

Freeman On Ford



Newsletter 6 - April 2011

Freeman on Ford - Making you feel special

Score of 19 out of 20 from The Age Weekend Away columnist

What a busy and exciting time it's been.

In this edition you will see what we have been up to lately including scoring a 19 out of 20 in *The Age's* Weekend Away section and we're about to be included on Channel 9's *Postcards*...more details later.

In October last year we held an official opening for the renovation. More than 100 people attended from throughout the district and it was a real honour to have the then Minister for Tourism, Tim Holding officiate. Mr Holding has stayed with us before and spoke from the heart about our renovation journey.

Since then, the renovated Freeman on Ford has been discovered by a number of travel writers - with articles in *Virgin Blue's Voyeur* in-flight magazine, inclusion in *Great Australian Historic Hotels* book by Barry Stone, *The Age* article (see back of this page), *The Border Mail* and many of our valued guests have turned travel-writer, giving us great feedback on Trip Advisor -

<http://tinyurl.com/45q6et8>



Heidi with Giaan Rooney
from Postcards

Catch us on Postcards on 10 April

We have also had the crew from Channel 9's *Postcards* series stay with us recently. The program about Freeman on Ford and other Beechworth highlights will air at 5.30pm on Sunday, 10 April in Melbourne. Please check your regional/State times as this may differ.

Make sure you watch it because we are offering two superb prizes for viewers on the night.

Happy Easter to you all

Heidi and Jim, Jasmine and Ezra



Thousands come to
Beechworth for Easter



Heidi & Jim with the then Minister
for Tourism, Tim Holding



Opening of renovation

For more updated information please go to www.freemanonford.com.au

WEEKEND AWAY
BEECHWORTH

Stars with shine

Sue Wallace settles in for cheesecake and tea at an opulent bed and breakfast.

If there's one place that's always intrigued me in Beechworth it's a grand building that was once the home of the Oriental Bank, where more than 5000 Chinese put their savings in the 1870s.

As a child, I was spellbound by stories of gold-miners and the Chinese who flocked to the area to make their fortune.

As I step through the front doors of the former Oriental Bank, that in another life was also Australia's second convent for Brigidine nuns and then the home of the State Savings Bank of Victoria, nostalgia comes flooding back.

The facade of the historic two-storey building, now Beechworth's first and only five-star bed and breakfast, has been well preserved. It was designed by architect Leonard Terry, who built the Melbourne Club, Lazars and Trinity Chapel at Melbourne University.

Freeman on Ford features four upstairs Victorian-era rooms that were completed in 2002 and retain an old world charm, and the latest additions, two luxurious new guest rooms inspired by the 1930s golden age of Hollywood, were opened in October.

We are in time for a sumptuous afternoon tea of home-made lemon cheesecake, with ripe strawberries and cream, and tea served from a silver teapot, complete with flowery china, linen napkins and tiny crystal encrusted teaspoons.

It's served with style as we sit on the verandah overlooking the new granite pool and manicured grounds adorned with Grecian-style statues and classic urns. Finally it all proves too inviting and we change and cool off in the solar-heated pool and test the spa.

There's a massage room near the pool area and a masseuse available but I am happy to return to my elegant bedroom with its Hollywood feel.

There's a bed to sink into and the fine linen, quality furnishings, sparkling chandelier, large mirror and open fireplace are opulent.

The bed and breakfast is owned and run by Heidi Freeman and Jim Didolis who have worked meticulously since 2002 to ensure standards are equivalent to their city counterparts.

As well as the new bedrooms, a spacious living room has been added with arched windows, comfortable leather couches and polished floors.



Things of beauty ... (clockwise from main) Grecian-style statues adorn the pool; tea served from a silver

It is a perfect place for reading a selection of magazines or enjoying some quiet time.

Breakfast is served in the formal dining room and there's a great menu selection ranging from Didolis's big breakfast with eggs, sausages, tomatoes and fetta to fresh fruit, muffins, thick toast and home-made jams.

I soon discover some nostalgic touches with a quaint nod to the past. Mannequins saved by Freeman, from her late father's well-known shop, Freemans the Draper, which opened in Beechworth in 1952, are displayed in several corners.

Michael Isaac Freeman sold everything from furniture to knitting needles and haberdashery in what was Beechworth's biggest shop with four separate departments.

The mannequins are dressed in period Victorian costume with cute hats that still display the price tag of 26 shillings and 11 pence.

There is also a commanding 2.4-metre-high bronze and copper statue of bushranger Ned Kelly near the entrance of the bed and breakfast.

Crafted by a local artist, it's a talking point among all who pass. Freeman on Ford is well positioned in the heart of the town close to the information centre and the museum where you can discover all you want to know about the town's flamboyant gold rush days, which all started when two shepherds unearthed a gold nugget in 1852. Throughout the 1860s more than 20,000 people lived in the town where you could quench your thirst at 61 pubs.

There are lots of wonderful stories of the past such as when parliamentarian Daniel Cameron had golden horseshoes made for his mount and rode down the main street followed by 80 men.

The event evolved into the Golden Horseshoe Easter Festival attracting thousands each year.

Walk the main streets and you probably won't get far; there's a line-up of cosy cafes and quaint shops selling everything from old fashioned sweets to jewellery and fashions. But just make sure you return in time for afternoon tea at Freeman on Ford, it's a treat you don't want to miss.

VISITORS' BOOK

Freeman on Ford

Address 97 Ford Street, Beechworth

Phone 5728 2371, see freemanonford.com.au.

Cost From \$275 a night, which includes a fully cooked hot breakfast and afternoon tea.

Getting there Beechworth is three hours north of Melbourne, on the Hume Freeway turning off at Wangaratta.

Summary Hollywood style and sparkle versus Victorian charm.

Verdict 19

The score: 19-20 excellent; 17-18 great; 15-16 good; 13-14 comfortable. All weekends away are conducted anonymously and paid for by Traveller.



Music Soiree at Freeman on Ford

In February, our new courtyard showcased one of Australia's most popular Celtic bands 'Miles to Go.' The trio played for over 70 guests who brought along a picnic tea. We hope to host future evening events for the enjoyment of the town.

Celtic Band Miles to Go