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## Weekends Away

Our annual  
independent  
guide to the best  
short breaks

eco-luxe @ Mount Avoca in Good Weekend Magazine  
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Moates Lane,  
Avoca, 3467  
Phone (03) 5465 3282  
Fax (03) 5465 3544  
stay@eco-luxe.com.au  
www.eco-luxe.com.au

**T**he curtain rises just after 8am. From our vantage point in the master bedroom of our lodge at Mount Avoca winery, we decide to survey our surrounds and roll up the blinds of the picture windows.

The scene is, appropriately,

picture-perfect. A pale yellow sun washes the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains and the olive grove just ahead. We sit back and marvel.

Could it get any better than this?

Cue kangaroos, stage-left.

A mother roo and her young joey

hop into view. The joey bounds off in a burst of youthful energy, only to return to the security of its mother's side.

This glorious commune with nature, combined with five-star comfort, defines our visit. On a patch of high ground, three lodges have recently appeared: architecturally interesting – modern and angular – with a nod to sustainability.

Much of our stay is about just being there. Serene views are matched by a deep weekend quietness, interrupted only by the screech of cockatoos.

The bookshelves, brimming with an eclectic holiday-house collection,

also anchor compulsive browsers. We happen across a book by a distant relative: *Strange New World* by Alec H. Chisholm. Uncle Alec. Who would have thought?

There is a wonderful world just down the drive. Mount Avoca is one of more than two dozen wineries in the area. And then there is friendly little Avoca, with a wide main street that tells of its gold-rush roots and ambition.

Dining options are limited. We have a simple but satisfying pub meal at the Vic Hotel, finished off with a beaming smile from the young girl serving us when we tell her just how much we enjoyed it. **Shane Green**



1-4



2hrs

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**Cost:** from \$390 a couple a night (local produce breakfast included).

**Distance:** 185km north-west of Melbourne.

**Accommodation:** three self-contained lodges, primarily for couples, but bunk beds are available at an extra cost.

**Features:** large living area,

spa bath, DVD/TV/CD, DVDs and CDs supplied, kitchenette with microwave, floor-to-ceiling windows, king-size bed, barbecue.

**Nearby:** more than two dozen wineries, bushwalks, state parks, historic towns of Avoca and Maryborough.

**Children:** by arrangement.

**Wheelchair access:** yes.