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The Secret's Out



The Parsonage

When a location can offer an experience as special as that found at The Parsonage, it is difficult to decide whether to selfishly keep it a secret or share it with the whole world. When *Homespun* discovered this location, we figured we had better opt for the latter.

Situated in the centre of the historic Victorian village of Maldon, The Parsonage has lived much of its long existence as a home to ministers, travelling lay preachers and people in need. It was the site of the first sermon preached in the Goldfields district back in 1858 and remained a part of church life until four years ago, when it was sold into private hands and left to turn derelict. Fortunately, it has since been lovingly restored, with hand-hewn bricks, tuck-pointing and coining, 12-foot ceilings and original thatching under the roofline allowing a glimpse into another era.

When Melbournian Rita Bosaid purchased the property in August 2005, she was intent on bringing to it her flair for French styling and decoration. A paint finish artist whose business produces collectable, hand-finished, Rococo-style furniture, Rita was well-equipped to undertake the task of transforming the large building into a heavenly retreat.

Calling this a labour of love is somewhat of an understatement. Rita spent one and a half years separated from her husband and daughter during the working week to complete her work at The Parsonage. Her family would come up to meet her each

weekend to help with the heavy workload, which included months of painting, in between reworking sections of the garden and ensuring it would be kept alive during very harsh water restrictions. Rita also spent countless hours sewing all the curtains, swags and soft furnishings.

The result? Walls have been expertly painted to imitate parchment, floors meticulously hand-finished and rooms accented with carefully selected imported fabrics, armoires, swags and tails, Louis-style chairs, chandeliers and gilded mirrors. Sweeping verandahs surrounding the building are dotted with tables and chairs for enjoying the garden. Urns and fountains mingle amongst rose gardens and a French potager garden embraces the house.

An extensive conservatory housing a 10-seat worktable provides a gorgeous and well-lit workspace for patchwork and craft retreats. Oh, did we forget to mention the craft retreats? That's right, a keen patchworker herself, Rita has set up The Parsonage especially to cater to the needs of fellow crafters. All sewing requirements are provided, from standard and tabletop ironing boards to a choice of cutting boards and a light box.

The Parsonage has four bedrooms, with a total of eight separate beds to accommodate as many people at one time. Each French-style bed comes with its own fine linen, coordinating fabrics and accessories. You'll even notice a few of Rita's handmade quilts around the place. "I can't wait to have the time to make more," Rita says. "Being a part of the quilt-making process and sharing it with friends has enriched my life. To offer a property that promotes the love of this craft is truly satisfying," she says.

This luxurious destination is just a one-minute walk to the quaint main street of Maldon, which includes the charming local patchwork shop The Village Patch and a great range of cafés. Now that you're in on the secret of The Parsonage, use your knowledge wisely and make your way to Maldon without delay.

For more information about The Parsonage, visit www.theparsonage.com.au or see the Stockists & Contacts list at the end of the magazine for business details.

