

If there's one thing that Albury is not, it's one-dimensional. Yes, there are the stunning snowfields and plenty of skiing to be had, but take a drive along the Great Alpine Road and stop off at the cutesy towns dotted along the way and you're in for a culinary treat.

We discovered the perfect little treasure in Porepunkah, nestled in the ideal spot, close to the quaint town of Bright and the sublime snowfields.

To the north of the grandiose Mount Feathertop, we descended upon Boynton's Feathertop winery, which has been making handcrafted wines for more than 25 years and boasts 21 varieties of grape. Not only that, it has recently opened up luxury accommodation, Feathertop Château, which comes complete with itineraries offering fine wine and cuisine.

The Château, formerly the home of owners Janelle and Kel Boynton, is

the perfect residence to take a large family or a bunch of friends. Complete with a spa, pool, gigantic kitchen and dining area, and four double bedrooms, it's a stylish and contemporary home offering panoramic views of rolling vineyards. The property also has a BMW X5 on hand, so after a quick dip in the heated spa overlooking the vineyards we jumped behind the wheel and headed for the 'unlock the cellar' experience at the cellar door. **►**

# Discovering FEATHERTOP

*OUTthere* heads to Albury and discovers fine wine, rolling scenery, quaint towns and glorious snowy mountains.



Skiing from the summit at Falls Creek.



The experience includes a tasting of traditional and alternative wine varieties including Savagnin, Vermentino, Tempranillo, Prosecco and Friulano. All are extremely palatable wines with plenty of personality to set your taste buds alight.

We journeyed over to The Red Stag in nearby Eurobin for lunch. It forms part of a commercial deer farm situated on a 375-acre property bordering Mt Buffalo National Park. Deer roam the property, as do emus and a rather boisterous turkey that literally pecks its visitors for attention. We tucked into a hearty roast pork dish and venison sausages, which pretty much set the standard for the gourmet delights on offer in this region.

For dinner, we went back to the Château where the vineyard restaurant's chef Simon Buckley and his team created a degustation experience

Feathertop offers amazing sunrise and sunset vistas.

After a blissful night's sleep, we woke to a breathtaking sunrise over the vineyard, which we watched in awe



for our guests and us. Buckley has masterminded a seasonal contemporary menu, with ingredients sourced mainly from the vineyard's veggie garden or local producers in the Alpine Valleys. Paired with some of the cellar door's finest wines, it's a culinary extravaganza not to be missed.

After a blissful night's sleep, we woke to a breathtaking sunrise over the vineyard, which we watched in awe before packing our ski gear and heading to Falls Creek for a day of skiing. Falls Creek has a variety of splendid runs for all skill levels. If you've forgotten your ski gear, there are plenty of places that can you can hire gear from. The tobogganing and tubing is excellent fun if you're armed with tots too small to ski. And if you've missed the ski season, fear not – a trip up to 'The Creek' still offers plenty of activities during the spring and summer seasons.

Hungry for lunch we headed to Elk Restaurant in the heart of Falls Creek village. It offers succulent lamb kebabs, crunchy fish and chips and gluten-free gnocchi, all of it ideal to sate your post-ski hunger.

For dinner, we went back to the Château to fire up the property's very own pizza oven. The restaurant at the vineyard provides house guests with an array of freshly made pizza dough and a million toppings so you can tuck into piping-hot, homemade wood-fired pizzas and perhaps a bottle of two of the 50 wines on offer at the Château's cellar.

The next day, we decided to take a heli-scenic flight from Porepunkah with Brian from HiLife Helicopters. If time and budget permits, this is well worth it as the true beauty of this region is



Where the great outdoors meets the great indoors



DINNER WITH FRIENDS

FUN ON THE MURRAY

ALBURY WODONGA see both sides



Pondering on the true pleasures of this paradise we about talked dates that we could visit the region again.



best experienced from above. Whizzing over stunning mountainous countryside lets you experience the raw untouched essence of the region like nothing else.

After another fine lunch with Simon Buckley's team back at the vineyard's restaurant, we took the hire bikes available to us and drove into Bright. This charming town is situated close to the snow-fed waters that flow through Ovens Valley on the way to the Murray River.

We cycled through the town, stopping in at all the cute shops along the river and found ourselves at the

delightful Bright Chocolate shop, which boasts Australian craft chocolate made using ethically sourced single origin cacao. Sample many of their fabulous varieties or simply settle down for a comforting cup of hot chocolate – or even cacao tea.

In the afternoon back at the Château we treated ourselves to an in-room spa service and enjoyed sumptuous massages by the pool before having an evening dip. Pondering on the true pleasures of this paradise, we talked about dates that we could visit the region again. [O]

## Round-up

### GO

Fly to **Albury** and the alpine towns of the Snowy Mountains are all within an hour's drive.

### STAY

**Feathertop Château** can be booked through Luxe Houses. [luxehouses.com.au](http://luxehouses.com.au)

### DO

All activities mentioned in the article can be arranged by Feathertop Château. From February until May, the Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA) will have a blockbuster exhibition celebrating the enduring cultural phenomenon of Marilyn Monroe. [mamalbury.com.au](http://mamalbury.com.au)

In March, the region host the Chryslers on the Murray meet, a must for classic car enthusiasts.



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