

# A great escape

By Emily Sobey

**F**or years, thousands have flocked to the Spa Country to indulge in great food, wine and a host of therapies.

Daylesford and Hepburn Springs are home to diverse attractions from day spas and restaurants to markets and galleries.

One woman with a passion for the region has taken the best of what it has to offer, including some of the “best kept secrets”, and is offering them with a two-day accommodation package.

I’m about to embark on Christine Lewis’s 65 Main experience.

Christine is passionate about allowing her guests to meet locals who love what they do, and love to share their “special something”.

Her facility, 65 Main, is one of the Spa region’s newest bed and breakfasts, just a walk to pubs, restaurants, spas and massage providers.

Christine carefully planned my two-day itinerary, including the modern deluxe champagne room, with views over Hepburn Springs from the private balcony.

And my itinerary comes with just one condition: fun must be had at all times.

To add to my two-days of indulging, Kings of Ballarat also ensured I could do it in style, in a new Citroen C4.

It’s state-of-the-art diesel option means I can drive for 1300 kilometres on a tank — perfect for that weekend getaway.

First up on my itinerary was the pre-dinner mezze and drinks at The Grande, which provides the best forest views, along with its great bar and food. It’s just a great place to unwind.

Next up, I checked out The Old Hepburn Hotel, hailed for its “pub grub” and chicken parmigiana.

Visitors are greeted with a friendly smile by Jason, the publican. Add live music, and you have a great atmosphere, with great-sized meals, providing value for your money.

Not to be missed the next morning was Christine’s specialty breakfast including superb local produce and presentation — 10 out of 10!

For the next part of my stay, I was treated to a spa and massage at Omada Day Spa. The 20-minute spa and hour-long massage was relaxing; the perfect place to close your eyes and drift away.

The staff use a combination of sunflower oil and heat packs to work into any problem areas.

Feeling light as a feather, my next stop was Spice Daylesford, a funky new hair salon in Howe St.

Owner Renee Pilmore treated me to a nourishing hair treatment and her specialty head massage, all while sitting in a massage chair.

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**FOCAL POINT:** 65 Main, one of the Spa region’s newest bed and breakfasts, is just a walk to pubs, restaurants, spas and massage providers.



**LOCAL WINES:** A Perfect Drop in Howe St is a modern wine bar complete with great music. The selection includes some of the best local wines.

For a foodie experience, next stop was Cliffy’s Food Emporium in Raglan Rd.

This store and cafe offers a range of local produce and delicious goodies.

Wine lovers should be sure to head to A Perfect Drop in Howe St.

This modern wine bar, complete with great music, is the brainchild of owners Tim and Devon, who have years of experience in the hospitality industry. They have an enormous wine collection on show, featuring some of the best local drops.

I was treated to a glass of local Cabernet Sauvignon, cheese, breads and prosciutto-wrapped bread sticks.

This “hidden secret” in Daylesford is set to become a huge hit.

Up the road, don’t miss dinner on Monday nights at the award-winning



**PEOPLE FUEL:** Cliffy’s Food Emporium store and cafe in Raglan Rd offers a big range of delicious local produce.



**WAY TO GO:** The Citroen C4.

Mercato restaurant, one of Daylesford’s newest.

Monday is “locals nights”, where you can enjoy home-baked bread, a delicious main and glass of red or white house wine for \$20.

It is the perfect opportunity for those who haven’t tried this restaurant, with modern Australian food, put together by owner and chef Richard Mee.

On my final morning of the 65 Main

## THE 65 MAIN GREAT ESCAPE

Where: 65 Main Rd, Hepburn Springs  
 Details: The Great Escape Package includes two nights at 65 Main, a relaxation massage at Eagle Therapies, wine and cheese at Perfect Drop, handmade chocolates and Convent Gallery tickets  
 Cost: \$200pp midweek or \$250pp weekends  
 CONTACT: 5348 1826, 0438 379 450 or email info@65main.com

experience, I took the opportunity to sample another “best kept secret”, the local’s breakfast at the Red Star Cafe.

This cafe offers plenty of light snacks and coffees; the perfect place to relax and unwind.

The Citroen C4 took me from place to place in style, comfort and with brilliant fuel economy, and handled the road well during the wet weather.