



## Sunday Escape

Five things to do in Dubai

# STAY AT MY PLACE ...

## HERITAGE ON LYDIARD BALLARAT

**W**HAT do you look for in a relaxing weekend away? How about hot-stone massages? Or sipping great Victorian wines and lingering over a feast of local produce before relaxing in a boutique hotel steeped in history? This ticks all the boxes for me when I need to get out of town.

### ACCOMMODATION

Our weekend abode in Ballarat was the former Bank of NSW built in 1862, transformed by Quality Inn into a modern boutique hotel called the Heritage on Lydiard.

The grand staircase to our room makes an amazing first impression, as do the giant doorways welcoming us to our room with the high ceilings. The room is modern and warmly decorated, with a few extra delights including a gas fireplace, big leather arm-chairs and 42-inch TV. In a word: sumptuous.

One tip. If it's warm, pack the togs for the outdoor spa-pool.

### FOOD

Downstairs there's a gem, the Lydiard Wine Bar. Our 10 courses included homemade bread with olives and dip, freshly shucked oysters with chilli and lime, wild mushroom croquettes, crystal bay prawns with red pepper and salami, spicy Thai chicken and pork sausage and, for main, local lamb.



Golden outlook: The autumn trees are a treat at the moment in Ballarat's Botanic Gardens.

We went local and ordered a bottle of Tomboy Hill chardonnay (\$90) from a tiny vineyard planted north of the Eureka Rebellion site. It was worth every cent and had us reaching for mail-order forms.

### FUN

Earlier in the day we found ourselves in good hands at Elysium Day Spa (24 Doveton St, ph: 5332 9722, [elysiumdayspa.com.au](http://elysiumdayspa.com.au)), pampered with a hot-stone massage.

Eighty minutes from Melbourne's heart, connected to the city by one of Victoria's best

stretches of road, there are new reasons to add Ballarat to your list of weekend getaways. As a romantic destination, it's a golden delight.

### THE DEAL

Heritage on Lydiard, 5 Lydiard St North (ph: 5327 2777) has a \$335 Romantic Indulgence Package, which includes Superior Spa Room, 10-dish banquet for two in Lydiard Wine Bar, sparkling and chocolates and breakfast for two.

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NATHANIEL BANE