

TREE CHANGE, SEA CHANGE, ME CHANGE

Slow

OFFBEAT & OFFSET

MEETING JANE HALL, URBAN ARTIST, CHOOK FANCIER
AND LOVER OF HER OWN SWEET TIME

**LESS IS
MORE**

JEFFREY BOOTH
ASKS, DO WE NEED
GRAND DESIGNS?

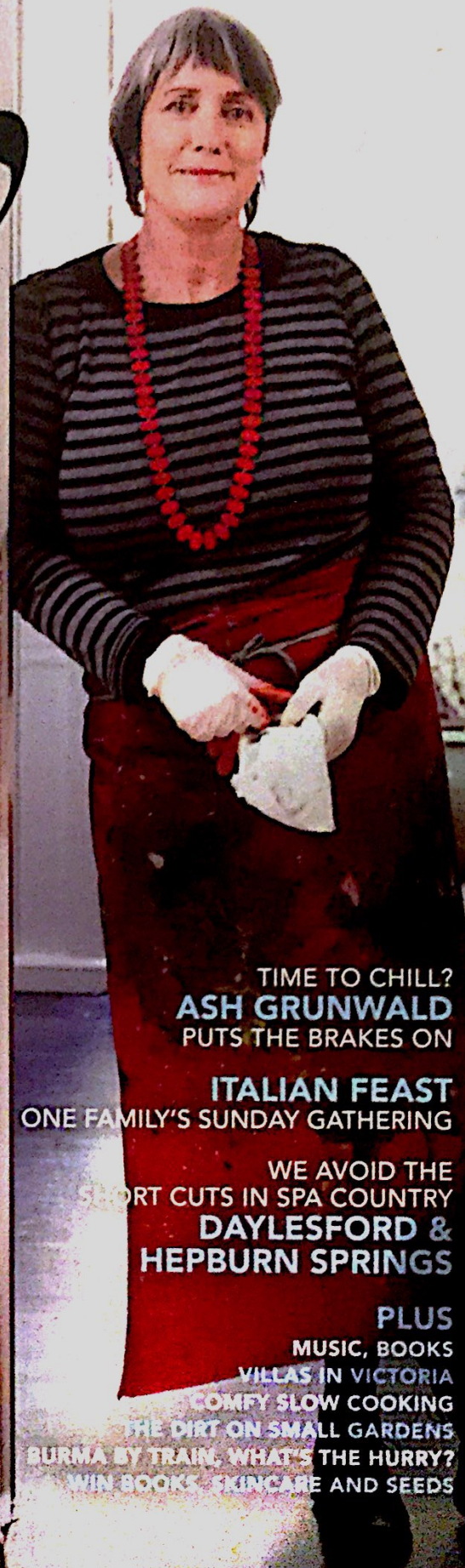
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TIME TO CHILL?
ASH GRUNWALD
PUTS THE BRAKES ON

ITALIAN FEAST
ONE FAMILY'S SUNDAY GATHERING

WE AVOID THE
SHORT CUTS IN SPA COUNTRY
**DAYLESFORD &
HEPBURN SPRINGS**

PLUS
MUSIC, BOOKS
VILLAS IN VICTORIA
COMFY SLOW COOKING
THE DIRT ON SMALL GARDENS
BURMA BY TRAIN. WHAT'S THE HURRY?
WIN BOOKS, SKINCARE AND SEEDS



DAYLESFORD

TOURISTS FLOCK HERE IN DROVES, BUT THERE IS MORE TO DAYLESFORD THAN DAY SPAS AND DOILIES. IT IS ALSO HOME TO GREENIES, FOODIES, HIPPIES AND HOBBY FARMERS AS WELL AS A FOREST OF TREECHANGERS, AS **SUE PEACOCK** REPORTS.

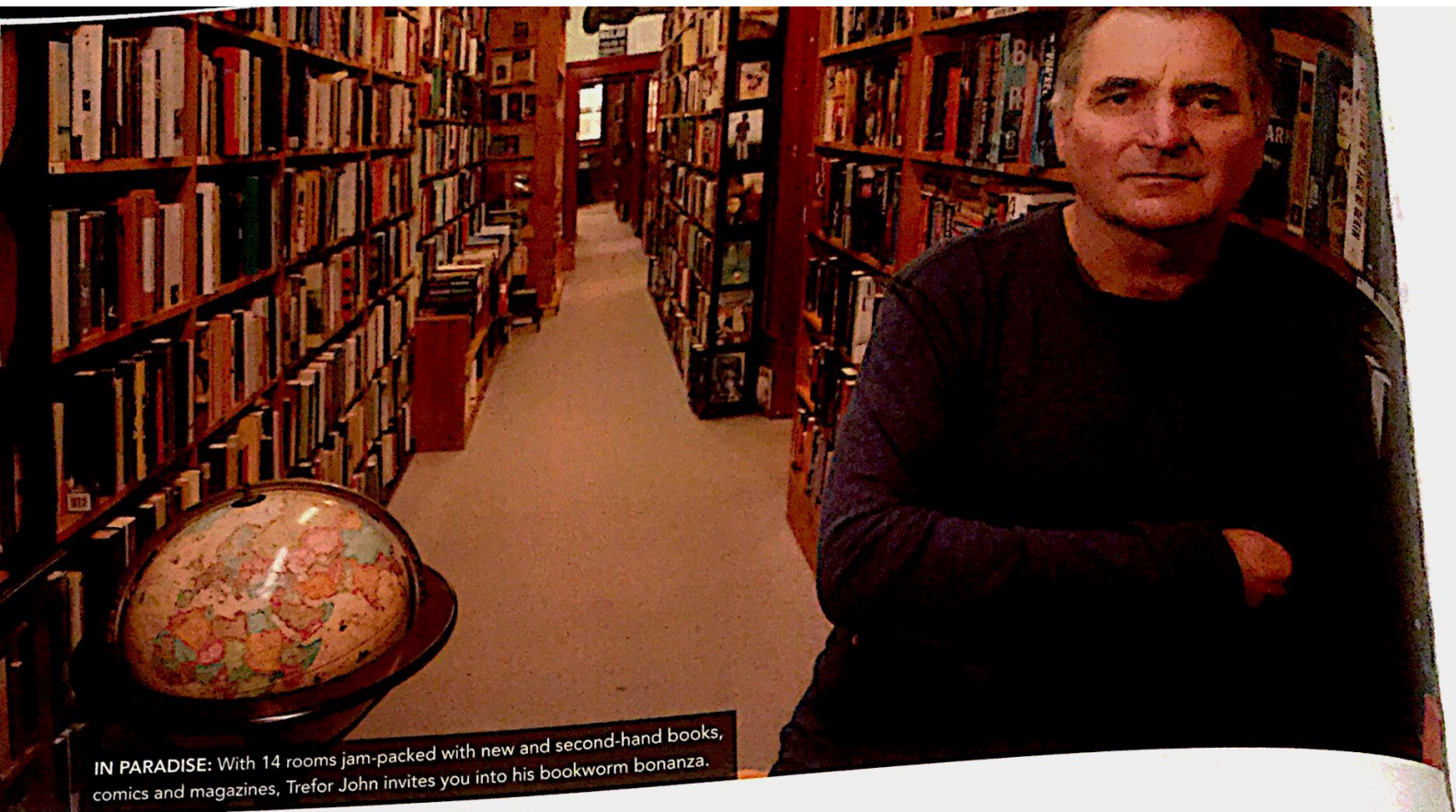
IN THE LAND of the long weekend, the capital is a town called Wombat.

This is a place where people come to slow down, eat and sleep well and burrow away from the world. Here, luxury is defined as leisure and measured by time.

Located just 115 kilometres, or a 90-minute drive north-west of Melbourne, Wombat is a real place. Except it is now called Daylesford, following a name change during the heady, goldrush days of the 1850s.

The wombat moniker hasn't completely disappeared – Wombat Hill dominates the landscape in the centre of town – and plenty of wombat-like behaviour goes on in the town's cafes and restaurants, bed and breakfasts and the modern day 'burrow', the day spa.

Daylesford's grip on the collective, long weekend mindset of city folk, interstate and overseas holiday makers and treechangers is unique, thanks to some clever marketing and a bucolic setting which includes the highest concentration of mineral springs in the country. And a similar ratio of therapists. »



IN PARADISE: With 14 rooms jam-packed with new and second-hand books, comics and magazines, Trefor John invites you into his bookworm bonanza.

» “There is a very strong community here,” he says. “Tourism is not a new thing, there has been a long tradition of visitors coming here and it has always had a very European feel to it which I think has led to a greater tolerance and diversity in the community when compared to other largely Anglo towns.”

Since 1993, the legacy of the hundreds of Swiss and Italian ‘emigranti’ who arrived in the region from the goldrush era onwards, is celebrated with a ten-day festival in Hepburn Springs. This year’s Festa from October 19 includes Italian film screenings, winery tours, jazz concerts, art exhibitions and a big ball.

Christine Lewis knows all about the European influence on the area. The daughter of a Hungarian migrant, she used to join extended family gatherings in a little miner’s cottage on Lake Daylesford as a child.

Ten years ago, after growing increasingly disillusioned with the corporate world, she swapped the boardrooms of London for a few

“ I came up here to visit a mate and felt like I had come home ... The sense of community here was very strong and still is ...

bedrooms in Hepburn Springs. As a private banker, she had earned a hefty salary, had a robust share portfolio and London flat with a rooftop terrace, yet cashed it all in to follow her dream of opening a guesthouse in the country.

She gravitated back to Hepburn Springs, where she bought an old weatherboard house on Main Street, opposite the Lucini family’s historic macaroni factory. Her life has never been richer, thanks to the vibrant Hepburn community she is a part of.

“I could see the world was being taken over by corporates and knew there was going to be a lot more stressed out individuals who would need a place to come and rest,” she says of her life

TOO SLOW TO RETURN HOME?

Daylesford's Population: 3000
(shire 15,000)

Median house price data:

Year 2000: **\$180,000**

Year 2011: **\$350,000**

Average rental in 2011: **\$280 per week**

changing decision. “I wanted to do something where I could be my own boss and which didn’t involve managing people.”

Now she spends her days showing visitors how to laugh and enjoy themselves as well as many of the region’s attractions. It can be as simple as telling them to look up at the stars. »



It is not about spending more money, it is about enjoying the fresh air, visiting the waterfalls, riding a bike or buying a bag of potatoes from the side of the road.

» “Many are so busy they are too tired to hold their partner’s hand, they are beyond being exhausted and it is my job to make them feel nurtured.”

For Christine, connections rather than transactions are important. Her approach is collaborative and she is just as eager to talk about the attractions and local businesses she loves, as her own place.

“It doesn’t have to be expensive,” she stresses. “It is not about spending more money, it is about enjoying the fresh air, visiting the waterfalls, riding a bike or buying a bag of potatoes from the side of the road.”

Gayle Watkins is another treechanger who has pursued her passion for local, seasonal, organic produce at the iconic Clifty’s Emporium on Raglan Street. After a few years working there, she purchased the business from founder and slow food doyenne, Mary Ellis.

Part café, part local produce store, Clifty’s ethos centres around supporting the region’s growing

number of food producers and educating customers about what they are eating. Just don’t ask for avocados, tomatoes and mushrooms for breakfast in the middle of winter.

“Often we might only have root vegetables,” Gayle tells *Slow* during an afternoon break. “So we try and get customers to try something new and expand their experiences.” »

GETTING THERE WITH V/LINE

The journey to Daylesford takes approximately two and a half hours from Melbourne by train and coach. V/Line will get you there for only \$19 return for an off-peak full fare ticket, or just \$9.40 return for an off-peak concession ticket (\$13.60 return on weekends). Take the family with a V/Line Family Traveller ticket, which is only \$38 return from Melbourne (valid for two adults and up to four children during off-peak times, including weekends). For more information, visit vline.com.au or call 136 196.





MAINSTREAM TO MAINSTAY: Swapping the big smoke for a big regional adventure within the twin-towns of Hepburn Springs and Daylesford is a dream-come-true for Christine Lewis. (pictured here with her dog Narla)



65 Main Guesthouse

best local experience

We invite you to design a Daylesford-Hepburn Springs getaway for yourself, friends, family or significant other. This doily-free stay at 65 Main includes authentic Spatown Experiences with local knowledge on your side. Host Christine's little black book introduces you to those passionate about regional wine, produce, relaxation and fun. Specialising in romance, celebration, gift packages and groups up to 12, tailor an escape to your budget and desires.

65 Main Rd, Hepburn Springs

Tel: 03 5348 1826, 0438 379 450

www.65main.com



Five slow things to do in Daylesford & Hepburn Springs

DISCOVER the edible wild plants of Daylesford on a leisurely stroll through the back streets, lanes and gardens of the town with local vegan chef Alexis Pitsopolous (Wild Edibles website). He can show you what is growing right under your feet and tell you about its culinary and medicinal merits, as well as those weeds best left alone. For more information contact the Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre on (03) 5348 3569 or email daylesford@ourneighbourhood.org.au

HUNT for treasure with a difference, and take the kids – one hunt involves a GPS unit – with Brendan Murray's Secret Forest Walks. He is the creator of the Lake Daylesford Geocaching game, a hi-tech treasure hunt which is great for teens – or he can tailor an activity to suit your family with holiday packages and guided forest tours available. For more information contact Brendan on 0418 301 281, or email info@secretforestwalks.com

ORDER some fish and chips and head for Jubilee Lake, the less-glamorous sibling of Lake Daylesford. The man-made lake was built in 1860 to provide water for the goldfields and is now a popular spot for fishing and picnicking. There is a caravan park, a mineral spring, a kiosk, BBQ facilities and canoe hire. Head off around the lake, it's a lovely walk... and see if you can find soda spring.

GRAB a free map from the visitor information centre and explore some of the region's 70-odd mineral springs, many of which are found in the Hepburn Regional Park. You could start with Sailors Falis, Tipperary Springs, Golden Spring and Argyle Spring. Sample the therapeutic waters from old-fashioned hand pumps or continuous flowing pipes – some taste sweet, others sharp – and bring some old bottles to fill up and take home.

CALL in at Passing Clouds, the closest winery/vineyard to Daylesford to see wine being made in a truly slow style. Here, high on the north-facing slope of the Great Dividing Range, Cameron Leith is committed to continuing the winemaking tradition begun by his father Graeme, producing cool climate pinots and chardonnays. Their philosophy centres around guiding the fruit from the vineyard to the bottle as gently as possible, which explains the limited use of modern equipment and the preference for hand picking and hand plunging the grapes until such time as they are ready to be pressed. Opening hours – 11am to 5pm daily, 30 Roddas Lane, Musk. www.passingclouds.com.au