

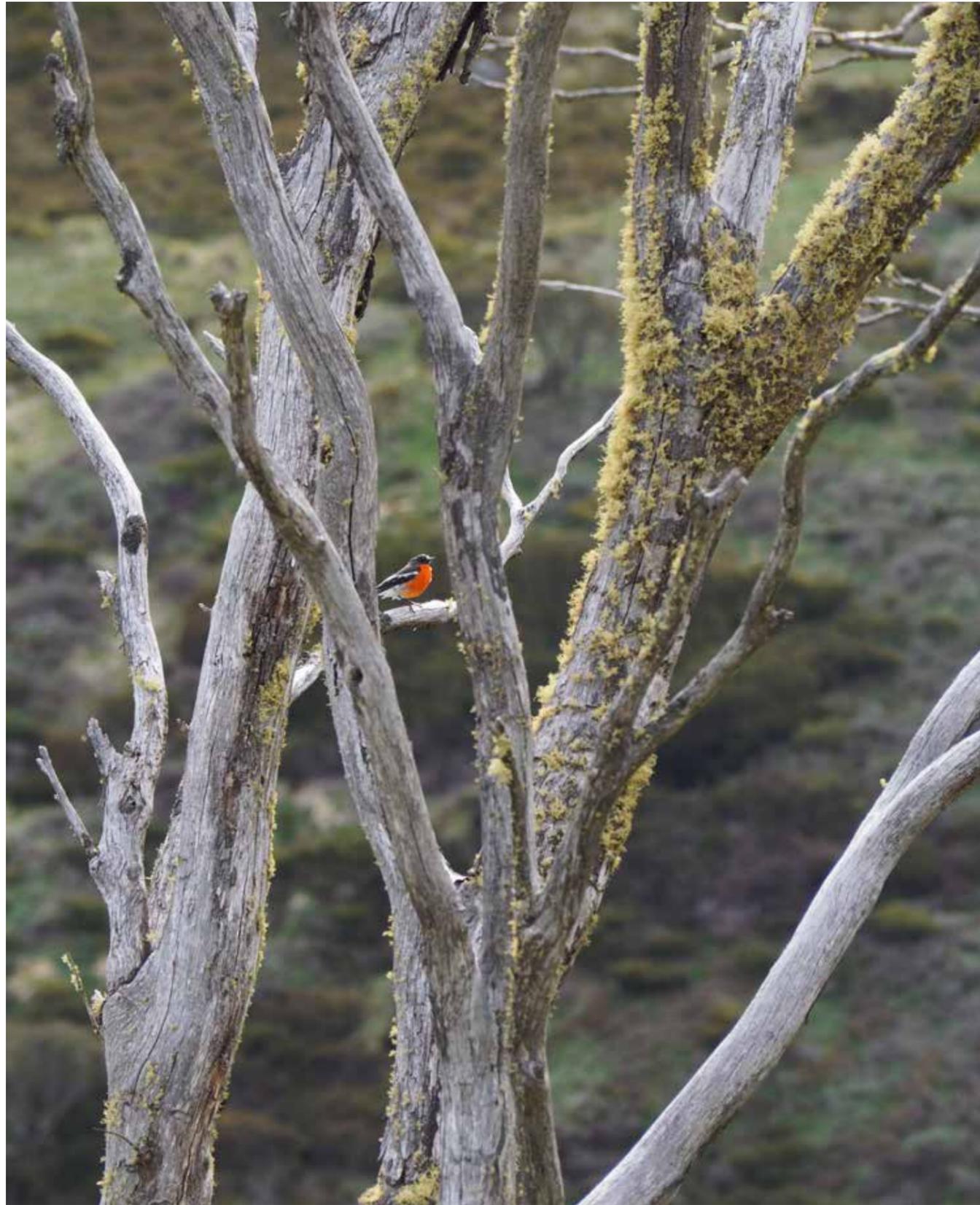
Big Sky Cabin

Looking down Thredbo River and across the valley to the Main Range of the Snowy Mountains. **opposite** The cosiness of the Mill Cabin beckons as dusk falls.



Sitting quietly in the foothills of Australia's highest mountains, Mill Cabin is lovingly crafted for the timelessness of all-season adventuring or day-long reading sessions by the fire.

text: Tom Bodycomb
photography: Tamsin O'Neill and Liam Adamaity



top The wallaroos are the frequent locals around the cabin. **bottom** A king parrot enjoying the bounty from the flowering shrubs. **opposite** A Scarlet Robin alert in bushfire-burnt snow gums.

● Following the shimmering Thredbo river upstream from Jindabyne, our arrival reveals expansive views across the valley to the peaks of the Snowy Mountains. Set in a clearing on the site of a former timber mill, Mill Cabin's location is ideal to immerse yourself amongst the flora and endemic wildlife of this montane region.

The cabin is modest and robust and draws on the quintessential design of the Australian stockman's hut. This has been a project filled with passion and toil for Niki Fisher and Trent Lowe and their young family. Close to 30 tonnes of naturally-weathered granite was sourced from their nearby property, a much-preferred option to the harsh edges of quarried rock. Working alongside Brent, a local stonemason, Trent meticulously chipped and fitted each rock into place for the external walls. The 50-square-metre structure is inherently cosy with only a cast iron stove required for heating. Sitting at 1350 metres in altitude, the property easily transforms from an ideal spring/summer hideaway to a winter wonderland with views across to the snow-laden Perisher ski fields.

During our visit in late spring, wallaroos appeared en masse in the late afternoon. A wombat pair reside beyond the shed and Niki reports visits from echidnas and a local emu dad with chicks in tow. If you are fortunate, you may even catch the mimicry of lyrebird from the nearby scrub. >



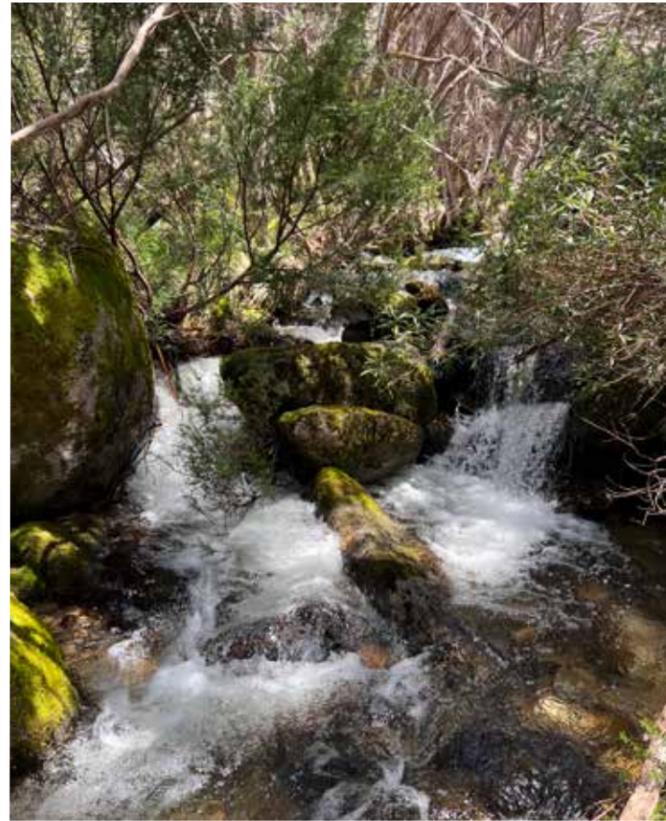
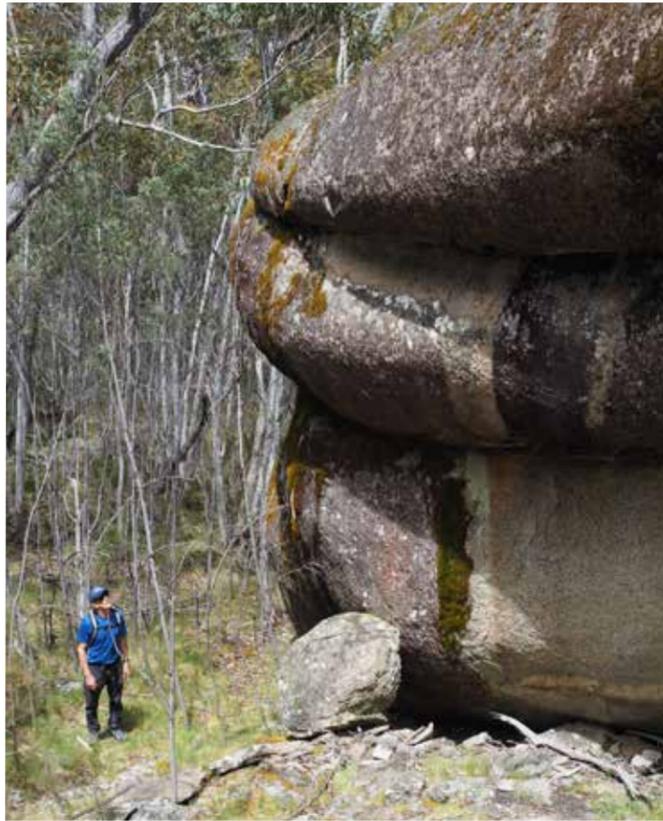
top The proud owner/builders Niki Fisher and Trent Lowe.
bottom On the track to the waterfalls of Sawpit Creek. **opposite top** The kitchen lovingly crafted by the owners with attention to detail. **bottom left** The north facing living area with wood fired heater. **right** Calming bedroom colours with a view of the bush.

The owners have together created a stylish minimalist fitout. Blackbutt hardwood milled down the road in Tallangatta has been used for the build, including all the windows, bedroom furniture, the kitchen joinery, exposed ceiling rafters, and the bathroom vanity.

Himalayan cedar was used for kitchen stools and the pièce de résistance, the outdoor bath heated by a woodfired furnace. “Design-wise we were borrowing a bit from Scandinavian and Japanese principles – mainly the idea of less is more,” Niki says. “Trying to keep to form follows function and not trying too hard. [We use] a couple of the pieces we’ve collected over the years like the Borge Mogensen couch and the van de Rohe cane chair ... we appreciate mid-century design and philosophy and wanted some reference there too.”

The remoteness of the dwelling necessitates an off-grid setup with solar-generated power and rainwater tanks. While deliberately isolated in the bush, there are plenty of nearby options for local produce. Back down the track is Wildbrumby Schnapps Distillery with access to native mountain botanicals and pristine water for their variety of schnapps and gins. Nearby is Crackenback Farm Restaurant serving fresh, seasonal produce in a French farmhouse-style cuisine. For all your cabin cooking requirements, head down the valley to Jindabyne for smoked local trout, cured meats and freshly baked bread.

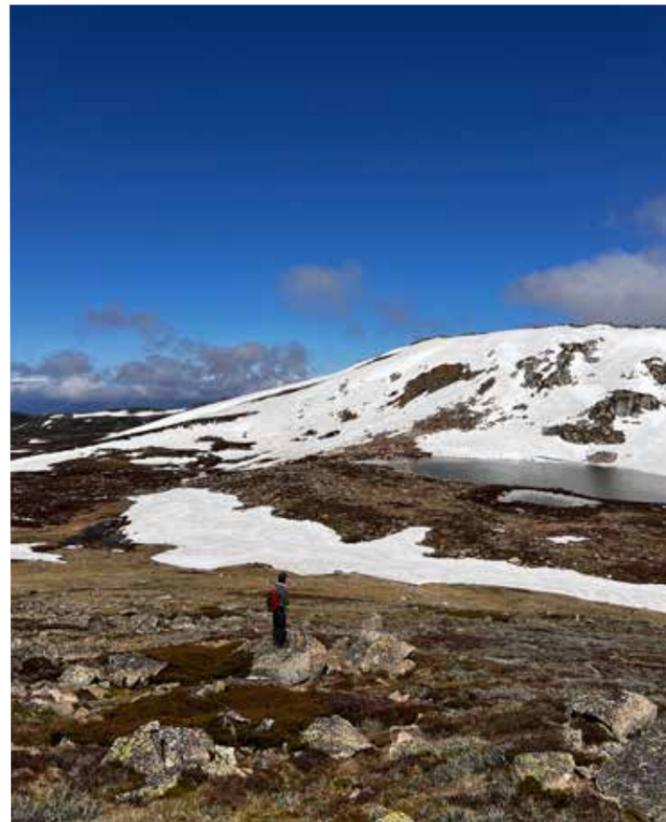
There is a plethora of walking trails to explore in the valleys and ridges. On the road into Perisher Valley is the six-kilometre loop trail to Sawpit Creek Falls. This track crosses heathland, passes towering granite boulders and through dry sclerophyll montane forest teeming with birdlife before reaching the plunging cascade. Upstream of Thredbo Village at Dead Horse Gap is the Cascade Hut Trail which is part of the Alps Walking Track. The trail follows the Thredbo River through undulating plains, spectacular in the late afternoon light. >



And of course the iconic hike to Mount Kosciuszko summit can be tackled with the rewards of sweeping views across The Murray River headwaters to Victoria, and north and east over the Main Range. If you are searching for two-wheel thrills, Thredbo Village has bike hire and plenty of mountain bike riding tracks catering for all levels. The region is renowned for fly fishing with many popular locations along the Thredbo and Snowy Rivers. For a more challenging experience, remote locations at Burrungubugge and the Gunghalin can be reached by mountain bike or a hike in.

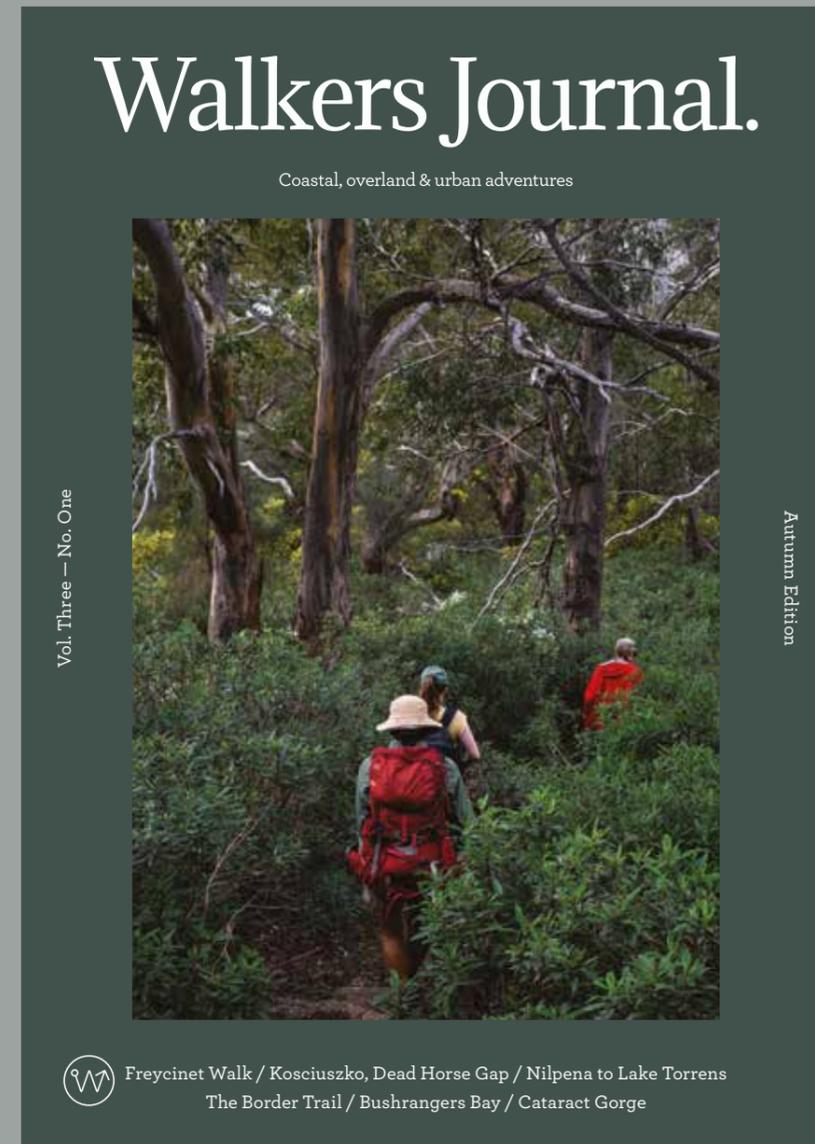
All this outdoor activity will have you yearning to return to the seclusion of the Mill Cabin for a deep soak in its enticing cedar bath whilst pondering what you will conjure up for the evening's feast. 🌲

millcabin.com.au



top left Majestic granite tors dominate the region. **right** The cascades of Sawpit Creek accessed from the road to Perisher Valley. **bottom** Lake Cootapatamba in the foreground en route to Mount Kosciuszko in the background.

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