

Inspirational Retreats

By Jeannette Vermeulen

In the 1986 hit film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, the lead character closes the film by saying, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while you could miss it." Twenty five years later, that statement feels truer than ever.

How often have you wished that time would stand still for a while just so you could get everything done and have a breather? As we're always rushing pell-mell from one task to another, it's no wonder that we hardly ever get the chance to just sit back and simply indulge our crafty aspirations.

Now that another year is underway, it's time to change that. Our featured craft retreats are just the thing to help you relax and unwind while reconnecting with your favourite hobby. So grab your diary and start planning your craft getaway — with it all pencilled in, there's less chance of your much-needed "me time" being postponed indefinitely.

From hosted weekends in the company of like-minded crafters to do-it-yourself sojourns in the country with your friends and that project you've been meaning to finish for ages, a craft retreat is sure to get your creative juices flowing.

When planning your trip, be sure you know what you want from your weekend. After all, you very rarely get to be so indulgent with your craft, so you don't want to be disappointed.

DIY retreats are the perfect option for an established group of crafters and those who like to go at their own pace and work on their own projects. If you would rather have all the organisation done for you and join a larger group of participants, a hosted craft getaway may be just what the doctor ordered.

Regardless of your preference, one thing is for certain: with all that positive time out to devote solely to your craft, you're sure to feel inspired, refreshed and ready to take on the world again. We've sourced retreats of all types so flick through the following pages to see what would best suit you.

Photography courtesy of The Tinkers Cart.



The Quilted Crow Gathering

Date: March 3

Location: New Town, Tas

Contact: Leonie and Deidre, (03) 6228 3319,
thequiltedcrow@dodo.com.au,
www.thequiltedcrow.com.au

When you call a stunning old church home, you should definitely put it to good use and that's exactly what Leonie and Deidre of The Quilted Crow are doing. Twice a year, the talented duo host a Gathering in their gorgeous shop — An Autumn Gathering is first, with A Christmas Gathering held later in the year.

It's proven to be a very popular event as keen crafters join in for a lovely day of hand stitching, friendship and laughter. It's a great excuse to get together and have a great time doing what you love best, while also getting in a bit of retail therapy! There are always talented guest designers in attendance, who in the past have included Rosalie Quinlan, Leanne Beasley, Helen Stubbings, Lynette Anderson, Kerry Gillespie, Anni Downs, Natalie Bird, Natalie Ross, Sue Daley and Simone Gooding. In 2012, the sublime Natalie Lymer of Cinderberry Stitches will be there to share some of her expertise, along with another guest who was still to be confirmed at the time we went to press.

One day's attendance at a Gathering is \$110, which includes a fabulous goody bag with at least six mouth-watering patterns, a thankyou gift from Leonie and Deidre, as well as some other little goodies, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. There are also lucky door prizes and any purchases made on the day will automatically be given a 10% discount. What more could you ask for from a stitching day out?

Don't miss out on this wonderful event: contact the shop today to book your spot.



Patchwork on Parade hosted retreats

Dates: Held throughout the year commencing in March

Location: Wallaroo and Mannum, SA

Contact: Sharon Parkinson, (08) 8285 4709, quilting@patchworkonparade.com.au, www.patchworkonparade.com.au

For a fun weekend away with water views, you can't go past the retreats offered by Patchwork on Parade. Held several times a year in the charming South Australian country towns of Mannum and Wallaroo, they are fully hosted weekends that promise nothing but indulgent stitching time! "The only time anyone has to lift a finger is to thread a needle," says Sharon, the enthusiastic owner of Patchwork on Parade.

In Mannum, you escape to the tranquil Mannum Caravan Park on the banks of the River Murray, where there are two accommodation options —the Pumphouse, an historic building ideal for the budget concious, or riverview cabins. The retreat in Wallaroo consists of four-star two-bedroom villas on prime beachfront real estate, so you can wake up to the soothing sounds of waves lapping the shore. All retreats are fully catered.

On arrival, each visitor will be presented with a lovely gift, followed by drinks and nibbles. Tuition is offered at the retreats, often featuring a project that has been specially designed for the occasion. Visitors also have the option to simply enjoy the dedicated time to finish UFOs. Patchwork on Parade provides a "travelling shop" at all retreats, with a focus on beautiful pre-cuts, kits, patterns and plenty of wonderful notions. No chance of running out of supplies at a crucial moment!

The first retreat for 2012 will be from 16–18 March in Mannum. Email Sharon to sign up to the mailing list and be the first to know when others are announced. A number of workshops are also held throughout the year, with details available on the website.



BeauVue Craft Retreat

Dates: Individual bookings

Location: Loch, Vic

Contact: Christine Opray (03) 5657 2360, 0437 731 403,
christineopray@gmail.com, www.beauvuecraftretreat.com.au

Situated in the picturesque rolling hills of South Gippsland, just 90 minutes from Melbourne and 10 minutes from both the historic village of Loch and the town of Korumburra, BeauVue Craft Retreat is a fab venue for a unique and relaxing getaway. Located on a working dairy farm, the retreat was originally a family home before being turned into a stitcher's haven in September 2011. It is a recently painted self-contained house in excellent condition, boasting a deluxe new kitchen with new appliances including dishwasher and cappuccino machine, new custom-made curtains in two bedrooms, new reverse-cycle air conditioner and a new roof. It's free to be used however you wish, whether just working on your own projects or hosting workshops with tutors. Christine can also organise workshops for guests.

The retreat can comfortably accommodate eight guests, or 10 for a cosier arrangement. There are three huge bedrooms featuring eight comfortable single beds (can be changed if required) and a spacious, well-lit craft room that caters for up to 10 people. Extra lights have been installed, so even at night the lighting is fantastic. Outside, there's a covered patio area complete with table, chairs and a barbecue.

BeauVue Craft Retreat is open all year round, offering both weekend (3pm Friday–3pm Sunday, minimum four guests) and mid-week accommodation (single nights available from 3pm on day of arrival until 3pm the following day, minimum two guests). Other options are available — contact Christine for more information. All linen is supplied and continental breakfast provisions are included. Full catering can be organised on request.



Craft Retreat @ Hepburn Springs

Dates: Individual bookings

Location: Hepburn Springs, Vic

Contact: Bev Sullivan 0413 264 808, bev@craftretreat.com.au, www.craftretreat.com.au

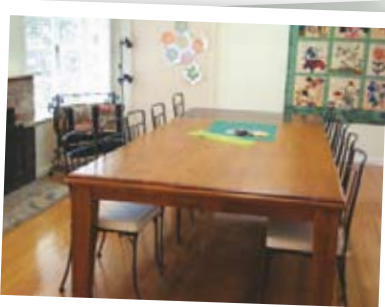
This luxury, purpose-built retreat was specifically designed with high levels of comfort in mind. From the spacious, fully equipped studio to high quality surroundings this is definitely a retreat for discerning quilters.

After attending many quilting retreats, the owner, Bev Sullivan, recognised that quilters deserve the very best in quality at a reasonable price. To achieve this, Bev started with generous bedrooms with a choice of comfortable king single, double or queen beds. Two of the five bedrooms are single rooms for those who prefer privacy. All the linen is of a high thread-count and is complemented by fluffy towels and face washers.

But what is a quilting retreat without the studio that dreams are made of? Bev has created a large studio where you can spread out. It boasts a five-metre design wall, an area for fabric cutting, plenty of power points, daylight lighting and a huge communal sewing table. Much of the necessary equipment is provided to cap off the perfect sewing escape.

An extensive kitchen/dining/lounge adjoins the studio, perfect for when you want to take a break. The kitchen is fully equipped, the dining table seats 10 and the comfy couches are ideal for taking in the view over the wrap-around deck. And to complete the picture, ducted heating and evaporative cooling ensure year-round comfort.

Craft Retreat @ Hepburn Springs specialises in offering quality accommodation and facilities. In 2012, classes and workshops with renowned instructors will also be offered — keep an eye on the website for further details.



in2quilting Quilting Retreats

Dates: March 16–18, April 25–30 and September 7–10
Location: Harrierville and Monbulk, Vic
Contact: Katrina Edgley 0427 967 586, in2quilting@gmail.com,
 www.in2quilting.com.au

in2quilting holds three retreats each year: two at Harrierville in the northeast of Victoria and the other at Monbulk in the Dandenong Ranges. The Monbulk Retreat is held over a weekend in March and is a very relaxed sit-and-sew affair. Work on your own project or join in a Mystery Quilt. Spending time with like-minded people who enjoy quilting while being in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges is sure to inspire a great sense of peace and friendship.

The April Alpine Retreat is a marvellous five-day retreat where you work on your own projects with Fay, a co-organiser and quilt tutor with many years' experience, there to assist and provide guidance. The theme for this year's fun-filled event is "Decorated Bras" (they can be worn on the outside!), complete with a special "Decorated Bra Dinner" on the Saturday night. Last year's theme of "Hats & Gloves" was a hit. At this retreat, you have the option to take a break by visiting local towns such as Bright and Beechworth, do a winery tour, go for a swim in the onsite indoor pool, play tennis or walk along the Ovens River, which runs alongside the resort.

The September retreat is a structured tutor retreat over three days, Friday to Monday. This year's tutors are Christine Calherois (foundation-pieced Double Wedding Ring), Fay Winther (10° ruler) and Mary Hitchens (hand quilting). Visit the website www.in2quilting.com.au to view photos of the class projects and to download registration forms for all retreats.



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Vickery Quilt and Craft Retreat

Dates: Individual bookings

Location: Alexandra, Vic

Contact: Anne and Beverley 0401 042 135,
vickeryretreat@optusnet.com.au, www.vickeryretreat.com.au

Located in Alexandra, a pretty town in the foothills of the Great Dividing Ranges about 130km from Melbourne, Vickery Quilt and Craft Retreat is just the spot to revitalise your creative spirit. The large, newly renovated three-bedroom house has been offering crafters a chance to escape since September 2010. It sleeps up to 10 people and there are two bathrooms, a well-equipped kitchen, comfy lounge-dining room, reverse-cycle airconditioning and a brilliant, warm Coonara wood heater. You're guaranteed to get some quality rest here as all beds have innerspring mattresses. Everything you could possibly need has been thought of!

The craft workroom is a delight, featuring lots of light, large tables, gas-lift chairs, design wall, irons and ironing boards, and a separate cutting table with mats and rulers. There's plenty of space for everyone to gather round and get busy sewing. It's located right inside the front door, enticing you from the moment you arrive.

The area has much to offer if you need a break — wander along the scenic walks, explore nearby Lake Eildon National Park, or visit wineries, galleries, museums and shops. A bicycle rail trail will also soon be completed. Alexandra's main street is only a short walk or drive from the retreat and there are plenty of cafés and restaurants to choose from if you don't bring your own food.

Workshops with well-known tutors are held two or three times a year, catering to both local and overnight guests — contact Anne or Beverley for more information.



Circle Retreat

Dates: Individual bookings

Location: Buderim, Sunshine Coast, Qld

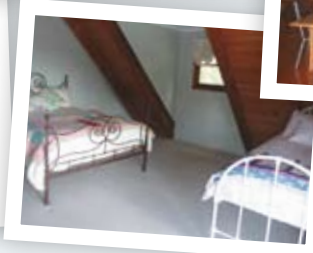
Contact: Stacey 0428 000 041, email: circleretreat@inet.net.au
www.circleretreat.com.au

Do you want to escape the kids and husband for the weekend? Do you want to spend time finishing some UFOs? Do you want to sew all day and into the night? Do you want wine on the deck at sunset with your sewing friends?

If you said "yes" to any of the above, Circle Retreat is for you. The stunning chalet is situated on three acres facing north with views to Mt Coolum. It has four bedrooms on three floors, easily sleeping 12, and three bathrooms. Circle Retreat offers complete flexibility

so you can spend your stitching weekend with your friends any way you wish.

What are you waiting for? Phone your girlfriends and choose a date for 2012.



Quilting on the Downs

Dates: Starting September 22

Location: Toowoomba, Qld

Contact: Lisa Zimmerman (07) 4633 4748, precioustime@iprimus.com.au, www.welcometoprecioustime.com.au

For a fun week of craft and learning, you can't go past the event organised by Lisa Zimmerman of Precious Time. Held during the annual Carnival of Flowers, the gathering takes the form of a specialised week of classes taught by talented tutors.

It's held at a local Catholic school with a wonderful hall that caters for up to three classes at once. Class size maximums are set between 15 and 20 participants, depending on the tutor and the project. The venue is close to two local shops and the quilting guild holds its annual quilt show nearby as part of the Carnival of Flowers. This is a particularly great time for the area, as Toowoomba comes alive with many wonderful gardens and a variety of exhibitions to enjoy.

On your first day at the gathering you will be greeted by friendly staff with your welcome kit for your class. It's not just your sewing soul being spoiled, there's also fantastic homemade morning and afternoon teas and delicious lunches, all included in the class fee.

Tutors for 2012 include Kathy Doughty, Wendy Williams, Sue Ross, Margaret Sampson (also known as Margaret George) and Bev Clune, to name a few. While the event does not include accommodation, Lisa is more than happy to assist visitors with finding local B&Bs and hotels. For more information, contact Lisa on (07) 4633 4748.



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DEPARTS SYDNEY 11th AUGUST 2012

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Asia Discovery Tours, 370 Pitt Street, Sydney

ADT
ASIA DISCOVERY TOURS

The Quilters Angel

Girls' Stitch In!

Date: March 10–11

Location: The Village Green, Highfields Qld

Contact: Marion Marshall on (07) 4630 8062, info@quiltersangel.com.au, www.quiltersangel.com.au, www.blog.quiltersangel.com.au

Are you in need of a day out for some quality time with the girls? Join Marion of The Quilters Angel for the annual “Girls’ Stitch In”, an event all about taking time out to appreciate the joys of being a woman, embracing all things girly and doing what you love: stitching!

There are fabulous new guest designers on-hand every year. Joining in the fun this time is Debbie Magee from Always Stitchin and Nikki Tervo from Nikki Tervo Designs and Brandy Gully.

The event is held in a beautifully decorated, silk-lined marquee on The Village Green, a grassy verge overlooking the escarpment and surrounded by specialty shops. It is the ideal location to spend the day mingling with the designers, forming friendships, enjoying fine food and wine and, of course, stitching.

The designers are given an allocated fabric kit to create brand-new unreleased projects for the event, which you then receive. The cost of the day includes the fabric kit, all patterns created for the event, a scrumptious morning tea and lunch, fabulous wine and lots of fun! There are prizes and giveaways throughout the day, along with special entertainment.

Places are limited, so contact The Quilters Angel today to secure your spot.



Retreat for the Creative Soul

Dates: Individual bookings

Location: Kobble Creek, Qld

Contact: Suzan Saliba (07) 3289 9864, 0401 314 314, suzan@easypeasyquilting.com, www.easypeasyquilting.com

Run by Suzan of Easy Peasy Quilting, this gorgeous craft retreat promises “peace and beauty spiced with a bit of ‘creature comfort’.” This stitching paradise is only 40 minutes from the Brisbane CBD, located on a lovely 67-acre property between the towns of Samford and Dayboro, surrounded by the breathtaking Mt Glorious and Ocean View mountains.

There’s a really welcoming, peaceful atmosphere to this retreat that’s unforgettable. The property is surrounded by sloping green hills and bushland, and with the workroom and upstairs verandah overlooking the amazing river-like dam, you’ll be able to spot plenty of wildlife — there are wallabies, kangaroos, koalas and many different birds.

The retreat caters for eight adults with four in comfortable twin-share rooms, a generous three-share room with walk-in wardrobe and a single room. The workroom offers a spacious set-up for 12–15 people and has captivating views, plenty of light, a great outdoor area and a variety of quilting tools and gadgets to try out. There’s a good-size design wall to display your progress, a huge pressing table that also serves as a cutting table, lightboxes, projector and so much more. You can even have your quilt long-arm quilted while you are enjoying your weekend. Bertha, the Statler Gammill long-arm machine, offers thousands of beautiful quilting designs to choose from. Be part of the experience or simply leave it to Suzan to work her magic.

Coffee and tea are readily available at the retreat and you have the option to book with or without meals. Minimum two-night stay. For more information and bookings visit www.easypeasyquilting.com



