



Quaint facade: Todd's Cottage in Martinborough is set among grapevines, ensuring a quiet backdrop for visitors.

Cosy wine retreat

What: Todd's Cottage

Where: Todd's Rd, Martinborough
tel: 04 233 8910 or 027 443

8608, website:

www.toddscottage.co.nz

Basic facts: Self-contained cottage with two sleep-outs. Accommodates up to 10 people. Breakfast provisions supplied

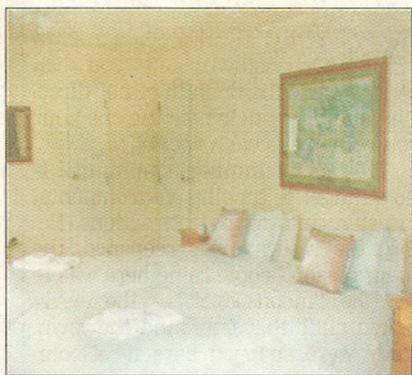
Cost: First couple \$200 and \$50 for each additional person a night. Minimum \$400 stay — a couple for two nights or six people for one night

Reviewed by: Anna Chalmers

STAYING in a place surrounded by vines was always going to be tough. But it was not till waking the next morning — after arriving the wet, dark evening before — to twittering birds that I sensed being somewhere different. It was a treat to pull back the curtains and discover rows of neatly tended grapevines, turned golden by autumn.

Shortly after I got a phone call from Todd's Cottage owner Mike Nelson checking that we had got in okay. We certainly had. The weekend escape was a family event and on arrival, dare I say it, we had welcomed the two adjacent outhouses as places to escape — there was no chance of tripping over one another here.

Mike and his wife took over the cottage a year ago and have set about making it a comfortable escape for such re-



Bedroom bliss: There is sufficient accommodation for 10 people.

treats. They also run the nearby late-1800s Countryhouse, which was transported from Feilding in 2003.

The cottage comes equipped with everything you could need. A sizeable kitchen is packed with quality crockery, cookware and utensils plus handy ingredients including olive oil, balsamic vinegar and breakfast (cereals, coffee, bread and spreads).

There is a large table in the dining area, which opens out on to an attractive cobblestone courtyard with a barbecue.

The two bedrooms are decorated in a country cottage theme and contain kingsize beds. The lounge has a large comfortable leather lounge suite, log fire, television with DVD player and, much to Dad's delight, Sky, for cricket and basketball were on.

The venue sleeps up to 10 people,

with four in the main cottage. A large outhouse with garage has four single beds and a bathroom. The cute wooden cottage with a double bed is a peaceful sanctuary and its veranda would have been a great spot to curl up with a book in the afternoon sun — if the weather had allowed.

Saturday was spent exploring the nearby vineyards, including former New Zealand cricketer Jeremy Coney's Coney's Wines. Preparations for a fashion show that afternoon prevented us from having lunch there, but we moved on to James Murdoch, where we made our way through the extensive tasting platter.

With at least eight wines to try, and our generous waiter's "taste" measurements, we returned to the cottage very relaxed before stoking up the fire. By late evening it was so warm we had stripped back to T-shirts. We were cosy as we headed to bed, but electric blankets in the main cottage would have been nice.

By Sunday morning we were completely settled into country life and with the sun shining we walked the two kilometres to Martinborough, where we checked out the small community market. We bought a lunch of local cheeses, breads, chutneys and olives, which we enjoyed in the courtyard.

Todd's Cottage, with its well-equipped facilities and space, made for a comfortable and harmonious family retreat.

■ Todd's Cottage hosted Anna Chalmers.