



Nimbo Fork Lodge, left; Braymont Garden, top; Tumut River Brewing Co, above; Courabyra Wines, below left

act plays out in a purpose-built show ring, starring Tim's amazing horsemanship (and too-smart-by-half horses), genius dogs, target whip-cracking, shearing and even a brumby. Wife Jo is also part of the show, and if school's out you might catch trick-riding teenage daughter Harriet.

About a half-hour away, Braymont Garden puts on an impressive show, too. Since August 2013, Chris Brayne has poured passion and backbreaking work into nurturing a vast and diverse garden out of a barren stock paddock in Maragle, even producing finger limes "which you're not supposed to be able to grow here". Her son Adrian's adjoining Obsession Wines vineyard and home were destroyed by the New Year's Day fire, but Braymont miraculously survived. The property began with a "dream of being a nice garden open to the public, but ... now we have weddings, and funerals too". In her spare time, Brayne breeds South African meatmaster sheep, crested Indian runner ducks and ring-necked doves, but her pride and joy is the tree church, with silver birches growing up the steel sides of an open-air chapel with views out to Kosciuszko National Park.

The next morning, Truenorth Helicopters takes me for a stunning look at both the devastation and the beauty of the Snowys. We track over three dams in the hydro-electric scheme — Blowering, Talbingo and Jounama — and the spectacular Chimney Rock in Kosciuszko National Park. (Many of the

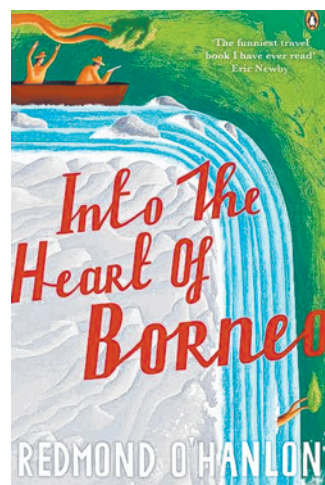
walking tracks had reopened inside the park but coronavirus has seen extensive closures.) Pilot and Truenorth co-owner Jim Ryan points out how the fires travelled, and how close towns came to peril.

The scars are physical and psychological, but after three days touring these communities I feel strangely restored. On the tranquil drive back to Nimbo Fork I stop next to a cow and bobby calf, the youngster feeding hungrily, and take this quiet moment of nurturing as an optimistic symbol of the regeneration of this spectacular region.

Jane Nicholls was a guest of Destination NSW.  
■ visitnsw.com

## OUR MISSION

In January and February, T+I writers hit the roads around our nation to report on regions and operators most affected by the unprecedented bushfire season. The comeback process for many destinations and small businesses continues amid the COVID-19 crisis. T+I's Project Australia series supports the domestic tourism industry and encourages you to think local when planning future holidays and weekend breaks.



pith helmets and butterfly nets, rather than the escapades of a 36-year-old. Perhaps there's a lot of licence in the telling, in a Boy's Own Annual way, such as Fenton almost being swept to his death in raging rapids. "James's bald head, white and fragile

as an owl's egg, was sweeping round in the whirlpool below, spinning, bobbing up and down in the foaming water, each orbit of the current carrying him within inches of the black rocks at its edge." He was rescued by their local guides while O'Hanlon more or less carried on birdwatching. Five years later he invited Fenton, who had barely recovered from Borneo, to join him up the Orinoco River through Venezuela's Amazon region. In brief, the poet told him he wouldn't even accompany him on a day trip to High Wycombe. Undeterred, O'Hanlon found another sidekick, Simon Stockton, and off they went on a mission that formed the aptly named book, *In Trouble Again*. It's another I would heartily recommend, although with a spoiler alert that Stockton pulled out before the end, perhaps after one too many jungle ticks embedded in his groin.

SUSAN KUROSAWA

## FAB FOUR

## COLOURFUL CITIES

These places celebrate all things bright and beautiful

LINDY ALEXANDER



### JAIPUR, INDIA

The northern Rajasthani city of Jaipur has been known as "the pink city" since the 1870s, when Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh had all the royal and official buildings painted prior to a visit from Prince Edward Albert (later King Edward VII). The locals followed suit and soon the entire city was rose-hued. Overlooking the snake charmers, garland weavers and chai wallahs pouring steaming tea is the breathtaking Hawa Mahal (pictured). The grand, salmon-coloured palace

has intricate white piping and slanting latticework windows designed so the royal women could look upon their subjects without being seen. Just outside the city is the Amber Fort, a red sandstone edifice that was once home to the Rajput Maharajas. You can spend the best part of a day exploring the courtyards, palaces, gardens and halls, but don't miss the Diwan-e-Khas, the Hall of Private Audiences, where tiny mirrors reflect the surrounding grandeur.

■ tourism.rajasthan.gov.in

### CHEFCHAOUEN, MOROCCO

Chefchaouen is like an inland sea amid the peaks of the Rif mountains. The city is worth the day's drive from Fes or Marrakech to see the many shades of blue painted on the building exteriors — sky, azure, cobalt, ultramarine, sapphire, lapis, cornflower. No one is sure why the place is awash with such colour. Some believe it began in the 1400s when Jewish people fled there to escape the Reconquista, during which Christians from medieval Spain and Portugal battled to regain land from the Moors. In Jewish teachings the colour represents the sky and reminds people of God, but others have suggested blue tones help to deter mosquitoes. Regardless of the reason, the city provides a taste of traditional Morocco. Narrow alleyways lead



past locals in loose-fitting robes sipping mint tea; men pull hot bread from fiery ovens. And once you step inside the lush gardens of the kasbah in the centre of town, there's a sense of immediate calm.

■ visitmorocco.com



### GUANAJUATO, MEXICO

If a rainbow were to splinter into pieces and shower buildings with colour, the result might look like Guanajuato in central Mexico. The university town is a beautiful jumble

of ruby red, lime green, burnished orange, hot pink and electric blue colonial-era buildings. The Basilica of our Lady of Guanajuato (pictured) is perhaps the most striking, with its golden yellow facade and scarlet baroque dome. But colour isn't reserved only for churches and houses. Jardin de la Union, the city's main plaza, is framed by a thick green hedge of Indian laurel trees and purple jacarandas contrasted against the vivid buildings. Pink bougainvillea adorn the walls of Teatro Cervantes, a theatre named after the Spanish author of Don Quixote, Miguel de Cervantes. Every October the town hosts the International Cervantino Festival, a three-week extravaganza celebrating dance, music, art, folklore and theatre, with performers from all over the world.

■ visitmexico.com

### ST JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

St John's is the most easterly city in North America, and legend has it the bright dwellings dotting the hilly foreshore were painted so fishermen and sailors could spot their homes in foggy weather. It's a charming city, where colourful clusters of clapboard houses, known as Jellybean Rows, look as if they belong in a children's picture book. There are no particular patterns or approved paints citizens must use, yet most abodes are in hand-some hues that reflect the natural environs — olive green, sky blue, sunny yellow with gleaming white trim. Once the snow starts to fall (around the end of November), the city is



transformed and the houses seem to glow within their white surrounds.

■ destinationstjohns.com