



Haven by the river

Story Lisa Cowell
Photography Brian Kowald

The small township of Mannum is perhaps a surprising location for five star accommodation. The banks of the Murray River are more commonly considered the top spot for relaxed weekends at the shack or on a houseboat. But if you hop aboard the trusty Mannum ferry, cross the river and travel just two kilometres up the hill, you will find a little slice of heaven. Perched above the river, Wink and Michael Chorney's property offers some of the most stunning views of South Australia's beautiful river country.

It is also home to Riverview Rise Retreats – three secluded purpose-built luxury sanctuaries that, when we went to press, were the only five-star rated self-catering B&B accommodation in regional SA.

Designed and built by the Chorneys, the retreats are a self-proclaimed culmination of a life's work. Michael Chorney is best known for his career as an award-winning designer of prestigious houseboats and river cruisers and as a set designer in the film industry.

Each private retreat has its own charming name and personality. My partner and

I were introduced to the 'Lazy Jane Lodge', named after a paddle steamer and inspired by the ABC mini series *The River Kings*, on which Michael worked.

The retreat's enclosed verandah is the perfect parmesan salad, and blue gum honey place to sit back with a glass of wine and enjoy commanding views as the sun sets. With dart board and barbecue, the verandah is just a hint of what's to come inside. The luxuriously equipped retreats are beautifully decorated in a palette of earthy tones.

With a focus on the romantic, Michael and Wink provide an assortment of packages for couples. The 'menu' includes scented rose petals scattered across your bed, a bouquet of long-stemmed red roses on arrival, tasting plates, chocolates, a hand-selected tasting of local wines, massages, a private river cruise, or even your very own in-house chef for the evening.

The latter option is increasingly popular, which is hardly surprising. To get you in

the mood for dinner, Wink will visit your retreat with cocktail shaker in hand. It's then time to meet your new best friend – professional chef Meredith Adams.

It's a joy to watch her whip up a feast in the retreat's fully-equipped kitchen.

For us, she opened our gastronomic treat with a sweet potato, red lentil and

coriander soup paired with warm and buttery homemade damper. Entrees

(which we swapped halfway, of course) included twice-baked goat cheese soufflé with caramelized fig, rocket and shaved

roasted quail with wild mushroom ragout. A simple cleansing sorbet was followed by Szechwan peppered tuna on cucumber with daikon salad, wild lime butter and pickled ginger, and roasted venison loin with cannellini bean puree and red onion confit (this dish proved particularly difficult to wrestle from my partner). For this sweet tooth, the meal's highlight was its ending: a macadamia and butterscotch tart with King Island cream quenelle along with a pear in spiced wine jelly with frozen cardamom parfait.

After this feast, we were left to our own devices. Fit to bursting with some of the State's finest foods does not leave one with many options. An extra-large two

person spa, however, did the trick nicely. There's also a double shower, with 'built-in' foot massage – smooth stones set into the floor that are surprisingly therapeutic. It's nice to know that all hot water on the property is from rainwater tanks, while all the cold water is recycled from the Murray. In fact, the whole business is environmentally sustainable and carbon emission neutral. Slip into your stylish kimonos and slippers (all provided) and get set for a movie marathon. A built-in plasma screen with complete surround sound and dimmer lights creates

an in-house cinema experience. Then, before you sink into a very contented slumber, be sure to choose from the 'pillow menu' to top off the comfort of the plush king-sized bed.

How to get there

Mannum is just over an hour's drive from Adelaide, on the River Murray north of Murray Bridge. Take the ferry crossing at Mannum, then turn left up Bowhill Road. The sign for Riverview Rise Retreats is on the left.

Where to stay

Riverview Rise Retreats

Bowhill Road, Mannum

Tel 0400 310 380

www.mannumaccommodation.com.au

Article by Lisa Cowell for Sumptuous magazine

Photography by Brian Kowakd

Food and wine

Murraylands Market

A fruit and veg shop stocking local produce including Marne River Olives and Murray Valley Cheese.

Randell Street, Mannum

Pretoria Hotel

Award-winning bar and bistro on the banks of the Murray.

55 Randell Street, Mannum

Tel 08 8569 1109

www.pretoriahotel.com.au

The Mannum Hotel

Historic hotel with friendly country style.

15 Randell Street, Mannum

Tel 08 8569 1008

