



# The write place to live

**Author Monica McInerney was inspired by the Clare Valley, writes Elissa Doherty**

It is not hard to see why a young girl growing up in this charming Clare Valley residence was inspired to become an author. Forget for a moment that the historic, picturesque home sits proudly in one of the prettiest regions in South Australia — perfect fodder for a writer's ink.

Because the award-winning Stationmaster's Residence — the former home of international best-selling author Monica McInerney — is an experience in itself.

If the walls could talk, they would no doubt regale visitors with tales of the golden era of rail and the antics of seven railway children whom Father Christmas would visit by train.

McInerney's father, Steve, was the stationmaster for 35 years and the property was home to the family from 1959 to 2003.

Grand yet quaint, it has in recent years been reincarnated by Chris and Christine Jones into a bed and breakfast, with throwbacks to its railtime past. The term B&B, however, does not do this gracious 1913 stone house justice. Strolling past the ivy-covered facade and sprawling

garden into the elegant hallway is like stepping back in time.

The original pressed-tin ceilings drip with chandeliers, the sunlight shines through stained glass and the tasteful furniture all imbue a foregone era.

It's easy to imagine a time when the stationmaster would entertain, the children would play hide and seek in the sprawling garden bursting with gladioli, agapanthus and fruit trees and tea would be taken under the ivy on the wraparound veranda.

But if this sounds like a weekend at grandma's, think again — country charm is mixed with mod cons, including a spa and a barbecue.

And the real surprise is out the back.

Inside a corrugated iron shed is the Country Club — a modern games room with jukebox, pool table, a

plasma TV, comfortable sofa beds, locally commissioned art works, a second bathroom and a bar fridge.

Every whim has been catered to — quality chocolates, a full wine rack, a supply of port and scotch, magazines and novels, including McInerney's *Those Faraday Girls* and *The Alphabet Sisters*.

For the budding chef, the kitchen is stocked with anything you could require, while the expansive pantry is decked out with a huge supply of food.

Links to the golden age of rail can be found throughout, harking back to the days when the old track would have hummed with locomotives bustling into the station of Clare. The last train pulled out of Clare in 1983 after Ash Wednesday bushfires ripped through the track.

The B&B won the 2008 SA Tourism Awards Deluxe Accommodation category.

## boarding pass



**getting there:** Clare is an easy 90-minute drive north of Adelaide. The B&B is at 4 New Rd, Clare.

**rates:** Start at \$275 for a couple, or pay two nights stay three \$460.

**more:** Phone (08) 82616270, [www.thestationmastersresidence.com.au](http://www.thestationmastersresidence.com.au)



**Sunday Herald Sun**  
**15/03/2009**  
**Page: 23**  
**Escape**  
**Region: Melbourne**  
**Circulation: 606500**  
**Type: Capital City Daily**  
**Size: 382.12 sq.cms**  
-----S



**Quaint home:** The Stationmaster's Residence Bed and Breakfast in Clare Valley, South Australia