

**GRETEL
SNEATH****A PROVINCIAL VIEW**

A country gal hereafter

AN old Adelaide school friend emailed me a while back to tell me she felt sick because she had just bought three pairs of shoes. I wrote back and told her I felt sick, too, because we'd just bought a bull.

"You're really not coming back, are you?" she replied.

I recently posted a picture of my freshly preserved beetroot on Facebook. My friend Jenny's comment: "Who are you?"

It's been 16 years since I left my Henley Beach home for a 12-month stint in the South-East. Since then I've done the TV reporter thing, met my soul mate, created a dream home, and conquered the challenge of juggling a freelance print and radio career with raising babies.

I have reached the point where the big yellow hallelujah bus whisks them off to school each morning leaving me to write in peace. These days, Port MacDonnell is my place. And I still pinch myself.

My Adelaide friends visit every year without fail. The husbands head out to sea with Andy (they can't believe he catches crayfish for a living) and spotlight in the paddocks after dark.

The girls love Mount Gambier shopping, but also are content to stay at our farm. "We just want to sit by the fire and drink wine," they say.

My children delight in playing tour guide around the property; the itinerary includes frog hunting, strawberry picking, motorbike demos and calf feeding. (And that's just for the adults.)

On a recent visit everyone was fascinated by a clucky chook and couldn't believe that her eggs were due to hatch a couple of days after they left. Fortunately, there were plenty more for the kids to collect, and everyone headed back to the big smoke with a few cartons.

Alas, it seems the kids must have been a little confused about which eggs to take, and my friend Rachel got the fright of her life when an almost fully formed (but not quite breathing) chick fell into her frittata.

But it couldn't have been too bad, as they're back again this weekend.

The zucchinis are taking over the garden here and everywhere else in the South-East, so perhaps they'll be a safer bet as a token of country love.

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