

**National Trust N.S.W.  
Hidden Gems of Melbourne  
September 2019**

**Day 01            Monday 09<sup>th</sup> September**

Arrive in Melbourne make own way to the hotel

6.00pm            Welcome drinks in Hotel

**Accommodation: The Como Melbourne, MGallery by Sofitel**

**630 Chapel St,  
South Yarra VIC 3141  
Tel # [\(03\) 9825 2222](tel:0398252222)**

**Day 02            Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September**

**Breakfast in the hotel**

09.30am            Transfer to Labassa House

10.00am            Tour

Labassa is an outstanding Victorian era mansion with opulent architectural features. Originally called 'Sylliott Hill', it was renamed 'Ontario' in the 1880s reflecting its new owner Alexander William Robertson's Canadian heritage. Robertson was a founder of the Cobb and Co. coach company that successfully ran mail services throughout Victoria. He had the mansion redeveloped in the French Second Empire style by commissioning the German born architect, John A. B. Koch, to remodel the house into a thirty-five roomed mansion. The interior features gilt embossed wallpapers, ornate stained glass and a rare trompe l'oeil ceiling.

Renamed Labassa in 1904 it was home to Melbourne's elite until 1920 when it was divided into flats. The residents included Hollywood's first Australian silent film star and other colourful bohemians. Labassa is the most lavish of the few surviving nineteenth century mansions and the magnificently restored interiors of the main rooms again impress all its visitors.



11.15am            Transfer to Rippon Lea

11.35am            Tour of Rippon Lea, House & Gardens

Built in 1868 for Frederick Sargood, who made his money selling soft-goods on the goldfields. The property was a large, self-sufficient farm, about twice the size it is now. The mansion was originally 15 rooms; it currently has 33 rooms. Sargood moved in with his first wife, Marian, and their 9 surviving children.

Sargood was a typical man of the Victorian Age – visionary and practical. This resulted in an elaborate underground watering system and the house having its own electricity supply.

Unusually for its time, the house had internal toilets.

Marian Sargood died in 1878 giving birth to her 12th child.

Sargood remarried and fathered another child. He resumed his career as a member of the Colonial Parliament, becoming Minister for Defence. The Sargood's could be 'at home' to over 500 people. Sargood was knighted in 1890. He died in January 1903.

Now a widow, Lady Sargood sold Rippon Lea for 20 000 pounds. The property was purchased by a syndicate headed by Thomas Bent

who became Premier of Victoria in 1904. He began subdividing and selling off some of the land, Bent was forced from office in 1908. He died the following year while under investigation for involvement in land scandals. His death saved Rippon Lea from further subdivision.



In 1910 the property was bought by Benjamin Nathan. He owned Maples Furniture and Music Stores. He returned the house to a family home. Nathan died in 1935. His elder daughter Louisa (Lulu) inherited the property.

Louisa Nathan married lawyer Timothy Jones. After inheriting the property in 1935 she decided to modernise, influenced by Hollywood movies of the time.

Timothy Jones died in 1958. In the early 1950s Mrs Jones sold some land to the ABC for their television studios. In 1963 the Federal Government put a Compulsory Acquisition Order on a further 4 acres of land to extend the studios. Mrs Jones fought the order to the High Court but lost. There was a demonstration against the acquisition that attracted 10 000 people. During 1963 Mrs Jones made arrangements so that, when she died, the house and land at Rippon Lea would pass to the National Trust. Her children approved of these arrangements.

1.00pm Light lunch at Rippon Lea

2.00pm Transfer to the Royal Botanical Gardens

Melbourne's Botanic Gardens was established in 1846 by Lieutenant Governor Charles La Trobe.

Over the next 60 years this swampy site was transformed into the world-famous landscape we know today. In 1958, Queen Elizabeth II bestowed the 'Royal' prefix on the Gardens.

3.00pm Tour through the gardens

4.00pm Transfer to the hotel

**Accommodation: The Como Melbourne Hotel**

**Day 03 Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September**

**Breakfast in the hotel**

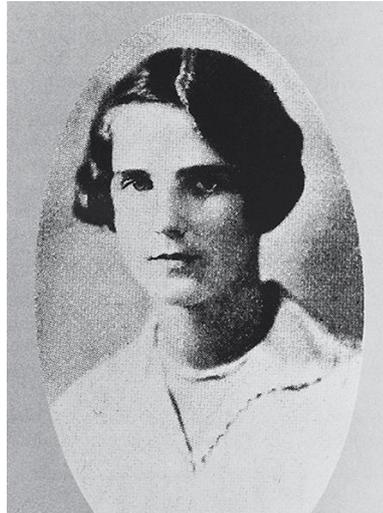
Drive to Cruden Farm



10.00am Tour of Cruden Farm Dame Elizabeth Murdoch's garden. In 1928 journalist and newspaper executive Keith Murdoch gave his 19-year-old bride, Elisabeth Greene, a small farm as a wedding present. Elisabeth loved the property at first sight, but Murdoch, a perfectionist, soon engaged leading design professionals to revitalise the modest weatherboard cottage and old-fashioned garden as a weekend retreat suitable for his family and for entertaining. Edna Walling laid out the garden.

11.15am Morning Tea  
 Dame Elizabeth Murdoch  
 8/2/1909 – 5/12/2012

Dame Elisabeth's upbringing taught her to love gardens and the land, because as a young wife and mother of four she found herself running two large gardens in city and country. Neither had a good water supply so she would wake at dawn — a habit that has never left her — to pump water and shift hoses. Or she would do this at dusk after a day's work in the city.



11.45pm Drive to Coombe, Yarra Valley.

Helen 'Nellie' Porter Mitchell or Dame Nellie Melba is fondly remembered as Australia's most famous operatic diva. She continued to sing until the last months of her life, making a legendary number of 'farewell' appearances until her death in 1931.

Melba purchased the sixty-acre dairy farm in 1909, renaming the property Coombe Cottage after a house she had rented in England while she was performing at Covent Garden.

Coombe Cottage is still the private residence of Melba's family and was the home of Melba's granddaughter Pamela Lady Vestey until she died in 2011.



1.00pm Lunch at Coombe

Private tour of the house and garden

4.00pm Transfer back to the Hotel

**Accommodation: The Como Melbourne Hotel**

**Day 04 Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September**

**Breakfast in the hotel**

09.30am Transfer to **Heide Museum of Modern Art**

It began life in 1934 as the home of John and Sunday Reed and has since evolved into one of Australia's most important cultural institutions. Soon after purchasing the fifteen acre property on which Heide stands in 1934, founders John and Sunday Reed opened their home to like-minded individuals such as artists Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, John Perceval and Danila Vassilieff. They nurtured a circle of artists, writers and intellectuals who contributed to Heide becoming a place for the discussion, creation and promotion of modern art and literature.

10.00am Private Tour through the house, Gallery and garden  
 12.00noon Lunch on own  
 1.00pm Transfer to the National Gallery  
 2.00pm A Private tour of the Gallery,  
 4.00pm Transfer to the hotel  
 6.30pm Transfer to Geppetto Trattoria by Taxi  
 7.00pm Farewell Dinner Geppetto Trattoria



In 1981, Nino Cea opened Geppetto Trattoria with the vision to create an unpretentious eatery that focused on Italian home-style cooking. This idea was inspired by those eateries found in his hometown region of Puglia in Italy. Simple, rustic dishes with a particular focus on pasta, seafood, and slow-cooked meals.

After Dinner Transfer back to the hotel by taxi

**Accommodation: The Como Melbourne Hotel**

**Day 05 Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September**

**Breakfast in the hotel**  
 Make own way to Airport

**Cost per person share twin \$1850.00 p.p. single supplement \$600.00**

***Included in the Quote:***

4 night's accommodation at The Como MGallery by Sofitel Hotel  
 Full Breakfast daily  
 Welcome cocktail party  
 Lunch at Rippon Lea & Coombe Yarra Valley  
 Dinner at Geppetto Trattoria  
 Private tours, and entry fees to Labassa, Rippon Lea, Royal Botanical Gardens, Cruden Farm, Coombe Yarra Valley, Heide Museum of Modern Art, and the National Gallery  
 Transfers in Private coach except transfers to dinner in taxis  
 National Trust Guide to accompany throughout

**Not included**

Air Fares  
 Meals not listed,  
 Items of a personal nature, Travel Insurance