

REVIEW | HOTEL

Dairy Flat Lodge, Daylesford, Victoria

By Ute Junker



Check-in

You couldn't ask for a smoother arrival. An hour after leaving Tullamarine Airport our rental car turns up the long drive lined with silver birches that leads to the Lodge at Dairy Flat Farm. The sister property to Daylesford's acclaimed Lake House, which is just 10 minutes' drive away, Dairy Flat Farm is a 38-hectare regenerative farm that supplies produce to the Lake House restaurant, including bread and pastries from the bakehouse beneath the Lodge.

The look

Step inside the Lodge's sprawling main room and you instantly want to nestle in to one of the cosy seating areas; the only question is, which one? Perhaps you will head to one of the couches in front of the fireplace, or perhaps it is the smaller seating nook to the side where a bowl of tulips and a stack of glossy coffee table books awaits. There is an inviting kitchen to one side with a dining room table large enough to fit a football team. A library is on the far side. All of it is decorated in the distinctive Lake House style: an artful jumble of fabrics and furnishings, bespoke pieces and exquisite antiques, thick rugs and eye-catching art, much of it by the family's late patriarch, Allan Wolf-Tasker.

The room

Dairy Flat Lodge is designed for families or friends travelling together, although single-room bookings are available occasionally, so choosing which of the six bedrooms you will sleep in is part of the fun. Whether you opt for one of the four rooms in the main lodge, or one of the two rooms tucked into the former stables just behind the house, each is designed as a private sanctuary complete with king-size beds, deep-soaking tubs and excellent Wi-Fi. Make the most of it by opting for an in-room massage using products from the Lake House's indulgent all-natural Daylesford Pure range.

Food + drink

If your idea of a good start to the day is a hearty breakfast prepared by someone else you are in luck - breakfast is included in your stay and the pastries are incredible.



Clockwise from above: Lodge arrival; a room to hole up in; hot-air ballooning and the farmhouse breakfast.



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For many guests, cooking their own meals is part of the pleasure of staying here but if you want someone else to take charge of lunch and dinner, that can be organised. (We take the latter option and enjoy feasting on superb dishes such as spiced carrot and lentil soup and duck with Jerusalem artichoke mash.) Be sure to book in a meal at the two-hatted Lake House restaurant, still one of Australia's best regional restaurants.

Out + about

The Lodge concierge will help you organise an itinerary for your stay but with so many options available on the property, it's smart to stay close to home. Take a farm tour to learn more about the vegetable gardens, orchards, hoop houses, olive grove and vineyard, or get fascinating insights from honey supplier Dan the Bee Man. Workshops on gardening and baking are also available. **i**

The writer was a guest of Luxury Lodges of Australia and Dairy Flat Lodge.

THE VERDICT

This five-star farm stay offers a luxury escape to the country.

THE ESSENTIALS

From \$5610 a night for up to 12 guests. Four accessible suites. 238 Dairy Flat Road, Musk, Victoria. See dairyflatfarmdaylesford.com.au

THE SCORE

HIGHLIGHT Early riser? Wander down to the bakehouse for a croissant fresh from the oven.
LOWLIGHT If it's been raining, pack your gumboots so you won't mind getting muddy.

HOW WE SCORE ***** AMAZING. CAN WE MOVE IN? ***** EXCELLENT. GET A LATE CHECKOUT
 **** PRETTY GOOD BUT COULD BE BETTER ** GET AN EARLY CHECKOUT * WHAT'S THE REFUND POLICY?