

Mountains fire up '20s style

BY BRIAR JENSEN

IN ITS heyday in the early 1900s, after a failed start as a hydropathic sanatorium, the Hydro Majestic Hotel at Medlow Bath in the NSW Blue Mountains hosted lavish parties for Sydney's wealthy.

But today's Roaring 20s event is far from elitist; it's all about food, fun and fashion, with outfits spanning Op-Shop bargains to family heirlooms.

The Hydro Majestic Traditional Long Lunch is a celebration of all things 1920s – break out the bobbed wigs, bugle beads, braces and bowties. Ensembles range from flapper dresses and fishnets for the ladies to dapper suits and fedoras for the gents.

Held in the Majestic Ballroom the long lunch is a celebratory feast of regional food and wines hosted by cooking personality Lyndey Milan.

Next day I take a tour in a ruby-red 1929 Cadillac La Salle Phaeton. Her vintage lines and glistening chrome turn heads as we cruise the streets of Leura and Katoom-



TOP TWENTIES: Kath Clarke (left) and Linda Connell turned heads with their eye-catching outfits, true to the era.
Photos: Briar Jensen.

ba. Blue Mountains Vintage Cadillacs co-owner Donald Millar says the car is affectionately called Flora after his mother, who learned to drive in the vehicle in the 1950s.

Flora exudes quality and

elegance of a bygone era, but even then she was a collector's item, one of only 449 ever built. When a Model A Ford was the equivalent of \$300, the La Salle was \$2500.

We putter down tree-

arched lanes and pause at mist-shrouded Wentworth Falls Lake. We take a stroll at Everglades Historic House and Gardens, a five-hectare property of European-style gardens operated by the Na-

tional Trust. The next day I settle into Parklands Country Gardens & Lodges in Blackheath, a Hamptons-style property surrounded by towering pines and manicured lawns. My balcony is

cocooned by arching maples with lichen encrusted trunks.

Further along the road is Govetts Leap Lookout, where the Grose Valley is chiselled out of the basalt-topped sandstone cliffs.

I head further afield to Hartley Historic Village tucked into the hillside beneath a dramatic stone tor. The heritage buildings include a courthouse, post office and sandstone churches.

Behind the village in an old woolshed is Talisman Gallery, where Ron Fitzpatrick introduces me to blacksmithing. Ron's work spans fine jewellery, sheet metal-framed mirrors and large-scale wrought iron and stained-glass garden sculptures, many with Celtic and Medieval influences.

Under Ron's tutelage I heat and hammer a straight metal rod, gradually flattening it before twisting and curving a handle. Fire roars in the forge, the ball peen hammer pings off the anvil and water hisses as I plunge in the red-hot metal. Strike by strike my fire poker takes shape – a fitting souvenir of a roaring weekend.



IF YOU GO...

ON February 23, The Hydro Majestic Hotel will host its annual long lunch – an opportunity for art deco buffs to don their most sophisticated 1920s-inspired costumes and graze on a decadent regional food and wine showcase.

Music in the Mountains will present the Blue Mountains Charleston Challenge to raise funds for the Rural Fire Service through gold coin donations. Register online.

www.hydromajestic.com.au

www.charlestonchallenge.com.au

bluemountainsvintagecadillacs.com.au

www.talismangallery.com.au

The writer travelled as a guest of Escarpment Group.

Photo: Blacksmith Fitzpatrick

COMING UP



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