

The Daily Telegraph

TASMANIA

Your 16-page guide to one of the most unspoilt islands on Earth



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ABOUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

Lying 150 miles off mainland Australia's south coast is a magical island with so many experiences to discover. Tasmania has a wilderness that's listed as a World Heritage Site, plus stunning lakes, spectacular rainforest and unique wildlife. You'll breathe some of the cleanest air on the planet, but Tasmania is not all about rugged terrain and the great outdoors – you can stay in luxury accommodation and enjoy the finest food and wine. You'd be missing out on a taste of paradise if you did not include Tassie in an Australian holiday. This supplement aims to give you a glimpse of one of the most unspoilt islands on Earth.

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FANTASTIC TASSIE

REPORT BY **VICTORIA MATHER**

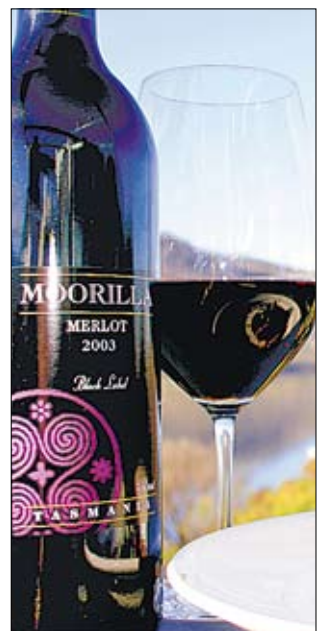
DON'T BE FOOLED BY TASMANIA'S AIR OF UNDERSTATEMENT – THIS IS AN ISLAND THAT INVITES SUPERLATIVES

The worst thing a mainland Australian can do to a Tasmanian is build a swimming pool in the shape of Australia (yes, this stuff happens, mainly in Palm Beach, Sydney) and leave off Tassie. Weird. You'd think Australia's only island state would be so perfect as the Jacuzzi. Tasmania is pretty much perfect in every way. Admittedly, when I first went there and woke up to the dripping wet veil of rain that was Cradle Mountain, I thought it was a very long way to have travelled to Wales. I was then entirely beguiled by possums squeezing themselves down the drainpipes. One intrepid possum morphed itself through Carol Thatcher's bedroom door and

pooed on her bed, about which she was a terrific sport: "Always nice to know the natives appreciate one," she commented. The Tasmania I first went to was emerging from being Australia's orphan state to a state of grace, largely due to a terrific ball of energy, the late premier, Jim Bacon, and his wife Honey Bacon (that was a marriage made in heaven). Jim took Tassie on tour: "Hello, world – we're here, we're fab, we have sensational food and wine, amazing beaches, history, wildlife, beauty, eco-emptiness." Honey was the Carla of Tassie. What they rode was the eco-wave, then a bit hippy-dippy, now acutely fashionable. It was people-with-beards power that triumphed over logging and dam-building on the Franklin River. Now Tassie is a bit of an eco-issue model – a pioneer of

organic forestry and a savage protector of sea eagles. And you just thought you might go for a jolly hol, staying somewhere sensational, such as the Avalon Coastal Retreat at Great Oyster Bay, and hug a goosedown pillow. Right, so the first thing one used to need in Tasmania was an anorak, regardless of whether or not one was an anorak. The Freycinet Peninsula is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. The headland on which Avalon is perched is so private that anoraks are not required: you can wander nude. All around is deep blue sea from the floor to ceiling glass walls of this modernist bombshell. The bath is sculpted from huon pine, the fridge filled with meats and cheeses from Wursthause, the Fauchon of Tassie. You can walk and swim, eat and read in front of the log fire. The posh Islington Hotel, meanwhile, is an 1847 Regency house overlooking Mount Wellington, stuffed with antiques. Dust-gatherer angst (the urban version of hunter-gatherer angst) comes to mind, but one is deeply cossetted, canapé'd to the gills, and kissed all over by the in-house dachshund. If clutter gives you the creeps, the Henry Jones Art Hotel is scary in the other way: trendy. Are you cool enough to stay

here? In an old jam factory on Salamanca Docks, where the first settlers stepped ashore, Flora de Kantzow has done the Manhattan thing: acres of exposed brickwork, fabulous art, a humming bar. Those convicts wouldn't know the old place. Hobart is jumping. On the waterfront are all the hot restaurants and bars; yachts bob, and the market comes to town. We live in homogenised Tesco-world; here in Tasmania



INTRODUCTION TASMANIA



Furry friend: clockwise from left, the possum is among creatures native to Tasmania; Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park; descend Mount Wellington with Island Cycle Tours; and enjoy fine cuisine and wine at the Moorilla Food & Wine Centre

TRAVEL TIP

- Tasmania has four domestic airports: Hobart in the south, Launceston, Devonport and Wynyard in the north. Flying time from Melbourne is 1 hour 10 minutes and from Sydney, 1 hour 50 minutes.
- There are two passenger and vehicular ferries travelling to and from Tasmania. Spirit of Tasmania I and II depart Melbourne nightly taking approximately 10 hours to reach Devonport.
- Tailor Made Travel offers a seven-night self-drive itinerary, including accommodation, car hire and international flights with Qantas from £1,339. **0800 988 5915; www.tailor-made.co.uk; sales@tailor-made.co.uk**
- Qantas offers 28 services a week from the UK to Australia.

DID YOU KNOW...

- Tasmania is actually an archipelago of 334 islands.
- Hobart is the second driest city in Australia after Adelaide.
- Macquarie Harbour in Strahan is seven times the size of Sydney Harbour.

there's smalltown life as it is meant to be: friendly and charming, a happy timewarp with terrific food. The cool-climate wines are world class, the beers unpasteurised, the food at The Source – a restaurant at the Moorilla Estate vineyard – incomparable.

Unlike the rest of Australia, which consists of an enormous frill of activity round an intractable interior, Tasmania is manageable. Later this year, the place to which to move on would be Diamond Island, where there's a new spa where all the food is sourced from within 45 minutes of your table. Or you could drive to the new Priory Country Lodge in Bothwell, sister hotel to The Islington.

Fishing? It's on the way to the highland lakes. Golf? Bothwell

has the oldest golf course in the southern hemisphere, the grass kept short by grazing sheep.

Flora de Kantzow, creator of the Henry Jones, is now opening Quamby, outside Launceston, an 1828 colonial manor in the Anglo-Indian style. It will have a private golf course. Indian friends of mine are in great excitement about it and have hired a car and a driver. "Why?" I asked. "The roads are completely empty."

"Yes," they replied. "That is what terrifies us." Released from the traffic jam that is Mumbai onto the open highway, their inner Mr Toad would surely roar forth. Poop, poop.

One of the world's loveliest drives is from Strahan to Hobart. I've told the Indians to stop at the Art Deco Tarraleah Lodge in

the Central Highlands, which has just been refurbished, and you see platypuses in the lakes full of brown trout, before coming home to a log fire in your room, 170 malt whiskies and 300 Tasmanian wines. Stay awhile.

Strahan itself is a small, whitewashed world reminiscent of Ireland. It overlooks Macquarie Harbour, which is so big it makes Sydney Harbour look like a puddle. The fish and chips on Strahan Wharf are the best in the world, and you should stay in the Wheelhouse Apartments, designed by local builder Richard Dyson, on the clifftop. With their portholes and polished timber floors, it's like staying on an ocean liner.

Just an hour along the wild west coast is Corinna, on the edge of the Tarkine, Australia's largest

temperate myrtle rainforest. The historic mining village has just been restored and has simple cottages in which you can stay.

Tassie is a walkers' paradise. There's the four-day walk along the Bay of Fires, ending in an eco-lodge with compost loos (much nicer than they sound). If Cradle Mountain is too wet, the wilderness on the Derwent River is enchanting.

How can so much of the world's excellence be in one small island? Yet it is: go to Port Arthur where the convicts were held and the sense of historical evil is more palpable than anything in the London Dungeon. Tasmania is an utterly genuine place. Don't leave little Tassie when you're on your next trip to Australia. You'll be missing one of the best experiences in the world.



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



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If you're thinking of a holiday in Tasmania how do you decide where to start, where to go and what to see? What you need is someone to talk to who knows this unspoilt island first hand. Like the person who'll answer when you call Tailor Made Travel and who'll be able to tell you about the best places to stay and eat, including the harbourside Henry Jones Art Hotel, other boutique hotels and Freycinet Lodge, a hidden gem off the beaten track. Call Tailor Made Travel now, talk to someone who knows and ask for a copy of our new Australia brochure.

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Henry Jones Art Hotel

REPORT BY **JAMES STEWART**

A ROAD JOURNEY ACROSS TASMANIA IS THE PERFECT WAY TO TAKE IN THE ISLAND'S EVER-CHANGING SCENERY

For once, Shakespeare is wrong. Far from being a steep and thorny way, the road to Paradise is all red volcanic soils and livid green pasture, a hyper-real vision of farmland drenched in the luminous light of what is officially the cleanest air on the planet. Ahead, Mount Roland thrusts a sudden slab of dolerite more than a kilometre into an

intensely blue sky. Behind is an empty, undulating road. The way to Paradise is neither steep nor thorny. It isn't even hard to find. In fact, Paradise is signposted – it's a 15-minute drive from Sheffield in north Tasmania.

If people never get there, it's because everyone underestimates the size of Tasmania. Sure, you can sprint from one end to the other in a couple of days, snatching a few hours apiece at the poster-places, before returning to mainland Australia. Many visitors do. But

why would you want to? Head out on the open road in Tasmania and you embark on one of Australia's great drives. Traffic jams are unheard of. Winding roads force you to slow down to holiday pace. This is touring country; perhaps it lacks the epic distances of the mainland marathons, but neither is it the bore-athon they become.

Whereas the landscapes of the mainland states change at a grindingly slow pace, in Tasmania, a state the size of Ireland, a constantly changing slideshow of scenery slips past your windows. You can be driving through open paddocks and colonial farming villages in mid-morning, then find yourself twisting deep into ancient rainforest beneath snow-dusted alpine mountains an hour later.

By lunchtime you are walking along a beach whose sands are literally squeaky clean while wallabies bounce away into the coastal scrub. Anthony Trollope

was way off the mark when he said that Tasmania was more English than England. Bits do look like a sketchy recollection of the Cotswolds or small towns in Wales that have hunkered down from the weather; but most of it is far too rugged for that. It's more a continent in miniature, 40 per cent of it preserved as national park, packed full of weird wildlife and landscapes that are startlingly epic and naggingly familiar by turns.

So, two days? You'll need 10 at least, or more if you pull off the bitumen and onto the dirt roads that criss-cross the countryside. You may jeopardise your rental insurance – check the small print – but at their ends lies the great outdoors, the essence of the state and the goal of any Tasmanian driving tour.

Tasmanians do not pursue a love of the outdoors so much as take it for granted. Thanks to a liberal scattering of bush camps, the birthright of every local is to

sit at a campfire beneath a star-blazed Southern Hemisphere sky without forking out so much as a cent. Around you are empty rainforests or pristine beaches. Illuminated by the stuttering flames are some of the strangest limited-edition creatures ever put on the planet – Tasmanian devils, platypuses, hedgehog-like echidnas that bumble through the bush with a sailor's roll, cuddly-looking wombats, pademelons and spotted quolls like fat stoats in patterned pyjamas.

The camper van rules in Tasmania. If ever there was a vehicle tailored to the freedom and leisurely pace of a driving holiday around the island, the motorhome is it. Two-wheel tours come a close second, whether your saddle is on a 1,200cc BMW or a mountain bike.

So, where to go? The classic grand tour spins around a coastline that is longer than that of New South Wales and Victoria combined yet has none of their

development. All routes lead from the pocket-sized capital, Hobart. Despite a hotel and foodie renaissance that is adding cosmopolitan gloss to historic character, the natural setting remains the star attraction. If you do only two things in Hobart, get afloat on the Derwent estuary and ascend Mount Wellington, like every tourist since Charles Darwin in 1836.

An hour's drive east are the cool-climate wine estates of colonial village Richmond and Port Arthur, the penal sink into which the Empire poured its worst. The penitentiary – the prize of convict-era Australia – made the fledgling colony's name "harsh with the crack of the jailer's whip", Trollope wrote.

Strange, then, that Port Arthur appears like an Oxford college with a disciplinarian bent. Bizarre, too, that everyone overlooks a boat trip beneath the highest sea cliffs in Australia just outside the prison's bay – fluted dolerite

TARGA TASMANIA – THE ULTIMATE TARMAC RALLY

Amid all the talk of World Heritage sites and eco-tourism, it should not be forgotten that Tasmania has a proud place in the history of motorsport. In the 1950s and 1960s the wickedly fast Longford road circuit near Launceston twice hosted the Australian Grand Prix as well as several races in the famous Tasman series. This daunting course also saw prestigious motorcycle and sports car events; Chris Amon's 122.2mph average in a 1968 Ferrari P4 was Australia's fastest lap record until the F1 circus moved from Adelaide to Melbourne in 1996.

Since 1992 the island's roads

have also provided a challenging 1,300-mile course for one of the world's greatest Tarmac stage rallies, the Targa Tasmania. Inspired by epic European road races such as the Targa Florio in Sicily, long abandoned on safety grounds, Targa Tasmania attracts hundreds of crews, including some of the biggest names in motorsport, and an amazing variety of cars



dating from the 1920s to the present. It is also possible to hire a race-prepared car for the duration of the rally and there is a touring category for those who just want to enjoy a great drive.

The 17th Targa Tasmania runs next week (April 15-20) and among the entries is a crew from The Daily Telegraph motoring section, as co-driving Franca Davenport and I take on the big V8-powered locals in my own

classic car, a tiny 1969 Triumph GT6. We have already been warned that Targa Tasmania is the most serious and dangerous thing we will ever do, so wish us luck. You can follow our day-to-day progress at telegraph.co.uk/motoring and find more information about the event at www.targa.org.au.

PETER HALL, MOTORING EDITOR

● Grandstand Motor Sports is the leading motorsports tour operator offering packages to the Targa Tasmania 2009 car rally for both competitors and spectators **(0845 375 0300; www.grandstandmotorsports.co.uk)**

DID YOU KNOW...

● Tasmania has the highest cliffs in the southern hemisphere, rising to 300m along the Tasman Peninsula.

● Wild dogs were chained across Eaglehawk Neck, the narrow isthmus of land on the Tasman Peninsula, to prevent convicts escaping from Port Arthur.

● You can explore almost the entire west coast of Tasmania by bicycle, led by expert guides and staying in comfortable B&B accommodation, with experienced Tasmanian cycling operator Island Cycle Tours.



AROUND YOU ARE EMPTY RAINFORESTS, PRISTINE BEACHES AND SOME OF THE STRANGEST WILDLIFE ON THE PLANET

faces crammed with sunbathing fur seals like a rocky Costa or diving in what *National Geographic* has lauded as the most accessible underwater wilderness on Earth.

From Port Arthur, you head north up a coastline that teeters on tropical, blessed with mile upon mile of dazzling white sands and sculptural granite boulders like lost Henry Moores. Bits of the



Tour de force: the long, empty roads that traverse the state make Tasmania a motorist's dream. Above, historic Port Arthur, once a grim penal colony

east coast are gentle holiday mills. Other parts are virtually deserted. Take Maria Island, a ferry ride from Triabunna. It has gorgeous short walks, abundant wildlife, historic ruins steeped in tales of imprisonment and folly, and sweeping bays drenched in brilliant light.

You can drive to the village resort of Coles Bay to reach Wineglass Bay in the Freycinet National Park. A perfect crescent of sand beneath granite peaks that glow pink at dusk, it is a standard fixture in beach top tens compiled by travel magazines. Not as well known are those that scallop the Bay of Fires near St Helens' pristine quartzite strands as perfect as you'll find anywhere in the world. Here, you'd expect cafés or restaurants. Crowds, at least. Instead the only mobs are of kangaroo in the nearby Mount William National Park. You can camp behind whichever beach takes your fancy for up to four weeks for free.

From St Helens the drive cuts past mining ghost towns swallowed by rainforest to reach the second city of Launceston and the Tamar Valley. Wine estates and orchards roll down to meet a broad, meandering river. Chefs conjure up gourmet cuisine among the vineyards. The short cut there from Hobart is through the state's historic heartland, where picture-postcard Georgian villages such as Ross nestle in the folds of sheep-grazing hills, and rose bushes and hawthorn hedgerows ring colonial manor estates near Longford.

Just south of Launceston, the small town lies beneath the lake-pocked Central Plateau with the

finest trout fishing in the Southern Hemisphere. But the last leg into west Tasmania couldn't be more different. Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur, of Port Arthur fame, called it 'beyond the limits of the unknown'. More than 150 years later, it remains a land apart, pummelled by massive waves that have built up unopposed from South America.

From here you can drive into the mountains. To Cradle Mountain, for example, adventure playground of a Unesco-listed World Heritage Area that comprises a fifth of the state. Or you can grind on a dirt road through wilderness from Arthur River to Corinna, a gold-rush town reinvented as an eco-retreat.

Roll back into Hobart and in the morning you'll stretch your legs in a primeval forest that has barely changed for 30,000 years, then have afternoon tea in a sleepy Georgian town. You don't get that on a drive in mainland Australia. In fact, you don't get that on a drive anywhere else on Earth. Paradise indeed.

TRAVEL TIP

Tailor Made Travel offers a 12-day Best of Tasmania self-drive holiday from £1,565 including accommodation, car hire and international flights with Qantas. **(0800 988 5915; www.tailor-made.co.uk; sales@tailor-made.co.uk)**

LUXURY IN TOWN AND WILDERNESS

Tasmania has some of the best scenery and views in all of Australia, and as well as being perfect for scenic touring by road, it lends itself to the most hearty and healthy of hiking holidays. But whether you decide to explore the island by foot or by car, you can be assured of luxury at the end of the day.

There are some travellers for whom a day's trek up a mountain is not complete without a tent, a sleeping bag and a Cup-a-Soup, but I am not one of them. I want the reward of a good bath, a comfortable bed and some gourmet food before I will even contemplate the next excursion.

Tasmania has responded to visitors' tastes for comfort by providing some fantastic hotels. For instance, a five-minute drive from the centre of Hobart lies The Islington. This is Tasmania's only five-star guest house and it feels like the private home that it was until recently. It still has the owners' antique furniture and impressive, hugely expensive art collection, spread throughout a series of lavishly decorated reception rooms.

In a striking double-height glass conservatory you will be plied with drinks and canapés while admiring the view across the architect-designed garden to Mount Wellington. The 11 bedrooms are comfortable, spacious and attractive, and boast luxurious bathrooms.

The Islington does not have its own restaurant, but provides adequate warning and the resident chef will cook dinner especially for you. She also rustles up creative breakfasts, which stand you in good stead for all that invigorating touring or walking ahead. Add an outstanding gourmet lunch to take away, and even halfway up Mount Wellington you need never feel deprived of luxury.

One of the best-loved trips across the island is the Hobart to Strahan route which passes through magnificently changing scenery, showcasing the best Tasmania has to offer. Almost exactly halfway across lies the wonderfully unusual Tarraleah Lodge. Perched on a ridge in the



Peak experience: Cradle Mountain Lodge offers superb facilities and food

highlands, Tarraleah is a gorgeous example of 1930s Art Deco architecture.

It was refurbished in 2006, previously having housed the top brass of Tasmania's huge hydro-electric scheme. Admirers of industrial history will adore seeing the impressive pipes and trappings of the hydro-electric site, while everyone else will just fall in love with the stunning views. The building is a joy. The Art Deco features have been beautifully restored, and supplemented with new additions such as silk duvets, Tasmanian mohair throws, Molton Brown toiletries and spa baths.

The restaurant offers gourmet four-course meals, all featuring local produce imaginatively put together, and with a wine wall featuring 300 wines, it is definitely worth staying a while to savour as many as possible. After dinner, retiring to the splendid library gives you the chance to prolong the night further, and to sample the selection of different malts a whopping 170 of them.

Further west again and an

absolute must visit is Cradle Mountain Lodge. Its location, on the edge of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, means the walking is superb.

The Lodge itself is all you could possibly want, and brings to mind Alpine skiing lodges. The main building is warm and welcoming with its roaring fire, cosy lounge and a restaurant whose windows give a perfect view of the wallabies, possums and wombats that roam the estate. The food is pretty fantastic too.

What's more, the rooms are sublime. Ours was enormous, lit with fragrant candles, and was divided into two by a double-sided log fire. On one side was a sumptuous sleeping area; on the other, a sitting area with extensive CD library. The pièce de résistance was the balcony yes, yet more views, but here you can enjoy them from the luxury of your very own hot tub.

Whether you are a walker or not, a trip to Tasmania is well worth it – just to enjoy its world-class hotels.

SASHA BATES

WHERE ON EARTH ARE YOU?



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CALL OF THE WILD

REPORT BY JAMES FAIR

DOLPHINS ABOUND OFF THE COAST OF TASMANIA – AND THE ISLAND IS HOME TO AN ASTONISHING NUMBER OF MARSUPIALS TOO

In my day job as travel editor of *BBC Wildlife Magazine*, I'm working on a feature about the world's greatest wildlife spectacles. I've been e-mailing filmmakers, photographers, writers – anyone, indeed, I think might have a legitimate opinion on what constitutes a truly galumphing, gob-smacking or just plain gorgeous wildlife experience.

With a few hundred responses in so far, my experts have mentioned a massive diversity of spectacles, ranging from the predictable (the wildebeest migration in East Africa) to some I didn't forecast (er, a wren building its nest).

But none have mentioned sitting in a small boat just off the coast of Bruny Island, off the

south-east coast of Tasmania, watching hundreds of bottlenose dolphins performing acrobatic leaps as if they were taking part in an audition for Windsor Safari Park. I guess they weren't there. In fact, apart from a fellow journalist, a couple from the tourist board and our guide Rob Pennicott, there appeared to be nobody within 10 or 20 miles.

And this was jaw-droppingly spectacular. I will never forget cruising along at some 15 or 20 knots and looking down over the bows, and there, staring back up at me, were three or four dolphins swimming effortlessly in the bow wave. I could almost reach down and touch them, they were so close. Later, Rob stopped the boat, and all around us the ocean seemed to boil as dolphins exploded out of the water in

exhilarating breaches. At one point, two dolphins performed a synchronised leap, crossing each other's route in the air as if drawing an imaginary archway. It was a shame that one of the animals was a touch ahead of the others, but this was eight years ago – they should have perfected the manoeuvre by now.

And there was more. Juvenile Australian fur seals were performing mini-breaches as if in imitation of the dolphins. Rob said they were doing it to avoid great white sharks (no, we didn't see any), but it looked to me as if they were just having a laugh.

That happened the first time I visited Tasmania, and I recall that before my second trip in 2005, a colleague remarked: "There isn't much wildlife in Tasmania, is there?" For some reason

Tasmania does seem to have earned itself a reputation as being tame and a bit like England. However, apart from the slight "small island" mentality, the rolling green hills in some areas of the country and perhaps the starlings in Hobart, nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, Tasmania – thanks largely to the absence of the European mammals that have ruined much of the Australian mainland's indigenous fauna – has astonishing numbers, and diversity, of marsupials that are also tolerant of humans and easy to see. And this makes it unlike anywhere in the world.

There's quite often a true surprise just around the corner. Take the unprepossessing surroundings of the caravan park at the south end of Adventure

GET TO KNOW THE LOCALS



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Discover Tasmania's abundant and unique wildlife with Tailor Made Travel. Call one of our specialist travel consultants and they will tell you all about our inspiring flora and fauna experiences which give you the opportunity to meet some of the island's inhabitants, like the iconic Tasmanian Devil, echidnas, quolls and pademelons. Talk to someone who knows and let them bring out the devil in you.

We'll put together a tailor made itinerary that will get you up close and personal with the wildlife.

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Animal magic: far left, see Bennett's dolphins performing acrobatic feats with Bruny Island Charters. Clockwise from top left: the quoll is a relative of the Tasmanian devil; Bruce Englefield prepares for the Flora London Marathon (see panel, right); a wombat; and a Bennett's wallaby enjoys beach life

DID YOU KNOW

- Ten Tasmanians, led by British ex-pat Bruce Englefield, have travelled 11,000 miles to run in tomorrow's Flora London Marathon to raise funds for a captive breeding programme for a Tasmanian devil named Delilah. Donations can be made to Australian Pacific Touring: at www.aptouring.co.uk
- If the Tasmanian devil is made extinct, it is likely that another seven rare and endemic species of mammal will also be lost forever, including the eastern quoll, the bettong and the poteroo.
- Huon pines can live 1,500 years and grow incredibly slowly (no more than 2mm in diameter in a year). They also contain an essential oil called methyl eugenol that stops the trees from rotting, and it is recognised as the world's best natural boat-building material.
- The orange-bellied parrot breeds in Tasmania but migrates to mainland Australia for the winter. It is the only parrot that migrates across the open ocean. The species is critically endangered, with an estimated 100 to 200 individuals left in the wild.
- A Bennett's wallaby can have three young on the go at any one time – one grub attached to her nipple in the pouch, a joey in the pouch, and another one out of the pouch (but still suckling). She can produce three different types of milk to cope with their different demands.
- Tasmania is a hotspot for giant squid. Four of these huge creatures have been washed up on a Hobart beach in recent years – the longest, in 2002, measured 50ft.

Bay, on Bruny Island. There's a small colony of docile red-necked wallabies, made easier to see by the fact they have pelts so white you begin to wonder if this is *Alice in Wonderland* – only here the white rabbit has grown to about four feet in height.

White forms (or morphs) of many animals can happen anywhere but they are more likely to occur on islands where males and females both possessing the recessive gene responsible can easily meet and mate. Bruny's white wallabies take full advantage of this. Elsewhere on Bruny, you can find colonies of the world's smallest penguin, appropriately named little penguin.

And that's just Bruny. What I love about Tasmania is that it's not a place you can easily pin down or sum up, with a great diversity of scenery and habitats that range from dry eucalyptus forest to high, bleak, rugged moorlands.

Up in the north, for instance, is the alpine area of Cradle Mountain, where boardwalks stretch over vast expanses of swampy buttongrass. The streams are stained dark by tannins, and above you, the exposed dolerite cap forms geometric, square-edged crags and peaks. In the distance, you can make out the spectacular cliffs of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, deemed primitive enough to be the setting for episodes of the BBC's *Walking with Dinosaurs*. Up here you get ancient King Billy pines and the strange palm-like pandanus plant and a multitude of marsupials hiding in the forests.

On the west coast, there's the temperate rainforest

surrounding the Gordon River where you can find a pine tree that is 2,300 years old. It's a Huon pine, and its two main trunks have both fallen over but one half is still (well, was in 2005) attached to its roots and so still growing. Here the forest is dense, dark and damp, leeches lurk in the leaf litter and rambunctious parrots called green rosellas squabble in the canopy. It's often said that this is what the ancient supercontinent of Gondwanaland (existing between 500 and 200 million years ago) would have been like, and it seems to make sense.

But, really, if you have an interest in wildlife, there is one main reason for visiting Tasmania, and that is to see its most famous native son – the Tassie devil. North of the Gordon River, near the small town of Marrawah, Geoff King runs the Devil Restaurant, an eatery where road-kill wallabies and possums are on the menu.

My visit to the restaurant was in April 2005, when the full extent of a dreadful, infectious cancer that has halved devil numbers was becoming known. And though some scientists are worried this cancer, known as Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD), could make the animal extinct in the wild within 25 years, it has yet to make any inroads into devils in the north and west.

Devils aren't

*I WILL NEVER FORGET
CRUISING ALONG AT 15
KNOTS AND LOOKING
DOWN AND THERE,
STARING BACK AT ME,
WERE DOLPHINS*

large – about the size and weight of a bulldog – and they're not always pretty. On the night I was there, a five-year-old male, with a battle-scarred face, black fur resembling a threadbare carpet and looking like a bar-room trouble-maker who'd got involved in one fight too many, turned up to feed on the wallaby carcass that had been staked down outside the ramshackle shed where we were hiding.

I thought he was on his way out, said Geoff when he arrived.

Devils won't live much more than five and really it's amazing he's still going. Brawler was certainly still going: he fed for about half an hour, eating perhaps a quarter of his own body weight, and because Geoff thoughtfully rigs the carcass for sound (as well as flooding it with light), you can hear the crunching of bones and the tearing of sinews coming through the speakers. This is a truly visceral experience. Later that night, a younger, prettier female with a large, white crescent on her chest also appeared, but she dined for less than five minutes before disappearing into the still night air.

Because the devil is endemic to Tasmania, scientists are in a desperate race to find out why DFTD is affecting them and what they can do. Part of the conservation efforts involve setting up captive-breeding refuges with animals that are known to be healthy – the idea is that these will provide an insurance population

should the disease spread over the entire island. Scientists are also investigating whether some devils have a natural resistance to the disease – if that is the case, there might yet be hope.

A smaller relative of the devil is the eastern quoll, another carnivorous marsupial, but this one looks like a cross between a rat and a weasel, though with lovely light grey or chocolate brown, spotted coats. Craig Williams runs trips to see them in farming country in the north-east, and the premise is remarkably simple – take some wallaby burgers to an open pasture surrounded by eucalyptus woodland, cook them over an open fire, open a bottle of Tasmanian Pinot Noir (and maybe while it's breathing, go and look for platypuses in the nearby stream) and as the light fades, look for sprites scampering about in the shadows, just beyond the light of the barbecue, lured out of the forest by the smell of cooking meat. These are the quolls, and you can spend an amusing hour playing a kind of grandmother's footsteps with them as they try to grab the scraps Craig throws them from the barbie. Later on, once darkness had fallen and the stars were shining brightly through the inky-black night sky above us, we went spotlighting, finding possums, wallabies and wombats.

In Narawntapu National Park, on the north coast, the sheer numbers of wallabies, wombats and to a lesser extent eastern grey kangaroos (there are no big reds in Tasmania) brought to mind the antelopes of the African savannah. Nibbling on the rich grasslands, they remained unperturbed as we wandered

TRAVEL TIP

Tailor Made Travel offers a seven-day self-drive holiday from £620, including six nights accommodation, Tassie Devils tour and trip to Bruny Island. Flights with Qantas from £809. **0800 988 5915;** www.tailor-made.co.uk; sales@tailor-made.co.uk

among them, the light fading until we could no longer see them clearly and only knew they were there from the rhythmic sound of them tucking into their dinner.

And what of the most famous endemic Tasmanian species I have yet to mention? What are your chances of adding that to your swelling tick list in a two-week sojourn? Well, realistically, to strike it lucky, you will probably have to settle in one of the more remote areas and spend a good 10 or 20 years of your life out there. But speak to a Tassie bushman for half an hour or so, and not only will you have heard his Tasmanian tiger story, you'll be convinced there's one with your name on it just around the corner.



ON THE RIGHT TREK

REPORT BY

NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE

THE BEST WAY TO GET CLOSE TO TASMANIA'S NATURE IS BY FOOT

One of the most incontestably lovely places in Tasmania is the Freycinet Peninsula. In the 1820s, the ex-ruler of Iceland and now British convict, Jorgen Jorgensen, paused to take in the prospect. He gave his less than level-headed opinion that after travelling the world as he had, and after seeing its many splendid sights, this was a view "impossible for the most luxuriant imagination to conceive more lovely within the whole circle of the creation".

This 38-kilometre promontory on the Australian island's east coast was named after a French cartographer who sailed along it 200 years ago on an important scientific expedition that may have had a secret pretext.

A long-suspected brief of the "Voyage to the Southern Lands" was to map Van Diemen's Land – as Tasmania then was – ahead of the British, and so claim the island as a Napoleonic settlement: Terre Napoleon. The mission only narrowly failed but the French left behind their names on some of the most heartstopping wilderness on earth.

"Everyone was gazing at the land," wrote Francois Péron, a bilious, one-eyed zoologist who lives on in the shape of a rock inhabited by mutton-birds. "We vied with each other in our admiration of the lofty mountains that nature seemed to have set, like so many granite bulwarks, against the furies of the stormy ocean, which extends from here to the Antarctic ice."

Today, the voyage from Europe takes 26 hours, not eight months, and yet what is remarkable is the extent to which this coastline has remained in the pristine condition described by Péron: the same casuarina trees, the same cerulean sea, the same orange-lichened rocks.

The lichen, known as caloplaca, is a barometer of the healthy atmosphere. The colour of the freshly cooked local crayfish, it confirms the findings of the CSIRO that Tasmania has the cleanest rainwater and air in the world. Small wonder that increasing numbers of people want to come here. They have been coming since the early 1900s, when Errol Flynn's father, a professor of marine biology at the University of Tasmania, used to camp in Honeymoon Bay – where he discovered a large new species of jellyfish, "a somewhat distant cousin of man himself".

Of the dozen treks I have made in Tasmania, that organised by The Freycinet Experience is the most picturesque, varied and

memorable. I tested it again recently, and again experienced the sensation of what it must have been like to set foot in an unspoiled New World, before homo sapiens put it to his filthy purposes. There are no more than eight to a group and the four-day walk, which features an optional six-hour climb of Mount Graham (from the 620m summit of which you can survey the whole area), caters for most ages and levels of fitness.

The walk was reinvented five years ago so that now you sleep all three nights in the award-winning lodge designed by Ken Latona, rising at the civilised hour of 7.30am. Six hours of the day are devoted to walking. By the end, you will have trodden two hypnotic strips of quartzite sand (including Wineglass Bay, voted by *Condé Nast Traveller* one of the best beaches in the world); ascended through a forest of towering white gums that stretch like whales into an ocean-coloured sky, and tracked an Aboriginal trail into a valley of absolute silence.

In Britain, it is almost impossible to find a place without background noise. On the Freycinet Experience walk, whole hours pass when you hear no plane, no traffic, no human voices, nothing.

The creation of a Sydney environmentalist, Joan Masterman – she helped to establish the better-known Cradle Mountain Huts trek on the increasingly overcrowded Cradle Mountain trail – the walk aims to leave behind no imprint.

We're encouraged to slough off the grosser habits of the world we've escaped and to tread with the lightness of ghosts. Boots are scrubbed for the root-rotting fungus, *phytophthora cinemomi*, and anyone who dares to toss away their orange peel after a picnic lunch is instantly chastised.

The place – and I cannot repeat this enough – is practically as the first explorers found it.

One's baggage unloaded, the journey begins on board the *Naturaliste*, a motor-boat named after one of the French corvettes. Our destination is Schouten Island. Over a sandwich lunch in Crockett's Bay, we survey our itinerary. During the next three days we shall walk the entire length of the peninsula.

One thing that elevates The Freycinet Experience above other Tasmanian treks is the quality of its guides. We are lucky to have Tom, who points out, in the fork of a gum tree, the nest of a white-bellied sea-eagle – "as big as a double bed"; also the remains of a whaling station, a reminder of a brief period in the 1820s when convict-harvested whale-oil illuminated the streets and studies of London.

Once, the bay was black with numerous southern right whales streaming through Schouten Passage. Today, the surface is



Room with a view: the award-winning Bay of Fires Lodge designed by Ken Latona

ruffled by a school of blue-nosed dolphins.

Under Tom's tutelage, we learn to distinguish a variety of bird calls, such as the yellow wattle bird, whose guttural, coughing gurgle is "reminiscent of vomiting", and the black swan whose cry reminded the early explorer George Bass of a rusty alehouse sign in a wind.

Tom is, in addition, a passionate student of animal droppings. Twice he halts to inspect the long greyish "scat" of a Tasmanian devil, the nocturnal predator that eats, literally, everything: echidna quills, bottle tops, even a pencil dropped by one of the wildlife rangers. Numbers have drastically reduced in recent years, owing to a disease that causes facial tumours; but walking one morning onto Salt Water Lagoon we see a line of small fresh imprints in the sand – tracks left by a baby devil.

Two virtues are worth pointing out. Once you start the trip you don't have to put a hand in your pocket. And the group that goes through is the only group at the lodge – unlike at the Bay of Fires where two groups overlap for two nights.

The Bay of Fires Walk is a 20-mile beach trek down the East Coast's northern shoreline. And what a beach. It is hard to dispute the valuation of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which named it

the whitest beach in Australia, composed of sweeps of sand so fine and pure that it can appear as if the waves have cast their foam on the shore and left it there.

The wildlife exceeds even that encountered on the Freycinet Peninsula. In a short space I came across a draughtboard shark, two wedge-tailed eagles (one of 80 pairs on the island) and a wombat foraging on wild geraniums before it saw us and shuffled over the dunes in a blur of leg and bone.

After a night in the upgraded standing camp (sleeping bags provided after a meal of abalone caught by the guide), we arrived at Ken Latona's lodge: a spectacular Tasmanian hardwood and glass construction which rests like a lizard on the rocks above Anson's Bay.

Latona, who sold up last year to Grant Hunt, spent 18 months selecting his site. He famously compares his buildings to "sheds" and shares the aim of his mentor Glenn Murcott: to touch the earth lightly. "All my buildings encourage you to get out," he told me. "If you want to be a couch potato, get lost."

The food is pretty good. The only complaint of the eight guests, among them some couch potatoes from Melbourne, was that they had to pump their own water for a shower.

TRAVEL TIP

Tailor Made Travel features many Tasmanian walking experiences, including the spectacular Bay of Fires four-day guided walk from £833. Flights with Qantas from £809. **0800 988 5915; www.tailor-made.co.uk; sales@tailor-made.co.uk**

DID YOU KNOW...

- Tasmania has more than 2,000km of walking tracks and 18 national parks.
- The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area covers 1.38 million hectares.
- Tasmania has the cleanest air in the world and its rainwater is so pure that quantities have been shipped to Australian Olympic athletes competing overseas.
- The island has a higher proportion of its land area (22.6 per cent) reserved for recreation and conservation purposes than any other Australian state.

MARIA ISLAND WALKS

I was sceptical about my trip to Maria Island. I had booked a four-day guided walking tour with Maria Island Walks and could not believe it could come close to living up to their grand claims. They promised gourmet food and fabulous accommodation on an island that, due to its National Park status, insists you bring your own food with you and that you take all your rubbish away. We would be camping, carrying our own luggage and walking several miles a day. It further promised untold sightings of geographical wonders, friendly wildlife and rare birds.

As it happens, the wildlife watching began the moment we boarded the boat in Hobart for the half-hour trip south-east to Maria, followed as we were by a pod of dolphins surfing our wake. There is something about these amazing creatures that gladdens the heart and cannot fail to put you in a good mood.

By the time we landed, I was in love. Like a child's drawing of an idyllic island, Maria's mountains loomed over green forests fringed with white beaches and ringed with crystal-clear water.

Over the course of the four days there is so much to captivate you that you honestly don't notice that you are getting exercise into the bargain. And

there were nearly always options to shorten or lengthen each day's walk – add on a few extra hours by climbing one of the mountains, thereby gaining spectacular views over the dramatic coastline, or enjoy a rest and a swim off one of the many wide, sweeping, deserted beaches. Either way, the calm beauty provided an almost spiritual level of relaxation and an embarrassment of riches in the wildlife-spotting stakes.

Wallabies and kangaroos have the run of this protected park, which means their numbers reach into the hundreds and they have absolutely no fear of humans. I also saw an echidna, two wombats, and lizards aplenty, while for birdwatchers, this is a dream location.

There are 130 recorded bird species, including the world's second rarest goose, the Cape Barren. My favourites were the funny little hooded plovers, which have this odd habit of running along ahead of you. They try to distract you from the location of their hidden nests, and will run the entire length of the beach before taking flight and doubling back when they feel you are at a safe distance.

But although I enjoyed wildlife-watching, I was very surprised to find I could stand, in awe, in front of a rock. I'm not normally brought to a standstill

by a geomorphological occurrence but this rock, known as the painted cliff, is the result of thousands of years of weathering, rendering it more beautiful than many works of art – an exotic convoluted sculpture, vibrant in orange and yellow.

Nothing disappointed in the food and accommodation stakes either. Our first two nights were spent in surprisingly comfortable luxury tents, while the guides astounded me by rustling up gourmet dinners which would have been impressive in any restaurant. These enthusiastic Tasmanians also had a depth of information on Maria Island's flora, fauna and history.

On the final night we stayed in a beautiful colonial home in the tiny settlement of Darlington where you could still see the old cells dating from the time when Maria served as a penal colony. That stage in the island's history did not last long, however – when news of Maria's beauty spread, many honest men were tempted to commit crimes in order to have the pleasure of being sent there. Luckily nowadays you don't have to go to quite such lengths to get to visit but, whatever else it takes to get there, do it. It's worth it.

SASHA BATES



Sea of tranquillity: the peace and amazing views on Maria Island are truly hypnotic

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Take in a deep breath and marvel at spectacular sights as you explore Tasmania, Australia's island of inspiration, on foot. Call one of our specialist travel consultants and they will be able to tell you all about the most inspiring walks and organise guided walking tours to make sure you see all the must-see sights. Like, for example, the 4 day Maria Island Walk, on which you can experience unparalleled wildlife viewing. Talk to someone who knows and let us create a

Tasmania holiday where you take a walk on the wildside.

We have a whole host of walks from half day to 7 days to suit all abilities from moderate to challenging. Here are just a few: Bay of Fires 4 days from £833, Maria Island 4 days from £929, Cradle Mountain Huts Walk 6 days from £1,165.

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SEEKING PARADISE



A HOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD

On the Beach. I must have remembered Nevil Shute's novel when, nine years ago, at the end of a trek in the central highlands, my girlfriend and I saw a house for sale on a shelf of coastal dunes. It was a single-storey building made from Canadian cedar and glass, and through the glass I could see a rock.

Nothing prepared me for the vision of the Freycinet Peninsula on that March morning, or the dense colour of its granite: smoky and compact like a watercolour pigment. I knew that I was gazing at the most beautiful place I had seen on Earth, a conviction that all subsequent experience has served to deepen.

We knocked at the door. Helen, a middle-aged woman in a lavender sarong, told us she had built the house with her husband, a retired radio executive who was now ill and needed to be nearer to a hospital. She was an artist and photographer – the house was hung with her vast red moodscapes – and as she led us on an impromptu tour of the rooms, she chattered about

“destiny” and “serendipitous unions”.

Inside the house, the glass seemed to intensify the sunlight. Strangely suspended by the light, I followed Helen into “the solarium” and “the verandah café” and then through clumps of boobyalla to the deserted beach, where I had an improbable vision of children scampering into the waves. Less than an hour later, we were bidding her an emotional farewell.

We had no family connections, no friends, no reason to linger, but I could not stop thinking of the view from the window out to the peninsula. By the time we arrived at our B&B that evening on the road to Hobart, we were seriously considering the possibility of the house – and Tasmania – becoming a destination as well as an escape.

There was a message at the convict-built B&B from Helen. She just wanted to say that she saw herself in us, how rare it was to feel such a connection to strangers, and that there were no accidents in life. Oh, and did we like the house?

We went home to England, got married, and began immediately to plot our return. I phoned Helen and proposed that we take a six-month lease. Whether impressed by our karmic connection or by a want of other offers, she agreed. At the end of six months we would make a decision to buy or not.

In the last fortnight of our lease, my father had flown to Tasmania with the express purpose of persuading us not to sink our savings into a two-bedroomed beach house at the end of the world.

On the morning after his arrival, I came upon him standing barefoot on the strand. His eyes were nailed to the horizon and I could have sworn that there were tears in them.

“I... have... never... been... anywhere... more... beautiful.”

We telephoned Helen. We would buy the house.

NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE

The author's most recent novel, Secrets of the Sea (Harvill/Secker), is set in Tasmania. He is also the author of a history of the island, In Tasmania (Vintage).

REPORT BY VICTORIA GLENDINNING

BACK FROM HER SECOND VISIT WITHIN SIX MONTHS, THE WRITER INDULGES HER FANTASY OF BUYING INTO A DREAM

Ethical investors should be buying land in Tasmania. You could hardly go wrong acquiring a chunk of paradise for which, within 20 years, the overcrowded world will be clamouring.

On an island the size of Sri Lanka (population: 20 million) there are, according to the 2007 census, 494,520 inhabitants. That leaves a lot of world-class beauty unoccupied: vast tranches of forest, unpolluted salmon and trout rivers, some of the planet's last true wildernesses, rugged mountains, sheep-nibbled pastures protected by towering trees, and miles of sea inlets and empty, sandy beaches.

There is old money in Tasmania, but as a whole it is quite poor. Most tourists come from mainland Australia. It's a chicken-and-egg situation. The Tasmanian government promotes tourism and development, but until travellers from the rich northern hemisphere start coming in larger numbers, Tasmania cannot risk investing in the necessary infrastructure.

Nevertheless, there are already pockets of perfection in hotels and restaurants. The wines, hardly exported due to the modest output, equal the best Australian wines available.

Look at the map of Tasmania, or Tassie as it is familiarly known. The island is shaped like a rough triangle, and according to John Huizing at Bluedge Property in Hobart, the premium spot, pricewise, is Sandy Bay, just south of the capital city. This is because building is limited by hills and it is close to town.

A four-bedroom house with pool, sea view and aircon would cost you around A\$1m. (Always divide by two for the rough sterling equivalent.)

The most important town after Hobart is Launceston in the north. Although Hobart is Paris in comparison with Launceston, the Tamar Valley is lovely and produces great wine, and property on the north coast as a whole is about 30 per cent cheaper than the south.

A great area for somewhere to build a holiday house would be on the Freycinet Coast, which starts with Swansea town and the stupendous Nine Mile Beach, then extends round to Coles Bay and on to the Freycinet Peninsula and its startling pink granite mountains, the Hazards. One-and-a-half hours north-east of Hobart, this is a relatively expensive area. Parcels of virgin land on the Nine Mile Beach,

with between eight and 15 acres, are offered from A\$90,000 to A\$100,000. Nearer Hobart, perched above the sea at Orford, there is an immaculate one-storey family house on more than 10 acres for A\$435,000.

South of Hobart, along the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and on both sides of the estuary of the Huon river, waterside towns frame a rolling agricultural hinterland which, west of the Huon, becomes wild and mountainous.

On the main street of Huonville every other shop is an estate agent, offering stylish timber-and-glass houses, “colonial” homesteads and cottages, and hundreds of shacks.

Shacks are small single-storey constructions, often weather-boarded, with overhanging eaves and verandahs, sometimes balustraded. The simplest shacks are “relocated” – mobile homes, to us. But if not pulled down, shacks can be elaborated and built onto, resulting in light and spacious bungalows. You might have several shacks on a property, for different purposes.

A few miles down the coast from Orford, near Rheban, there is a long, low shack on 40 acres, with river frontage and a secondary two-bed timber dwelling, going for A\$195,000. Basic shacks in rural areas, like small building plots by the sea, can be had for A\$75,000.

Our own favourite place is Bruny Island, its north and south halves joined by an isthmus. Bruny has a secret, serene, sea-filtered atmosphere. There is nothing much here apart from beautiful big trees and pastures – and a promising cheese operation, and an oyster farm.

The 500 inhabitants include some reclusive incomers. The ferry crossing from Bruny is only 15 minutes, and you can be back into Hobart and its foodie glories in half an hour. A few miles south from the ferry port, outside classy Woodbridge (stop at the Peppermint Bay restaurant), there are 39 acres of pasture and bush going for A\$650,000.

If greater remoteness is what you long for, drive through uninhabitable mountain and forest lakelands to Strahan on the west coast, with Cradle Mountain on your right and Wild Rivers National Park on your left. There are hiking trails round here that no car has ever penetrated.

Buy as many acres as you can, to protect your panoramic views.

Fortunately, homes are often on a “lot” of anything up to 40 acres, some of it uncleared bush. There will be no difficulty, providing it is not a sensitive area for rare plants or wild animals, in getting council permission to build your own house, or to rebuild an existing one.

Planning regulations, from a British point of view, are completely counterintuitive. The less developed your property, and the more you intend to do with it, the fewer complications there will be. This is because you will be creating jobs for builders and tradesmen, and adding value.

The principle is that incomers must not be a burden on the state. A foreigner who intends to build, or substantially improve, can buy property and remain non-resident, and the only official body involved will be the Foreign Investment Review Board. But if you buy a house to occupy just as it is, you have to become a resident, which involves jumping through hoops: a medical examination which includes an Aids test and a chest X-ray; proof that you have had no criminal conviction in the past five years; sponsors and an immigration lawyer. This process will cost money. Don't even think about it unless you fall in love with a fine “colonial” or “heritage” sandstone house, maybe on a wine estate.

Closed tender, or “expressions of interest” are the norm for selling outstanding properties such as Lennonville Orchards on North Bruny, a 312-acre cherry farm with a timber homestead dating from 1835 and its own beach. I wish...

Ordinarily, the mechanics of purchase are uncomplicated. You make an unconditional contract: “I'll take it now.” Or you make a conditional contract, and do the usual searches, and risk the 48-Hour Clause. This means that if someone makes a higher offer for your Tassie dream, you have 48 hours in which to match it – or withdraw, in tears.

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www.realestate.com.au

DID YOU KNOW...

● Tasmania boasts the oldest continually licensed public house in Australia – the Bush Inn at New Norfolk, which dates back to 1825. The island also has Australia's oldest working live theatre, the Theatre Royal in Hobart (1834-1837).



SAVOUR A GLORIOUS LARDER

REPORT BY **CAROL DRINKWATER**

THE FERTILE LAND OF THIS UNSPOILT
PARADISE PRODUCES A TRULY
MOUTHWATERING MENU



Tourists come with one shirt and a £10 note and leave having changed neither – the words of “Electric Eric”, the Hon Eric Reece, Tasmanian Premier during the Sixties and Seventies.

Xenophobic, yes, but in 1974 he built Wrest Point, Australia's first legal casino, and laid the foundations of the island's tourist industry. Until then, Aussies dismissed Tasmanians as “retarded bloody buggers, inbreds with two heads”.

Although Tasmania's tourist industry has grown, the island still has some of the world's most productive soils, respects its resources and has cultivated one of the finest, most surprising, fresh-food larders on the planet. It produces Périgord truffles, award-winning cheeses, Huon Valley saffron, leatherwood honey and olive oil – 100,000 olive trees have been planted.

Order a seafood platter and it might include wild abalone, rock lobsters, Atlantic salmon, sea trout, blue mussels, scallops, smoked eel, salmon caviar, sea urchin roe, octopus and squid. Its

unpolluted Southern Ocean offers delicious catches of bluefin and yellow-fin tuna, blue eye (travalla), orange roughly, blue grenadier and pink ling, among others, while its farmed salmon is entirely free of impurities.

After Sydney, Hobart is Australia's second oldest city. My first impression was of a quaint settlement huddled round the harbour but down around the wharf district many of the timbered structures have been converted into boutique hotels, smart apartments, elegant sushi bars and restaurants. Tempting menus offered the likes of salmon fillets, steamed pink-eyed

potatoes, chilli lime compôte and lemon myrtle butter sauce.

Off Tasmania's southern tip lies Bruny island. Captain Bligh landed there in 1792 and planted Tasmania's first vines and an apple tree at the edge of what is now South Bruny National Park. Today, Tasmania – Apple Isle – boasts a million apple trees producing 500 different varieties. Close to that historic spot, I dined on fresh oysters shucked at the table, served with ginger and Japanese soya, followed by succulent, Flinders Island lamb.

Up north, close to Stanley, I feasted on abalone and salmon legally fished from the sea two hours earlier. In France, the black truffle grows symbiotically with the oak. In Tassie, the truffières are producing these black jewels beneath oaks and hazelnuts and world-leading chefs are eulogising them.

On a recent visit I fell into conversation with a red-whiskered chap who ran a harbourside marine chandlers in Hobart where metal-framed and wooden lobster pots were stacked high. I asked if he'd rather live on the mainland.

“Rough as guts there,” he grinned. “You'll see, mate, it's paradise here.” How right he is.

TRAVEL TIP

Tailor Made Travel offers a selection of gourmet-inspired itineraries, including a six-day package featuring the best in gourmet cuisine and award-winning wines from £2,375. Flights with Qantas from £809. **0800 988 5915; www.tailor-made.co.uk; sales@tailor-made.co.uk**

AUSTRALIA'S COOL-CLIMATE WINE

While Australia's very first vineyards are buried beneath Sydney, some gnarled vines of Australia's second oldest vineyard can be seen in the New Town area of Hobart. This was planted in 1823 by Bartholomew Broughton, a remarkable convict who eventually came to own a substantial amount of property.

Due to its cool climate, some local winemakers like to think of Tasmania as “the champagne of the southern hemisphere” but it offers some of Australia's finest Pinot Noirs; Rieslings with more finesse than anything grown outside Germany's Mosel; Sauvignon Blancs that are challenging New Zealand's best.

The best sparkling wine is generally agreed to be Arras, made by the giant BRL Hardy Group. In fact, some rate it as the best Australian fizz of all. Under the same ownership is Bay of Fires, which has a stunning blanc de blancs tucked away for special release in 2010. But the hot-tip

fizz is the soft, elegant Jansz 2004 Rosé. Jansz was established by a champagne house in the 1980s but now produces fine sparkling wines under Australian ownership (Yalumba).

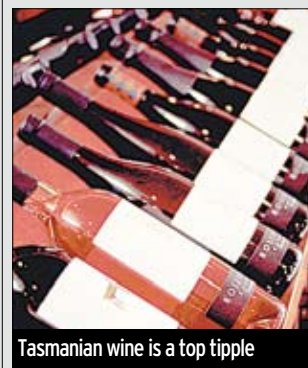
Tasmania's best red this year is the Burgundy-like Stoney Rise 2006 Pinot Noir, which won “Wine of Show” at The Tasmanian Wine Show 2008. Other top performing Pinots, all 2005s, include Ese Vineyard,

Velo and Bream Creek. If you are a Cabernet Sauvignon person, go for the remarkably ripe Bream Creek 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon. The greatest dry Riesling is Holmoak 2005 Riesling but not far behind are Bay of Fires (both 2006 and 2005), Waterton Vineyards 2006 Riesling and The Wine Society 2007 Riesling.

Those who enjoy a sweeter, but very classy Spätlese style will love Frogmore Creek FGR 2006 Riesling (“FGR” stands for “Forty Grams Residual”). Roslyn Estate 2007 Sauvignon Blanc would give most Marlborough wines a run for their money, while Campania Hills 2006 Unwooded Chardonnay demonstrates the potential of this verdant isle to produce a Chablis style.

TOM STEVENSON

● For your chance to win a fabulous prize from Jansz, go to telegraph.co.uk/tasmania



Tasmanian wine is a top tippie

A TASTE OF TASMANIA

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BE PART OF THE ACTION

REPORT BY **MARK CHIPPERFIELD**

TASMANIA'S DIARY IS PACKED WITH SPORTING EVENTS. THERE'S ALSO A THRIVING ARTS SCENE AND A HOST OF FOOD FESTIVALS. HERE'S A TASTE OF WHAT'S ON...

APRIL

Expect a vociferous crowd when Aussie Rules teams Hawthorn and Adelaide take to the field in Launceston (April 13). Tickets: www.ticketmaster.com.au. Sport gets more bizarre at the B&E Rotary Duck Race in Launceston (April 19), a charity event involving 3,000 ducks. Meanwhile, the annual Tasmanian Heritage Festival (April 1-30) is hosted by the Tasmanian National Trust (www.heritage.tas.gov.au).

MAY

Some of Australia's best surfers congregate at the tiny fishing settlement of Scamander for the East Coast Classic (May 11-12). For a full programme of Tasmanian surfing events visit www.surfingtas.com.au.

JUNE

The Antarctic Midwinter Festival (June 20-27) marks the winter solstice with exhibitions, films, lectures and a gala dinner.

JULY

Festival of Voices (July 3-6) in Hobart is Australia's only festival entirely devoted to choral music. Or head north to the Devonport Jazz Weekend (July 24-27), which covers all genres from trad to contemporary. And those with a sweet tooth should not miss the Chocolate Winterfest (July 13), at the small fishing port of Latrobe, in the northwest of Tasmania.

AUGUST

Catch some mid-winter footie action when AFL giants Hawthorn and Brisbane Lions clash at Aurora Stadium in Launceston (August 9). Bookings at www.ticketmaster.com.au

SEPTEMBER

Tasmanian International Adventure Film Festival (September 19-21) will bring together adventurers, filmmakers,

environmentalists and outdoor types. The inaugural event is being held at the Wrest Point Festival Theatre in Hobart: www.tiaff.com.au

OCTOBER

Keen gardeners should not miss the Spring Tulip Festival (October 4-5), in Hobart's Royal Botanical Gardens, with live music, dance, food stalls and other attractions. The Great Tasmanian Oyster Riot (October 18-19) in Barilla Bay showcases the very best Tasmanian oysters, plus other regional produce. Further north, Tasmania's second-largest city hosts the Launceston Blues & Roots Festival (October 24-26). Tasmania is the hop-growing capital of Australia. No surprise, then, it should host the country's best beer event – the Hobart Beerfest (October 25).

NOVEMBER

Tasmania gets into summer mode with the annual Bass and Flinders Boat Festival (November 29-30). The event, at York Cove in Hobart, includes yacht racing, displays and wine tasting. For lovers of the grape, the Royal Hobart International Wine Show (November 28) offers the chance to sample almost 3,000 wines, plus a chance to meet winemakers and critics.

DECEMBER

Hobart's busiest month sees the



THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

If you are an adventurous type, taking part in the Mark Webber Challenge might be the "holiday" for you. I competed in 2007, a gruelling six-day race consisting of hauling my body around 400km of Tasmania's most demanding terrain.

The first day saw me and 59 other competitors kayak 5km, trek the equivalent of a half marathon over a mountain the size of Ben Nevis and cycle 55km across bogs, through

muddy forest and along dirt tracks no wider than your hips.

Luckily, the scenery is so staggeringly beautiful that it is easy to forget the pain. It is the perfect playground for the Challenge, set up by Formula One driver Webber in 2003 to marry his love of the outdoors with the chance to raise money for charity.

While scaling the jagged peaks of Cradle Mountain, paddling on the serene Barrington Lake and

running along the pure white sand of Wineglass Bay, I was in a permanent state of awe. Mark Webber is keen for more British participants to compete in the next Mark Webber Challenge in November 2008. If you think you or your company are up for the challenge, contact paul@markwebberchallenge.com or visit www.markwebberchallenge.com for more information.

JUSTIN GOULDING

port city bustling with activity, both nautical and gastronomic. Top of the tree is the gruelling Rolex Sydney to Hobart ocean yacht race (from December 28). The arrival of the yachties coincides with the Hobart Summer Festival (December 28-January 6) at the Sullivans Cove precinct, with street theatre, live music and various

kids' activities. Not to be missed is Taste of Tasmania (December 28-January 3), a showcase of the island's food, wine and beer. For music fans there is the Falls Festival (December 30-January 1), a Glastonbury-style outdoor event held on the state's picturesque east coast. See www.fallsfestival.com for this year's programme.

JANUARY
Wildside MTB (January 19-22) is Australia's premier mountain bike competition. It follows a 140km course and is open to recreational and competition level entrants. Register at www.wildsidemtb.com

● For a full list of events in 2008 visit www.discovertasmania.com/gb



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END OF THE WORLD

REPORT BY **JAMES STEWART**
FEW PLACES ON EARTH BOAST
SUCH SPECTACULAR WILDERNESS

They've built a lookout so you can watch the sunset at Arthur River. While the sun drags the sky sizzling into the sea on this side of the world, it rises on the other over Patagonia. Between you and South America there's nothing but the Southern Ocean, flailed by the Roaring Forties into heaving swells that finally explode on either side of you as waves up to 10 metres high.

Look south and there are only a few specks of land before you hit Antarctica. Just in case you were in any doubt, there's a sign: End of the World.

The end of the world was how the rest of Australia used to see Tasmania. It was the ill-starred runt of the Lucky Country, shackled to its penal past while other states raced towards modern malls, suburbs and shiny glass towers. But since 1982, when Australia's largest mass civil protest halted a dam project that would have flooded the wild Franklin River, mainlanders have come to the conclusion that a lack of development is no bad thing.

Out of the Franklin campaign, came a realisation that the state's wilderness was its greatest asset. Few places in the world do wilderness like Tasmania. When an application for World Heritage status landed on Unesco's doormat in 1982, Tasmania's wilderness ticked seven of the 10 boxes for inclusion; more than Venice, the Pyramids, Machu Picchu, the Serengeti, Victoria Falls or any other World Heritage Site. The nomination was another upshot of the Franklin campaign. At the time, Tasmanians hadn't

got round to deciding what to chop down or build on the virgin tracts in the west and southwest of their state. Nor will they because Unesco's thumbs-up created five national parks under the banner of the World Heritage Area, one of the largest conservation reserves in Australia whose 1.38 million hectares represent a fifth of the state's area. Not bad for a little island at the end of the world.

In places the Tasmanian World Heritage Area has the rugged looks of a super-sized Scotland. In others such as the Western Arthurs Traverse, whose razorsharp ridges sawtooth the horizon in the Southwest National Park, it beggars description. George Bass, the first man to sail around Tasmania, had a go in 1798. Having gawped at mountains that bucked and reared behind mile upon mile of deserted beach, Bass acclaimed the wild west coast among the foremost of the grand and wildly magnificent scenes of nature. It abounds with peaks and ridges, gaps and fissures.

The Southwest National Park is so remote that you either have to hike in for at least seven days on the exhausting but utterly exhilarating mudfest of the South Coast Track, or squeeze into a Cessna at Hobart airport and fly to Melaleuca. With a population of two and that only part-time it can't even call itself a one-horse town. But there is wildlife. Heaps of it, including some of the strangest and rarest species known to science. The only chatter in summer comes from however many of the 200 orange-bellied parrots on the planet have survived to breed. Nearby a modest thorny shrub called King's lomatia has quietly been cloning

itself from a single plant for at least 43,000 years and possibly 135,000 if carbon-dating of fossilised leaf fragments is accurate. Few places on Earth are as pristine as the World Heritage Area. Even at Cradle Mountain, the area's premier wilderness playground where daytrippers easily outnumber hikers, you can make daywalks into areas that feel like pockets of Eden.

Even more impressive is the cool, temperate rainforest with its endemic myrtle, sassafras, laurel, celery-top pine and leatherwood. The only place you'll find anything remotely similar is in Chile. It seems improbable until you realise the two used to be neighbours and that the forests of the World Heritage Area are relics of the primeval jungle that cloaked the supercontinent of Gondwana. Talk about conservation down here and your timeframe stretches 50 million years.

Unless you have the stamina and a spare 10 days to race rapids on the Franklin River, the west coast entry point to the Tasmanian World Heritage Area is Strahan. David Bellamy got arrested when he set out from this pretty harbourside village for the Gordon River during the 1982 and 1983 protests. Nowadays everyone's at it, albeit with the blessing of the law and in state-of-the-art catamarans rather than aluminium dinghies.

Having blasted across Macquarie Harbour six times the size of Sydney's you ease into a waterway that snakes deep into the Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. Huon pines that were saplings when Christ delivered parables are reflected in water that's stained the colour of Coca-Cola by vegetative tannin.

The dawn chorus of thousands



of birds wakes you when you anchor overnight on board the luxury cruiser MV Discovery or charter yacht Stormbreaker, and you can have a morning dip while platypuses trace Vs across the river's glassy patina. It's a pure wilderness experience without any hardship. You can buzz peaks of the Southwest National Park in a seaplane and be back for dinner of fresh ocean trout from Macquarie Harbour. You can nibble gourmet cheeses from King Island and slurp the best wines in Tasmania's cellar as you pootle through the rainforest aboard a steam train, or have a gourmet picnic in a clearing having arrived by 4WD converted to run on a pioneer railway.

Elsewhere the World Heritage Area is growing. In September last year the Australian Senate unanimously agreed to nominate the Tarkine for inclusion. A blank space in the northwest corner of the map, buffeted by what is officially the cleanest air on Earth, the Tarkine's empty coastline is where those massive Southern Ocean swells crump, having travelled halfway around the globe. From Arthur River you can journey on a charmingly old-fashioned cruiser into an untrodden rainforest that the World Wildlife Fund in 2004 called a world beyond human memory, a living link with the ancient supercontinent Gondwana. Last year TV network Channel Nine named it Australia's best-kept wilderness secret but the marketing men don't seem to have cottoned on yet. Being at the end of the world has its advantages.

TRAVEL TIP

Tailor Made Travel offers a selection of eco-wilderness experiences including a three-night stay at Cradle Mountain Lodge from £154 including breakfast. Flights with Qantas from £809. **0800 988 5915; www.tailor-made.co.uk.** **sales@tailor-made.co.uk**

DID YOU KNOW

- Tasmania has the highest flowering trees in the world. Swamp gums grow to 100m and can be readily seen in the forests of the south-east.
- Some Huon pines are believed to be more than 2,000 years old, and a stand of male Huon pines, estimated to be more than 10,000 years old, has maintained itself by vegetative reproduction.
- You can explore the west coast of Tasmania by pedal, led by expert guides, staying in comfortable B&Bs, with experienced Tasmanian cycling operator Island Cycle Tours:



Paradise: camp amid lush landscapes, above and top, or take the train, inset



REPORT BY **RICHARD MADDEN**

FROM DIVING TO RIVER RAFTING, TASMANIA IS A DREAM LOCATION FOR LOVERS OF THE GREAT OUTDOORS

My dreams that night were peculiar and vivid. We had reached the mid-point of our rafting expedition down the Franklin River and our group of 10 paddlers had retired early to the warm embrace of our sleeping bags, the roar of the torrent still drumming in our ears. We were camped on

the banks of the Great Ravine at the heart of the Franklin-Gordon wilderness. As sleep washed over me, I felt as if I was staring up at the sky from the bottom of the river. I dreamt I was a mourner at a funeral and, in a ritual which shocked only when I recalled it over breakfast, the corpse was decapitated and its blood daubed over my face.

"The river can have a very powerful effect on people," said Brett, our senior river guide, with a laugh. "Any idea what it meant?"

"I'm taking it as a heavily disguised blessing from the river god," I replied stoically. "After all, if he was out to get me he had his chance yesterday."

My thoughts spun back to the events of the previous day. Our raft was being swept towards the Gordian Gate, one of the Franklin's many treacherous rapids ending in a four-foot vertical drop. I ducked just in time to avoid the branch of a dead tree dealing me the same fate as the decapitated corpse of my dream.

Despite its dangers and thanks to modern equipment and the guides' in-depth knowledge of the river, safe expeditions down the Franklin are a routine occurrence.

Personally, I was in no doubt that the rewards heavily outweighed the discomforts and I needed no reminding of how lucky we were to be experiencing this unique

wilderness. On one memorable occasion a quoll, a rare short-sighted marsupial with a tail like a cat, strolled through our campsite. Not only had I never seen a quoll before but up until that moment I have never even heard of one.

Later the same day, in a moment of wilderness magic, we watched mesmerised as a duck-billed platypus slipped from the river bank into the translucent red-gold of the river right in front of our raft.

Memories of a first expedition down the Franklin merge into one another like the mercurial flow of the river itself.

One of the most memorable was our campsite at Rafter's Basin where we emerged from the Great Ravine a few hundred yards downstream from The Masterpiece, a series of rock gardens and small waterfalls seemingly created by a Zen master.

I NEEDED NO REMINDING OF HOW LUCKY WE WERE TO BE EXPERIENCING THIS UNIQUE WILDERNESS

We gathered in the afternoon sun on a boulder-strewn bend in the river carpeted with the white buds of flowering tea-tree shrubs. On the far bank the bleached trunks of fallen trees tossed aside by the flood looked like the fossilised skeleton of a mammoth; upstream, the broken slab known as The Biscuit was cast into delicious soft focus by a sunlit gauze of mizzle; overhead

a sea-eagle hitched a lift on a thermal. It was just one more magical moment in the story of one of the world's great wilderness destinations.

A few days later, after a weekend spent recovering from the rigours of the Franklin, I found myself perched awkwardly on the side of an inflatable dinghy as we prepared to dive on the Eaglehawk peninsula south-east of the Tasmanian capital, Hobart. The site was reputed to be one of the world's best temperate water dive locations and I was curious to discover whether the reality lived up to the hype.

"It's a mecca for dolphin, whale and seal watchers," Mick Baron, co-owner of the Eaglehawk Dive Centre, had told me earlier. But Mick didn't need to convince me of the magic of his dive patch. On the previous day he had taken us on a magical warm-up dive to a giant

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Exciting: Tasmania lends itself to amazing pursuits, such as white water rafting with Water by Nature, far left; rock climbing, above; and diving, below

DID YOU KNOW...

- The waters surrounding Tasmania harbour have the greatest proportion of endemic marine species anywhere in Australia. From the fastest growing plant in the world, giant kelp, to the bizarre-looking Leafy Sea-dragon, Tasmania's waters are famous the world over for their unique biodiversity.
- Shipsterns Bluff on the Tasman Peninsula, once known as Devil's Point, is the most feared surfing spot in the world.

TRAVEL TIP

Tailor Made Travel offers a wide selection of adventure experiences, including a four-day Freycinet Expedition which includes kayaking and walking, from £469. Flights with Qantas from £809.
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underwater kelp forest in nearby Deep Glen Bay.

But that was yesterday. Now we were about to dive the legendary "Cathedral Caves" in Waterfall Bay.

Mick took us meticulously through every stage of the dive before leaving the safety of the boat. Where to wait for each other, what to expect and what to do when we arrived at "The Catacomb".

The Catacomb? Suddenly the full realisation that this was my first-ever cave-dive hit home with a vengeance.

But then at last we were in the water, descending the shot-line to about 80 feet. Finning close behind Mick we swam through a cave entrance under the cliffs.

And then it struck me. I really was flying down the nave of a cathedral. On a level with the stained-glass windows with the aisle far below me, shafts of light speared into the depths. Instead

of a congregation, strange ungodly beasts flitted by: a porcupine puffer fish; a feather duster worm; and schools of bullseye fish.

Then the chamber narrowed and the light became darker as we glided along in an eerie light, a strange form of underwater vertigo threatening to take hold.

A few minutes later and we reached the point of no return: the entrance to The Catacomb.

By this stage I would have followed Mick into the underworld and clearly so would the rest of us. AOK signs all round.

In the end, it wasn't even scary. The reflections from the encrusted walls of the cave provided an all-engrossing light display to the soundtrack of the calming rumble of our exhaled air bubbles. Even an unexpected encounter with a baby draughtboard shark didn't faze me.

And then, all too soon, Mick was leading us back through the maze of underground chambers and passageways, pausing as he went to show us the huge rib structure of a dead whale.

But one last surprise was in store. Two huge beams of light illuminated our progress and I felt as if I was looking out through a giant underwater skull.

"Now you see why it's called Skull Cave," said Mick later with a chuckle.

Back on the boat again in bright sunshine, euphoria washed over us. "And now for the main event," announced Mick as we guffawed indulgently, assuming he was joking.

But no. The weather had been kind and there was a rare opportunity for an expedition to Pillar Rock for a dive with endangered Australian fur seals... but that, as they say, is another story.



THERE'S A LOT OF TROUT ABOUT



Before 1864 there were no trout in the southern hemisphere. Fish eggs, even less live fish that survive only in cool, clean water took unkindly to a journey that lasted three months and sailed them slowly through the tropics.

But a native Australian living in London – James Youl – finally worked out how to do take them there. With pine boxes, moss and ice, he established trout in Tasmania and in doing so he opened to the world a new frontier of trout fishing.

Our native brown trout took better to their new home than any fishermen – a breed not immune to wishful thinking – could have dared imagine. Within a few years, stories of vast catches of enormous trout were seeping through from the New World to the Old. And it's been the same ever since.

Every year a steady stream of anglers on the road to fishy

Nirvana head to that far side of the world. Most miss Tasmania and lose themselves in the Alpine torrents of New Zealand but in doing so they are missing a trick. Tasmanian trout fishing is Australia's best kept secret.

A thin coastal plain in the north rises steeply to a 3,500-foot-high plateau which then slopes gently all the way to the southern coast. It is covered in lakes of all sizes, from the Great Lake which is 50 miles in circumference, to the many small lagoons – some no bigger than a football field – that make up the Western Lakes. There are enormous brown trout in all of them. And in such abundance too.

The vast Derwent river system drains south to Hobart but all over the island there are innumerable streams and creeks, from mountain torrents to mazy, pastoral rivers where blizzards of grasshoppers bring

fat trout greedily to the surface. Any fishing itinerary should include:

● **The Western Lakes:** a high plain mottled with water. Here you stalk the margins looking for feeding trout. A two-pound fish is a small one. There are many two, three, four times that size.

● **Arthur's and Great Lake:** on Great Lake particularly, the locals will rave about the "shark fishing". It's not for sharks, but for trout that feed like them, surfing white-capped rollers, framed by light.

● **Brumby's Creek:** the most complicated and difficult trout fishing in Australia. Brumby's is a maze of interconnected lagoons, creeks and channels, like a Hampshire chalkstream might have looked like 2,000 years ago (though bizarrely Brumby's is a man-made creek).

CHARLES RANGELEY-WILSON

ON COURSE FOR FANTASTIC GOLF

Two types of people pack their golf clubs to take with them on holiday, the golfer-tourist and the tourist-golfer. Until recently, Tasmania was perfect for the latter; a beautiful island with some lovely little courses but short on the serious stuff.

That has now changed dramatically. Suddenly, with the opening of the magnificent Barnboughle Dunes, a world-class course near Bridport on the north coast, Tasmania has become a "must" destination for any golfer visiting Australia.

Barnboughle is a piece of golfing perfection. Bordering the Bass Strait, it was designed by arguably the finest golf architect currently working, Tom Doak, and wanders through ancient dunes that have given it the instant feel of something centuries old.

And talking of instant, as soon as it opened, Barnboughle Dunes went into the world's top 50 courses as rated by *Golf Digest*, unprecedented for a magazine rating a course thousands of miles from its US readership.

The course has glorious holes as well as fabulous walks – no motorised buggies here. You can stay in the club's own accommodation and eat great food in a clubhouse that caters for golfers, not posers.

Meanwhile, in the middle of



Tasmania, at Bothwell, Ratho is the oldest course in the southern hemisphere. This is for true connoisseurs, for you have to play with hickory clubs which can be hired at the course. The fascinating Australasian Golf Museum is also at Bothwell.

But perhaps the greatest glory of golf for the Tasmanian tourist lies in the little nine-holers. Take Tasman Bay, for instance, a gorgeous spot situated above Port Arthur. The views from this clifftop layout are sensational.

Tassie's nine-holers are not great courses but great places to play, usually trusting you to feed

the green fee into an honesty box. Swansea, for example, is on an east coast promontory surrounded by sea; Elderslie lies deep in bucolic countryside; and do not on any account miss Sheffield, a lovely undulating course with great views over the countryside – stay at the Eagles Nest, a wonderful lodge that has views of Mount Roland.

You would struggle to find a better day's entertainment anywhere in golf, but then that is true these days of so much that Tasmania has to offer to both the golfing-tourist and the tourist-golfer.

DAVID DAVIES

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