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Y'All Come Back Now, Hear?



Ginninderry

This is what you'd call a compilation album in the music business. Because Lisa and I were overseas - me for seven weeks - we didn't have a chance to check into any new pet-friendly accommodation before hitting the deadline time for this issue. So for many of our readers who may have missed some of the top places we've stayed within a couple of hours of Sydney, here are the hits.

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The Fibro Majestic is a 1930s-style bungalow tucked away behind a blue picket fence and hidden from the street by trees. Many treasures are contained within and only a moment after entering the three-bedroom cottage the chorus of WOWs began. It was like stepping back into another era. And any stress was left at the door with the shoes.

Just inside, an immaculately restored, working gramophone with brass bell greeted us. The dark red lounge room had art deco furniture, a snazzy bar area and a trove of old photos and art among the kitsch furnishings. The Persian carpet was a perfect contrast to the fireplace, already loaded with logs and kindling, ready to roar! Dropping the bags in the back bedroom with its gorgeous curtains and inviting old-style double bed, more treasures popped into view. An ancient bakelite radio nestled next to an equally aged '30s candlestick phone with detachable earpiece and dial on the bottom of the mouthpiece - and it worked!

Wandering through the comfy house with a third mini-bedroom and trundle bed attached to the main bedroom, discoveries abounded as antiques laden with collectables and knickknacks fill each room.

The bathroom is equally archaic in appearance but everything works just fine. Mono vinyl floor, brass flush tank with button, clawfoot tub with rose shower, and old-style sink with a shaving cup and stand for a razor. Most unique of all is the 1940s instant gas-fired water boiler in perfect condition, and there was plenty of hot water for showers with parrots who screamed with delight and strutted along the shower rail, admiring themselves in the long mirror just above it at beak height.

It's only a five-minute walk to the edge of the Jamison Valley and 15 minutes at most from Echo Point and the Three Sisters.

The Fibro Majestic-C/- David Kennedy
Ph: 4782 2121. Email: kennedyd@uppermountains.com.au. Web: www.fibromajestic.com



The Fibro Majestic

Milton is a comfortable three-hour drive south from Sydney, just short of Ulladulla, and home to the property called 'The Lazy Curl', 13km out of town where the Love Shack sits - just like in the song - in the middle of a field. It certainly lives up to the lyrics as being a funky little shack. It's constructed out of a mix of materials - brightly painted weatherboard, corrugated iron and brick. Half the floor is wood, the other half is nicely worn brick. Lovely, exposed, heavy wooden beams run through the main room's ceiling and walls.

The shack is just one room with basic kitchen facilities and a four-foot-high queen-sized bed, constructed of wrought iron and wood - just high enough that a dog can't jump up on it. A basic bathroom with combined shower and bath is situated off the main room. The bathroom has a window that opens out so you can enjoy the country views while having a soak. From the bed you can look out through the floor-to-ceiling glass doors leading to the veranda. The veranda also has a large gas barbeque that probably gets a good workout during summer evenings.

A large fireplace sits in the middle of the kitchen area and there is plenty of wood stacked up for a warm winter weekend with a fire pre-assembled awaiting only a match. Two groovy, black and white, '70s-style bucket chairs complement the black and white fireplace surround.

The Lazy Curl-Wheelbarrow Road, Milton NSW 2538. Ph: (02) 4455 2290



The Lazy Curl

You may be surprised to learn that Sydney, too, has hotels that quietly open their rooms to travellers packing a pooch. We discovered a little luxury hideaway in the middle of Darlinghurst. The Medusa Hotel is conveniently located on Darlinghurst Road just a stone's toss from the hustle and bustle of Kings Cross and the shopping heaven of Oxford Street. From the outside, this little gem is quite inconspicuous—even walking down Darlinghurst Road you could blink and miss it.

It's a large Victorian heritage-listed property that has all the features of larger hotels without compromising its friendly, personalised and attentive service. All rooms feature the comfort of king or queen-sized beds, a choice of pillow - down or synthetic - superior linen, ensuite bathrooms that stock Aveda toiletries, and 24-hour reception and concierge service.

Medusa has received numerous awards for its interior architecture and personalised service. Proprietor Terry Schwamberg created this contemporary and luxury boutique hotel with the appointment of award-winning Sydney architect Scott Weston. The Medusa is popular with the creative set from advertising, film, fashion, design - and those other style-setters, travellers with dogs.

The designated 'dog guest rooms' are spacious and conveniently located on the ground floor. All these rooms have access to the central courtyard, which is an inviting paved area where you can rest, enjoy a coffee and catch up on some reading. The furniture, colour design and muffled street noises are more reminiscent of courtyards in historic New Orleans than downtown Darlo.

Other features of the room include kitchenette with microwave oven, mini bar, entertainment system and TV with cable access. It would seem a shame to just spend your whole time cooped up in a hotel room - no matter how luxuriously funky - when there's so much on your doorstep for you and your four-footed companion.

The Medusa Hotel
 267 Darlinghurst Rd
 Darlinghurst NSW 2010
 Ph: 9331 1000
 Email: info@medusa.com.au
 Web: www.medusa.com.au

Ginninderry is a gracious and stately homestead situated on a 70-acre estate only 15 minutes outside Canberra. It's surrounded by gorgeous gardens and Victorian-style gazebos, and it has views of the surrounding mountain ranges. A long, tree-lined driveway leads to a luxurious lawn and pathway to the main entrance. The homestead has its own canine greeters who are more than happy to show your dog around this exceptionally well-maintained property.

The elegant accommodation includes the two queen-size Deluxe rooms and two Superior queen rooms. The rooms are tastefully decorated, are filled with antiques and have ensuite bathrooms. House-trained and well-mannered dogs are allowed to sleep in your rooms but are not allowed into the common areas - the large guest room downstairs and the smaller sitting room upstairs.

As evening approaches, you're welcome to have a complimentary glass of sherry or port and it's a pleasant time, at dusk, to sit in the garden and watch deer and kangaroo cross the nearby ranges. For early risers - human and canine - a walk up the long driveway is an excellent start to the morning. I felt like a pied piper of dogs as I set out on a brisk walk. I started with two dogs and within a short time had a total of seven spirited canine companions eagerly bounding up the driveway.

The Homestead's collection of livestock includes handsome Belted Galloway cattle, Angora and Boer goats and a selection of chicken and geese.

Ginninderry
 Ph: (02) 6254 6464
 Email: info@ginninderry.com.au
 Web: www.ginninderry.com.au



The Medusa Hotel

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