



Time out under the gum trees

Leave the city life behind you, re-energise, refresh, unwind and rediscover nature in the beautiful bushland setting of Turon Gates Country Retreat. *By Peter Moore.*



It was a camping trip they took from their usual abode in Mosman that became the catalyst of The Turon Gates Country Retreat, explained owner Sonya Lunoe. After four days of camping on the river Soren, Sonya's husband made a comment that he'd like to buy land and retire there one day. Brushing her husband's intentions off as a mere comment was her first mistake. However, Soren was resolute and returned home the next day with deed in hand. For Soren and Sonya the Turon Gates dream had just edged closer to a reality.

Move forward twenty years and Soren has clearly put his back into the large acreage. Rightly assuming there'd be more people like himself from the city who'd give nothing more than to be amongst country air and its trimmings, Soren built an array of wooden cabins amongst the rolling hills and gums of the property. Our stay was in a wooden cabin named 'The Loft'. Driving straight through the cross-city tunnel from Bondi in work garb, onto the M4 for a couple of hours and into a neat left after Capertree, it felt all too simple to find. Onto the dirt road with highbeams on full charge, the night air was a lot cooler than in Sydney and it was also a lot clearer. The Milky Way clearly de-

finable in the night we weaved the cows and cattle grills to the cabin. Fifteen minutes later the fire had been lit and the kettle was on the boil. Ahh, the serenity!

When Soren built the cabins he spaced them apart with enough distance to give them a sense of isolation. You and the land. It's the most welcome respite from life in the city. You won't hear the buzz of traffic, just the animals that inhabit the land. Curious wallabies that keep their distance and docile mountain goats going about their business. Taking a drive around the unsealed roads to explore, we found Soren and Sonya's place near the river at the bottom of the gully amongst the scent of an open fire, gleam of morning dew and the hooves of their horses grinding the paddock.

Hors riding is just one of the activities available at Turon Gates, along with trout fishing in the freshwater streams, canoeing, bush walking and panning for a little piece of your own Turon gold. Our choice was to do nothing and with the inside of the cabins spacious and modern in their decor it was a pleasure. The Loft had two bedrooms but came stacked for a large occasion, with plates and cutlery to feed a couple of families possible. Outside, logs



surrounding a makeshift fire could make for a night of tales and marshmallows. Fold-out couches turn into beds for the weary and an upstairs loft area for the kids - complete with TV, DVD, video and a stack of kids' movies - means they're safe, entertained and out-of-sight!

If you want to look around the area, visit nearby wine region of Mudgee and enjoy specialty local food and wine, or explore the gold towns of Sofala and Hill End. For a complete escape, delicious home-cooked meals are available, as well as a wide range of pampering beauty treatments. Phone Sarah on (02) 6359 0098 to pre book.

Cabins at Turon Gates are eco-friendly, relying on solar power, although you wouldn't know it in the gas-heated shower. You can book a meal to be



waiting when you arrive, bring your own food or take a trip to nearby Mudgee (one hour away) for a wine-tasting lunch and food shop. Soren and Sonya welcome your pets so taking a stroll before curling up in front of your fire could be the perfect day. Just make sure when you leave, you take your partner's comments seriously.

For more information or bookings: Tel: (02) 9969 3818 or visit www.turongates.com. Email: info@turongates.com

FACT FILE

Turon Gates is a unique bush hideaway set in unspoilt Australian wilderness, located just 2.5hrs drive from Sydney CBD. An ideal place to escape city life and rediscover nature... and yourself! It's approximately 30 mins from Lithgow.

Go bush walking in 6,000 acres of untouched bushland or swim in wonderful deep bush swimming holes against a sheer cliff backdrop. Canoe along the 8km river, go trout fishing, try your luck panning for gold, or simply relax in a hammock under a gum tree and enjoy the sounds of nature. At Turon Gates, you can do everything or nothing at all!

- Prices range from \$360 for a 3-night weekend in the river cabins to \$480 for the mountain cabins (3 adults or 2 adults / 2 children). 1, 2 and 3-bedroom cabins.
- Midweek rates start at \$110 per night.
- Camping is available, with no booking required for \$22 per car and \$6 per trailer per night. Off road 4wd driving is not permitted.