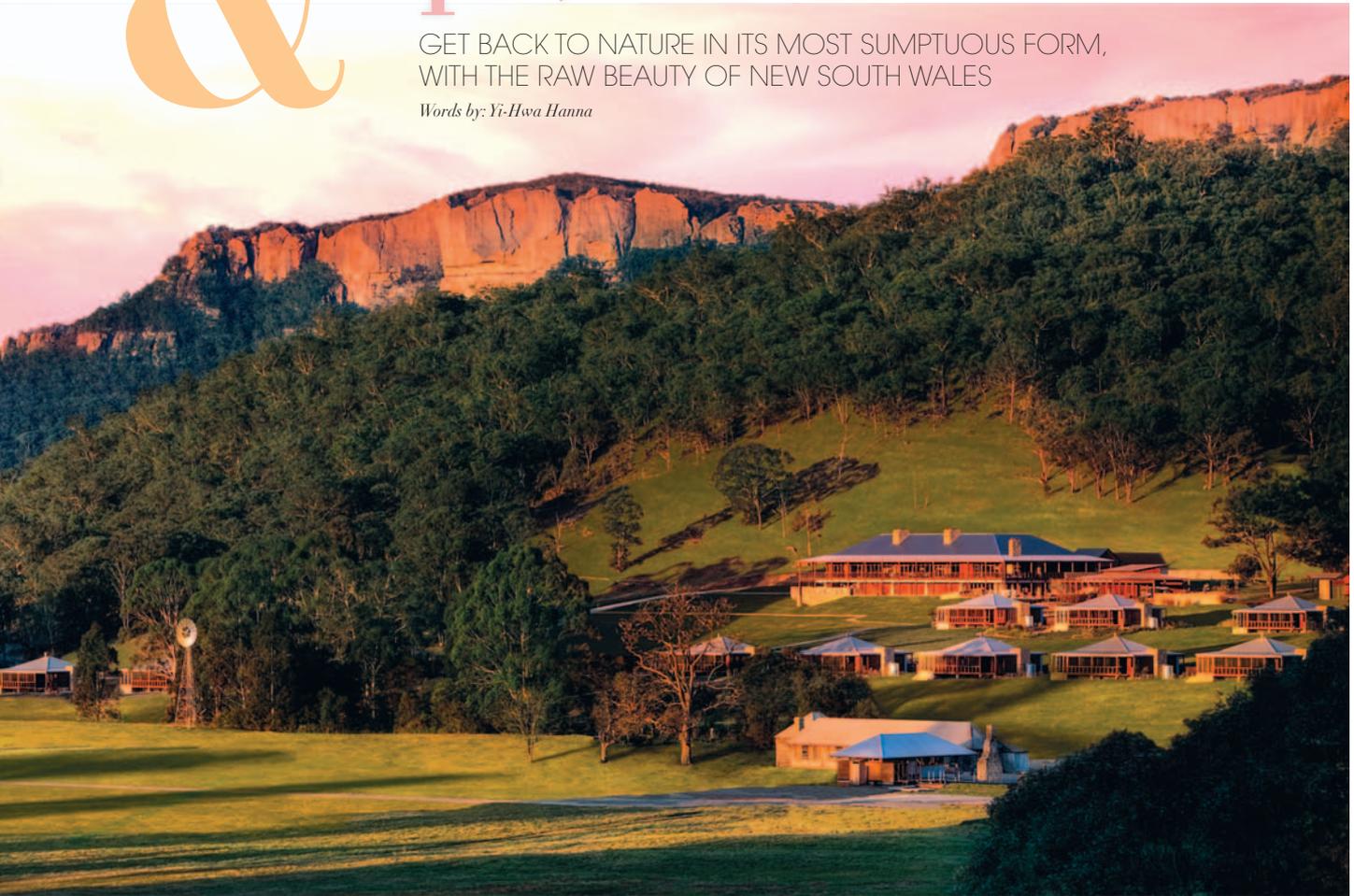


Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa, Australia

GET BACK TO NATURE IN ITS MOST SUMPTUOUS FORM,
WITH THE RAW BEAUTY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Words by: Yi-Hwa Hanna



Imagine the sort of place where as you wake, natural sunlight streams through a skylight and the only sounds you hear are animals stirring and the breeze rushing through the trees; where dewdrops glisten on leaves in the morning, and the sweet, heady perfume of pines, eucalyptus, and wild flowers wafts through the air. Freshly baked bread, home-made spreads and local cheeses are plentiful in supply and ready to tickle your palate as you savour nourishing, locally-sourced farm produce, meats and dairy. While at night, the sky is a velvety, unending canopy glimmering with stars. Thankfully, you can do more than just imagine the sensory overload that such an environment could stimulate; you can experience it with a stay at Emirates Hotels & Resorts' Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa in New South Wales.

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa represents the ultimate in escapes. Here you can step away from the grind of daily city life, cast away thoughts of traffic, high rise buildings and dispense with the incessant battery of electronic communications (you won't get coverage for your mobile here) and instead succumb to the irresistible allure of seclusion in an idyllic valley teeming with wildlife and seemingly endless greenery.

Just three hours after driving away from Sydney's city limits, wilderness reigns supreme and you will find yourself navigating carefully along winding roads and steep cliffs. As you veer off onto a private road alongside the river, the *homestead* comes into sight. An inviting array of timber and sandstone farmhouses nestles cohesively into the surroundings of fruit orchards and herb gardens, while beyond a dramatic mountainous backdrop stands tall and proud.

A passing thought about a rudimentary back to basics style holiday slips quickly from mind as the Wolgan Valley Resort's staff extends the warmest of welcomes, and cheerfully offers to cater to your every need. Ushering you to the divine suite that will be your home for the duration of your stay, you are greeted by country living at its most luxurious. The spacious interior is well thought-out; weathered pieces of fencing posts and metal from the original homestead make eye-catching works of art. The centre piece of the suite is a vast four poster bed, which is a perfect place to repose in after day spent exploring the wonders of Wolgan Valley.

Even if you don't consider yourself an outdoorsy type, you can't fail to be won over by the awe-inspiring

DETAILS

• SLEEP

Achieving a perfect blend of old and new, the resort's 40 free-standing luxury suites, each with a private terrace and swimming pool, reflect the original architectural heritage of the area despite having been built using ultra-modern technology. Choose from one of 36 Federation-style wood and stone Heritage Suites, decorated with earthy tones and complete with a romantic sandstone fireplace. Families can stay together in one of the three Wollemi Suites, with ample space in which to get 'alone time' or for bonding with family members. For the ultimate sanctuary, there is the exclusive, self-contained Wolgan Suite lodge; its vast private terrace, lush gardens and gourmet kitchen are the pinnacle of luxury.

• IMBIBE

Local delicacies rule the kitchens as the resort adheres to its sustainable living approach, sourcing ingredients from the surrounding areas. Utilising these ingredients, the talented chefs conjure up delectable seasonal, regional and organic cuisine with dedicated summer and winter menus. Delight in breakfast and dinner at the Homestead's Wolgan Dining Room, or settle down in the atmospheric Country Kitchen for light meals throughout the day. From freshly-baked breads to Australian produce and spices such as quandong, peppercorn or wattleseed, your tastebuds will be seduced by unique fare including zesty kangaroo carpaccio and tender herby roasted venison to juicy Wagyu beef rosettes and flakey grilled baby Barramundi. Lest you think the wholesome and hearty menus would overlook your sweet tooth, fret not - there are decadent desserts galore - Valrhona chocolate parfait spiced with passionfruit, blood orange pudding with candied mint and succulent creams, sour cherry tarts with home-made cream, crisp buttery millefeuille, to name just a few. For panoramic views of the valley and a diverse selection of refreshments, don't miss the Valley Bar & Terrace.

• EXPERIENCE

Set amidst the rugged Greater Blue Mountain World Heritage Area, the award-winning resort boasts Emirates Hotels & Resorts' commitment to an environmentally responsible philosophy with its nature reserves, conservation areas and wildlife and biodiversity protection. As a result, the stunning scenery plays host to a veritable smorgasbord of outdoor pursuits. Skilled field guides proffer a wealth of knowledge about the breathtaking vistas and captivating wildlife. Activities range from wildlife safaris hosted in luxury 4-wheel drives to guided nature walks, hikes and mountain biking, all of which allow you to drink in the diversity of the area's natural elements. Equine lovers can explore the plains on horseback, even stopping for a picnic lunch, while history buffs will be delighted to learn more about the area's culture through Aboriginal Tours. **END**

FAST FACTS

The rugged, wildlife-rich Wolgan Valley was formed by the Wolgan River in New South Wales, west of Sydney.

Still largely undeveloped, the valley was inhabited by indigenous Australians for thousands of years. The valley's name originates from the word "wolga," an Australian Aboriginal name for a coastal climbing plant.

The Greater Blue Mountains area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is known for its lush vegetation including eucalyptus trees (that give the mountains the "blue" part of their name through the oil they secrete) and the rare Wollemi pine.

natural beauty that envelops the resort; simply gazing out at the picturesque landscape from the comforts of your suite will instill a sense of tranquillity. More adventurous folk, meanwhile, can explore their surroundings in greater depth and detail. A vast environment beckons to guests for an array of hiking or safari-style activities.

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa's environmental consciousness doesn't end with ensuring that it blends seamlessly into its surroundings, it's also committed to offering eco-luxury of the highest pedigree and is the first resort in the world to have achieved internationally accredited carbon neutral certification. Aside from capacious bio-conservation efforts, the resort supplies 35% of its power through renewable energy, and has incorporated heat recovery and solar power usage into its construction. Rainwater is collected and domestic water is recycled, while food and supplies are sourced from within a 100 mile radius.

Self-sustainable, eco-conscious, sumptuous and luxurious, not to mention amidst the finest elements of mother nature, Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa really is a self-contained paradise; once there you may decide you just don't want to leave.