

COASTAL SECLUSION

PRIVACY IS A MAIN ATTRACTION AT THIS FLEURIEU PENINSULA GUESTHOUSE, ALONG WITH HOSTS WHO ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO BE AS ENERGETIC OR AS LAZY AS THEY LIKE ON THEIR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GETAWAY.

WORDS ANNA FLANDERS PHOTOGRAPHY MARK ROPER STYLING LEESA O'REILLY



In the dining area windows on each side overlook the beautiful grounds. FACING PAGE Arches and a parapet greet visitors at the guesthouse's main entrance.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE A bedroom in the main house comes with an antique four-poster bed and a chest holding extra blankets and pillows; a Moreton Bay fig dominates the entrance; the swimming pool, centre for leisurely laps and sun lounging.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Anna and Campbell; generous linen sofas in the lounge; a blue chest in the hall is just one of the many interesting pieces of furniture that the pair have collected.



A SMALL, DISCREET sign and two worn pillars form the entrance to Waverley Estate — a mix of the understated and graceful aging that defines this stately guesthouse, built in 1856. Campbell and Anna Haig have refrained from cosmetic updates, choosing instead to celebrate the property's history while adding subtle touches inspired by their interest in Tuscan and French decoration.

The previous owners hadn't had much time to spend on upkeep, so Anna and Campbell realised they'd be busy — "Over the four years we've been here we've been gradually renovating, doing it up, collecting furniture," Campbell says.

The property, near Port Elliot on South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula, is just over an hour's drive from Adelaide, five minutes from Victor Harbor and only about 15 minutes from Goolwa, where the Murray River meets the ocean. Many travellers pass by, but the main house is sheltered from the road and chances are they'll glimpse it only if they know to look.

"We offer seclusion," Campbell says. "The one-and-a-half hectares are well set back from the main road, and there's a small vineyard out the front.

"The philosophy behind what we're doing is that there are so few places that offer fully self-contained accommodation for large groups. We can sleep up to 21 — you can have a function here, bring in your own catering, your own alcohol, your own entertainment.

"There are no restrictions in regards to what you want to add, and people love that freedom — that they plan and build their own event or experience."

The main house is flanked by a pool and tennis court. Inside, the stone walls enclose spacious rooms with four-metre high ceilings that Campbell and Anna have decorated with antiques collected from

Italy and France, tasteful reproduction furniture, South Australian and Danish art, and rugs collected from their travels.

In the living area it's comfy sofas in no-fuss slipcovers that draw the eye; this area, which also features a 12-seater dining table, overlooks the swimming pool and tennis court, and is a fine vantage point to catch a beautiful sunset.

In the main house are two bedrooms with queen-sized beds — one has an extra single bed — and ensuites. The living area separates the bedrooms from the kitchen, which boasts a commercial-sized stove, and is stocked with a full range of tableware and appliances. Windows over the bench overlook a huge paved courtyard that's decked out with tables and chairs. Three other buildings — including a former schoolhouse — contain five more suites.

The kitchen is designed to accommodate cooking retreats and master classes — or Campbell and Anna can arrange for a local chef to cook for you. In fact, they can arrange almost anything.

Just beyond the courtyard and the school house is a kitchen garden. Olive oil crushed from the property's grove sits in the pantry and if you come at the right time of year, you may also find jars of jam furnished by the century-old mulberry tree or the nearby citrus orchard.

Although many see no need to leave the guesthouse, Campbell believes the area rewards leisurely exploration.

"For Anna and I, it's the quaintness that's attractive," he says. "Port Elliot is the jewel in the crown of this end of the coast... And of course, there's the views. You can look one way and see spectacular hills, then look forward and see all the way through to the ocean."

Waverley Estate is at 58 Waterport Road, Port Elliot SA. 0407 604 337, www.waverleyestate.com





THE STRAND... IS AN EXCELLENT WINTER VANTAGE POINT TO SPOT PASSING SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALES.



CLOCKWISE Vincent's restaurant on The Strand; the view from the town towards Pullen Island Conservation Park; the Port Elliot Bakery; fresh local fruit from Scoop Produce.



FLYING FISH RESTAURANT & CAFE
1 The Foreshore, Port Elliot.
(08) 8554 3504.

Oysters, abalone, sardines, kingfish... and the ever-popular fish'n'chip takeaway (right). The menu suggests you're right by the ocean, while the address indicates the café is just past the high-tide mark at Horseshoe Bay.

MAMMA LISA
42 Waterport Road, Port Elliot.
The fame of Mamma's foccacia stretches as far as Adelaide. While Mamma Lisa and Pappa Guiseppe serve up Italian peasant fare on Saturday nights in their small restaurant, their wood-oven breads and takeaway Italian sauces are available every weekend. The bread is baked on Friday and it pays to be quick.

SCOOP PRODUCE
89 Hill Street, Port Elliot. (08) 8554 2332.
This store features the great fresh food for which the Fleurieu Peninsula is renowned. Open Tuesday and Thursday noon-6pm, and Saturdays 10am-3pm. Arrive early on Saturday to ensure you snaffle some freshly baked breads and tarts.

VINCENT'S
34 The Strand, Port Elliot.
(08) 8554 3377.
Coastal meets country: deckchairs out front offer a great people-watching vantage point while wooden chairs and tables inside provide the perfect perch from which to survey the store's wares, which range from designer toilet paper to custom-made tables and every homewares option in between.

where to eat, shop & play

EXPLORE PORT ELLIOT AND THE COAST.

It's all lush green rolling hills as you wind down towards the Port Elliot turn-off from Adelaide. This is one of South Australia's most important produce regions. Nestled between Victor Harbor and Goolwa on the Fleurieu Peninsula coast, it's only a short drive to the wines of McLaren Vale (do check out D'Arry's Verandah Restaurant at the D'Arenberg vineyard, and the Red Dot Café at Penny's Hill vineyard). Along the way, visit the Alexandrina Cheese Company (right), or drive to Goolwa and while away an hour gathering a feed of fresh cockles. The famously quaint Port Elliot township contains a spattering of foodie places — try Vincent's or head to the Port Elliot Bakery to put together a casual picnic. Take a drive down The Strand for breathtaking views over the Southern Ocean — an excellent winter vantage point to spot passing Southern Right whales.

