

SHORT BREAK

On starry, starry, nights

abode@pyrenees, Moonambel 3478

The basics

When was the last time you saw stars? And not just the mere smattering of celestial lights that permeates Melbourne's pollution haze, but the entire sweeping gamut of the Milky Way? Abode's southerly facing observation deck provides sweeping vistas of the Pyrenees by day, and breathtaking views of southern skies by night. In one night, we spotted more shooting stars (six) and satellites (four) than cars on the road in the valley below (two).

Abode is the family-built holiday retreat of the Jones family, founders of the region's award-winning Dalwhinnie Winery. It was designed by Ballarat architect Ewan Jones, built by his brother, and the interior designed by Ewan's daughter (and present owner), Cindy Jones.

Abode has four double bedrooms (one a twin room) and can sleep up to eight people.

The location

The winemaking village of Moonambel is an easy 2½-hour drive from Melbourne, and 25 minutes from Avoca, the closest major town. Abode is just over a ridge from Dalwhinnie's vineyards, in the



heart of the Pyrenees ranges, and a five-minute drive from Moonambel.

The bathroom

Two bedrooms are located on each side of a long corridor, and each

pair of rooms shares a modern, stylish bathroom. The bathroom on the southern side has a wide, high window that has stunning views of the Pyrenees from the shower.

The breakfast

Abode is secluded and self-contained, but being a property also used often by the owners, it has a superbly appointed kitchen. Bring your own supplies but whether you want a bowl of cereal or eggs benedict, there is a utensil on hand to whip it up yourself.

The facilities

If there's even the slightest hint of sun, you will feel drawn to the wooden deck to watch the colours



winemaking family, you certainly won't run out of glasses.

Food and drink

The fabulous Warrenmang restaurant, a regular in *The Age Good Food Guide*, is just minutes away. There are pubs in Moonambel and Avoca, local wineries such as Taltarni and Redbank have reasonable lunches. Aspiring chefs will want to stock up on local produce and head for the kitchen. Try the butcher and smokehouse in Avoca. Dalwhinnie makes some of Victoria's finest shiraz. The dining table comfortably seats eight.

Contacts

abode@pyrenees, 239 McAdams Lane, Moonambel, Victoria. Details: 5331 1577, or 0409 672 259, abodepyrenees.com.au
Host Cindy Jones. Check-in and check-out times are negotiable.

The cost

Two-night minimum, \$200 a night for two people, \$350 for four guests, \$450 for six and \$600 for eight.

MARK HAWTHORNE

All short breaks and city breaks are conducted anonymously and paid for.

The verdict

An abode that provides glorious views and a wonderful rustic setting. Just remember to bring bread, wine and good company.

Vines as far as you can see from the abode-@pyrenees cottages.

