



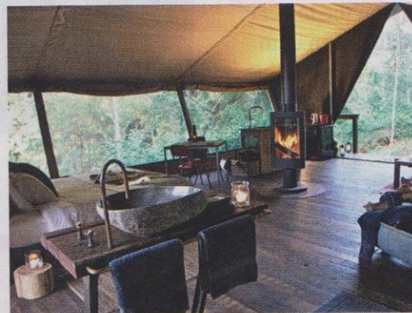
## It's camping, but not as you know it

I have never really enjoyed camping. Childhood experiences were tainted by trying to sleep on a deflated air mattress in sweltering heat beneath a pungent canvas tarp. But now “glamping” – glamorous camping – retreats have popped up in several Queensland locations and they aim to balance the needs of campers who seek the undiluted great outdoors and the demands of reluctant naturalists like myself who want three-course meals and massages.

Nightfall Wilderness Camp, nestled amid 101 sprawling, viridescent private hectares on the boundary of Lamington National Park, 80km south of Brisbane, has executed the concept beautifully. The site was opened to guests in March and only one tent was operating at the time of our stay but a second was near completion. Situated in complete privacy at the top of a hill in the shadow of a cliff, the tent was generously sized with a high canvas roof sewn by Nightfall co-owner Heidi Ross. She and husband Steve Ross have lived in

their own tent on the property since buying the land four years ago, and they work each day regenerating the land and realising their vision of a glamping retreat, complete with organic kitchen garden.

Along with its elevated wooden floor and rotatable fireplace (imported from France and installed the day before our stay), our tent's luxury features included 600 thread-count sheets, “raw” chocolates and a well-stocked bar fridge with antipasto plate and Chandon sparkling wine. We dined with our hosts in the



communal area, where Heidi and Steve prepared delicious and hearty winter fare in a camp oven – beetroot-and-kale pizza, roast lamb with root vegies, and apple pie to finish.

A hike to the wreckage of the Stinson plane, which crashed in 1937, was on the agenda but overnight rainfall had made the tracks impassable. Instead we walked the 10km loop to the national park's entrance. The road snaked between verdant hills, past cows and wallabies that seemed surprised to see us, such was the serenity.

While our hosts stressed they were still at “guinea pig stage”, every detail of the accommodation hit the mark, from the lemongrass-scented soap to the hot water bottles in bed as part of the turn-down service. After a breakfast of fresh orange juice with a yoghurt and strawberry parfait beside a fire on the creek bank, we left with a newfound fondness for “camping”, and feeling as nourished and unwound as Lilly Pilly, Nightfall's chilled-out resident wallaby. **ROSE BRENNAN**



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