

## Urbane charm in a country setting

**Briar Jensen** needed a quick break from city life and found the township of Berry just the place.

**S**TEALING a last-minute midweek getaway with a couple of girlfriends was an indulgent treat, but with only one night to spare we needed somewhere not too far away.

We settled on the new Beach Road Bed and Breakfast in Berry, two hours south of Sydney, for its rural setting and promise of privacy – we wanted to catch up on each other's news, not chat with fellow guests.

The two-hectare property, in a picturesque country lane just before Berry township, gives the feeling of a rural estate, with extensive lawns flanking the driveway, while the house hides among garden beds under the shade of a weeping gum.

Owner Sandra Berner, showed us to our rooms – a queen and twin (that can be converted to a double on request). Uncluttered and tastefully decorated with crisp white embroidered bed linen, the rooms feature huge windows overlooking the garden, a bar fridge and tea making equipment.

The two bedrooms share facilities, so the second room is let only to families or friends travelling together, but the bathroom is large with separate areas for vanity, bath/shower and toilet.

The private sitting-dining room opens on to vine-covered terraces and the English oak dining table overlooks the garden to the hills



**HOMELY:** Go to Beach Road B&B for charming gardens, comfy beds and a laid-back mood.

After coffee back at the B&B, I went to bed gazing at the moonlit garden, and woke to a dawn-tinged landscape. Propped up on plush pillows, I sipped Earl Grey while watching birds flit around the lawn.

The breakfast table, with white cotton tablecloth dappled in morning sunlight, was so inviting we visited it twice. After helping ourselves again to fresh fruit, yoghurt and cereals we headed to Seven Mile Beach, a three-minute drive, where we walked up an appetite for Sandra's delicious herb omelettes on our return.

Sandra joined us for coffee, telling us about her move from Sydney businesswoman to B&B hostess, and suggesting places to see in Berry.

Taking her advice we visited Precinct Galleries in Alexandra Street to view a stunning collection of landscape photographs by Richard Morecroft. I left carrying a gorgeous opaque glass Ikebana bowl and a head full of ideas.

We'd had only one night away, but it felt much longer. I think we should do this much more often.

beyond. The sitting room is dominated by an antique Chinese cabinet, and features Persian rugs, Moroccan saddlebag cushions and personal artefacts, which exude an atmosphere of homely luxury. It's perfect for our gossipy getaway.

After unpacking we ambled around the grounds breathing in the perfume of earthy eucalypts, tinged with intoxicating wisteria. The sound of cicadas rose and fell punctuated by kookaburras.

Settling into chairs beside the pool, we chatted all afternoon. In the cool of evening we adjourned to the sitting room, sinking into the soft leather sofa to continue our conversation over a bottle of wine.

We opted for dinner in Berry, a five-minute drive away, at Twenty Three, a little restaurant in the main street. The entrees were so delicious two of us decided to have a second one, rather than a main, while our friend chose a decadent dessert.

### ► TRIP NOTES

**Address:** Beach Road Bed & Breakfast, 290 Beach Road, Berry.  
**Bookings:** Phone (02) 4464 1454 or email [beachbb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:beachbb@bigpond.net.au).  
**Website:** [www.beachroadbedandbreakfast.com.au](http://www.beachroadbedandbreakfast.com.au).  
**Rates:** Sunday to Thursday \$120 a night a couple; \$80 a single. Friday, Saturday, school and public holidays \$150 a night for couples and \$95 single.

### ► VERDICT

Homely, sophisticated luxury in a rural setting.  
**Why you'd go:** You like privacy and rural tranquillity.  
**Why you wouldn't:** You'd rather hit the town.

### ► FIND TIME TO

- Investigate the historic graveyard across the road from Beach Road B&B.
- Explore Berry Market on the first Sunday of the month (except February) at the showgrounds.
- Visit Precinct Galleries for contemporary art, craft and design.
- Go for a picnic at Seven Mile Beach.
- Visit some of the many vineyards in the area.