



 The one-bedroom farmstay accommodation attached to the main house at Weston Farm.

Travel

TasWeekend: Soaking up some Weston culture

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PADDOCK to plate is an eating ethos appearing on menus all over town. But it's relatively rare to be able to see the principle in practice from the farm gate to the cafe table – and back again.

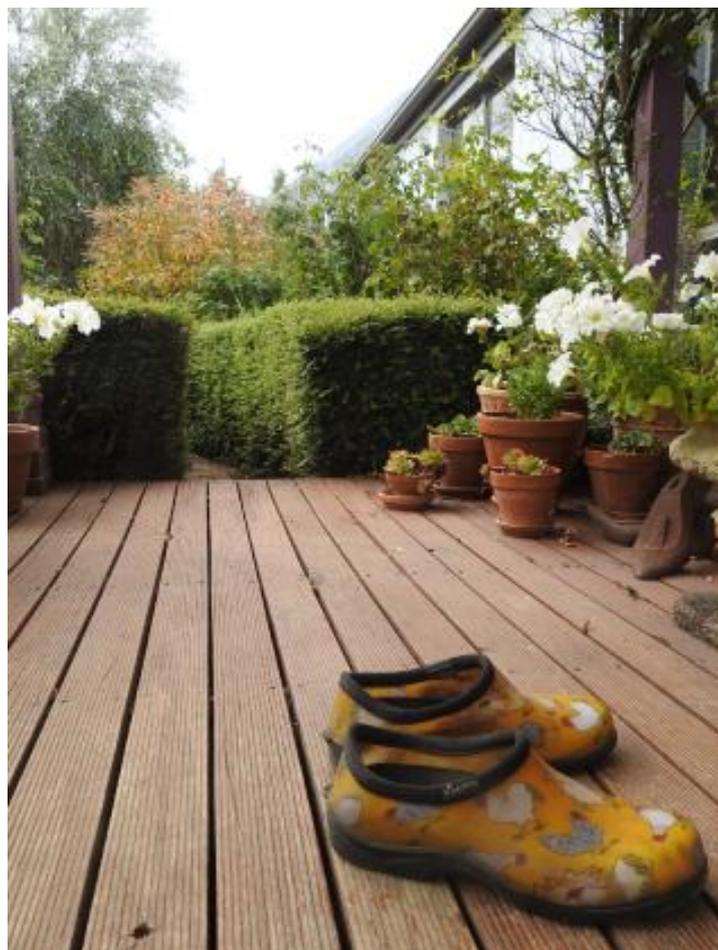
This is exactly the experience offered by Richard and Belinda Weston on the Brighton flower, olive and produce farm they share with their twin teenage sons.

While I am poking around in the boot of the car after we pull up, a wet nose makes contact with my hand as Heston Weston – an exuberant three-year-old border collie – introduces himself. Richard appears a few minutes later, offering a quick tour while he's on his way to feed the pigs.

The Westons bought the land in 1992, building their house shortly after and settling in to make their living-off-the-land dream a reality. “It was a blank canvas,” Richard says of the 5ha property. “That worked in our favour because the land hadn’t been flogged.”



📷 Inside the Weston Farm guest accommodation.



📷 Well-worn garden shoes out on the deck.

We walk up the driveway, passing Belinda’s bee hives. She has added apiarist to her list of talents, which also include building design and running an inner-city eatery.

The first stop is the compost heap, fragrant with coffee grounds and other organic waste from the Pigeon Hole cafe at West Hobart, which they bought about four years ago.

Next is the impressive array of chickens, before we wander near the smoke house, used to impart flavour to their award-winning paprika, and through the garden to the rear of the main house, where Belinda joins us.

On the chooks’ menu today is barley meal produced as part of the brewing process at Captain Bligh’s, one of many boutique beer-makers around Hobart. (Richard shares the brewing bounty with Rodney Dunn, a fellow waste-not-want-not devotee who runs the Agrarian Kitchen in the Derwent Valley.) Not to be outdone by the pigs, the ducks raise their heads at the dam and begin to waddle down a well-worn path. Belinda is ready with leftover bread from the cafe for their supper.

As the light begins to fade, we retreat to the guest accommodation, a one-bedroom, self-contained apartment attached to the main house. Bright and white with cathedral ceilings, it has quite a Mediterranean feel.

As the sun sets and the clouds turn a pleasing shade of pink over the olive grove outside, my bread-loving partner John sets about demolishing a loaf of crusty sourdough — again courtesy of the cafe. He dips it into a small bowl of Weston Farm's extra virgin olive oil, which is vivid green and peppery.

As if they don't have enough on their plate, the Westons are also experimenting with a new crop in white asparagus. A few years ago, Richard won a Nuffield agricultural scholarship primarily to study the vegetable.

Judging by the fruits of the couple's labours thus far — their productive property and beautiful home — one suspects their newest farming foray is set for success.

Meanwhile, for guests, a gorgeous spring awaits with the blooming of the peonies.

The author was a guest of Weston Farm

MAKE A NOTE

If heading from Hobart, take the longer route through the Coal River Valley and pick up some provisions for dinner.

There are at least two cheese producers on the way, including Coal River Farm and Wicked Cheese, and no shortage of vineyards open for tastings and cellar-door takeaways.

Weston Farm also offers picnic hampers for guests for an additional charge. Farm stay bookings are available on Airbnb from \$125 a night. Visit westonfarm.com.au/farm-stay



📷 The open-plan living area looks out onto an olive grove.
