



Home Grown

THESE NORFOLK ISLAND COTTAGES REVEAL PLENTIFUL LOCAL DELIGHTS.

FEW PRIVATE CHEFS arrive with fish fillets caught fresh by their husband. "He brought it home and I said 'I'll have that,'" says Rachel Borg, serving up our main course of sweet lip Emperor and bush lemon hollandaise. The seasonal vegetables are from Borg's own garden. "The hollandaise is home-made too," she adds.

At every turn on Norfolk Island, there is a heart-warming community spirit. It's even apparent at the island's most luxurious accommodation – the five star, family-owned Forrester Court. But don't think the service is quaint. The cliff-top cottages are stylishly appointed and Borg presents our four courses with effortless elegance. The Emperor follows an entrée of pan-seared sea scallops on basil broth. Dessert is cheesecake with chocolate-coated honeycomb, leaving barely enough room for the edible sugar-coated flowers that accompany the petit fours.

John and Joyce Forrester bought the five-hectare property in 1983. They came to the island to research their ancestor, the First Fleet convict Robert Forrester. They fell in love with the island's laidback lifestyle and its more recent history, the mutiny on the Bounty. Forrester Court was established on land once owned by mutineer Mathew Quintal. The land was cleared to reveal breathtaking views across the South Pacific; three open-planned timber cottages were later built by John Forrester's son, Brad.

It's a rare family who will share their private paradise with paying guests. My cottage has 180-degree ocean views – over Elephant Rock, sheer cliffs and a blowhole. In Spring, there are whales. In Summer, storm clouds.

Inside, cathedral ceilings create spacious elegance. A recent renovation by Brad Forrester's wife Ariane has seen glamorous modern Gothic settings incorporated into the one- and two-bedroom cottages. The king-sized down and feather beds are dressed with sateen Egyptian cotton sheets and designer Italian

coverlets in ink and silver. The stainless steel and marble chefs kitchen is fully equipped. There's everything from candles and long-stemmed wine glasses to picnic baskets and blankets. Room rates include car hire and the three cottages can be booked exclusively for weddings, parties, anything.

Contrary to popular belief, there's plenty to do on Norfolk Island. Our stay features the perfect his-and-hers itinerary: fishing and golf for him, a massage, shopping and a yoga class for me. Still, it would be perfectly acceptable to spend time just enjoying the view. The grassy lawns are ideal for a private yoga class and an in-house massage therapist will set up on the verandah. After my massage, I spend an hour entranced by dozens of white terns whirling on the air currents beyond the verandah.

By evening, it's time for our private dinner party with Rachel Borg. There is also a home delivery available from the island's award-winning restaurant, Dino's. Make sure to leave room for Brad Forrester's homemade liqueurs. The house specialty is Pitcairn Passion – a tasty blend made from strawberries and bananas, locally sourced, of course.

Forrester Court, Norfolk Island. From \$360 per night. Details, + 67 23 22838, af@norfolk.nf, www.forrestercourt.com

THINGS TO DO:

- Learn more about the Bounty mutiny at the impressive Cyclorama, www.norfolkcyclorama.nlk.nf
- Dive among some of the world's best reefs, with Bounty Divers, www.bountydivers.com
- Enjoy 18 holes at the Royal Norfolk Island Golf Course in the historic Kingston area, www.norfolkislandgolf.com