

Whoever said romance is dead has never been to Quamby Falls Lodge. The setting, high in a valley in the Gold Coast Hinterland surrounded by the World Heritage-listed Springbrook and Lamington National Parks is breathtaking. And if admiring the view doesn't get in you in the mood for romance, you needn't panic. Just leave all the planning to owners Ian and Normajean Gasking, who aim for romantic perfection.

We arrived on Saturday morning keen to enjoy one of Quamby's tailor-made romance and relaxation packages. The week before, I had completed a questionnaire focusing on our preferences and levels of fitness. As we were to find out, this information is so Ian and Normajean can fine-tune the experience to suit every couple.

After settling into the Rosewood Room (one of only two guest rooms), lunch was served. Our meals were waiting for us in a secret picnic spot at the back of the lodge.

To get there, we walked down a narrow track, marked with romantic surprises that I was asked to keep secret so as not to spoil the surprise for other couples. By the time we reach our destination - a picnic spot from heaven at the base of a small waterfall— my wife and I were behaving like a couple of teenagers.

Foldout chairs were set on a natural platform of rock surrounded by water. In between the chairs was a picnic basket filled with fresh bread, salad and a main course of goat's cheese and vegetable terrine. A backpack nearby had all necessary cutlery requirements, as well as milk for freshly brewed coffee in a thermos.

Quamby Falls Lodge is also renowned as an eco-adventure retreat. We were keen to walk off the excess of lunch, so we put on our sandals and headed bush for a two-hour circuit to Quamby Falls with Ian, an experienced bushwalker and amateur botanist, as our guide.

Highlights included standing inside a 1000 year old brushbox and the 18ha property's many flame trees, which showered the bush track with small red flowers. There was also a huge strangler fig that you can climb up the middle of and look back down the gorge.

After a series of challenging zigzags up a steep slope, we came to the highlight of the walk: Quamby Falls, where the water tumbles off a 120m sheer rock face, providing a permanent rain shower for the rare rainforest plants at the bottom. You can lie on your back and let the spray gently wash over you while rainbows form in the mist.

We stayed there for as long as we could, reluctantly departing only because light was fading. On the way down we used an old logging track, which Ian occasionally deviated from to show us a bower bird's nest, decorated with pieces of blue plastic that the male had picked up to attract females. There was also a lyrebird theatre, a trampled-down circle in the middle of the rainforest where the male performs during mating season.

Before dinner we sat near the creek and watched the fireflies dance above the water. This distracted us enough to allow our hosts to set up a table on the lawn outside our room, where we were treated to a home-cooked chicken curry (another of my wife's favourites) with local wine and a dessert called passionfruit summer surprise.

In the morning it was more of the same: bacon and eggs for me, eggs benedict for my wife, freshly squeezed orange juice and coffee.

We managed to fit in another short walk before we packed our bags - a stroll that was meant to include feeding the geese at the dam. But Quamby's resident horse, Sir Galahad, put a stop to that by scoring most of the meal before the geese cottoned on to our arrival.

For a Romantic escape look no further than Quamby Falls Lodge. You'll need to be reasonable fit and agile to reach the falls, but if you don't make the climb, there are plenty of other attractions closer to the lodge to keep you enthralled.

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The writer was a guest of Quamby Falls Lodge, Bakers Road, Natural Bridge. Ph: 55336196.

Web [www.quamby.com.au](http://www.quamby.com.au). **Rainforest and Waterfall package is \$425 per couple for one night in the Rosewood Room all meals, gourmet picnic and guided bushwalk.**