



Lolling about at The Knoll

Overnight bag in. Camera case in. Boot closed and off we go. I mention our quick and easy departure for the South Coast on a recent Saturday morning because in a few months it's going to seem a fantasy.

Our trip to The Knoll, just out of Moruya, was likely to be the last trip away for the two of us before we become three early in the New Year.

And then the process of packing a car for a weekend away will be complicated by nappy bags, portacots, prams and other baby-related necessities of which I'm now still blissfully ignorant.

The irony then of this last married-with-no-kids trip was that it took us to a place best suited to a family – and a big one too.

The Knoll is made up of a cottage and a country house set on a 7ha property. We stayed in the house, a fairly new double-storey building with four huge bedrooms, a big lounge area, kitchen and dining room and a veranda running most of the way around.

It's a place that calls for an extended family or a group of friends to fill it with noise and atmosphere.

We had it to ourselves and, frankly, we were like a pair of empty-nesters rattling around a too-big empty home.

Not that that detracted from our stay. In fact we had a fantastic, relaxing weekend, spoiled by the luxury of space, peace and quiet (aware these will be soon in short supply when apartment living is tested by a third person).

The weather on the weekend we were there was murky and wet, which made curling up inside on the comfortable lounge with a glass of New Zealand white wine and watching



JOHN-PAUL MOLONEY

The Knoll, Moruya

Where: 182 South Head Road, Moruya.

From Canberra: About 2½ hours.

Phone: John on 0408 629 752 or Natasha on 0418 421 361.

Email: reservations@theknoll.com.au.

Website: www.theknoll.com.au.

Cost per night: Four people can stay in the Country House for \$260 off peak. Extra guests pay \$40 each. The cottage is \$150 for a couple.

Simon Katich knock around the Kiwi bowlers a real pleasure. A greater pleasure was taking an afternoon spa in the master bathroom looking out into the bushland adjoining the property.

We had no need for the fireplaces in the lounge and dining room, but we could easily imagine how cosy they would make the place on a cold winter's day.

On a warm summer's day it would be a terrific spot too. The veranda offers views across green paddocks to the distant Great Dividing Range. Down the road 3km is Dolphin Beach and the Moruya River is a



The Country House at The Knoll, above; the view from the veranda of the surrounding countryside looking across to the Great Dividing Range, top. Photos: JOHN-PAUL MOLONEY

short walk away. If you felt inclined, I'm sure there'd be plenty of good walks or bike rides in the area. We ventured out once, in the evening for a meal at The River restaurant in Moruya, an inspired recommendation by our hosts. It wasn't a cheap night out, but it was well worth the price for a superb meal in a relaxed setting overlooking the river. It was as good a meal as any we have had in Canberra in recent times and it seemed no wonder to us that the restaurant had been awarded a regional hat in this year's *Good Food Guide* awards.

On the morning of our departure, we

decided to cook our own light breakfast, and happily we found the kitchen to be kitted out with everything we needed and more.

The owners of the property make a point of the country house and the cottage being truly self-contained and the guest book tells the story of satisfied couples, groups of friends and families who have appreciated the little extras.

As we discovered hunting around before leaving, there's even a portacot and a high chair for young families. Packing for our next visit might not prove such an ordeal after all.

■ The Moloneys were guests of Tourism NSW.