



BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

BISHOP'S COURT ESTATE IS A UNIQUELY LUXURIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR EVEN THE MOST DISCERNING TRAVELLER.

A WEEKEND AWAY in a location only a couple of hours from home is not something we do often – it's usually a long drive or flight (of varying lengths) to get to our retreat. But discerning friends had recommended Bishop's Court Estate in Bathurst as a "must stay", so we thought we would pop along one Friday afternoon after work for a two-night visit with Christine and David and the Burmese cats, Chocolat and Latte. And that is exactly what it feels like when staying at Bishop's Court – that you are visiting with friends, only their "spare rooms" are huge and their furnishings are bold and plush and exquisitely tasteful... and the food! But I get ahead of myself.

Bishop's Court was once the privately owned home of Bishop Samuel Marsden. It is located on a hill with spectacular views of the city on what was once a property of sweeping paddocks, but is now of smaller scale, on grounds still spacious with well-manicured and picturesque gardens.

Christine and David have worked tirelessly to transform the once neglected manse into the unique and luxurious boutique B&B that is Bishop's Court today. Each piece of furniture, painting, *objet d'art*, cushion and throw have been personally selected by owner Christine (who was the interior designer of the iconic Longitude 131 at Uluru), and her taste is faultless. She embraces the history of the building with her fine sense of composition and modern taste in a cohesive design concept that simultaneously gives the impression of intimate comfort and lush opulence, all while staying with friends.

There are five bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. Due to the heritage listing of the building, only one of the bedrooms has an

en suite, but all the rest have private bathrooms – you just need to don the plush robe supplied to pad down the hall to your luxurious bathroom. We stayed in the impressive Bishop's Room – warm furnishings, dark wood and an occasional accent of cardinal red. Our private entrance to the second-storey wraparound balcony was a delightful surprise. The wide space allowed room for lounges, chairs and coffee table, as well as Christine's touches of figurines and other striking artistic statements – the perfect spot to curl up with a book. There was even a range of furry throw rugs for when the temperature dropped. The weather provided us with gothic-novel mist for both of our mornings, but when clear, the views of the garden assisted with the fantasy of living as landed gentry.

The heart of this magnificent old home is the large and welcoming kitchen. This is where Christine, who is not just a renowned interior designer but also an exceptional chef, creates her masterpieces. A four-course dinner and wine package is not to be missed when visiting. Our host catered beautifully to the various food requirements of the guests, providing equally delicious options for vegetarians, carnivores and allergy sufferers alike. Christine's cooking, as well as the luxurious location, is why so many people choose Bishop's Court as their "go to" place for special celebrations. The chapel, which is attached to the main house, has been meticulously restored and accommodates a gigantic medieval banquet table for 22 people (but up to 40 people can be accommodated for events). Understandably, this is a much sought-after venue, and I recommend booking well in advance to lock in the date for your special occasion. >





Without any other guests checked in on our Friday night, it was lovely having the house to ourselves. The evening began with David opening some sparkling wine – a Mayfield Pinot Noir Chardonnay – before moving on to a very fine bottle of pinot noir from Cook’s Lot Winery (both wines are from the Orange region). The comfortable sitting room with its open fireplace provided the perfect atmosphere to relax before dinner. We vacillated between staying in while our hosts cooked or hitting one of the local culinary hot spots for dinner with all of us having a “night off”. The vote was unanimous – a night off, so we piled into the car and went to a local restaurant via a lap of Mount Panorama (I think David regretted the 60kmh speed limit enforced when it’s non race time, but the views were . . . well . . . panoramic).

Our second night at Bishop’s Court was shared with a variety of pairs and solos, guests who had all visited before. Dinner was incredibly tasty and perfectly portioned, and Christine catered to all the dietary requirements with flair and inventiveness. My particular favourite was the spicy Moroccan vegetables and couscous (above), with the cream of cauliflower and truffle soup a close second. It was a delightful evening chatting with other guests, sharing stories and basking in the hospitality of our hosts. Breakfast was a similar affair in terms of fine dining presentation and well-matched flavours. After our buffet selections of cereals and homemade preserves were finished, we placed our orders for our breakfast mains and whatever we fancied was catered for. My particular favourite was the courgette-stuffed mushrooms with pine nuts and shaved almonds. Delicious! >



Leaving on Sunday morning was difficult. And the fact that all other guests this weekend were "repeat custom" meant they obviously felt the same. Christine and David provide such a special experience at Bishop's Court. The sense of complete pampering, courtesy of the luxurious environment and expert service, is balanced with the comfortable sense of the familiar, achieved through their sincere and friendly hospitality. It is easy to see why visiting titled gentry from the motherland were eager to extend to their stay – five-star service without the pretension is a difficult task to master. Christine, David and staff make it all look too easy. I can't wait for my next visit! **CWL**

Words: Nicole Bonfield Images: Shot by Jake and John Baltaks

NEWS FLASH: Bishop's Court Estate has recently been awarded a 2015 Traveller's Choice Award from TripAdvisor, which places them in the top one per cent of all TripAdvisor listings worldwide.

Right: Bishop's Court Estate hosts Christine and David with guests Nicole Bonfield and John Baltaks.

Above: John and Nicole stayed in the impressive Bishop's Room; Nicole's favourite breakfast dish – courgette-stuffed mushrooms with pine nuts and shaved almonds; Christine's personal touches create an elegant, homely feel.



W.J.COOTE & SONS

"YOUR AWARD WINNING SHOWCASE JEWELLER"



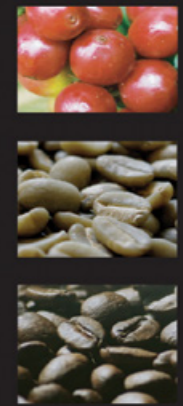
W.J.Coote & Sons are your award winning diamond and engagement ring specialist.

Shop W.J.Coote and Sons online!

The latest designs and trends are now available for you to purchase from our family owned independent jeweller, on our online store. Up to five business days for delivery, Australia wide.

69 William Street, Bathurst
Ph 02 6331 3042 Fax 02 6331 8623
Shop online at www.wjcoote.com.au/shop/

fish river roasters



Fish River Roasters provides speciality coffee from around the world to cafes and restaurants in the Central West, Blue Mountains and around Australia. Our award winning coffee is supported by barista training and espresso machine repairs and maintenance.

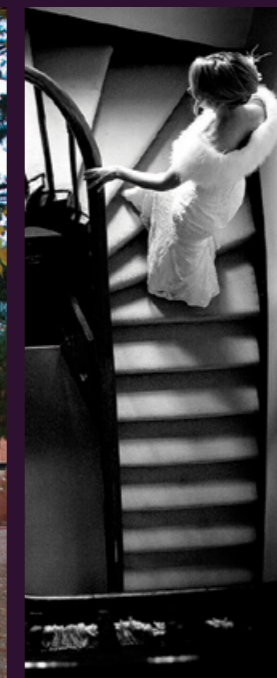
We would like to thank the cafes and restaurants that stock our coffee and the coffee drinkers of the region for their support.

fish river roasters
67 corporation avenue bathurst 2795
02 6331 7171

BISHOP'S COURT ESTATE BOUTIQUE HOTEL

SPECIAL OFFER FOR CENTRAL WEST LIFESTYLE READERS

Come & celebrate 200 years of heritage at Bishop's Court Estate. Book two nights and receive a \$50 dinner voucher with our compliments. Bookings by phone only.



ENJOY ULTIMATE LUXURY AND RELAXATION, ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE PAMPERED WITH DELECTABLE TREATS AND STUNNING WINES FROM OUR REGION AND BREATHE IN THE AROMA OF UTTER PEACE. IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT AT BISHOP'S COURT ESTATE.

Bishop's Court Estate 226 Seymour Street Bathurst NSW 2795 Ph: 02 6332 4447

www.bishopcourtestate.com.au

