

# THE VICE-REGAL RETREAT: SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS TOUR



WITH JUDITH DUNN OAM





# The Vice-Regal Retreat

This unique guided tour of the beautiful Southern Highlands, showcases its destination as a summer holiday resort during the 19th century. Once the NSW Governors came here for their holidays, the elite of Sydney followed, joining early grantees to form the idyllic lifestyle of summer hunts and hunt balls.

Judith Dunn OAM leads the tour and takes you into houses not usually open to the public (including Hopewood House, Throsby Park and Golden Vale Homestead). You will follow the ridge line of the Mittagong Range stud farms known as 'the nursery slopes of NSW', enjoy exclusive fine dining experiences and curated tours including Joadja ghost town and Hillview. Other highlights: the rare surviving summer residence of 16 Governors and a beautiful vice-regal church.



# Itinerary

## DAY 1

***9.30am Coach departs Central Station, Sydney.***

As we drive towards the Southern Highlands we will have a short break at Nepean Dam, part of the Upper Nepean River Catchment Area. Continuing with full commentary through the railway towns of Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale we reach our lunch destination at Southern Highlands Winery.

***12.00pm Lunch Southern Highlands Winery***

This cool climate winery is operated by three Italian families on an 83-acre property. Our chef for lunch, Marco Secchiutt, specialises in authentic Italian with a modern twist. We enjoy a 2 course meal in the barrel room with private bar and access to the garden. For this occasion, Marco is including a shot of limoncello, a traditional Italian liquor (sgroppino) and a wine tasting of the local wines.

Additional drinks/wine/liquor at your own expense.





# Itinerary Cont.

## *2pm – Hillview, Sutton Forest*

Tour the most intact vice regal summer residence occupied by sixteen successive Governors of NSW. During the war years the Governors lived here away from the dangers of Sydney. Largely untouched since 1957, it reveals the way of life, taste and decoration from the 1880s to 1950s. Extensive views of the surrounding countryside show why the elite of the colony gathered here for hunt balls and garden parties. Currently leased out by the government, the grounds are home to a biennial sculpture exhibition.

As we leave, we briefly pull up at All Saints Church cemetery gates (the original gates of Hillview) to see the names of the governors who stayed at Hillview along with Queen Victoria's cipher.



# Itinerary Cont.

## ***3.30 pm - Golden Vale, Sutton Forest***

We are privileged to have an exclusive tour of this private property which is an elegant and rare example of an 1852 house and outbuilding complex composed of sandstone homestead, meat house, barn, stables and woolshed. The significance of the house is enhanced by the importance to the local area of its original owner, Edward Carter, who discovered Kerosene Shale in Joadja Valley.

## ***4.30pm - Moss Vale Railway Station, Sutton Forrest***

As we wend our way to our accommodation, we pause at Moss Vale Station which was built to service the Vice Regal parties travelling to Hillview. A very large complex of station buildings was built to house a Vice-Regal waiting room, tearooms and waiting rooms for the Governor's retinue of 35 travelling servants.

## ***6pm - The Springs, Mittagong***

Check in to our accommodation at The Springs, Mittagong. Time to settle in and refresh for dinner which tonight will be at leisure and your own expense. Options are Mittagong RSL or various venues in Mittagong, a short walk away.



# Itinerary Cont.

## DAY 2

### *9am Tour of the Mittagong Range*

Saturday morning we climb the Mittagong Range and follow the ridge line through tiny villages and stud farms. Travel through scenic and relaxing country while hearing about the beginning of farming in the area – now known as the nursery slopes of NSW.

Hear of elite families who built holiday homes in the area once it was favoured by the Governors. Travel through the villages of Glenquarry, Kangaloon and Burrawang while skirting Wingecarribbee Reservoir. Learn about the early settlers and understand the lifestyle of this area.

### *12pm –Light lunch at Milton Park*

Mansfield's Farm was purchased by Anthony Hordern of retail fame in 1910. He renamed it Milton Park after the town established on the south coast by his grandfather, John Booth Hordern. Viola Hordern and then after her death, Mary (nee Packer) Anthony's second wife laid out the magnificent gardens which are famous today. We enjoy a Chef's selection of assorted sandwiches in the beautiful conservatory at Milton Park.





# Itinerary Cont.

## ***1.30pm Throsby Park, Moss Vale***

Enjoy a private tour of the Throsby Park Estate in Moss Vale where we will visit the homestead, a large verandahed cottage developed in the 1830s. Throsby Park is a site of national significance as it was the first settlement outside the county of Cumberland, and a surviving remnant of the 1,000 acre grant to Dr Charles Throsby in 1819. Throsby explored to the south as did Meehan, Wilde, Hume, Hovel, Oxley and various others, opening up the great sheep areas of Yass, Gunning and Cooma. The second Charles Throsby, who inherited this grant, continued to develop the area and built Christ Church, Bong Bong.

## ***3.30pm Christ Church, Bong Bong***

We have arranged a special opening of Christ Church Bong Bong, the oldest church between Cobbity and Canberra built in 1845 to a design of John Verge. Beautifully decorated by Elizabeth Throsby in honor of her husband Charles, the floral windows by Lynne and Cottier (later Cottier and Tiffany) are a magnificent feature. The surrounding cemetery holds the remains of many notable early settlers including 26 Throsbys and 19 Osbornes.



# Itinerary Cont.

## ***4.45pm Hopewood, Bowral***

We tour one of the grand estates of the Southern Highlands, established by pastoralist Ben Osborne and his wife Lucy Throsby. The home is currently the private estate of Janet Storrier and family. Included is a tour of the gardens and ground floor of the residence plus the gallery. This house has had several interesting owners including Lebbeus Hordern, one of the Hordern retail family, at which time there were five of the Hordern family with homes in the Highlands.

## ***6pm Dinner at Eschalot, Berrima***

Enjoy fine dining at Eschalot which operates from one of the most significant heritage buildings in the Berrima area and has been the recipient of many industry awards, including 11 prestigious chef hats. The Eschalot philosophy is to provide fresh produce of the highest quality, locally sourced where possible, and combine it with professional, friendly service in an elegant, relaxed environment.

## ***8.30pm Return to our accommodation at The Springs Resort***





# Itinerary Cont.

## DAY 3

### *9.30 am Tour of Joadja*

Joadja is a hidden valley full of mystery, intrigue and drama. The tour covers a large site so we will travel by people movers to explore the ruins of the Kerosene Shale mining town. Commentary from the local guide will include stories of the people that lived, worked and perished in the valley and some of the extraordinary events that took place during Joadja's heyday.

### *12pm Lunch at Bendooley Estate*

Indulge in a fabulous tableshare menu while overlooking the Bendooley Estate and vineyards. Originally the first land grant in Berrima, the estate was owned by the Cordeaux family (Cordeaux Dam). A grand Georgian homestead built from convict-hewn stone stands on the site along with stately European trees and the magnificent cool-climate garden. Now it also houses the largest book barn in Australia.

Drinks at your own expense.



# Itinerary Cont.

## ***1.30pm Harper's Mansion***

Built by James Harper, owner of the Surveyor General Inn in 1834 and used variously as a Catholic presbytery and convent, it was acquired by the National Trust in 1978.

Scheduled for sale, local NT members formed a committee and opened it to the public making it a most successful NT property. We will tour the house and five-acre garden including a well-designed maze.

## ***2.30pm Tour of Berrima village***

Berrima was established in 1831 after the failure of Bong Bong due to the lack of a permanent water supply. On the main road to the south which brought wool wagons over the Razorback Range to Sydney, Berrima grew in importance and at one stage had thirteen inns. Berrima was slated to become the centre of the Camden district, hence the overly large gaol and court-house, but when the railways failed to pass through Berrima due to the terrain, it stayed as a small village. Bypassed by the modern Hume Highway has preserved the village as an early 1800s site.

## ***3.30pm Depart for Sydney***

We depart the Southern Highlands and travel back to Sydney, Central Station

