

THE SPLURGE

# BEECHMONT GARDEN RETREAT

Olinda, Victoria



**W**hy it's worth it: This mountain retreat is owned by Melbourne florist Cherrie Mirikilis, from Flowers Vasette, and there are blooms and petals in the DNA of every room. Four living spaces circle the central kitchen: the games room has a huge painting of a fire-engine red flower; the dining room has botanic etchings and ceramics covered in flowers; floral

pillows are scattered along the couches of the TV room and the chairs surrounding the Coonara log fire. In the bedrooms dragonflies and butterflies flit across the silk wallpaper.

Throughout the entire house are Cherrie's fresh arrangements and the rooms are full of plumes of live orchids. The theme is consistent but subtle (books in the games room are arranged according



to colour), guided by the design aesthetic of someone who creates beauty for a living.

**Bang for your buck:** Ten acres of gardens is the huge draw with a sloping lawn at the rear of the house leading down to a pond. The property is protected by stands of mountain ash, blackwood wattles and beeches that appear to be jostling for a better view of the hedged walkways and manicured lawns of the English garden.

On arrival is a welcome pack from Sassafras Providore full of handmade preserves, cereals, coffee and baked beauties from Proserpina Bakehouse; everything you need for an indoor breakfast picnic by the floor-to-ceiling

walls that make you feel part of the garden even in inclement weather.

Get to know the pair of magpies that appear to rule the patch of grass outside the window, take time to watch the passing parade of parrots (when the magpies go off duty) and see ducks make use of the pond; set your watch to “bird time” and just get into synch with the avian locals.

**The digs:** The country house has bedrooms on either side with a grown-up wing – master bedroom (with king bed and deep bath) and a guest room, both with their own ensuites – and a more kid-friendly wing – a cartoon-festooned kids’ room and double room sharing bathroom facilities. At its centre is the circle of living spaces; read by the fire, dine together with garden views, play charades in the games room or watch Netflix in the TV lounge.



## GOING GREEN

Wander the gardens, then crash on the couch.



There are Bose speakers throughout the house, the kitchen has everything you need and there are lovely pockets of greenery all over.

**Must-do experience:** Ten minutes down the hill is Puffing Billy (1 Old Monbulk Rd, Belgrave; [puffingbilly.com.au](http://puffingbilly.com.au)) where you can get an adult take on a childhood classic by taking the lunch “Steam and Cuisine” train. The period dining cars once travelled the West Wilderness Railway in Tasmania and now they offer three-course meals as you wind up the famous Puffing Billy small gauge track into the mountains.

An early morning visit to Proserpina Bakehouse (361 Mount Dandenong Tourist Rd, Sassafras) is also a must. Grab a breakfast pizza, the panino (a sublime take on an egg-and-bacon roll with chutney and fresh coriander) or the best pain au chocolate you will find.

**The damage:** Two nights on the weekend from \$1020, two midweek nights from \$620. [vrgetaways.com.au](http://vrgetaways.com.au)

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