



# ALL ABOARD B&B

## Clare Stationmasters offer plenty of R&R

GRANDEUR and opulence is on offer in the Clare Valley, reports **ELISSA DOHERTY**

IT IS not hard to see why a young girl growing up in this charming Clare Valley residence was inspired to be an author.

Forget for a moment that the historic, picturesque home sits proudly in one of the prettiest regions in SA 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.

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 been reincarnated by couple Chris and Christine Jones into a decadent bed and breakfast, with throwbacks to its railtime past. The term B&B does not do this gracious stone 1913 home 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 verandah.

But if this sounds like a weekend at grandma's, think again — country charm is mixed with mod-cons, including a spa and a BBQ. 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, comfy sofa beds, local artworks, a second bathroom and a bar fridge.

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

For the budding chef, the kitchen is stocked with anything and everything you could require, while the expansive pantry is decked out with a seasonal 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.

My friends and I explored the surrounding area for a few hours, lingering over a delicious lunch at the rustic and renowned Skilogalee winery restaurant. But then it was back to the residence, cooking up a BBQ and chatting and laughing into the wee hours. This was one station we hope to pull into again.

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The writer was a guest of The Stationmaster's Residence.

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**if you go ...**

**GETTING THERE:**  
 Qantas  
 (www.qantas.com.au),  
 Jetstar (www.jetstar.com)  
 and Virgin Blue  
 (www.virginblue.com.au)  
 fly from Darwin to  
 Adelaide. Clare is an easy  
 90 minute drive north  
 of Adelaide.  
 The B&B is at 4 New  
 Rd, Clare.

**STAY:** Rates start at \$275  
 for a couple, or pay two  
 nights stay three \$460.

**DETAILS:** Phone (08)  
 8261 6270,  
 www.thestationmasters  
 residence.com.au



**OPULENCE:** The master bedroom



**GRAND:** The entrance



**GAMES A PLENTY:** Something for everyone out the back. Pictures supplied by Stationmasters