

REVIEW | LUXURY CABINS

# Basalt, Orange, NSW

By Jane Richards

Check-in

Four seasons in one day - if only that were possible. After winding our way up to Basalt's lofty perch 1100 metres above sea level 10 minutes outside of Orange, we can't help but feel a vague sense of FOMO. Spilling down the hill below us is the 30-hectare cherry orchard this stylish yet supremely comfortable getaway sits on. Imagine those trees in full spring blossom. Then there's the fire pit above it - just made for crisp but not freezing autumn nights after a day wandering Orange's tree-blazed streets. But this is winter, and it's icy, so we punch in the entry code to our new abode. And suddenly the reasons why winter is also a perfect time to visit becomes apparent.

The look

Basalt, named after the rich terra firma this food bowl sits on, comprises three sustainable, architecturally designed studios and is the brainchild of a cherry farmer whose bounty is named - rather aptly considering the elevation - Cherries from Heaven. As you head up the winding Pinnacle Road past vineyards and orchards, you'll reach a smartgate. Dial a number, and it will remember your vehicle and "open sesame" when you need to drive back out. A sapling-lined drive will take you to Basalt: three cabins spaced well apart which seem to emerge from the land, thanks largely to their rammed earth and metal construction.

The cabin

We're in the light-filled "Drifter" and, like "Yonder" and "Chaser", it sleeps two and packs a clever design punch in its high-ceilinged 43 square metres. Enter via solid glass doors to take in sleek spotted gum and polished concrete, plush rugs and linens, bluetooth speaker, a full kitchen with cooktop, microwave, fridge and coffee plunger. There's a walk-in rainshower, bathrobes and a separate toilet. A snug couch sits across from a smart TV disguised as a painting. There's a table for two, genius hanging space with an iron, hairdryer and Scrabble, and yoga mats under the bed. An iPad puts instructions and suggestions at your fingertips, but we don't need it, as avoiding frustration seems to be a key design element. Light switches are labelled, the air-conditioner and TV remotes are counter-intuitive, and there's no-password Wi-Fi. Even the internal wood fire is easily lit. The king bed faces the orchard as does a giant egg bath which nests in its own window nook. A telescope on a tripod reminds you that star-smudged skies are also on the viewing schedule.



Clockwise from top: Basalt offers views of the cherry orchard and rolling countryside; the orchard under sunny winter skies; soak up the views; king bed; cabin with firepit.



*A telescope on a tripod reminds you that star-smudged skies are also on the viewing schedule.*

Food + drink

If you want to stay with the view and that fire, pre-order from Racine eatery and enjoy the likes of lasagne and a vanilla slice. But Orange has strong foodie cred. Try Birdie Noshery and Drinking Est; Charred Kitchen & Bar; Hey Rosey for cocktails, and the Agrestic Grocer, Factory Espresso or Byng Street Local for coffee. For storytelling, history and good food, book at Antica Australis, Carcoar. Hear about Roman invasions and eat fare enjoyed by shepherds centuries ago as Kelly and Paolo Picarazzi transport you to ancient Italy. At Basalt, breakfast is sourdough, jams, coffee, tea. There are also choccies, marshmallows and a Swinging Bridge pinot. Speaking of wine, Orange is awash with it. For a fun tasting in an (often) sun-drenched courtyard try Angullong Wines Cellar Door, Millthorpe.

Out + about

We stroll through the orchard, pass a dam with a boat, and spring roos chilling in the sun. Basalt can organise winery tours, stargazing, or bush tucker walks with a Wiradjuri host. A hike up Pinnacle lookout takes an hour. There's a new viewing platform at Gaanha-bula (Mount Canobolas) - an extinct volcano that puts on snow shows in winter. Nearby Carcoar and Millthorpe have fun shops, restaurants and wineries. Abercrombie House, Bathurst, holds quirky treasures, and on the drive back to Sydney, divert to the gobsmacking folly that is Mayfield Garden, Oberon.

The verdict

One for all seasons: the perfect weekend getaway from Sydney.

The essentials

Basalt, 1100 Pinnacle Rd, Canobolas. \$550 a night Sun-Wed; \$605 Thurs-Sat. See basaltorange.com.au

Score out of five

\*\*\*\*\*

*The writer was a guest of Basalt.*

**Highlight** Waking to the brilliant red glow of a sunrise that fills our cabin.  
**Lowlight** That nagging feeling: which is more spectacular, winter, spring or autumn?

**How we score** \*\*\*\*\* Amazing. Can we move in? \*\*\*\*\* Excellent. Get a late checkout  
\*\*\* Pretty good but could be better \*\* Get an early checkout \* What's the refund policy?