

# 48 HOURS Daylesford

**Justin North**, owner and head chef of Sydney restaurant *Becasse*, travelled around Australia researching his travelogue and cookbook *Becasse: Inspirations & Flavours*.

One of his favourite destinations is Daylesford, Victoria. Last autumn he travelled there with his wife, Georgia. "It was the start of autumn, and all the trees were just turning bright red," he says. "It was almost surreal. You'd be driving along and see those big trees that go across the road, very bright and colourful."

Although it's a bit cold, Justin says autumn is a great time to visit Daylesford. "It was perfect weather, just being wrapped up all warm and cosy, drinking beautiful wine," he says. "I'd like to go back there."

## STAY

Justin recommends **Lake House** as a good place to stay (phone 03 5348 3329). "It's a beautiful spa and has all types of massages, body wraps and big Japanese baths, with different oils and candles," he says. "You can look out over the lake." Justin's wife was treated to a special pregnancy package for extra pampering. "It was an indulgent weekend," he says.

## EAT

The pair were impressed with the food and service at the Lake House restaurant. "It has great service, a big open fire and absolutely beautiful food." Justin recommends "the beautiful roasted tomato soup, eaten next to the fire with nice crusty bread". There's also baby trout from one of the local lakes served with butter, almonds and spinach. "It's very rare these days in the country to get the complete package," Justin says. He commends the chef, Alla Wolf-Tasker. "She sources lots of local produce, which is quite inspirational."



The Lake House at Daylesford, above, and restaurateur Justin North in the kitchen at his Sydney restaurant, above right.

**Photos:** Sandy Scheltema, Domino Postilione.

## DO

"We went on nice walks in the morning around the lake; it's very romantic," Justin says. After arriving in town the pair stumbled across the busy local market. "It's a big open-air market, it sells vegetables and old books," he says. The pair then settled in at the Lake House restaurant, "with the fire and a big bottle of red".

"It was beautiful weather, really cold but very clear and crisp," he says. They also enjoyed driving to **Mt Franklin**, "the spa and mineral water capital of Australia".

There are loads of art galleries and craft shops in Daylesford, Justin says. "We bought bits and pieces for our house." He liked the **Clayfire Gallery** (phone 03 5348 3766). "It just had a really interesting mix of classic stuff and funky modern pieces as well," he says.

## GETTING THERE

Fly to Melbourne. From there, it is about a 90-minute drive. From Melbourne airport, take the Western Ring Road exit through Tullamarine, then turn right onto the Western Highway, which becomes the Western Freeway. At Ballan, turn right onto the Ballan-Daylesford Road to Daylesford.