for the warmer months and a quaint private gazebo overlooking country gardens. The jewel in the property's crown must be the private rainforest walk along the creek. The easy walk meanders over mossy granite boulders and through towering rainforest trees, including ancient red cedars and tamarinds. Our quiet walk was only interrupted by the native bird life chatter from high in the canopy, and the odd bark from our trail companion, Toby, who happily bounded along during our exploration.

With the property explored and the afternoon settling in, we retired to our private deck with a cold glass of wine and a courtesy cheese and fruit platter left by our hosts. And speaking of food, we were certainly not disappointed during our stay – a rich, warm, red wine casserole for dinner followed by homemade chocolate cake; gourmet chocolates and port for late night in front of the fire; and a breakfast hamper filled with all the goodies you could eat, including locally produced eggs, bacon, yogurt and jams and my favourite, the freshly baked croissants left discreetly at our door in the morning.

Everything about The Narrows Escape is delightful, homely and well thought-out. And by our second night, my husband and I were convinced that it's the little things that certainly make a big difference, and The Narrows was brimming with lots of perfect little things. ■

### the facts ...

- 4 ½ star luxury accommodation
- Onsite massage available
- Breakfast hampers provided
- Dinners available nightly including BBQ packs to cook on the deck

The Narrows Escape, 78 Narrows Road, Montville  
Phone 5478 5000, [www.narrowsescape.com.au](http://www.narrowsescape.com.au)

## WIN

Together with Mark and Jo Skinner, profile magazine has a two night luxury stay for two on offer for a lucky reader! The prize includes two nights (midweek) accommodation in a rainforest cottage with spa bath, fireplace, gourmet breakfast hamper, freshly baked daily croissants and much more. Valued at \$570, this is a fantastic prize at a unique getaway in the Hinterland.

To enter, head to [www.profilemag.com.au](http://www.profilemag.com.au)