

Welcome to

# New England High Country



new  
england  
high  
country



# Contents

3

## Towns

From the quaint to historically unique

8

## Rides

Top motorcycle travel itineraries for you to follow

10

## Luxury Touring

Two wheels and five-star digs

14

## Offroad Touring

Our riders find plenty of adventure

18

## Road Touring

Hit the blacktop to see the sights



22

## Top Pubs and Bars

Pub grub and a craft beers

24

## Stay and Eat

All budgets and tastes catered for in the High Country

25

## Refuel

Our complete list of fuel stops





# Towns

No journey through the picturesque New England High Country is complete without stopping in at some of the region's quaint, unique and fascinating towns, all of which have their own story to tell.

## ARMIDALE

### Rural sophistication

The undisputed capital city of New England High Country, Armidale typifies everything you'd expect of a region named after the Motherland. Stately buildings, grand cathedrals and streets lined with trees that glow in fiery autumnal shades at that time of year. Armidale is a cultural hub with a thriving arts community and a lively food and bar culture. Here you can stay in an historic guesthouse, enjoy a city-quality coffee, meander through an art gallery, drive windy roads through pristine national parks and enjoy a hearty meal at the pub, all in one day.

**From top: The majestic Dangars Falls; Historic St. Mary's Cathedral.**



### TOP 3 IN ARMIDALE

- Go chasing waterfalls on your bike in several national parks
- Take a scenic flight over the gorge country
- Explore the magnificent art collection at the New England Regional Art Museum





## TOP 3 IN GLEN INNES

- The Australian Standing Stones, our answer to Stonehenge
- The Australian Celtic Festival, held in autumn
- Explore Washpool and Gibraltar Range National Parks

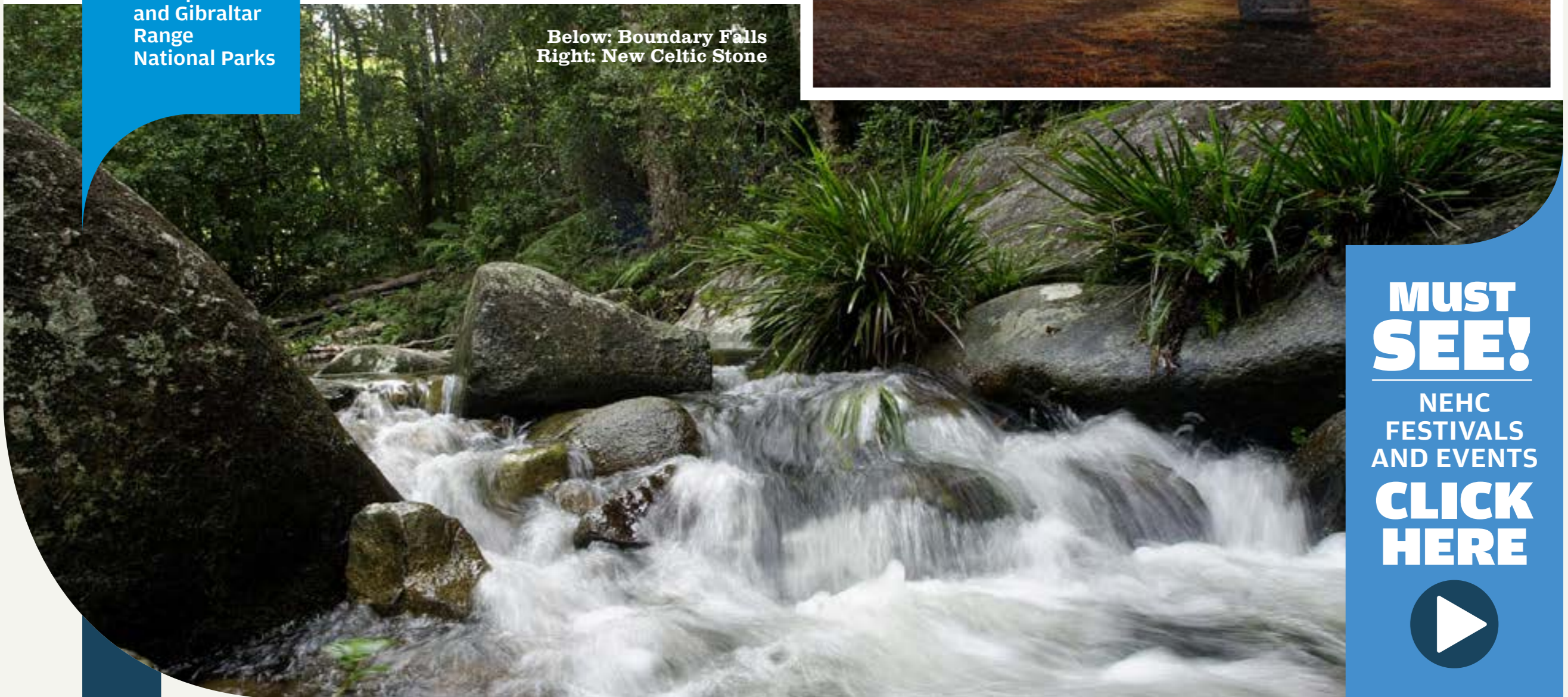
## GLEN INNES

### Celtic country

Glen Innes is known as the Celtic heart of Australia, owing not only to its early Scottish settlers, but also to the undeniable similarity between the region's stunning landscape and the lush Scottish countryside. Glen Innes is a charming mix of beautiful scenery, ornate architecture and tangible history. Beyond the city limits natural beauty rules supreme, with two of NSW's most impressive national parks and some of the world's richest sapphire and mineral fields on your doorstep. There is no shortage of wonders in this rich, rural town, and they're all just waiting to be discovered.



Below: Boundary Falls  
Right: New Celtic Stone



**MUST  
SEE!**

NEHC  
FESTIVALS  
AND EVENTS

**CLICK  
HERE**





## TOP 3 IN GUYRA

- The annual Lamb and Potato Festival, held in January
- Ride to Copeton Dam for watery tomfoolery
- A round of golf on the idyllically situated Guyra Golf Course

## GUYRA

### The top of the High Country

The vibrant little town of Guyra is located 1330m above sea level on the Northern Tablelands of the Great Dividing Range. Because of this geographical blessing, Guyra has become renowned as a place of natural beauty surrounded by rugged peaks, wild gorges, and no less than four world-class national parks. A light blanket of snow is no stranger to these parts in winter, either, nor is striking colour in spring and autumn. But Guyra is more than just a pretty face, and the streets tell a tale of pioneering success and pastoral splendour.

**Below: Explore the Mother of Ducks Lagoon Nature Reserve at Guyra.**



**Above: Macintyre Falls is a top spot to linger awhile over a picnic lunch.**

## TOP 3 IN INVERELL

- Try your hand at fossicking for sapphires
- Ride to Macintyre Falls in Kwiambal National Park
- Ride to Copeton Dam for a spot of cod fishing and camping

## INVERELL

### The sapphire city

With a name meaning ‘the meeting place of swans’ in Gaelic, it should come as no surprise that Inverell is a country town rich in wildlife and natural splendour. This charming rural centre is located on a sweeping bend of the mighty Macintyre River and is fringed with reserves, dams and wilderness areas. Defined by its riverfront parklands and charming streets lined with heritage buildings, Inverell is famous for supplying around 80 per cent of the world’s sapphires. If ever you wanted to try your hand at fossicking, now’s your chance.





## TOP 3 IN TENTERFIELD

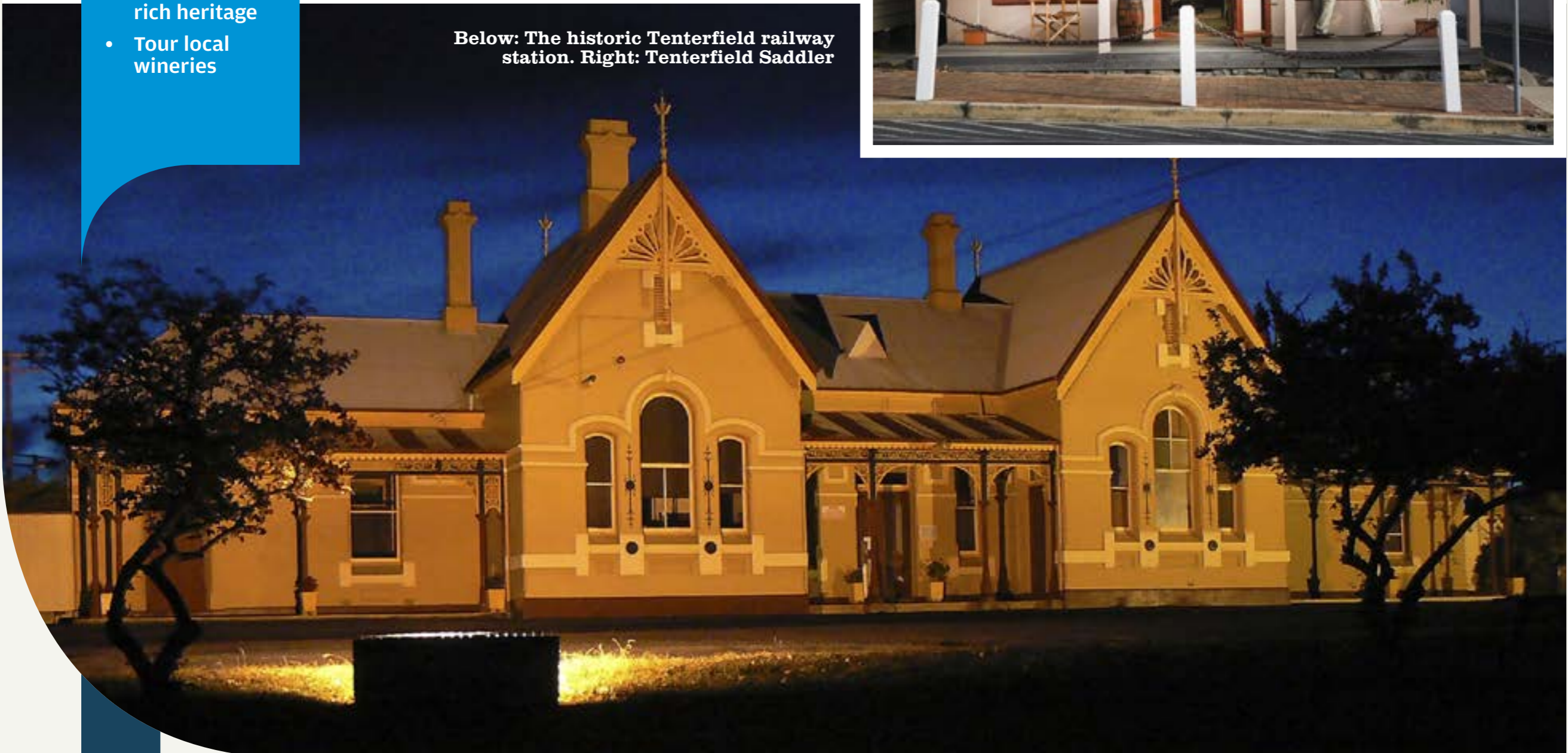
- Climb Bald Rock the largest exposed monolith in Australia
- Wander through town and uncover Tenterfield's rich heritage
- Tour local wineries

## TENTERFIELD

### Time is a traveller

Home of the iconic Peter Allen song, *Tenterfield Saddler*, this charming little town in the northern reaches of New England High Country is well worth a visit. It boasts a very pretty main street with a mountainous outlook, top-notch pubs, excellent dining and rich history. This is where Sir Henry Parkes gave his famous 1889 speech calling for the federation of our nation, so although it's tiny, this little town has a big national significance.

**Below: The historic Tenterfield railway station. Right: Tenterfield Saddler**





## TOP 3 IN URALLA

- The Top Pub for a feed and a yarn with the locals
- Visit the vine-clad Gostwyck Chapel
- Cruise Tourist Drive 19 at a leisurely country pace

## URALLA

### Country idyll

Surrounded by rolling farmland and with a main street dotted with cute cafes and historic pubs, Uralla has country charm by the bucket load. It doesn't matter what time of year you visit, the region's four distinct seasons mean that picturesque scenery is always on show. It's only 20 minutes south of the bustling regional centre of Armidale, but in many ways seems a world away. Reach Uralla from Armidale via the scenic Tourist Drive 19 - you won't regret it.

**Below: Found casting his steely gaze over Uralla's main street, this statue of Captain Thunderbolt was designed and cast by sculptor, Denis Adams.**



**Above: The stunning Tia Falls**

## TOP 3 IN WALCHA

- Tour the Open Air Gallery of sculptures and artworks
- Visit the awe inspiring Apsley and Tia Falls.
- Browse the galleries of contemporary art and Bespoke Motorcycle Museum

## WALCHA

### Southern gateway

Surrounded by some of the region's most breathtaking natural scenery, Walcha is the southernmost town of New England High Country. This community-minded town is the gateway to the spectacular Macleay Gorges and several of the region's revered national parks. Couple this with the grand historic buildings peppering the streets and you'll be hard pressed to find a reason not to explore this quaint country town. ■

**(Tia Falls image supplied by National Parks and Wildlife Service)**

# Best Motorcycle Rides

Exploring the picturesque New England High Country is a task best achieved on two wheels.

## 1 Thunderbolt's Way

Gloucester to Tibbuc (33km) > Tibbuc to Walcha (116km) > Walcha to Uralla (43km)

Entering New England from the south at Walcha, Thunderbolt's Way tops this list for its wide-open vistas of rolling, impossibly green farmland and its tight bends across the Great Dividing Range. It passes from the Mid-North Coast hinterland at Gloucester through the delightful towns of Walcha and Uralla before continuing on to Inverell.

## 2 Waterfall Way

Coffs Harbour to Bellingen (35km) > Bellingen to Dorrigo (30km) > Dorrigo to Ebor (47km) > Ebor to Armidale (80km)

There is no hyperbole in the name of this road: travel on it and you will see waterfalls, many waterfalls. You'll also cross the Great Dividing Range from Coffs Harbour to Armidale, a mountain pass with awesome hairpin bends and long, steep hills. Stop at the many lookouts to enjoy incredible views over the gorges to the coastal flats beyond.

**Right: Enjoy long, steep hills along Waterfall Way.**

## 3 Gwydir Highway

Grafton to Raspberry Lookout (102km) > Raspberry Lookout to Glen Innes (64km) > Glen Innes to Inverell (70km)

Stretching from Grafton on the coast to Glen Innes followed by Inverell in New England, the Gwydir highway crosses the Great Dividing Range and offers tight bends and long climbs. Highlights include Washpool National Park and Raspberry Lookout, which has extensive views across the gorge country.

## 4 Old Glen Innes Road

Grafton to Chambigne (26km) > Chambigne to Buccarumbi (13km)

For those with a taste for gravel, the Old Glen Innes Road is an unsealed alternative to the Gwydir Highway. Turn off the main drag just west of Grafton and follow the Boyd River through picturesque cattle country. You'll pass a ghost town, a convict-carved tunnel through a cliff and the old hideout of an infamous bushranger.

## 5 Oxley Highway

Port Macquarie to Walcha (182km) > Walcha to Tamworth (91km)

Another windy mountainous route to New England from the coast, the Oxley Highway runs from Port Macquarie to winding Walcha and then through to Tamworth. It's a fairly quiet stretch of road that tightens as it dips in and out of gullies before climbing steadily across the Divide through tall timber forests.







# 6

## Bruxner Highway

Lismore to Casino (31km) ▶ Casino to Tenterfield (128km)

A more obscure route from the coast to New England, the Bruxner Highway runs from the Northern Rivers region to Tenterfield, close to the Queensland border. The best part is the 130km stretch between Casino and Tenterfield where the road crosses the mountains.

# 7

## Tourist Drive 19

Armidale to Uralla (49km)

A peaceful country meander that is light on adrenalin but high on New England charm, Tourist Drive 19 is an easy day trip between Armidale and Uralla. It takes in the breathtaking Dangars Gorge, Petersons Winery, the historic Dergee Woolshed and the picture-perfect Gostwyck Chapel.

# 8

## Mt Mackenzie Drive

Tenterfield Loop (28km)

A shorty but a goodie, the Mount Mackenzie Drive leads you from Tenterfield up the mountain that presides over the town to the west. The drive is a loop that takes in rocky farmland dotted with iconic granite boulders and at the top you'll enjoy incredible views over the town, across the Queensland border and to the Great Dividing Range beyond. ▶

**MUST  
SEE!**

**OVER 40+  
TOP RIDES**

**CLICK  
HERE**





# Luxury Touring

As former *Motorcycle Trader* editor **Grant Roff** discovers, New England High Country offers plenty of twists and turns, climbs and dives, as well as more than a little luxury.

“Vineyards - up there?”

“Sure, plenty of them, and that’s where you’ll be staying each night.”

Just saying the word ‘vineyard’ means I’m a shot dog, but there were plenty of other reasons why I was interested in this trip. I have a long history with Armidale, including some years at the University of New England, and it’s always fascinating to revisit towns from your wild youth to see how the passing years have treated them.

## Getting there

Getting to Armidale absolutely confirms that classic cliché that the trip is just as important as the destination. From whichever direction you approach it, you have to climb.

From Sydney, the conventional route is through the Hunter Valley and up the New England Highway where the climb starts from Tamworth. But there are better routes. Thunderbolt’s Way out of Gloucester is fast and richly rewarding with scenery that makes you question whether you’re still in Australia.



**Right: The best way to really enjoy the sights is on two wheels.**



Motorcycling's worst-kept secret, the Oxley Highway from Port Macquarie, is a combination of more than 800 corners followed by a long section of fast sweepers and straights heading to Walcha. The road-less-travelled is Coffs Harbour to Armidale via Ebor and the aptly named Waterfall Way.

Coming from Queensland, the Bruxner Highway from Casino through Tenterfield where it links up with the New England Highway is also a riot of corners, but true adventurers would probably turn right at Grafton and take the Cobb & Co stage route along the Old Grafton Road. If your bike is more of the touring persuasion, Grafton to Glen Innes along the Gwydir Highway is also richly rewarding.

## Walcha

Walcha was our first town stop once we'd reached the plateau. Again, the motorcycle-friendly Royal Cafe (a thinly disguised pub) made its siren song but, since we were on our way to a vineyard anyway, we resisted and dined instead at Cafe Graze. Our visit proved beyond doubt that good coffee does exist outside of Melbourne. The Cafe also does excellent homemade pies in ramekins.

We walked it off afterwards on the town's public art trail where around 50 works of art (one for every 75 residents) are featured. None of this is Big Banana stuff - it's the real deal and impressed the proper artists in our group. Morley, Newbold and I were happy enough with the overtly pornographic nature of some of it but it led to some heated discussion. Morley settled matters by declaring: "I know everything about art, I just don't know what I like."

**“The Oxley Highway from Port Macquarie is a combination of more than 800 corners”**



Open air sculptures form part of Walcha's public art trail.



## Merilba

Merilba is a fine example of how pastoralists have endured in the area, with this historic property currently occupying 30,000 acres at Kingstown (slightly west of Uralla) and producing Merino fine wool and prime lamb. We didn't visit for any of that though - it also has 27 acres under grapes, produces excellent wine and has one of the most interesting cellar door/restaurant buildings in the country, namely Merilba Estate Wines.

The six of us had separate dishes and ended up passing them around to be shared as the extensive use of local produce gives the menu great regional interest. I know it's a mixed metaphor but I hogged the rabbit - you hardly ever see it on menus - and the crispy duck as well as a barley-based vegetarian dish were also exceptional.

## Uralla

Fred Ward, better known as Captain Thunderbolt, was a bushranger in the area in the 1860s, famous for escaping from Sydney's Cockatoo Island and never having actually killed anyone, despite a 40-year career in crime. Plenty of people around him died, though. Thunderbolt's Way is named after him, as is Thunderbolt's Rock in Uralla.

McCrossin's Mill tells most of the Thunderbolt story, including a series of paintings depicting his final hours. It's a great museum, and the Thunderbolt story is reminiscent of Jesse James in that you get the impression that, in the end, he wasn't trying too hard not to be shot.



Uralla has recently attracted a tree-change population shift from Sydney and its pubs, restaurants, book shops and art culture reflects this. It's a very surprising town and worth a lot more than just a beer at the Top Pub.

## Armidale

The New England region has every right to identify itself as different from the rest of

**Above: Uralla's Gostwyck Chapel comes alive in the autumn.**



**CLICK  
HERE  
FOR MORE**

Maps  
Itinerary



the country. Its sense of self was such that, in 1967, a referendum was held to make the New England region a separate state. Current maps would have Victoria, NSW, New England and Queensland as separate entities. The ALP pushed the no vote (mining and steel production in the Hunter Valley as opposed to agriculture everywhere else) and the proposal was defeated by a slim 54/44 margin.

Newcastle would probably have been the new state's capital but Armidale was a serious contender.

These days, the town impresses for the architecture of its grand, 1800s buildings and the 1948 decision by the Armidale Improvement and Beautification Committee to plant 1500

trees in the township. The current council still commits to 100-150 new trees annually and the result is brilliant colours throughout the year.

Typical of the period charm of the buildings is Saumarez Homestead, located near Armidale's airport, which is a 30-room Edwardian-era house with 15 other buildings attached, which were all required when the house was built to make it self-sufficient.

We stayed at another genius old house - Petersons Guesthouse. By an amazing coincidence, it happens to be a winery as well. The historic homestead, originally named Palmerston, was built in 1911 and while it has been recently restored, the giant ceilings and huge guest rooms were kept intact.

We used Petersons as a springboard for rides along the Waterfall Way to Ebor and back, calling in at various national parks for short walks to lookouts which revealed what the road suggests - waterfalls.

The eastern escarpment of the Tablelands region has mind-boggling gorges and rainforests protected in around 25 national parks, three of them listed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, and most easily accessible for motorcycle riders.

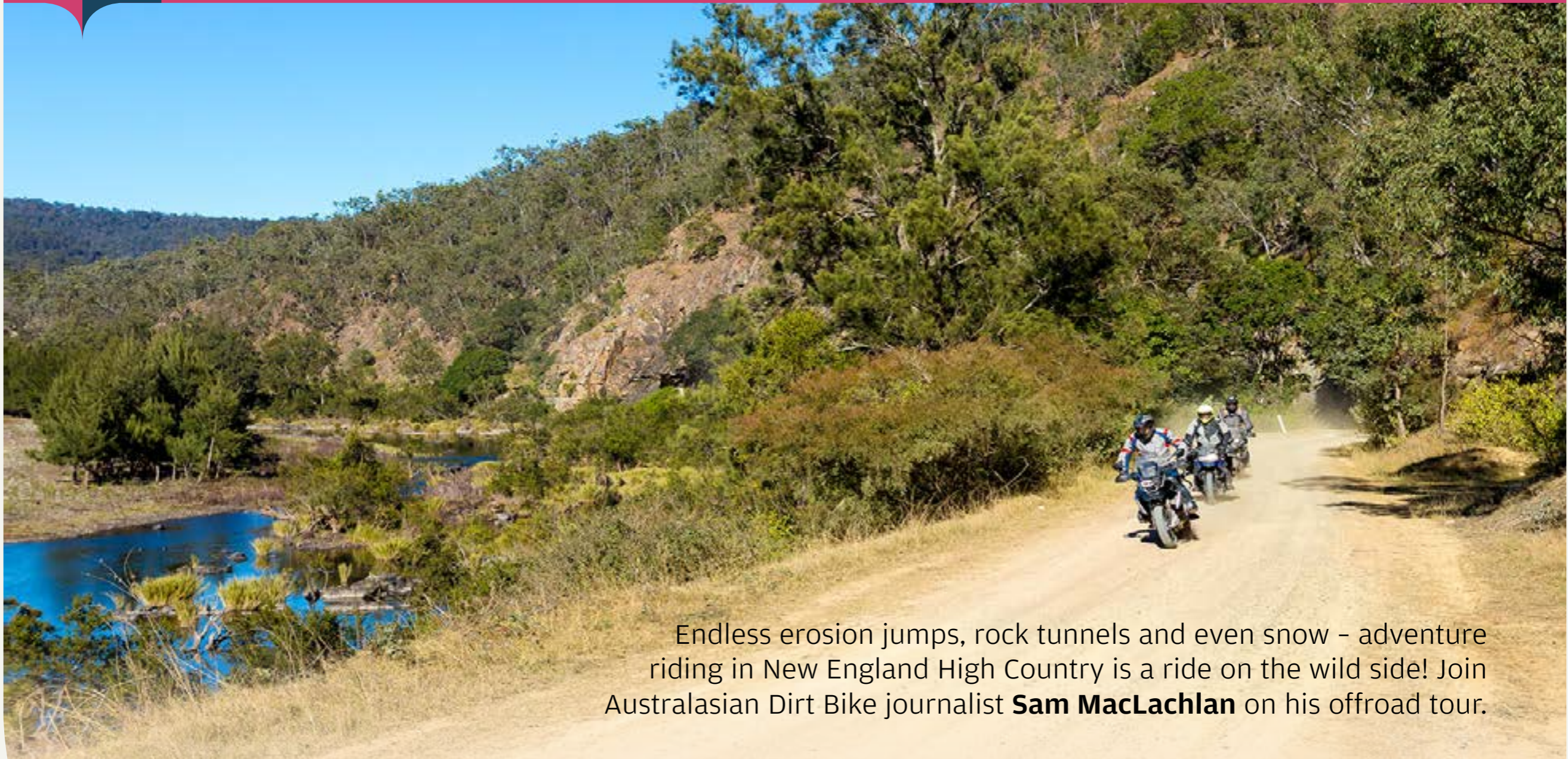
New England High Country has recognised motorcycle tourism as worth pursuing and it's now probably the most motorcycle-friendly destination in the country, so get out there and discover it for yourself. 🍷



**Left: Kick back with a top drop at Merilba Estate.**



# Offroad Touring



Endless erosion jumps, rock tunnels and even snow – adventure riding in New England High Country is a ride on the wild side! Join Australasian Dirt Bike journalist **Sam MacLachlan** on his offroad tour.

**T**he cold was a distant memory. Why? Because I was sailing off a steeply angled erosion jump on a full-sized adventure bike, with another three jumps in view, and what turned out to be around 40 more further up the hill. I was flanked by my riding mates and the hill was steep enough so

**Above: The Old Glenn Innes Road offers adventure and scenery.**

that using second gear meant we could yell out to each other in jest – “Passing inside!” – “Make room!” – “Whooaaa!” – and occasionally we could panic.

Just ahead of me was chief navigator Martyn Blake. He had actually never been on this piece of dirt delight but it was rapidly engraving itself into his memory banks. His BMW F700GS was loaded to the hilt with luggage but, with knobbies on, it was tractoring uphill with purpose.

On my right flank was Josh Evans, his F800GS loving the tight turns and demands on line choice. Was it a race? Not quite, but it was getting there when Marty peeled off for some photos to log this road into his records.

The 1200’s sheer grunt made up for its weight disadvantage to Josh’s nimble 800 – as long as I got the thing straight before rolling the throttle on hard. Unfortunately, forgetting that technique led to me taking a soil sample.



Rounding a left-hander in the lead, I heard Josh get on the throttle on the outside line.

It was boding well for him to execute a 'passed you on the outside' manoeuvre, something I didn't feel like hearing all about for the next two days, so I got on the throttle too. I shouldn't have.

Next thing I knew, I was kissing the BMW's headlight, as my ham-fisted control overwhelmed the available grip and the rear-end swung around to spank my butt. Josh stayed on the outside line to avoid me.

I had picked the thing up and was sitting on it, acting all casual, by the time Marty had put his camera away and joined us.

"Just having a break," I winked as Marty quizzically surveyed all of the scarred dirt around me. "Let's get to the top!"

We were on day three of a three-day adventure ride around the superb New England High Country of NSW and we'd had the time of our lives. We were coming back into the area via Dalmorton and the Old Grafton Road, which meanders along the Boyd and Mann Rivers. With the river on the left, the cattle-infested road is bordered by a rock face - it was hard to know where to look.

Earlier, we had lunched by the Mann River, seduced into a delightful food coma by the sounds of crackling flames and the river bubbling along.

## Tommys Rock

By the time we arrived at the ascent to Tommys Rock, and my ungracious parting from the GS, we already reckoned this area was made for adventure bikes. Once we arrived at the lookout itself, with its views of the Great Dividing Range, we knew it.

The lookout had one viewing area thoroughly fenced off - just below another excellent vantage point utterly free of restraints. We eventually found our way to the very tip of Tommys Rock, and it was nothing short of spectacular.

It's one of those places that is magnificent to behold, but simultaneously instils mild fear as you start to explore that uniquely human experience in high places - vertigo, as well as the urge to leap off something high.

**"We eventually found our way to the very tip of Tommys Rock, and it was nothing short of spectacular"**

**Left: A few riders having the time of their lives.**





And who is this Tommy bloke? Tommy McPherson, an Aboriginal man, was apparently a skilled stockman not to mention a bushranger, escaped fugitive and gold digger - and a solid judge of top lookouts!

But as impressive as the lookout is, as a rider you'll be equally excited at the prospect of returning to the Old Grafton Road via those countless erosion mound jumps.

The ride suits all kinds of adventure bikes - the big and medium-sized BMWs loved getting kays under the wheels but were also able to tackle the more challenging areas.

## Armidale

We spent our first night in Armidale, arriving via the magnificent Oxley Highway - one of the best bitumen roads in Australia - and awoke a little surprised to have to wipe snow from our bikes. It turned out to be the coldest week in the region for 20 years but that didn't worry us - we had heated grips and 'screens, plus snow makes for a better adventure.

We enjoyed some seriously good breakfast fare at the Fresh@110 cafe on the main street - quality coffee and mushroom-and-egg rolls that were so much better than we expected - then headed for the dirt roads around Wollomombi.

Taking in the historic Walcha Road Hotel, we suddenly realised things were about to get seriously cold, so we piled back to Uralla - on the bitumen, unfortunately - and made it into the warm embrace of our Top Pub accommodation just on dark.

## Mt Hyland Nature Reserve

At 3am I got my first taste of what was to come - a glance out the window revealed serious sleet getting all cyclonic around the closest streetlight. As I watched, the sleet turned to snow and four hours later, when I looked out again, it was a winter wonderland.



With the roads in and out of Uralla closed but an itinerary to follow and time running out, Marty stepped up with his excellent local knowledge.

"I know how to get to Armidale via some dirt backroads, then under the snowline," he volunteered.

**Above: This itinerary suits all kinds of adventure bikes.**



There was no more conversation after that - we just rugged up, turned the heated handgrips to full and followed Marty. We aimed north to Armidale, before escaping the snow and black ice by heading to Ebor, then got back on the dirt to the remarkable Vista Point, in the Mt Hyland Nature Reserve.

This place reminded me of the Victorian High Country - monster views far into the distance from what seemed to be the tallest hill around. We could also make out the scars of dirt roads among those hills, and the itch to get to them was hard to resist.

We owed Martyn and his knowledge a beer or two for getting us there - our entire trip would have been snowed in otherwise, and less memorable and enjoyable!

For those of you afraid to leave the Big City, don't despair; I had some of the best ever craft beer, coffee and food on this trip - I can still taste the magnificent steak from the first night - and the many pubs and accommodation options mean all budgets are catered for.

As my riding mates and I separated the next day, back to our families and the rat race, we knew we had a few months' of memories to keep us going. ■



**Getting off the blacktop offers some of the best experiences.**



# Road Touring

Staring out the window at 2am, it is hard to believe what I am seeing. That's got to be sleet swirling around the streetlight, though it looks a little light to be sleet...

**I** get up, trip over my gear laid out in readiness for the morning's ride, and move closer to the window. With my nose pressed right up against the pane, it's clear now - that's not sleet. That's snow. This ride just got interesting.

## Uralla

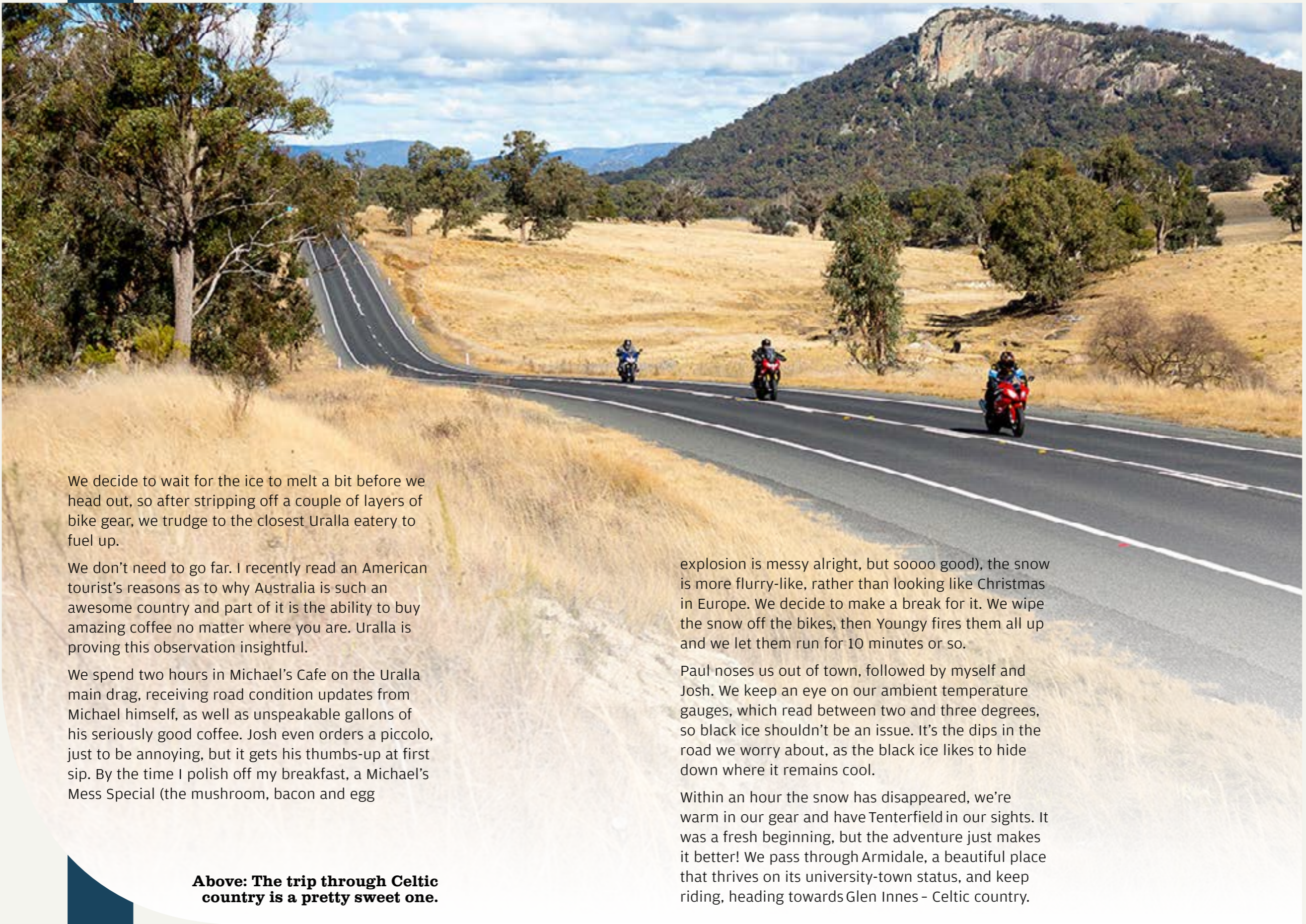
I'm in Uralla, a small town in New England High Country, NSW, with two other riders from the *Australian Motorcycle News* (AMCN) team, all of us ready to point our BMWs out of town in the morning on our way to exploring the area, one which promises great roads and numerous surprises. We've picked a time of year known to produce snow so I'm not entirely surprised to be seeing some on our first night, but a good ride is a good ride, as long as you're ready for the conditions.

When I meet my riding companions outside our Top Pub accommodation in the morning, I see they are taking it well. AMCN road test editor Paul Young used to spend his winters test riding bikes for Triumph in the UK, so anything less than a blizzard is speedo weather to him. AMCN snapper Josh Evans has done plenty of kilometres in snow on a bike and is so excited at the prospect of doing it again he is geared up and ready to ride. We're swapping between an S1000XR, S1000RR and an R1200RS.

**Right: Riders are ready to roll.**







We decide to wait for the ice to melt a bit before we head out, so after stripping off a couple of layers of bike gear, we trudge to the closest Uralla eatery to fuel up.

We don't need to go far. I recently read an American tourist's reasons as to why Australia is such an awesome country and part of it is the ability to buy amazing coffee no matter where you are. Uralla is proving this observation insightful.

We spend two hours in Michael's Cafe on the Uralla main drag, receiving road condition updates from Michael himself, as well as unspeakable gallons of his seriously good coffee. Josh even orders a piccolo, just to be annoying, but it gets his thumbs-up at first sip. By the time I polish off my breakfast, a Michael's Mess Special (the mushroom, bacon and egg

explosion is messy alright, but soooo good), the snow is more flurry-like, rather than looking like Christmas in Europe. We decide to make a break for it. We wipe the snow off the bikes, then Youngy fires them all up and we let them run for 10 minutes or so.

Paul noses us out of town, followed by myself and Josh. We keep an eye on our ambient temperature gauges, which read between two and three degrees, so black ice shouldn't be an issue. It's the dips in the road we worry about, as the black ice likes to hide down where it remains cool.

Within an hour the snow has disappeared, we're warm in our gear and have Tenterfield in our sights. It was a fresh beginning, but the adventure just makes it better! We pass through Armidale, a beautiful place that thrives on its university-town status, and keep riding, heading towards Glen Innes - Celtic country.

**Above: The trip through Celtic country is a pretty sweet one.**



## Glen Innes

The Glen Innes locals aren't mucking around, either, with the whole Celtic thing. Their nod to the mainly Scottish settlers who first set up white tenancy in the area includes the Australian Standing Stones, an array of monster rock arranged in such a way as to bring back memories for anyone who has been to Stonehenge.

Each granite masterpiece needed to be around 5.5m high, allowing for 3.5m or so to be above ground once 'planted', so a Polish former Snowy Mountains Scheme worker, George Rozynski, spent months in the surrounding bush, finding and splitting the rocks. It was another six months before they were eventually transported to their new home - a massive effort, but worth it, as the display is the only one of its kind in the southern hemisphere and hosts numerous festivals annually.

## Tenterfield

We have two appointments in Tenterfield - the Tenterfield Saddler, made famous by the song of a previous owner's grandson, Peter Allen, and the Commercial Boutique Hotel. As it's nearing dark by the time we arrive, we make straight for the Commercial. There is an elderly group sitting by the large open fire, so we stare at them silently until they move on, then slide into the massive leather couches and, with the bike keys away, order our first craft beer of the evening.

We swear we are sitting in a trendy Melbourne or Sydney pub - the Commercial's bar and dining areas are magnificent and the place is a real oasis. We have even parked the bikes under cover, so no snow on them tonight!

We book a dinner table, then head up to our rooms and are blown away again - the digs are quirky, super comfortable and everything is high end.

**Top: The three riders. Right: Fuelled up on breakfast (and actual fuel) for the day's ride.**



**“Our Beemers tick like restless metal horses, knowing what’s in store”**



The next morning we are in the Tenterfield Saddler. From out the front, the tiny shopfront looks like any other old-style store. But walking in, we are greeted with the smell of fresh leather and numerous items made from the stuff. As well as the usual bush whips, wallets and, of course, saddles, there are music boxes, magnificent diaries and leather patches. I find Josh reading a clipping on the wall – something to do with Peter Allen – and half an hour later we are still reading the walls and looking for one of the volunteers who run the place so we can buy something. Well worth the visit.

We walk back out the front of the shop, where our Beemers tick like restless metal horses, as if knowing what they have in store, then head south again. We have a date with the Oxley. We stop at Armidale for a coffee served out of a hole in the wall and a fresh mushroom roll, then head for Bendemeer and The Oxley Highway signs.

## The Oxley Highway

The Oxley drops us off the New England highlands, leading us first through Walcha, at around 1100m, then gradually descends in a series of epic twists and turns that take us out of the area. At first the three of us travel in synchronised low-level flying formation – and here is where the S1000RR really makes sense. We wind our way through kilometres of smoothly paved twisties, remembering why this road is the object of so many riders' infatuations, and why this is an epic way to end, or even begin, a road trip to New England High Country.

This impressive region is a great travel destination, even when it is snowing. The diversity it offers, as well as the many great roads leading to it, make it a perfect rider's retreat. ■

## MUST SEE!

### Wollomombi Falls

The second highest waterfall in Australia, Wollomombi plummets a staggering 220m

### Old Glen Innes Road

Trace an original route of the Cobb & Co mail coach, on New South Wales' Old Glen Innes Road

### Tourist Drive 19

Drive the charming tourist route to see the charming Gostwyck Chapel



**Right: New England High Country offers great roads and picturesque rest stops.**



# Top Pubs and Bars

A hard day's riding deserves an icy cold beer and a good feed. Luckily, you're in the right place.

# 1

## Top Pub, Uralla

At the top of the hill in Uralla you'll find the best feed in town. The aptly named Top Pub has an extensive menu, a fairy light-adorned beer garden and a rather hopping front bar where locals and travellers alike gather regularly for sundowners.

# 2

## Commercial Hotel, Tenterfield

Newly renovated, the Commercial Hotel is a sleek, stylish pub with leather lounge furniture, an open fireplace and an impressive list of craft beers. The kitchen serves up wood-fired pizza, homemade pasta and tapas-style share plates. The accommodation here is fantastic, too.

# 3

## New England Brewing Company, Uralla

It's not technically a pub but a top notch spot for a cold one all the same. The New England Brewing Company is located in Uralla and makes seven craft beers on site. There's a fireplace to keep warm and brewery tours are available by appointment.



**Above: Tenterfield's Royal Hotel Motel.**  
**Right: The Commercial Hotel.**



# 4

## Walcha Road Hotel, Walcha

Described as ‘the original gastro pub’, the Walcha Road Hotel’s chef (who is also a baker) serves up elegant meals as well as pub favourites. Set amongst Walcha’s trademark rolling countryside 19km from town, this is a charming, historic pub not to be missed.

# 5

## Club Hotel, Emmaville

In the tiny former tin mining town of Emmaville, north of Glen Innes, you’ll find the Club Hotel. Famous for the giant Murray cod that looms over the bar room, the Club Hotel is a friendly place for a beer and a feed. You’ll find it across the road from Emmaville’s other main attraction, the Emmaville Mining Museum.

# 6

## Royal Hotel Motel, Tenterfield

Built in the 1840s, the Royal Hotel Motel was Tenterfield’s first licensed establishment and it has been the social centre of the charming town of Tenterfield ever since. You can’t miss it - it’s across the road from the iconic Tenterfield Saddler.

# 7

## New England Hotel, Armidale

Filled with memorabilia celebrating the career of The Boy from Oz, the ‘Newie’ was the regular haunt of Peter Allen who played here as a youngster. It has been newly renovated and serves up delicious meals.

## TIPS

Take the high road and enjoy a bounty of delicious locally-grown produce and award-winning cool climate wines with monthly farmer’s markets held in most of the towns.



Above: Big cod at the Club Hotel in Emmaville.  
Below: Armidale’s New England Hotel.





# Places to stay and eat

To experience the best of New England High Country you will need more than one day.

We have collated the best places to stay and eat, find it all online by following the links.

## ACCOMMODATION

New England High Country offers a wide range of accommodation options from budget options to luxury Bed & Breakfast and boutique hotels.

## DINING OUT

Be it breakfast, lunch, dinner or anything in-between, the region excels for eating. If you are after fast and affordable or fine dining, you will find it throughout NEHC.



TO PLAN  
YOUR STAY  
IN NEHC

**CLICK  
HERE**







FOR THE  
BEST BITES  
IN NEHC

**CLICK  
HERE**





# Petrol Stations

**Key:**  Premium 98  98  
 Premium 95  95

## Armidale / Guyra

### BP Armidale

Cnr Dumaresq & Marsh streets

### Caltex Armidale Airport

New England Hwy (South)

### Caltex Armidale

Cnr Barney & Marsh streets

## Black Mountain

### Black Mountain Roadhouse

3174 New England Hwy

## Glen Innes

### United Petroleum

Cnr New England Hwy & Grafton St

### Caltex (Private)

Cnr New England Hwy & Meade St

### Caltex (Woolies)

Cnr New England Hwy & Meade St

### Shell Glen Innes

Cnr New England Hwy & Lang St

### Fossicker Caravan Park

94 - 96 Church St  
(New England Hwy)

### Jamesies Fuel & Fix

Cnr Church and Bourke streets  
(New England Hwy)

## Inverell

### Liberty Service Station

24 Glen Innes Rd

### Campbell's Fuel Service BP

309 Byron St

### Lowes Petroleum SHELL

208 Byron St

### Caltex

139 to 141 Otho St

### Coles Express

Cnr Henderson & Otho St

### Enhance Petrol Inverell Roadhouse

143 Warialda Rd

## Tenterfield

### Tindall's Fuel Supplies

159 Rouse St, Tenterfield  
(New England Hwy)

### Liberty Petrol Station

104 Rouse St (New England Hwy)

### Tenterfield Shell

69 Rouse St (New England Hwy)

### Tenterfield Metro Service Station

150 High St (Bruxner Hwy)

## Uralla

### Uralla Roadhouse BP

New England Hwy (south)

### Uralla Matilda

111 Bridge St New England Hwy (south)

### South Uralla Fuel Stop

133 Bridge St New England Hwy (south)

### Bundarra Motor Repairs

25 Bendemeer St

## Walcha

### Apsley Motors - Caltex

50e Fitzroy St

### Walcha Tyre Service

108w Fitzroy St

### Nowendoc General Store

8 Tops Rd, Nowendoc





**“New England High  
Country is now  
probably the most  
motorcycle-friendly  
destination in the  
country ... discover it  
for yourself”**

