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# Forgotten Valley's Yanada Retreat maybe just what we all need after this long year...



**Yanada Retreat at St Albans has – like most of us in the Hawkesbury – had somewhat of a trying year.**

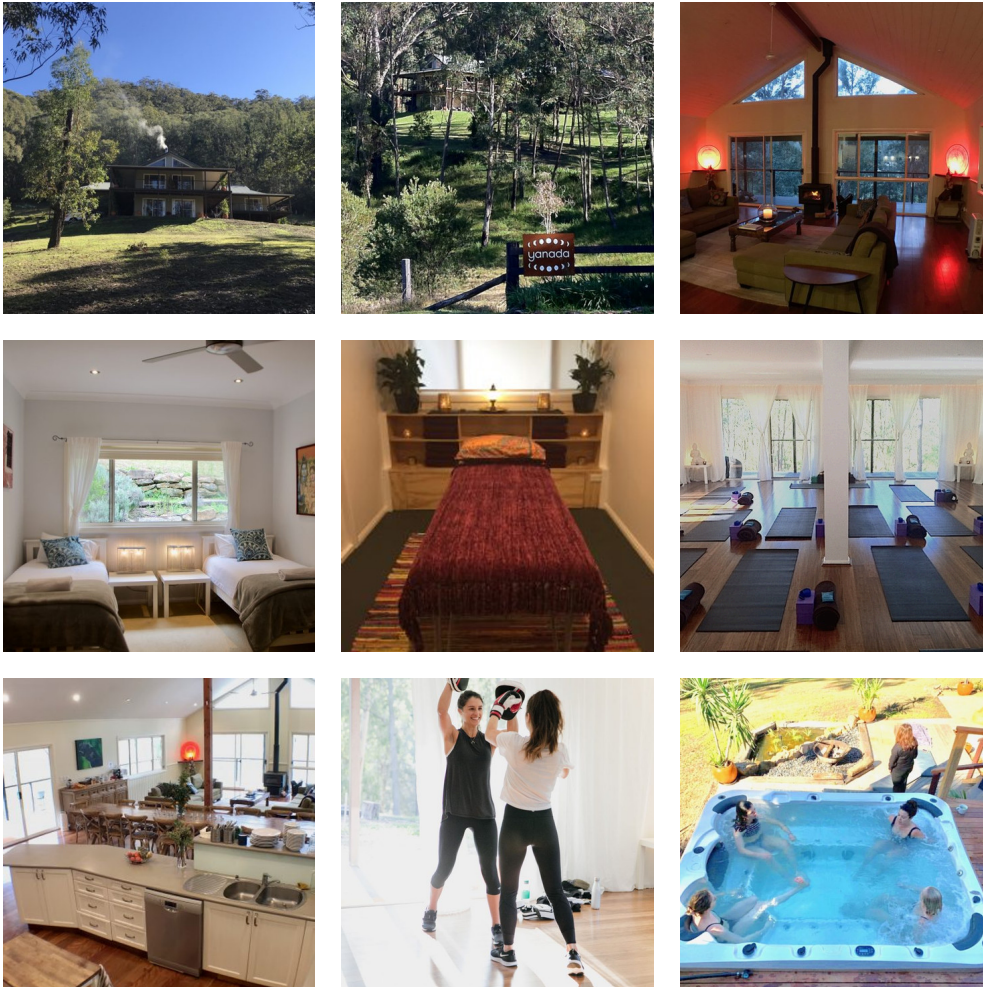
"It's been a year since the bush fires started," says owner Lewis Adey, "and then came the floods and then Covid. We were backburning with the RFS last November and we were safe because of that, but guests, some of them from Sydney, wouldn't come out, most postponed. Then we had the floods and were flooded in."

But right now, no-one needs an excuse to try and leave that all behind, and Lewis reckons Yanada is definitely the place to go to revive and get back to living life.

The retreat sits in the lush Macdonald Valley - called The Forgotten Valley by locals on account of its relative remoteness, even though it's just 90 minutes from Sydney.

"We've all had a trying time and we need to experience hope. I think what we have all discovered is we need each other, we need community, it is so important. But we are only just becoming aware of the trauma that's going on because of all we've been through as a broader community."

Lewis bought Yanada in 2013 and he and his co-owners along with a dedicated team have spent time, energy and money reshaping and renovating the retreat to become a centre for wellness and yoga, corporate and non-government organisation retreats, and simply a place for people to visit for a few days to recharge.



The original idea was a straightforward meditation retreat but thanks to a couple of local women who were really into yoga, the centre blossomed as a yoga and wellness retreat, also open to corporates for get-away retreat conferences.

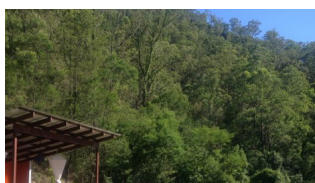
“Thankfully, we are now doing really well,” says Lewis. “On weekends our yoga and meditation retreats are fully booked, which is good, but without weekday bookings we can’t survive, so I’d encourage people to come along and see what we can offer. We are very flexible.”

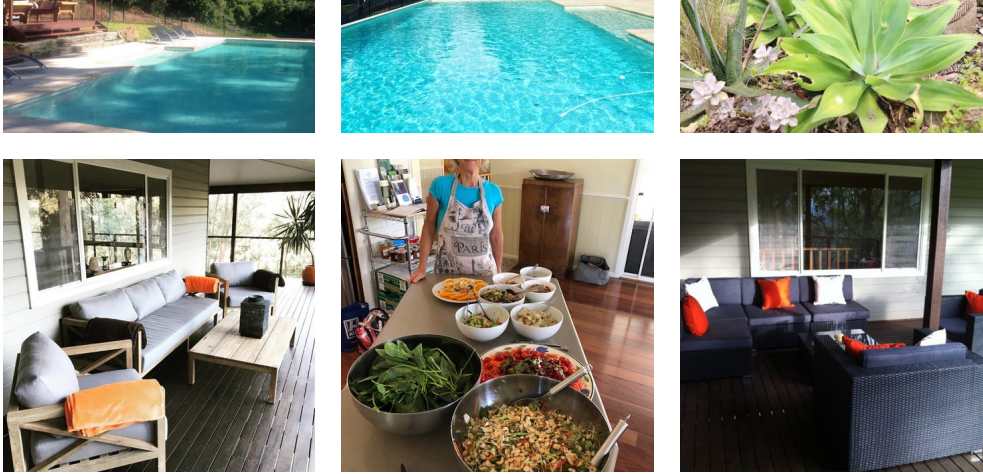


*Some of the healthy snacks you can eat at Yanada*

A maximum group size of 22 people can stay at the retreat but they also offer two-night-three-days stays for groups of at least four people, as well as bed and breakfast options, holiday rentals and for corporate groups there's an option to do a three-day retreat.

Staff can pick up visitors from Windsor train station and once at Yanada there are a whole lot of options for getting out and about and really relaxing.





"There are lots of walks we can suggest to visitors. There's nearby St Albans Commons, a really unique place, and we can provide details for local driving tours, plus there's also walking and kayaking. We have painting classes at Yanada and a lady in Windsor comes out to give basketweaving classes, which are very popular. We can do cooking classes too, and there's bird watching. Because this valley is so forgotten, quite remote, it is a well known destination for birdies to come to. We also do tours of the valley and we go to the farms dotted around that have products for sale and are run in a sustainable way. There's also a whole load of history. By 1790 colonialists were settling here. There's also a very rich Aboriginal history too.



"Really it is the perfect balance of being remote but not," says Lewis. "We're in the beautiful Hawkesbury region with all its benefits of nature and clean air, but we're also not too far from Sydney.

"We've also found the community incredibly welcoming. We didn't know anybody when we first arrived but within the first three weeks of being here we had our first flood. You go to your neighbours, someone gave us help getting the generator going, and before long you know everybody in the valley.

“The Macdonald Valley is a unique place, and to many people it is totally unknown – it’s one reason it’s often called The Forgotten Valley. People who live in Sydney may never have heard of the place but really it’s not that far away, it’s just waiting to be explored.”

More info: [www.yanada.com.au](http://www.yanada.com.au)

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