

# *Retreat at Wisemans*

YOUR HAWKESBURY ESCAPE



Wisemans Ferry NSW Australia • Ph (02) 45 66 44 22

[www.wisemans.com.au](http://www.wisemans.com.au)

## Contents

Please click on each heading to follow the link:

▶ Contact us	1
▶ Welcome to the Retreat at Wisemans	2
▶ Group Bookings	3
▶ Friends of the Retreat – Rewards program	3
▶ Things to do at the Retreat	4
▶ Health and beauty	5
▶ Riverbend Restaurant	6
▶ About Wisemans Ferry – St Albans	7
▶ Tour the area	8
▶ Some other activities	11
▶ Finding us	12

## Contact Us

### Reservation Enquiries

P: (02) 45 66 44 22

F: (02) 45 66 46 13

E: [retreat@wisemans.com.au](mailto:retreat@wisemans.com.au)

Address:

5564 Old Northern Road

Wisemans Ferry, NSW, 2775

Book online: [www.wisemans.com.au](http://www.wisemans.com.au)

## Welcome to the Retreat at Wisemans

*Welcome to your perfect country escape*

**Nestled on the banks of the Hawkesbury River, in the picturesque village of Wisemans Ferry, the Retreat borders some of the most beautiful scenery in New South Wales. It is a haven of tranquillity yet only just over an hour from the Sydney CBD and the Central Coast. You will feel you are in a different world - so far away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.**

We are an easy journey on uncrowded roads with so many interesting places to explore on the way - but more of that later. For travellers from much of regional NSW there is the great advantage that you will not have to battle the traffic of Sydney to find us.



While you are with us you will be spoilt for choice for things to do, both at the Retreat and exploring the surrounding countryside. We hope the information you will find in this information kit will help you plan a memorable stay.

The Riverbend Restaurant serves modern Australian cuisine with a difference. So we can use the freshest ingredients we change our dinner menu daily, providing a surprise to greet you each evening of your stay.

We have 54 large, fully equipped rooms, most of which overlook the golf course or the Hawkesbury River. If you really want to indulge there are 2 suites each with a private lounge and spa.

We have a wide range of recreational activities on-site including golf, tennis, swimming pools, volleyball, beach volleyball, basketball, badminton, croquet and petanque. There is an exercise room with rowing equipment, cycle and weights and a games room with pool tables, table tennis, darts, stereo system and Foxtel. Relax with a massage or beauty treatment in the Blaxland Health and Beauty Salon.

*We look forward to welcoming you to the Retreat at Wisemans.*

## Group bookings and Rewards Club

### Group bookings

Organise your friends and you can stay FREE!

Many of our guests stay at the Retreat with a group of friends. This may be a get-together of old friends (maybe former work or school colleagues) or a special interest group. Our guests have included members of:

- Car clubs - we have plenty of parking and there is so much to see in the area
- Bridge and chess clubs - our conference centre can be used for competitions
- Golf clubs - our on-site course can be used for competitions
- Quilters Clubs - who like the space available to them in our conference centre

These are but a few examples of groups who visit us and receive our special discount. Book at least 10 weekend Escape Packages and we will reward you with a FREE stay, or we can deduct 10% from everyone's package price.

### Friends of the Retreat – Rewards Club

We like to reward our loyal following at the Retreat, with almost half of our bookings coming from past users or by direct recommendation.

Earn points when you stay, bring a friend or recommend the Retreat, with every 100 points equivalent to a \$5 rebate on your next booking.



#### Earn points under three categories:

1. **Stay.** Stay at the Retreat and earn 1 reward point for each \$1 spent
2. **Bring** a Friend. Bring friends with you and earn 1 reward point for every \$2 spent by your friends during their stay.
3. **Recommend.** Recommend friends to stay at the Retreat and earn 1 reward point for every \$2 spent during their stay.

Full details of the terms and conditions of membership are available from the Retreat.

## Things to do at the Retreat

### Golf

Our picturesque 9 holes course is nestled on the banks of the Hawkesbury and must be one of the prettiest courses in NSW. It has the advantage of being an easy walk and is a course that can be enjoyed by all standards of golfer. However it also has its challenges and is regularly used for competitions. The tree-lined fairways place a premium on accuracy and the alternative tees provide an extra challenge for the back 9. Our staff will be pleased to help you with club and buggy hire.

Each Saturday the local golf club organizes a competition and guests are very welcome to play. Although green fees are payable for golf, you can play unlimited golf over the weekend for just \$30 per player.



### Swimming pool

The 25m saltwater swimming pool is another favourite and the toddlers' pool is ideal for the youngsters.



### Tennis

We also have 2 floodlit, all-weather tennis courts so you can play at any time. Racquets and ball are available free of charge from reception.

### Other facilities

These include:


- Beach volleyball - not quite Bondi, but just as much fun
- Croquet - the sometimes not so genteel sport on the Retreat's Village Green
- Petanque - the very French game otherwise known as Boules
- Mini gym - for the early morning workout
- Games room - with pool, table tennis and darts for the late night workout!

Or you can relax in the beautiful gardens with a good book or pamper yourself with a beauty treatment or massage.

## Health and beauty

### Blaxland Health and Beauty Salon

If you're feeling a bit tired or stressed why not include a relaxing massage or beauty treatment during your stay. We have a special arrangement with Beautiful Health & Wellness and they can offer a wide range of treatments for aching limbs.

Price list of services			
			
Massages and beauty treatments		Women's Waxing	
Swedish Massage (30 min)	\$ 47.50	Eyebrows (10 min)	\$ 17.00
Swedish Massage (60 min)	\$ 85.00	Upper Lip (10 min)	\$ 17.00
Swedish Massage (90 min)	\$120.00	Chin (10 min)	\$ 17.00
Remedial Massage (30 min)	\$ 55.00	Sides (10 min)	\$ 22.00
Remedial Massage (60 min)	\$ 95.00	Underarm (15 min)	\$ 20.00
Remedial Massage (90 min)	\$130.00	Bikini Line (15 min)	\$ 20.00
Aromatherapy Massage (30 min)	\$ 55.00	Brazilian (30 min)	\$ 55.00
Aromatherapy Massage (60 min)	\$ 95.00	Full Legs (30 min)	\$ 50.00
Aromatherapy Massage (90 min)	\$130.00	Full Legs & Bikini (40 min)	\$ 60.00
Tibetan Herbal Massage (30 min)	\$ 55.00	Full Arm (20 min)	\$ 40.00
Tibetan Herbal Massage (60 min)	\$ 95.00	Half Arm (15 min)	\$ 30.00
Tibetan Herbal Massage (90 min)	\$130.00	Half Legs (15 min)	\$ 30.00
Mineral Salt Massage (30 min)	\$ 55.00	Full Body (Eyebrow, lips, full arms, underarm, full leg & bikini)	\$100.00
Mineral Salt Massage (60 min)	\$ 95.00	Men's Waxing	
Mineral Salt Massage (90 min)	\$130.00	Chest & Stomach (30 min)	\$ 55.00
Stone Massage (90 min)	\$140.00	Back (30 min)	\$ 55.00
Mineral Salt Foot Spa (30 min)	\$ 30.00	Shoulders (20 min)	\$ 35.00
Express Facial (30 min)	\$ 55.00	Full Leg from (30 min)	\$ 60.00
Deluxe Facial (60 min)	\$ 95.00	Neck (10 min)	\$ 20.00
Mini Manicure (30 min)	\$ 45.00	Full Arms (25 min)	\$ 50.00
Deluxe Manicure (60 min)	\$ 75.00	Ears / Nose (10 min)	\$ 20.00
Foot Pamper (30 min)	\$ 45.00	Middle Eyebrow (7 min)	\$ 15.00
Deluxe Pedicure (60 min)	\$ 75.00	Full Body (Chest, Stomach, full legs, full arms & back)	\$150.00

**Please note:** **30 minute massages** available *only* with 2 or more massage bookings  
**30 minute beauty treatments** available *only* with 2 or more beauty treatment bookings  
 To avoid disappointment we ask you to book your treatment before arrival.

## Dining in Riverbend Restaurant

This will be a highlight of your stay. After a day of exercise on the golf course or exploring the area you can look forward to a delightful candlelit dinner in the Riverbend Restaurant.

We pride ourselves in the standard of food and service we provide and we are sure you won't be disappointed. Our cuisine is essentially modern Australian with some Asian influences.

We change the dinner menu each day to ensure we are using the freshest ingredients, to keep our highly talented chefs interested and to provide our guests with a surprise each evening. A typical menu would be:



### ENTRÉE

#### ***Coconut Crusted Tiger Prawns***

Served on crisp leaves and chilli lime and sesame sauce

#### ***Veal Tortellini***

Tossed through a basil white wine tomato sauce topped with parmesan flakes

#### ***Fig and Cream Cheese Stuffed Quail***

With a honey and seeded mustard glaze

#### ***Homestead Style Vegetable Soup***

With a cheddar and parsley parmentier

### MAIN

#### ***Tender Chicken Supreme***

On garlic roasted desiree potato, snow peas and apricot and Southern Comfort sauce

#### ***Scotch Fillet Steak***

Served with wilted arugula and sundried tomato roast polenta with claret jus

#### ***Grilled Barramundi Fillet***

Served on a basil pesto mash, with marinated tomato and white wine buerre blanc

#### ***Baked Vegetable Strudel***

Made with crisp filo pastry and Napolitano sauce

### DESSERT

#### ***Warm Sticky Date and Walnut Pudding***

With butterscotch sauce and vanilla ice cream

#### ***Mixed Berry Cheesecake***

With a merlot jelly

#### ***Steamed Chocolate Pudding***

With rhubarb compote and double cream

#### ***The Retreat Selection of Australian Boutique Cheeses***

Accompanied with dried fruits and water crackers

## About Wisemans Ferry – St Albans

Before you visit us you may find it interesting to learn more about the area and its history. Wisemans Ferry is dominated by the mighty Hawkesbury River, the longest navigable river in Australia. The journey through the "Forgotten Valley" from Wisemans to St Albans and beyond provides a unique insight into the lives of pioneer settlers in a setting of undisturbed picturesque landscapes. No other place so close to Sydney offers the visitor such a memorable experience of journeying back in time, yet for most of the year the traveller will move along roads and tracks as uncrowded as they were 150 years ago.



### Some history of the area

The land around Wisemans Ferry and the Macdonald Valley was settled mainly by emancipated convicts well before the first land grants in 1810. The colony flourished and by the 1840's the population peaked at approximately 1,200. Wisemans Ferry was on the original route linking Sydney with the Hunter region. Part of the Old Great North Road, built by convict labour in the early 1800's, still exists today and is a wonderful example of Australia's early heritage. As you descend into Wisemans Ferry from the south, the convict-built stone walls and culverts can be seen supporting the road. On the northern side of the Hawkesbury across from Wisemans Ferry one of the most remarkable and important engineering feats is preserved in the Dharug National Park. This section of the Great North Road is known as Devines Hill and the massive stone walls and ramparts are a must for all visitors to the area. Much work has been done in recent years to protect the Great North Road.

Soloman Wiseman, charged in London for theft, was sentenced to death but his sentence was commuted to transportation and he duly arrived in Sydney on 20 August 1806. An astute businessman, Wiseman obtained 80 hectares of land in the Hawkesbury in 1817 and by 1819 had established an inn at Wisemans Ferry called The Sign of the Packet. This was destroyed by floods and he built another on higher ground called Cobham Hall. It survives to this day and is now part of the Wisemans Ferry Inn. Wiseman continued to acquire land along the Hawkesbury where a river crossing was feasible on the basis that a road would be built to link to the Hunter Valley. In 1827 Wiseman was granted the right to operate a ferry to carry passengers and livestock across the river. When work on the Great North road started, he obtained the contract, worth \$6,000 a year, to feed the convict labour. In 1832 the government acquired the ferry lease by claiming the crossing was essentially part of the main road. The ferry is now run by the RTA and operates free of charge, 365 days a year.

More details about the areas can be downloaded from our website:

- Wonderful Wisemans (<http://www.maps.com.au/PDFs/Maps/hawkesb/WonderfulWisemans.pdf>)
- Serene St Albans (<http://www.maps.com.au/PDFs/Maps/hawkesb/SereneStAlbans.pdf>)
- Walks around Wisemans Ferry (<http://www.maps.com.au/PDFs/Maps/hawkesb/WalksArWisemans.pdf>)

## Tour the area

Our tour will take you across the Hawkesbury on the main ferry, up the Macdonald Valley (or the Forgotten Valley as it is known to the locals) to St Albans. Here you will cross the bridge over the Macdonald River and return to Wisemans Ferry at Webbs Creek. The journey of some 30kms will take you back in time seeing some classic examples of early settlement and visiting other places of interest.

### Exploring Wisemans Ferry

Before starting your tour of the valley we suggest you might like to visit the following:

#### Wisemans Ferry Cemetery

From the Retreat turn back up the hill from Wisemans Ferry township about 50 metres and turn east on Singleton Road which leads to the Wisemans Ferry Cemetery. Here you will find the graves of many of the pioneers of the district including Solomon Wiseman and a first fleeter. Note the part played by the river in many of the settler's lives. There are inscriptions recording drownings, horse accidents and one particularly poignant one of a woman and her three young children dying, only to be followed a year later by the husband and father. One can only speculate on what happened to this family.

#### Ferry Artists Gallery

Run by a group of local artists, the gallery is just across the road from the Retreat in the shopping arcade and is well worth a visit.

#### Statue of Solomon Wiseman

You will find this in the main street near the shopping arcade. Sculptured in bronze by Guy Evans, the statue was commissioned as a Bicentennial project in 1988. Old ferry timbers, wheel and a winch drum from the ferry DMR 8 form the surrounds to the statue.



## The Tour

Turn left out of the Retreat and follow the road to the Ferry. The oldest ferry in Australia, it is operated by the RTA and is, in effect, part of the Great North Road. It runs 24/7, 365 days a year and is FREE!

Start your trip up the Forgotten Valley by turning left off the Ferry on to Settlers Road.

## The Convict Trail

About 200m up Settlers Road you will see a gate on the right hand side (park on the left - hand side of Settlers Road). This is the Convict Heritage Trail or The Great North Road. The Great North Road, carved out of Hawkesbury sandstone by chain gang convicts, is a magnificent achievement. Each piece of sandstone was precision-shaped and placed perfectly to create walls of enduring strength. In fact, the massive buttressed walls, with the exception a few washaways, still stand in perfect alignment, nearly two centuries after construction. The National Parks and Wildlife Service have provided informative signs explaining the road's unique features.



On the summit of Devines Hill (a walk of about 1km) you can see the remains of a stone quarry as well as Hangmans Cave. This cave, complete with a carved bench and steps, has a natural hole in its roof. Folklore in the region asserts that this hole made the cave a suitable place for hanging errant convicts. More likely, the cave provided storage for gunpowder or a resting place for guards. On the lower sections of Devines Hill there are two examples of convict graffiti, which consist of initials carved high on the wall.

More details can be found at <http://www.convicttrail.org/>.

## Finch's Line

Finch's Line, the first attempt to build a road to the Hunter Valley, was convict-built in 1828 but later abandoned because it had too many sharp turns for coaches to manage. Now a good road for walkers or cyclists who are reasonably fit, this road starts at the top of Devine's Hill.

Return to your car and continue along Settlers Road to St Albans a journey of about 20km mostly on sealed road. Note the many stands of poplar trees - originally planted for the match industry - fortunately now preserved since the industry moved overseas and the invention of disposable lighters!

### **St Albans Old General Cemetery**

Before you reach St Albans you will find this old cemetery on the left of Settlers Road approximately 3.3km south of St Albans (17km north of the Wisemans Ferry crossing). The cemetery was established during the 1820s although several sections (General and Roman Catholic) were washed away by successive severe floods. Monuments are predominantly 19th century sandstone headstones commonly semicircular topped and of simple Georgian style. These monuments feature elegant Roman, Italic and Copperplate scripts. The cemetery records the principal pioneers and pioneering families of the Valley including Sternbeck, Thompson and Bailey. The cemetery documents the initial close knit pioneer community, its descendents and their relationships during the 19th and 20th centuries. If you have an interest in historic cemeteries, there are a number in the Macdonald Valley and you will find it useful to go to:

<http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/files/22150/File/macdonaldValleyHistoricCemeteries.pdf>

### **St Albans**

St Albans is a step (or two) back in time and those interested in its history and fascinating places to explore should refer to <http://www.saintalbens.org.au/index.html>, a wonderfully informative site developed by a local resident. There you find the history of the Settlers Arms, built as an Inn in 1836 and still operating as such today. A great place to stop for lunch on your tour. Or if you just want a coffee and delicious home-made scones and cakes try the Fickle Wombat or Wellums Lake.

St Albans is also home to the St Albans Gallery which has frequent exhibitions by well-known artists.

Cross the bridge at St Albans and return to Wisemans Ferry via St Albans Road.

### **Webbs Creek Ferry**

This is the other ferry that crosses the Hawkesbury at Wisemans Ferry - also operating 24/7/365 and FREE. Turn left off the ferry and make your way back to the Retreat.

## Some other activities

### On the water

Here you have a number of options:

- Taking a leisurely cruise (with an experienced skipper in charge)
- Hiring a boat and going for a cruise (how leisurely will depend on the skipper!)
- Going for a water ski or wakeboard (for those not into leisurely pursuits!)

### Cruising

Leisure Lass Cruises operate from the wharf near the ferry, just minutes down the road from the Retreat. A variety of options are available, see: <http://www.leisurelass.com.au/>



### Hiring

If you prefer to be your own skipper, then Able Houseboats will be able to help you. They have a variety of craft available for hire, see: <http://www.hawkesburyhouseboats.com.au/5646.html>

### Water skiing and wakeboarding

Fancy a water ski - then contact Wisemans Ferry Water Sports at <http://www.skischool.com.au/index.html>

Wisemans Ferry is also home to one of Australia's leading wakeboarding schools - Black Diamond. Expert or novice they will be able to help you, see:

<http://www.blackdiamondwakeboarding.com.au/about.html>



### Off the water

If you'd prefer to keep your powder dry then there are some other options

### Lawn bowls at Wisemans Ferry Bowling Club

The club is just across the road from the Retreat. Green fees and bowls hire are from \$12 per person. Check with the secretary about competitions and availability (02 45 66 43 07).

### Golf at Riverside Oaks

This is a championship course about 15km from the Retreat and we are able to negotiate special rates for our guests, see: <http://www.riversideoaks.com.au/index.php?page=home.php>

## Getting there

### Direct routes

If you're short of time then you can reach the Retreat by taking one of the following routes:

### From the City

Cross the Harbour Bridge and follow the signs for Epping (do not take the Pacific Highway exit) along the Gore Hill Freeway. Continue through Lane Cove Tunnel (you need an electronic tag – there are no toll booths – but you can phone in and pay). Then on to the M2 Motorway. Take the 2nd exit after the toll, sign posted to Castle Hill and turn right on to Pennant Hills Road. At Thompsons Corner turn left on to Castle Hill Road and turn right at the 2nd set of traffic lights on to New Line Road. Then follow the signs for Dural and Wisemans Ferry.

### From the North Shore

Make your way to the Pacific Highway and follow the signs to Hornsby (do not take the freeway to Gosford). In Hornsby follow the signs to Galston. You will travel a winding and picturesque road through the Galston Gorge. In Galston follow the signs to Wisemans Ferry.

### From Parramatta

Follow Pennant Hills Road to Thompsons Corner. Turn left on to Castle Hill Road and follow the directions as above From the City.

### From Windsor

Follow Pitt Town Road, Cattai Road and Wisemans Ferry Road. In Maroota turn left on to Old Northern Road.

### From Gosford

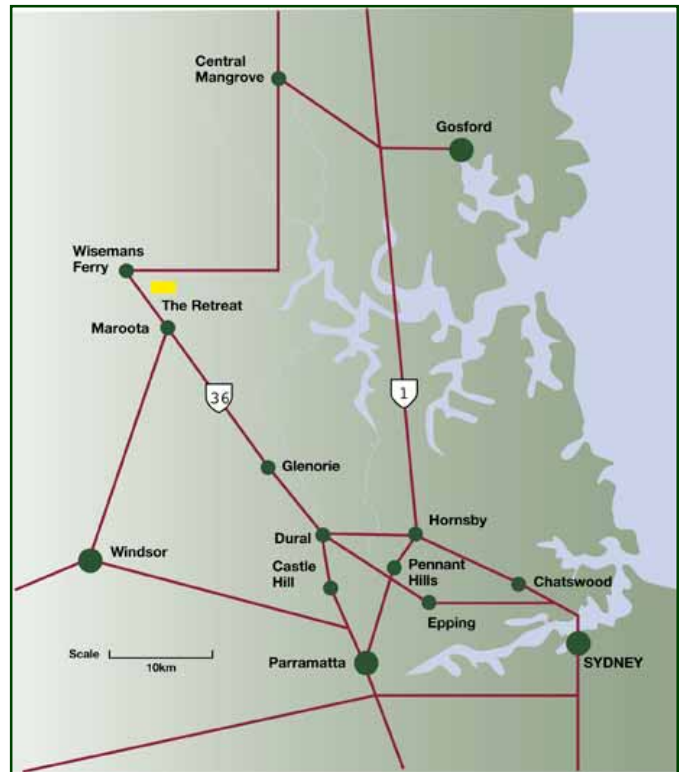
Follow directions to Sydney but before joining freeway turn right at sign for Wisemans Ferry. The road is then sign posted to Wisemans Ferry. Cross the Hawkesbury River on the Wisemans Ferry.

### From Newcastle

About 8km south of the Ourimbah exit on the F3 take the exit at sign for Peats Ridge. Follow signs for Peats Ridge and Wisemans Ferry.

### From the South

Leave the Hume Highway on to the M7 (you need an electronic tag – there are no toll booths – but you can phone in and pay). Leave the M7 at the Norwest Boulevard exit (approx 36km). At exit turn left on to Norwest Boulevard following signposts for Castle Hill. Continue to Windsor Road



(approx 4km) and turn left. Almost immediately you must turn right on to Showground Road. After approx 1km turn left on to Gilbert Road (signposted to Dural). Continue to Old Northern Road (approx 4km) where you turn left and follow signs to Dural and Wisemans Ferry. You are now about 40 minutes from the Retreat.

### **From the West**

Leave the M4 on to the M7 and follow instructions above "From the South". Northwest Boulevard exit is approx 15km along the M7.

### **Leisurely routes**

If you have the time why not meander your way to, or home from, Wisemans Ferry?

You may find it useful to download the map of Tourist Drive 15 (<http://www.maps.com.au/PDFs/Maps/hawkesb/TouristDrive15.pdf>) which shows the many interesting places you can visit.

### **And finally...**

We trust you enjoy your stay with us – hopefully we've told you so much about all the things you can do during your visit that you will come again to do it justice!

If you do have any queries or need further information please call us on **(02) 45 66 44 22**.