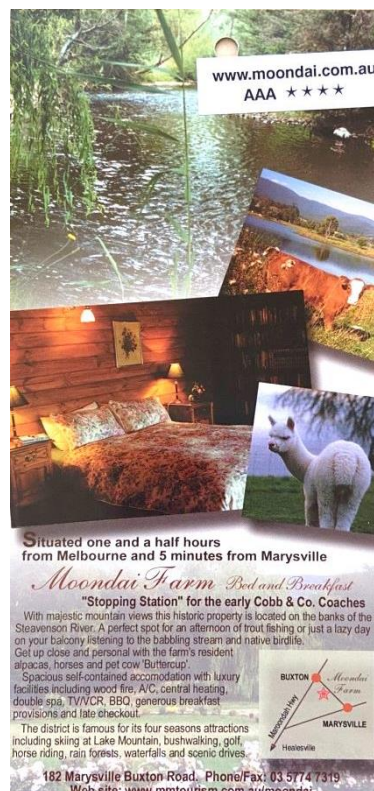
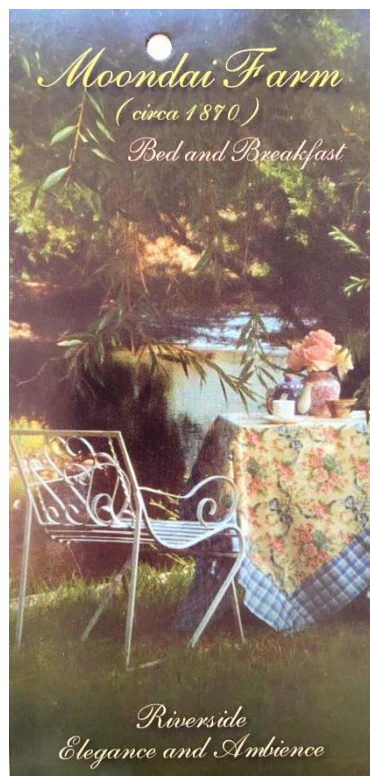


Moondai Farm B&B

182 Buxton-Marysville Road, Buxton



Your host Maria McIntyre welcomes you to Moondai Farm located just 5 minutes from Marysville and 90 minutes from Melbourne. Your luxurious self-contained accommodation comprises queen bed, dining area & kitchenette. The entertainment area is warmed by a slow combustion fire (wood supplied). Reverse cycle air-conditioning keeps you comfortable no matter what the weather. Relax with television, videos or CDs, or select a book from the library. Tickle the ivories on the electronic organ! Your generous bathroom includes double spa & shower with quality toiletries. Prepare a delicious cooked breakfast from the provisions supplied, and enjoy it on the balcony overlooking the magnificent garden.

Next, explore the property. The lake is home to wild ducks and other birdlife, and at the bottom of the garden is the Steavenson River. This offers excellent trout fishing & you can barbecue your catch on the lawn by the river. If you get up early, you may catch sight of the resident platypus.

Moondai is home to Maria's beautiful alpacas. These gentle creatures from South America produce magnificent soft fleece in a variety of colours. If you are lucky, you may even witness a birth! The horses and Buttercup the cow are always interested in a bit of hay, while the dogs Rosie & Jemima make everyone very welcome. Andy the cat is a bit shy, but he loves a pat.

Moondai provides an excellent base for many activities including: cross country skiing at Lake Mountain (40 minutes), bush walking in the Cathedrals or the many nearby tracks, horse riding, or just exploring Marysville with its excellent cafes, restaurants & galleries. The famous Steavenson Falls is a must visit. Marysville is famous for its autumn colour & spring flower display, but any time of year is a beautiful time to visit.¹

In 1988 Maria and Ern McIntyre bought the property known today as 'Moondai' where Maria could have her horses and later alpacas. The property contained the original Scott farmhouse from the late 1800s and its outhouses. Maria set about slowly restoring and renovating it, adding a billiard room at the southern end.



Rear view with the billiard room converted to B&B at the right end

Maria McIntyre Collection

With the popularity of Bed & Breakfasts Maria converted their Billiard Room into self-contained accommodation in the 1990s. One of the biggest attractions on the property was the stretch of the Steavenson River and the Little Steavenson, the latter belonging to the property. It is considered one of the best trout fishing places in Australia and possibly the world. During Maria's time some of the top fly-fishers in the world came to try their luck. Orlando Burbank, a previous owner, had been right to put rainbow trout in the river each year back in the 1910's.



The bend in the Steavenson River, Maria McIntyre Collection

Sadly Ern McIntyre died in 2003.

When the 2009 fires came, Maria managed to grab a few personal papers and to collect neighbours - Eugene Goodvach, Karen Scott and her daughter - just as the fires approached and drive them all to safety in Alexandra. The original house and buildings were destroyed and so ended the B & B.

See Farming Folder for the full history of the property.

Talk to the animals

Sydney Morning Herald, April 22, 2006 by Katherine Kizilos

The Basics

This is a working farm with alpacas that will stare at you sweetly, horses, bouncing dogs, and two rivers meandering through the green pasture. The accommodation is a former billiard room transformed into a large, wood-lined bed-sitting room. The front veranda has a barbecue and a pleasant view of the willows and the river. Maria McIntyre, whose farm it is, will light the wood-fire heater for you if the weather is coolish and she knows your arrival time. The farm is a soothing, unpretentious place. Guests are welcome to walk around the paddocks, or you can lie under the willow in the hammock and listen to the river. At night, the wonders of a big country sky vies with the television and the holiday reading in the bookcase for entertainment. (It was a warm, cloudless, moonless night when we were there, so the Milky Way scored an easy victory.)

The Location

The farm is on the Marysville Road between Buxton and Marysville, and was once a stopping station for Cobb & Co coaches; it is a 90-minute drive from Melbourne and a five-minute drive from Marysville. There are hills and forests all around but the farm is on the flat. You can hear the Steavenson River from your room at night, and then walk across the paddocks to the Little Steavenson River in the morning. It is a peaceful, comfortable retreat and we were glad that check-out was as late as noon.

The Surrounding Hills

For this writer, the drive through Healesville and over the Black Spur forms a magical approach to Marysville, one that amply rewards the driver with its mountain views, its rivers and its rainforest. On the way up, we stopped for a satisfying lunch at Healesville Hotel's Harvest Produce Store. We drove home via Warburton after taking, in innocence, a road called the Acheron Way. For those who don't know it, this narrow, gravel, winding road bordered by giant mountain ash follows the Acheron River and then threads precipitously around Mount Donna Buang, offering spectacular views of valley and forest for the passenger and a challenging experience at the wheel for the driver.

The Room

The accommodation is attached to the main house but has a separate entrance. We enjoyed long, warm autumn days but it is easy to imagine hunkering down at the farm in the cooler months. The decor is restrained and mercifully free of the floral tweeness that can beset country cottages. There are comfortable armchairs, a queen-sized bed, a kitchen equipped with an electric frying pan, small refrigerator and microwave, and a small dining table. Breakfast ingredients - bacon, farm eggs, cereal, toast, juice, real coffee and tea - are provided for guests to prepare themselves. If you tend to avoid B&Bs because you can't face the thought of chatting to strangers in the morning, this is a civilised arrangement.

The Bathroom

Like the bed-sitting room, it is a generous size, well-appointed, with a double spa and clean, modern fittings. The tiles are cream, and the look is reproduction vintage-style.

The Crowd

Only one set of guests can ever stay at one time at Moondai Farm. A glance through the visitors' book shows that the farm attracts a fair share of fishermen and couples in search of a

haven where they can leave their worries behind. Unless guests lie in visitors' books, the farm is serving a useful purpose for stressed city folk. A walk around the property means encountering several gates, alpacas and a friendly dog or two; we found the animals to be non-judgemental types that didn't care how we dressed or what model of car we drove around in.

Details

Moondai Farm, 182 Marysville Road, Marysville. Phone: 5774 7319 or moondai.com.au. The cost for our midweek stay was \$140 a night.

The Verdict

This is a good choice for couples looking for a comfortable, quiet getaway in beautiful mountain scenery. Maria McIntyre is friendly and welcoming and will introduce you to the alpacas if you wish to meet them, but the set-up also allows for privacy if you are the type who prefers it. Self-catering is possible in the room, but decent meals can be found in nearby Marysville for those not inclined to cook.

ENDNOTE

¹ Promotional words found on the internet - archived with no reference.