

MyDiscoveries

ISSUE SIX

Christmas Markets

Anyone for Gluhwein?

PLAN

Heritage hotel review, Sydney; drive to view silo art.

DESTINATIONS

Exploring Launceston; going solo on the Ghan; 5 highlights of the Maldives; finding mystery in Tangiers.

INSPIRATION

Tasting the best of Indian food; China's warriors, tame and terracotta.

CRUISING

The traditional history of Japan; intergenerational cruising; luxury cruising through Indonesia.



EUROPE – TASMANIA – MOROCCO – INDIA – CHINA

FUN FACT: GOATS IN TREES

This is not a fake photo. On top of a tree, in the south west of Morocco, in North Africa where the plants and trees are far apart and fewer, goats use their climbing skills to find food. Here the animals have climbed up an argan tree (8-10metres) to get to the fresh fruit at the top.

Goats eat the whole fruit even though their bodies can't digest the nut.

The argan nuts pass through the digestive system of the goats and once they are excreted, people gather them from the droppings and crack them open to expose the seeds. The Argan Oil from the nuts is a nutritious resource for Morocco.

And even after feeding their faces, the goats just hang around on the branches of the trees just looking out at the horizon ...



IMAGE: BEV MALZARD

MyDiscoveries.com.au

Make one day today



Expert Travel Knowledge
Call **1300 404 606**
or visit
mydiscoveries.com.au



30 Day Booking Guarantee
Get your preferred dates within 30 days or your **money back**



5 Month Interest Free
Enjoy 5 monthly payment options at no extra cost



Great Discounts
Up to 40% off for My Discoveries customers



Save On Travel Insurance
Travel **stress-free** with **discounts** on travel insurance



Contents

■ PLAN

04 Book early for a marvellous European Christmas and its sparkling markets.

08 Suss out a Sydney heritage hotel.

12 Ride on down the road on a driving holiday to find wall art in Australian country towns.

■ DESTINATIONS

16 Launceston – Tassie's top town.

20 Solo train travel is the new singles favourite holiday – go for the Ghan!

24 Five highlights of the Maldives.

28 Morocco's mystery city – Tangiers.

■ INSPIRATION

32 Tasting the best of Indian traditional food.

35 Meet the greatest army of warriors – the Terracotta Warriors of China.

■ CRUISING

42 Cruise to find the ancient tales of the Last Samuri of Japan.

47 Mixing it up onboard with an intergenerational family.

52 Accessible cruising.

54 Luxury cruising through Indonesia.

MyDiscoveries

MY DISCOVERIES TEAM

General Manager
Janeece Keller

Features Editor
Bev Malzard

Digital Editor
Alison Godfrey

Staff Writer
Sophie Cullen

Designer
Jon Wolfgang Miller

Contributors

Alison Godfrey; Sue Wallace; Bev Malzard; Rob McFarland; Bethany Plinth; Roderick Eime; Tiana Templeman; Julie Jones; Wendy Fernandes.

Contact

f @mydiscoveries
g @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



TO MARKET, to market...

Traditions dating back hundreds of years come into play at the charming and twinkling Christmas markets throughout Europe. Anyone for gluhwein?

SUE WALLACE





RATHAUSPLATZ IN FRONT OF THE NEO-GOTHIC CITY HALL

There's no better way to discover the charm of Europe's many wonderful Christmas markets than with a mug of steaming gluhwein laced with cinnamon and cloves, in hand.

The delicious aroma of roasting chestnuts is often in the air as you wander by wooden chalets decked with twinkling fairy lights, bright baubles and fresh holly and pine tree branches.

Intricate beaded Christmas decorations, timber toys, handmade soap, felt slippers and treats that are almost too pretty to eat top the list of must-haves as Yuletide fever sets in.

Christmas markets start from mid-November and by early December are in full swing across Europe as crowds flock to buy gifts for family and friends and stock up on goodies for Christmas stockings.

There's keen competition among European cities when it comes to the best Christmas market accolade but each one has something special to offer.

The market circuit has become a huge tourist attraction for Christmas revellers who wander along cobbled stone streets to pretty squares where markets have been held for centuries. Here are some of the best:

AUSTRIA

Austria stages some of the oldest and prettiest Christmas markets with many dating back to the Middle Ages.

Vienna has 20 markets in the city with stunning historical buildings as dramatic backdrops.

Rathausplatz in front of the neo-Gothic City Hall is a sight to behold with more than 150 chalets stocked with wooden houses, puppets, gingerbread hearts, leather clothing and woollen hats. There's a big skating rink



BATH, UNITED KINGDOM

and children can learn to make Christmas cookies.

The glorious Belvedere and Schonbrunn palaces, Altes AKH - a former hospital and Maria-Theresien Platz look amazing in their Christmas garb. Gingerbread, cheese, meats, punch and wine from regional producers feature at the Advent pleasure market at the Opera House.

Salzburg and Innsbruck markets are just as magical.

GERMANY

Cologne, Hamburg, Worms, Leipzig, Nuremberg and Stuttgart stage great markets while Berlin goes all out boasting more than 60. Gendarmenmarkt is one of the most popular and there's nothing like enjoying a traditional bratwurst and German ale while listening to

traditional carols.

Dresden's ancient Christmas market, Striezelmarkt started 583 years ago and is known for its traditional crafts. Mulled wine cups are designed and produced locally, in Neukirch in East Saxony by Kannegießer Keramik.

FRANCE

Strasbourg in eastern France is known for its pretty markets that started in 1570. The lofty Great Christmas Tree, a towering spruce that looms over Place Kleber attracts big crowds. Taste French Yuletide treats including pain d'épices with ginger, clove, cardamom, anise, and other spices and menele cookies in the shape of St Nicolas along with local Alsatian wine.

Another star market is at Colmar,

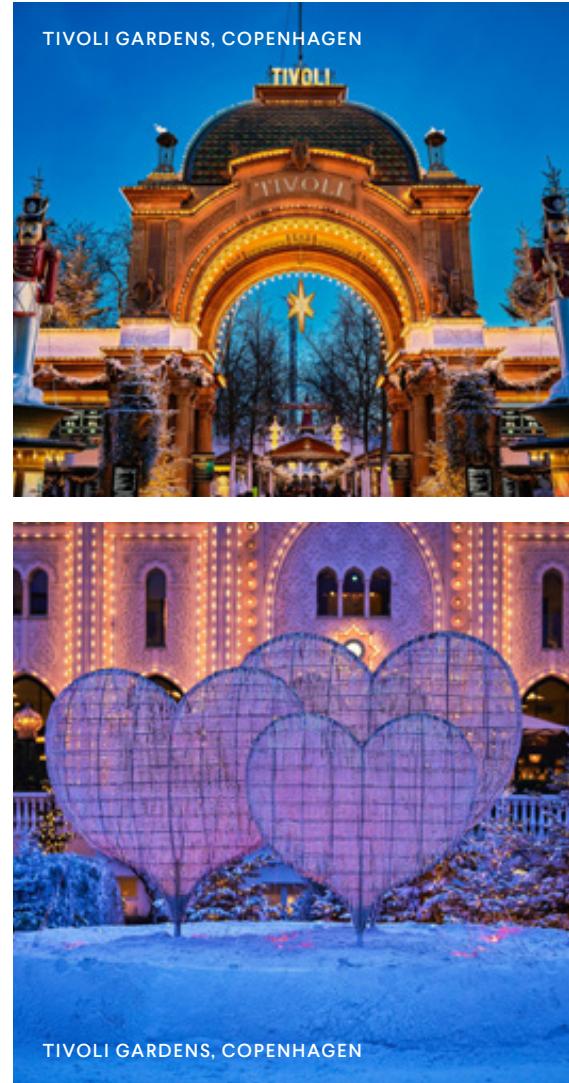
located between Strasbourg and Mulhouse.

ITALY

There are stocking fillers galore at the Florence market where the beautiful Franciscan Basilica Piazza Santa Croce stands. Piazza del Duomo has a nativity scene and an impressive Christmas tree, which is lit up on 8 December as part of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. In Trento, the gateway to the Dolomites, there are 90 wooden stalls showcasing local food including sheep's cheese and dried orange slices in the Piazza Fiera and Piazza Cesare Battisti.

SWEDEN

Glogg is the popular Christmas drink spiced with cinnamon, apple, and brandy at Sweden's Christmas



markets including Gothenburg where there's a three kilometre twinkling Lane of Lights.

The city's Liseberg Amusement Park is home to Sweden's largest Christmas market with more than 80 stalls, an ice-skating rink and real reindeer.

NORWAY

Dried reindeer meat, moose burgers and beautiful Christmas trees from Trondelag Woods feature at Trondheim's market square. Visit during the beautiful blue hour which gives everything outdoors a magical blue glow.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague's Old Town Square and Wenceslas Square are the homes of stunning Christmas markets where you will find mulled wine

and barbecued pork or trdelník, a hot, rolled pastry rolled in cinnamon and sugar and cooked over a grill.

ESTONIA

The Tallinn Christmas Market is where the first Christmas tree was displayed in Europe in front of the town hall back in 1441. Black pudding and sour cabbage are the local treat and can be tried in the Town Hall Square where Santa and his sleigh pulled by a team of reindeers often drops by.

DENMARK

Copenhagen's historic Tivoli Gardens puts on a spectacular show with 1000 Christmas trees and 70,000 Christmas baubles plus 27 fun rides and a cosy Christmas market full of goodies.

UNITED KINGDOM

Bath stages a spectacular Christmas market with more than 180 light-strewn stalls around the iconic Roman Baths and Abbey.

In Manchester you can visit a European market in Albert Square, a German-style market at St Ann's Square and French-themed stalls at King Street.

No matter which Christmas market you visit – it's easy to fall under the spell of fairy tale festivities, twinkling lights, local treats and spicy gluhwein.

PLANNING FOR A EUROPEAN WINTER?

f @mydiscoveries
@ @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
 1300 404 606



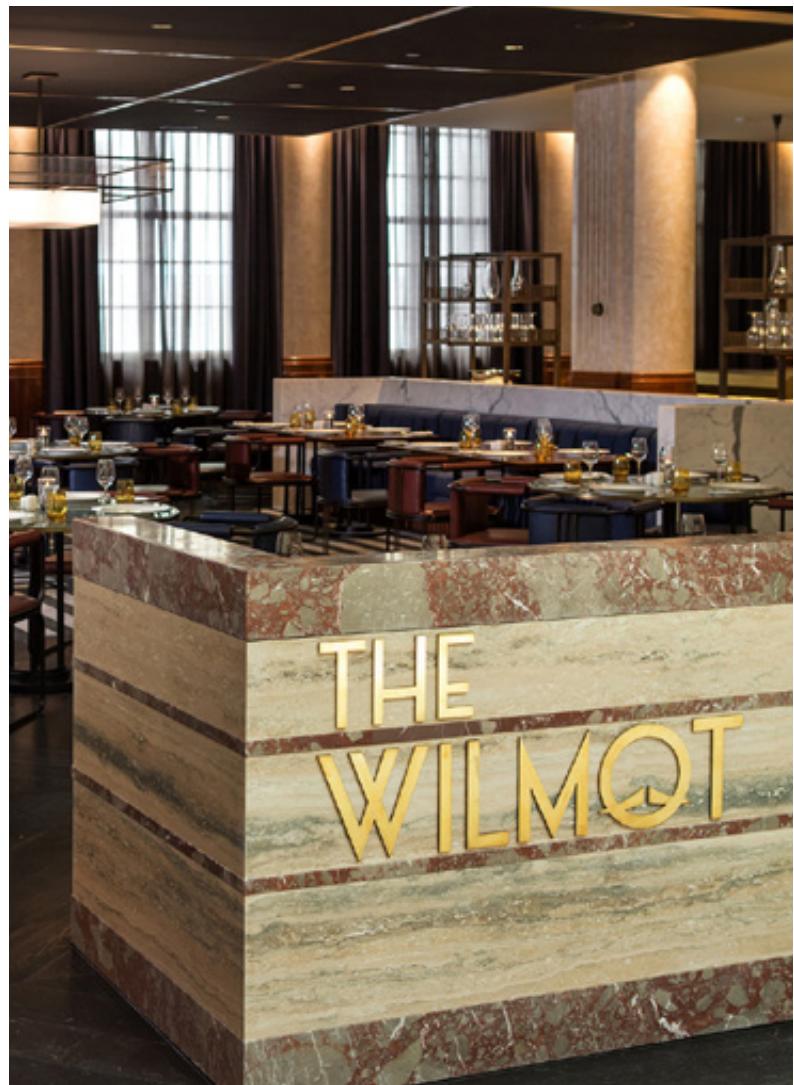
Primus Hotel Sydney

Want a classy staycation in Sydney or heading to the big smoke for a holiday? Enjoy comfort with history and heritage.

BEV MALZARD



PRESIDENTIAL SUITE



When is a hotel not a hotel? Well, it's always a hotel if it's a hotel! But if it's not a tall, shiny new property, a sprawling resort, a boutique, bespoke building – it just might be a hotel created within an historic building that still has the bones of the past, the ambience of a bygone era and the gravitas of heritage.

One such property is Sydney's lovely Primus Hotel. This mighty building was built in 1939 as home to the Metropolitan Water Sewage and Drainage Board (M.W.S & D. Board), not the most charming of names for such a splendid edifice but it worked tirelessly to perform its duties and to welcome the public in to pay their water bills.

It was considered such an architectural superstar that Queen Elizabeth II paid a visit here as part of the itinerary of the royal visit to Australia in 1954.

In 2008, 339 Pitt Street was listed as a heritage item of the Sydney Local Environment Plan and listed on the State Heritage Register of New South Wales.

The building was deserted by the M.W.S & D. Board around 2009 when the staff were relocated to Sydney's western suburbs.

And the rest is new history! Down the quiet end of town where the building in all its anonymous glory had been languishing, there was much work afoot.

In 2015 after considered restoration, respect for the architectural heritage and commercial savvy, the building opened as Sydney's newest five-star art deco hotel, Primus Hotel Sydney.

The façade employs such materials popular in the 1930s such as natural stone, timbers, bronze,

copper and aluminium.

Above the entrance are low relief bronze panels depicting the water industry and its technological progression. (Originally designed by Stanley James Hammond, the panels have been restored to their original mellow beauty.)

Entering the lobby is a gasp-worthy moment. There's not a space in Sydney that compares. The amazing scagliola columns stand as proud as when they were imagined in 1939. Eight metres high, they were entrusted to Italian master craftsmen, The Melocco Brothers.

Look up, look up and follow the stretch of the columns and see the Plummer Skylights – insulating the lobby from noise, heat and cold.

The hotel is located in Pitt Street Sydney and handy to a glut of fabulous restaurants, cafes, bars



and pubs. Public transport (buses and trains, easy to get to) and for a great package book for a couple of nights and go to the Capital Theatre for a show.

(The hotel runs informal heritage tours through the hotel on Fridays.)

There are 171 generous sized rooms that are decorated in subtle shades with slashes of colours from the past that have never gone out of fashion. Refinement is the buzz word for the accommodation.

There's a pool on the roof (Level 7) which is unusual for a Sydney hotel, but most welcome on a hot day. Hang out here and if you aren't

taking a dip, enjoy a snack and cocktail around the pool. Level 7 has been inspired by New York style rooftop bars (but with better Sydney weather).

As well as the elegance and welcome ambience at the hotel, the top billing is the restaurant. The Wilmot is an open area that is modern and inviting. The food takes hotel food to another level, with scrumptious produce, brilliant execution and artful presentation, thanks to Executive Chef Daniel Menzies.

For a staycation or if you're heading to Sydney, enjoy history,

heritage and a buzzy part of Sydney while staying in a hotel in its prime.

Writer Bev Malzard, visited the hotel recently and enjoyed a tasty lunch and is planning a sortie on the hotel to have afternoon tea which the hotel boasts about. OK, show me the honey!

WANT TO SEE MORE OF SYDNEY?

f @mydiscoveries
g @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



CHEF DANIEL MENZIES

FIVE FACTS

1

The building was completed after Australia had entered WWII. Instead of Level 7 being fitted out as a rooftop garden as originally envisioned, the roof was converted into a small arms testing range (rifle range).

2

The building was used as a backdrop for Angelina Jolie's film *Unbroken*, a WWII feature film made in 2013.

3

In 1939 this was the tallest building in Sydney.

4

Scagliola is a technique for producing stucco columns, sculptures and other architectural elements that resemble inlays of marble and semi precious stones.

5

Daniel Menzies is executive chef at The Wilmot and brings 19 years of experience in both International and Australian kitchens to the table. Daniel has a swag of prestigious culinary awards but a surprise one stands out - Doug Moran Portrait Prize - so take a good look at how your food looks on the plate!



TALKING TO A brick wall

Guerilla art is now great art. Walls become artworks and silos the grand canvasses of rural towns. Once was graffiti, is now urban engagement and licence to paint the town red.

BEV MALZARD





It probably began 45,000 years ago in Australia; community minded fellas worked their magic art onto the walls of caves to let passing nomadic clans see what food was available, attractions in the region and objects to be found or maybe just to show off their talent. Rock art galleries started it all.

For thousands of years, human beings have made their mark upon plain surfaces, from stick men to tag-style graffiti.

And when someone criticised the wall vandals of the 80s with the sentence "Punks can't spell Cappuccino", that phrase became official graffiti and the wall expression medium had arrived, evolved and gained acceptance by the less-than-art-critical-public.

Pre 'acceptable' wall art in New York City, of the 70s gave birth to excessive public graffiti – think subway trains. In one of his essays back in the day, Norman Mailer said New York subway graffiti is "the great art of the 70s". And it burned brightly until Mayor Ed



Koch, elected on a clean-up-the-city every which way platform, scrubbed clean the city. By the mid-80s NYC graffiti had faded quietly and what was left or came later became the acceptable norm.

Across the Atlantic, enigmatic artist Banksy launched his wall art career in his home town, Bristol. Stencils became his medium as his art gained notoriety on a big scale

in the late 1990s.

Banksy's work sneaks up on you. Characteristic of the works are the obvious digs at hypocrisy, violence, greed and authoritarianism but pathos and whimsy are in the creative makeup too.

There have been plaintiff cries of outrage that some of Banksy's work has been painted over by other artists. No worries. His works and



the art of most wall art specialists are not forever, just a fleeting expression from the artists and the *topic de jour*.

HOME GROWN ARTISTS

And at home wall art has changed the urban 'artscape' and rural regions. Australia is engaged with a stunning variety of wall/outdoor art that crept in stealthily during the late 90s too. Melbourne had the wall art advantage first up because of the surviving laneways in the inner city. And some of the most creative artists have emerged from the southern capital.

Sydney was a slow starter but every week another piece of excellent art appears on the walls in and around the inner west and on the edge of the CBD. Without a lot of laneways remaining due to concentrated development, the older, inner suburbs snatched the prize.

The big winners for wall art are the small cities and rural towns of Australia with their untouched walls. Professional wall artists including Matt Adnate, Guido van Helten, Kaff-eine, Resio, Rone, Cam Scale and Makatron are working on walls way out of the city and enriching the life of country towns.

The south east Queensland 'garden city' of Toowoomba held First Coat festivals for four consecutive years and through the laneways and backstreets, artists from near and far and embellished blank spaces.

Victoria's Benalla (Rural Street Art Capital) has had monumental success with its Wall to Wall festival since inception in 2015.

FOR MORE TO DISCOVER IN AUSTRALIA

f @mydiscoveries
g @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606

SILO, SO HIGH

Outdoor art is the the art of the 21st century. Graffiti has graduated!

The Silo Art Trail that snakes through the wheat belt of Victoria is an inspired outdoor gallery. A couple of hours outside Ballarat and you are on your way.

The concept of having the towering (up to 27m), cylindrical concrete towers as the canvas for murals started with Guido van Helten's stupendous 'Farmer Quartet' in the tiny town of Brim. Wheat silos define the landscape here and honouring the farmers and the history of the silos engaged the entire community - and it was lift off.

Shaun Hossach of Juddy Roller Studios proclaims himself as a 'one-man unionist' and does the leg work, negotiating and planning for the casual collective of Australian artists. He originally worked with GrainCorp (major sponsor), Taubmans Paints (the paint supplier), Creative Victoria

and got the Government Drought Communities involved in the decommissioned silos project that has reinvigorated these towns.

First stop heading north on the 200km trail is at Rupanyup with a double modern silo decorated by Russian artist Julia Volchkova. Seeing the scope of breadth of the art works it's obvious that this type of work is not for sissies. Cherry pickers have to be 'driven'. The artists work in all weather, alone, and at a great height at the top of the canvas.

Next stop at Sheep Hills is a four-silo effort by Adnate of children of the local indigenous clan. To be dwarfed by the four lifelike faces is a privilege.

And next at Brim is the extraordinary Farmers Quartet. The vision is almost overwhelming with the subtle hues of the landscape blossoming into four characters of the region humbly portrayed. Real people modelled for this and are the modest

celebrities of the shire.

Further into The Mallee, in Lascelles is the two-silo artwork by Rone. Here is a man and a woman, fourth generation farmers curving around the soaring towers and as part of the landscape as the mallee root tree.

Top of the trail is at Patchewollock - a town to dwindling prominence that is the most isolated on the trail. Fintan Magee chose a subject from the only pub in town on his first night in Patchewollock: farmer Nick Hulland who is a reluctant pinup. But he says if it helps the town - he's happy.

Other work is in preparation for the Silo Art Trail and silos in other states have put their hand up for attention and are now inviting all to view and enjoy.

We wonder what Norman Mailer would say if he had the good fortune to witness this original and exciting art.

www.siloarttrail.com





TOP OF THE Island

Tasmania's second largest settlement is not quite the town that time forgot, more like the town that time has given a second chance to.

BEV MALZARD

QUADRANT MALL

It's a tiny island that sits at the bottom of Australia, sometimes forgotten and left off maps. But it's an island that continually punches above its weight with bravado and a self-confidence that one wonders where it comes from.

Tasmania. The capital city Hobart is the star attraction and with a few new hotels attracting curious clientele, boastful wine and food being produced, colourful festivals and the internationally applauded Mona on show – the city has amped up its street cred.

But raise your eyes to Launceston, the gateway town to the north west of Tassie that has seen traffic for more than two centuries carry the result of a thriving logging industry and tonnes of silver from local mines shipped to the mainland and all parts of the globe.

Those cash cows were behind the spirit of magnificent, elegant Georgian buildings lining the streets of Launceston and beyond. And grand manors were the stronghold and centrepiece of rural holdings.

When the fortunes of silver waned there was little to sustain Launceston except for subsistence farming on the town's perimeters and the logging trade.

From the 1950s through to the beginning of the new millennium Launceston mooched along to the beat of a slow and forgettable drum – and unlike the cities of the mainland, it kept its head down when the rash of developers were making their mark on the rubble of the past in other cities.

While heritage buildings were being ripped from their sandstone bases and demolished in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne (less so) to make way for modern high rise and more than often rather bad architecture, Launceston quite frankly couldn't afford to set a



demolition plan into action, so the stylish Georgian institutions and homes either shut up shop or continued on their dogged way to stay standing.

Now these beautiful buildings are the pride of Tassie, and Launceston welcomes visitors to view the grand buildings and learn the history and mystery behind them.

The pride in the city is evident as parks and gardens are spruce; food and wine are proudly displayed – and imbibed, and the Tamar River is at the heart of things as it stretches 70km. It is from the river that the most breathtaking beauty of the Tamar Valley is on show.

WALK THE WALK

Get the best of the architecture on show by walking the streets – look up, down and sideways. Collect a heritage walks map from the Visitor Centre and follow the various trails.

Begin with a stroll through City Park and get a taste of the green city. There's a rather lovely greenhouse in the middle of the park and surprisingly a group of Japanese Macaque monkeys in an

enclosure here.

Walk through Princes Square, where in the 19th century there was a hot air balloon attempt, and two bushrangers were hanged here, and the petty fountain was purchased from the Paris Exhibition of 1858. Layered and chequered history.

Along George Street there's a fine terrace of Victorian shops, the huge Johnstone and Wilmot store (1842) and the solid complex of Public Building fronting Cameron, St John and Paterson Streets.

A cutie in George Street is the Umbrella Shop. And it's full of umbrellas of all sorts with vintage brollies on display. The shop is run by volunteers and the women here are up for a laugh and a natter about Launceston.

Next up is QVMAG Museum at Inveresk, it's free entry and features hands-on education for kids (and big kids). You pull, crank, touch and switch your way around the factory.

Another area is quite melancholy – it's the preserved railway workshops where the men who worked here just downed tools and walked out – it is in a state of stasis

and a little ghostlike.

And there's the splendid QVMAG Art Gallery Royal Park, home to changing art, photography and sculpture exhibitions. Vast galleries present local and international shows.

You can take an escorted Heritage Walk too, wherein a local will give you the lowdown on gossip, scandals and tales of rogues and rascals who left their mark on Launceston.

VINO VERITAS

There are some of the country's most productive and lauded wineries in this part of the island. Head for Josef Chromy, who has been instrumental to the Tasmanian food and wine industry having owned and developed some of Tassie's leading wineries including Rochecombe (now Bay of

Fires), Jansz, Heemskerk and Tamar Ridge.

Joe fled his war torn Czech village in 1950 as a penniless 19-years-old after 11 years of Nazi and Soviet occupation. He escaped borders guarded by minefields, dogs and soldiers, suffering five month's privation before immigrating to Australia.

Over the next 40 years he used his skills as a master butcher to build his business, Blue Ribbon Meat Products. In 1993 Blue Ribbon was floated on the Australian Stock Exchange and Josef then invested in Tasmania's fledgling wine industry. And now in his late 70s he is still active in the industry.

Have lunch here with a view over the lake and vineyards.

GORGEOUS GORGE

Launceston's most popular tourist

attraction and a fave chill place for locals, Cataract Gorge is beautiful and ideal for a walk or picnic – or a swim if the weather is hot enough.

Walk across the suspension bridge and try to name some of the wide range of flora that grows here.

There's a café, the world's longest single-span chairlift, a free outdoor pool and the gorge is only 10 minute's drive from downtown Launceston.

So, just when you think you've seen all the major cities in Australia, take time for a little trip to Launceston, be surprised, charmed and delighted to see what all the fuss is about.

FOR MORE ABOUT TASMANIA

f @mydiscoveries

g @mydiscoveries

info@mydiscoveries.com.au

www.mydiscoveries.com.au

1300 404 606



FIVE HIGHLIGHTS

1 Check in to Two Four Two Apartments, a cosy place in the best street with Café Mondello for brilliant coffee and a tasty breakfast.

2 Follow up with a stay at the new, luxury extravaganza on the banks of the Tamar - Peppers Silo Hotel. Dating back to the 1960's, the heritage building which spanned 35 metres high containing grain in four large silos, is an iconic landmark converted into a sophisticated nine-storey hotel providing a unique place to stay in Launceston.

3 Eat at Still Water, one of the island's most applauded eating places.

4 Don't miss a visit to pretty Evandale Village for Sunday markets with local produce and craft and the famous Penny Farthing race and village fair, held every February.

5 Take one of a variety of cruises on the Tamar river. Australian kitchens to the table. Daniel has a swag of prestigious culinary awards but a surprise one stands out - Doug Moran Portrait Prize – so take a good look at how your food looks on the plate!



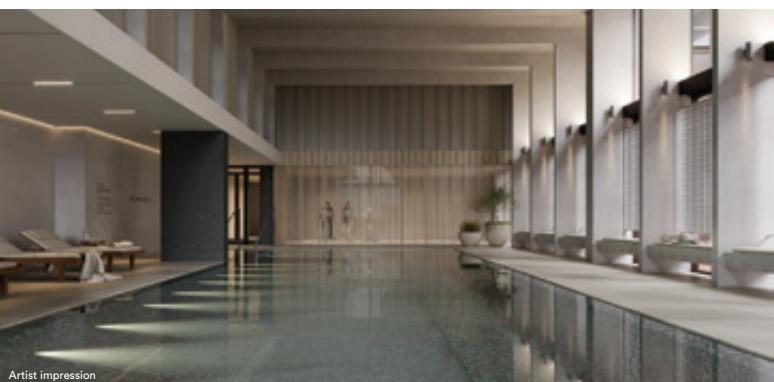
Discover Richmond's Newest Address

Exclusive to over 55s

Situated in the iconic GTV9 precinct on Bendigo Street, discover an incredible community where you'll live effortlessly connected with the city's soul on your doorstep. Here you'll discover;

- Spacious apartments with sweeping views and secure basement parking - designed around a lively central garden
- Stunning facilities including a rooftop terrace, wellness centre, cafe and more designed by Melbourne architects Bates Smart
- A social community with the best neighbours
- A convenient location with shops, trams and medical facilities only minutes away

**BE PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL,
FIND YOUR NEW HOME TODAY**



VISIT OUR SALES CENTRE

Cnr Bendigo & Khartoum Street, Richmond to chat to our friendly team.
Call Stewart on 0408 345 to find out more or visit richmondretirementliving.com

richmondretirementliving.com.au | 8610 4889

TM00000009

Information about services and facilities is correct at time of printing. Photographs are for illustrative purposes and may depict items not provided by Lendlease, like furniture. May 2019. Published by Lendlease RL Realty (VIC) Pty Ltd ABN 55 124 646 484







TRAVELLING SOLO ON **The Ghan**

**A cosy cabin all to yourself, please yourself for meal times –
solo train trips are the new journeys for singles.**

TIANA TEMPLEMAN



MANGURI BONFIRE



Travelling on The Ghan takes you deep into the heart of Australia, on a journey that is widely regarded as one of the world's great train trips. It is 90 years since The Ghan began its inaugural journey and special celebrations are planned in 2019 to celebrate the anniversary.

While many people travel on The Ghan as a couple, having the freedom to please yourself during such a remarkable travel experience is one of the great joys of doing this trip solo. An overnight train journey like The Ghan is the ideal holiday for singles, with the perfect mix of socialising and quiet contemplation, plus there is no need to dine alone.

The Ghan also helps single travellers say goodbye (and good riddance) to the dreaded 'single supplement' with single Gold Class sleeper cabins. This compact accommodation features a bed that converts to a seat by day and modern shower/toilet facilities at the end of each carriage with excellent water pressure and brand name toiletries. If you don't like 'going backwards' on trains, request a cabin facing the direction of travel when you book.

Single cabins on The Ghan are cosy so it is more comfortable if you check your suitcase and bring a small carry on for the journey. If you are staying at a central hotel in either Darwin or Adelaide, you can request a complimentary pick up from your accommodation. Checked luggage is tagged and made available for collection at your final destination.

One of the great joys of this trip is socialising with other travellers in the lounge (bar) car. The atmosphere is chatty and convivial rather than boozy, the chairs are comfy and the scenery is superb. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are included in the fare, so there is no need to worry about blowing your holiday budget if you fancy a coffee or a glass of wine.

Passengers on The Ghan tend to be well-travelled and excellent company, with plenty of interesting tales to tell. Even if you don't fancy a drink, the lounge car is a lovely spot to read, relax and watch the scenery roll by or chat with like-minded fellow travellers before dinner.

As there isn't enough room for everyone to eat in the restaurant at the same time, your cabin attendant will tell you what time your lunch and dinner bookings are each day. These can be early or quite late, such as 2.15pm for lunch, so if you have a preference make sure you get in early with your request. Breakfast is free seating anytime before 10am.

Excursions are included in the cost of the fare and include everything from bus tours to nature hikes and a cruise up Nitmiluk Gorge at Katherine. Some truly



amazing excursions are also available at an additional cost, such as camel riding in Alice Springs and a helicopter trip over the gorge at Katherine. These are booked onboard so if you are thinking of upgrading to the helicopter tour, for example, you can check the weather before you reach for your wallet.

When you book your journey on The Ghan, allow a couple of days to explore Adelaide and Darwin, the two destinations at the beginning and end of the trip. Darwin offers the chance to go on a sunset sailing trip, explore the Australian Aviation Heritage Centre or visit Litchfield National Park on a day tour with AAT Kings.

In Adelaide, you can enjoy a day or overnight trip to one of South Australia's wine regions or explore Adelaide's many galleries. Just one more reason to do this epic rail journey which draws travellers from around the globe.

ALL ABOARD FOR MORE TRAIN TRAVEL?

f @mydiscoveries
@ @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



5 THINGS TO DO IN THE **Maldives**

There's more to this beguiling tropical nation than just overwater bungalows and turquoise lagoons.

ROB MCFARLAND



ANANTARA KIHAVAH -
STARGAZING AT SKY



1. STUDY THE STARS

Thanks to a lack of ambient light pollution, the Maldives is a great place to star gaze. Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas has the region's most powerful telescope, a research-grade installation with sweeping views of both hemispheres. Resident astronomer Ali Shameem offers weekly guided star gazing sessions where guests can marvel at Saturn's rings, Jupiter's moons and the billions of stars comprising the Milky Way. The best bit? The telescope is next to Sky, the resort's spectacular rooftop bar, so you can observe the heavens with a glass of champagne in hand (skykihavahmaldives.com).



2. DINE IN THE DEEP

Get a different perspective on the Maldives by dining underwater. At Subsix on Niyama Private Islands, guests can feast on lobster medallion and pan-seared seabass while enjoying mesmerising sub-aquatic views of the reef through floor-to-ceiling windows (niyama.com/en/dining/subsix). Sea at Anantara Kihavah Villas has a similarly spectacular setting. Submerged six metres below the ocean surface, the restaurant specialises in seafood degustation menus and has a 450-bottle wine cellar, which for the last five years has been awarded three stars by The World of Fine Wine magazine (seaunderwaterrestaurant.com).



3. CATCH A WAVE

The Maldives is justifiably famous for its tranquil, turquoise lagoons, but thanks to a plethora of coral reefs, it's also home to some seriously good surfing. Niyama is the only luxury resort with a surf point breaking directly onto the island – a powerful left-hander that has its very own surf school right next door. Five minutes west by speedboat is Kasabu, a glorious right-hander, and when the big swells move in, experienced riders can try Hocus Pocus at Maeenboodhoo Corner and Vodi at Niyama Corner. Not a surfer? Don't worry, Niyama's surf bar is also the best place to watch the sunset (niyama.com).

4. HELP SAVE THE REEF

Thanks to global warming and the effects of El Nino, a cyclical weather event that raises sea temperatures, almost all of the Maldives' once pristine coral reefs have been affected by bleaching. In 2010, Anantara launched a coral reef adoption programme so that guests can help accelerate the reef's regeneration. At Anantara Dhigu, Anantara Veli, Naladhu Maldives and Niyama Private Islands, guests can work with a marine biologist to plant healthy coral in a reef nursery and then track its progress via photo updates (anantara.com/en/dhigu-maldives/coral-adoption).



5. GET YOUR HEART PUMPING

Think the Maldives is all about eating, drinking and lying by the pool? Think again. Most resorts offer a wide range of activities, from gentle pursuits such as kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding to more intrepid options such as big game fishing and jet skiing. Feeling adventurous? How about parasailing 120 metres above the ocean behind a speedboat? Or careering around a lagoon wearing a James Bond-style jet pack? Niyama Private Islands offers all of the above plus many other adrenaline-fuelled activities including wakeboarding, tubing and kitesurfing (niyama.com).





The city of pleasure

Tangier, a name that conjures myth, legends and exotic stories of decadence and intrigue - go see for yourself.

BEV MALZARD



There's the labyrinthine medina, an expat dream town, cafes and souks, tempting tagines – so much to uncover in Morocco's **top town**. It's a city on the edge, always has been, in every way. It squats at the northernmost tip of Africa just 14km across the narrow Strait of Gibraltar connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, which separates Gibraltar and Peninsula Spain in Europe from Morocco and Ceuta in Africa.

This city is more than a destination, it is a heady escape that has attracted spies, outlaws, outcasts, and writers for centuries.

All imaginable pleasures were to be had here, back in the 1950s characters such as Errol Flynn, Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton and Ava Gardner did their best to establish Tangier as the last word in louche and hedonism, while writers William Burroughs, Jane and Paul Bowles sought out the dark side of depravity and drug addled derangement. This was Tangier offering a haven to those who pushed the artistic boundaries of creativity.

In the 20th century writers drawn to Tangier wrote some of the most influential and incendiary works of our time. *The Naked Lunch*, *The Sheltering Sky* were two of those novels that influenced the beat generation and future hipsters.

Tangier has been a strategic gateway between Europe and Africa since Phoenician times. There are some startlingly lovely buildings in the city with its whitewashed hillside medina: Moorish mansions, French villas and palaces converted to museums.

This is an enigmatic city that begs to be explored, so take your time and take a glimpse into modern Tangier.



1. THE AMERICAN LEGATION: restored (from shabby obscurity) the American Legation in the medina is a 1982 Moorish former consulate, which documents early diplomatic (very peaceful and businesslike) relations between the U.S. and Morocco (the kingdom of Morocco was the first country to recognise American Independence). The first American public property outside the United States, it commemorates the historic cultural and diplomatic relations between the United States and the Kingdom of Morocco. It is now officially called the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies, and is a cultural centre, museum, and a research library, concentrating on Arabic language studies.

2. STAY IN THE FABULOUS HOTEL VILLA DE FRANCE, a hotel with its own secrets and list of celebrity guests. Biggest name has to be the French impressionist Henri Matisse, who stayed at the hotel in 1912 and 1913. He painted some of his great works here because of the inspiration of bright, clear African light, vivid colours and the soft sensuality of the landscape and gardens.

His room is still in the Hotel Villa de France, room 35, and a few notes change hands to obtain a night's stay here. It's not glamorous or elaborate, just a sensible double bedroom with ensuite. But – it has the fenetre which is the window to Tangier!

The most famous painting from that hotel room period though is "Landscape Viewed From a Window". There's a copy of the painting in room 35.



3. LEAVE THE HOTEL BEHIND

BEHIND and across the road we see the square white steeple of St Andrew's English church, now nearly hidden by date palms and evergreens. St Andrew's Church is one of the more curious buildings of Tangier. Completed in 1890 on land granted by Sultan Hassan, the interior of this Anglican church is decorated in high Fassi style, with the Lord's Prayer in Arabic curving over the altar.

The graveyard yields history wherein the journalist, socialite and traveller Walter Harris is buried here, along with Squadron Leader Thomas Kirby Green, one of the prisoners of war shot during the 'Great Escape'. There is also a sobering section of war graves of entire downed aircrews, their headstones attached shoulder to shoulder.

4. THE MEDINA MAZE NOW, INTO THE MEDINA.

(A medina is the old walled city.)

Across from the church enter the corner of the medina where the bazaar area of the grand souk (markets) stretch through colourful alleyways.

From baskets, to ropes, to carved sticks (to hit what?), hand made cheeses, fruit juices (try the pomegranate), stalls groaning with mountains of olives of all persuasions and flavours, hats, sweets, dates, breads (the staple food of Moroccans), butchers with nose to tail pieces on display (and so clean and fly-free), camel meat with the obligatory head (real one) hanging to advertise the fact that this is real camel meat, shoes, buckets and nuts of all sorts, fat and fresh.

Walking though the crowded curved alleys of food and noise and

people jostling, Berber tribal woman wearing wide-brimmed conical hats with pompoms, and children darting through the melee carrying stacks of flat bread is a dizzying sensation – but every step is rewarded with a bold sensation. Just step aside for the donkey carts.

Food is a dream here. Fresh vegetables, subtle spices, fruit and centuries-old cuisine that has been refined by many invaders, protectorates, governing bodies, religions – there's something for everyone.

5. FOOD

Be warned – bring your appetite to Morocco. Food servings are big and hearty. Must eats are the traditional tagines, meat, fowl or vegetable, cous cous. Tagines are basically an aromatic stew cooked with a thick sauce with fruits such as prunes and dates; harira is a delicious soup



normally made from chick peas; pastille – a dish made from pigeon meat, rice and egg and covered with a sweet filo pastry – sounds weird but – it's scrumptious.

If you fancy a glass of wine with your dinner you will have to hunt out a shop, but most good hotels and restaurants have a wine list, and wine is produced in Morocco so give it a try.

Due to legal restrictions of Morocco being a Muslim country, remember that drinking in public is prohibited.

6. TAKE IN THE SUNSET

VIEWS of the harbour after walking through the medina that tumbles down to the sea. The old homes are hidden and only a fancy or perhaps a modest door and decorated doorway indicates that there's life behind the door. It can be a vast riad (a type of

traditional Moroccan house or palace with an interior garden or courtyard). Homes and shops are all spick and span and the houseproud Moroccans keep their entrances well-swept and houses and windows painted fresh and in pretty colours.

7. AND SHOPPING. Leather slippers called babouche (French for slippers), argan oil, lanterns, wonderful leather goods, beautifully decorated pottery and carpets and mats are in abundance and on display, art every corner. Shopping here is a sport and the prizes are great indeed.

8. TAKE A TANGIER SIDE

TRIP: Cap Spartel marks Africa's tip. The promontory projects into the water, marking the boundary of the Mediterranean Sea with the Atlantic Ocean. For atmosphere,

the best time to come here is at sunset, when you can see dusk settle over the Atlantic.

This is Tangier, short on conventional attractions but it's the artfully aged fabric of the city itself – the magnificent ruination of the Cervantes theatre, the lush graveyard gardens of St Andrew's church, or the casbah walls' tiled starbursts – which supplies the spectacle. The sights come thick and fast in a city where its compactness is a big slice of its charm.

*The writer travelled with
www.bypriorarrangement.com*

READ MORE ABOUT MOROCCO

f [@mydiscoveries](https://www.instagram.com/mydiscoveries)
g [@mydiscoveries](https://www.instagram.com/mydiscoveries)
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



Tasting India

Spice is nice in the aromatic foods of India.
Here are the basic dishes not to miss.

BETHANY PLINT



PAKORAS

If you ask someone who has travelled to India about the cuisine, the first thing they'll tell you is that it's different to the watered-down version on offer in the west. They might also mention how vegetarian-friendly it is. In India, every dish is packed with flavour from a variety of spices, but most feature the essentials: cumin, garam masala, turmeric, and, of course, chilli powder.

PAKORA

Pakoras are a favourite comfort food for locals. You'll find dozens of street vendors selling different varieties of this fried snack, and they're almost always served in the home for guests because they're easy to make in big batches. Pakoras are essentially fried clumps of battered vegetables, served with chutney. Most recipes recommend choosing one or two vegetables. Potatoes, cauliflower, eggplant, onion and spinach are popular inclusions. The batter consists of chickpea flour, with a generous



MASALA DOSA

sprinkling of garam masala, chilli powder and coriander. One spoonful at a time, these glorious treats turn golden brown in a deep pan of oil or ghee (clarified butter). The locals dip them in mint chutney and tomato sauce!

DOSA

India's answer to the savoury crepe. The first things you'll notice about these crispy treats is their size. They're enormous. Indians consider

these a "snack", but you may want to share one. A classic dosa masala requires a good batter made from rice flour, dal (lentils), fenugreek seeds and salt. Once the 'crepe' is cooked on a flat, round iron, the dosa is stuffed with spiced potatoes. The dosa comes with chutneys and sambar; a lentil and vegetable sauce that usually has a bit of kick to it. (I have this for breakfast every day when in India: Editor)



SAMOSA

SAMOSA

Samosas are perhaps the most well-known Indian snack. Shapes vary by region but they're usually folded into a triangles. Common fillings include mashed potatoes, onions, peas, lentils and sultanas. The dough is rolled flat, folded into a cone shape, then stuffed, pinched at the top and fried.

CHAI MASALA

In India, chai is a way of life, or so I read on many a gift shop t-shirt. The term translates to tea with spices. The core ingredients are black (Assam) tea, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger and peppercorns. Recipes vary by household and are often seasonal. In summer, they use cooler spices such as tamarind and fennel seeds. During winter, nutmeg and cinnamon feature prominently.

The locals prefer their chai with lots of sugar but you can ask for it without. Enjoy it black or with milk.

BREAD PAKORA

This is a common street food among locals but many foreigners don't seem to understand the hype. Imagine the sandwich triangles you put in your kids' lunchboxes – battered and deep fried. The main question is, why? Because Indians love fried food. Also known as bread bhajis, these pakora-style sandwiches usually come with a spiced mashed potato filling. After a good dunk in a bowl of chickpea batter, they're submerged in a pool of molten-hot oil or ghee.

THALIS

More of an eating style than a food on its own, a Thali-style dinner is an



BREAD PAKORA

essential Indian experience. It's like an all-you-can-eat buffet, but with your own personal servings. Waiters will come around and top up your dishes constantly. A thali is a type of round serving plate with multiple bowls and sections. Usually, you would choose your selection of dishes by region. Southern Indian cuisine is usually coconut-based, whereas northern or Rajasthan food tends to contain more dairy and meat-based curries.

JEERA ALOO

Potatoes are a huge part of Indian cooking. Most home cooked meals contain an element of protein (lentils or meat), rice, bread and vegetables. Jeera aloo, or cumin potatoes, are a popular (and delicious) vegetable side dish. They're not too spicy either, so

they're great for kids easing into Indian cuisine. Diced potatoes are shallow fried and tossed with cumin seeds, turmeric, curry powder, salt and pepper, then finished off with a squeeze of lemon.

ROTI

Flatbreads are an essential element of most Indian meals. Something that will surprise westerners is that Indians rarely eat, let alone cook naan bread. Traditional naan bread requires a clay oven, something most households don't have. It requires a lot of time and effort to knead the dough, and the flour required is difficult to digest. For these reasons, naan is more of a special occasion food. But that's not to say Indians don't eat their fair share of breads. Paratha, chapati, poori, kachori, bhakri, parithi, appam; I could go on. Each bread differs by choice of flour and cooking method. Most are relatively easy to make at home and form an integral part of every main meal.

ALOO GOBI

This vegetarian dish is simple but flavoursome and wildly popular all over India, Pakistan and Nepal. The English translation, 'potato & cauliflower', reveals the two main ingredients. The other elements include cumin, chilli powder, ginger, garlic and, most importantly, turmeric which gives the dish its signature yellow colour.

Try as many different dishes as you can. Quell your fears of Delhi belly by taking a few probiotics before you leave and pack some Imodium, you know, just in case.

FANCY A TRIP TO INDIA?

[f @mydiscoveries](https://www.mydiscoveries.com.au)
[@mydiscoveries](https://www.mydiscoveries.com.au)
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606





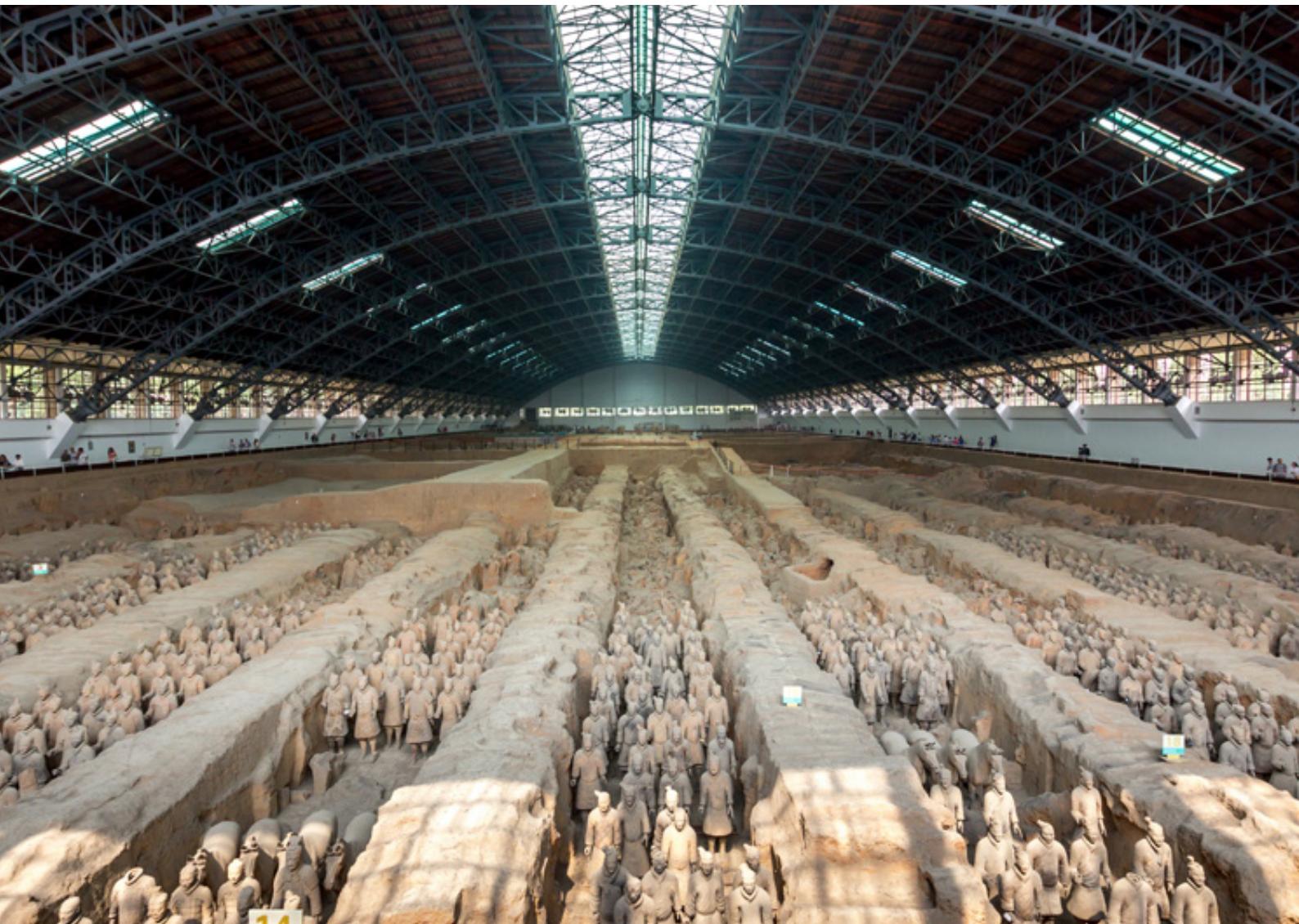
WHY YOU WILL LOVE THE

Terracotta Warriors

ALISON GODFREY







I expected the Terracotta Warriors to be lined up, facing straight, polished and secure. Instead, I'm looking at what is essentially still an archaeological dig. And that's what makes a visit here so brilliant.

Once inside Pit One, the most famous pit, you need to jostle for position to obtain that first glance. We squeeze through the crowd to the left of the main entrance and slowly push our way to the front barrier. Once there, we gaze out on row after row after row of terracotta warriors. Their outstretched hands once held flags or weapons. But many of these were stolen by farmers who ransacked the tomb following the emperor's death. Some still have scorch marks from the fire the

villagers set.

The Terracotta Warriors were the life-long project of China's first emperor Qin Shuhuang. Qin ruled from 7 May 247 BC to 220 BC. He was just 13 when he took the throne and 14 when he began to build his own tomb and the spectacular terracotta army. Emperor Qin believed the Terracotta Warriors would follow him into the afterlife and come to life as a vast army.

It's not known how many Terracotta Warriors actually exist. So far three enormous pits have been discovered. There may be more.

The sight of the Terracotta Warriors is different from Qin's tomb. That still remains untouched under a nearby mountain. Qin's body is said to be as far down as

the mountain is tall. And legend has it that it is surrounded by a mercury river. Scientific studies of the ground close to the mountain do indeed show high levels of mercury. Qin survived multiple assassination attempts but died at the age of 49 from suspected mercury poisoning. According to our guide, he drank a little bit of mercury every day because he believed it gave him superpowers.

After the Qin dynasty, the Hans took over. And in some places, you can actually see Han bones still on the ground.

It took 720,000 builders to build the Terracotta Warriors. The project took at least 30 years and many builders were locked into the building site until their deaths.

The warriors were moulded in



SPECTACULAR
BRONZE HORSES

parts, fired and then assembled. They once had brilliant colours. A few examples of colour warriors remain locked behind glass cases. But for most of them, exposure to the elements quickly faded the colour.

They're not all the same. Different ranks of soldiers have different hairstyles. Differences can also be seen on the shoes and the armour. Horses have also been uncovered.

Qin is also credited with building the first roads through China. These may perhaps be some of the first roads in the world. Archeologists are still unearthing them in the fields nearby. But it's the Terracotta Warriors that most people come to see.

As you stand overlooking

the pit, you can't help but feel overwhelmed. The soldiers in the first few rows stand at attention, facing the incoming crowd.

But it's a little further back that the magic happens.

In the middle of the pit and sprightly young man pushes a wheelbarrow up a steep slope. He's carting dirt – uncovering more ancient remains.

The Terracotta Warriors were discovered in 1974 by two farmers digging a well. For years the farmers had wondered why the crops would not grow around the area. Two more pits were discovered in 1976. In 1979 China constructed a museum over the sight and allowed tourists to view the work.

Wooden covers over the pits of soldiers had decayed over

time and the soldiers were slowly crushed and broken by soil that piled on top of them. Evidence of this destruction is still visible. Inside Vault One many Terracotta Warriors lie smashed and cracked on the sides. Slowly, piece by piece, the archaeologists are putting them back together, a jigsaw of history.

Cranes are used to hold chunks of terracotta aloft at the back of pit as horses and soldiers are slowly are carefully resurrected. Headless soldiers await their heads. Arms are splinted and other bodies lie on what looks like operating tables.

If you make the mistake of walking back out the main door instead of walking all around Vault One – you will miss this most fascinating glimpse into the work of



archaeologists.

Pit two, Pit three and the museum offer more treasures including spectacular bronze horses. The tiny bronze tassles are still the subject of archaeological discussion – how were they made? How did they get them thin?

Other sights to see in Xian include the city wall, the Muslim Quarter and the Big Wild Goose Pagoda.

For delicious noodles and dumplings head to First Noodle Under the Sun close to the Wild Goose Pagoda.

WANT TO TRAVEL TO CHINA?

f @mydiscoveries
o @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606

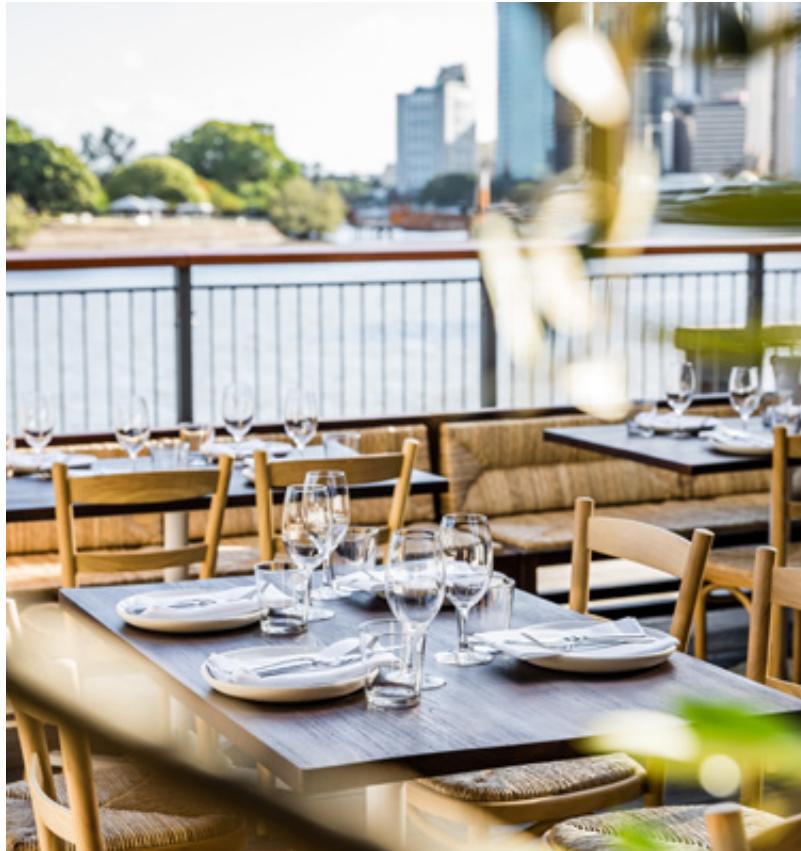


FIVE FAB FINDS IN Brisbane

While we shiver in southern Australia as winter ends, head to the balmy, warm climate of Brisbane – a city that shines with great attractions and a welcome smile.

KERRY HEANEY

MR PERCIVAL'S, HOWARD
SMITH WHARVES



1. EXPLORING UNDER THE STORY BRIDGE

How did Brisbane ever survive without the Howard Smith Wharves precinct under the Story Bridge? It is the name on everybody's lips when it comes to sundowner drinks, local beer tastings or cocktails by the river, all framed by New Farm's sheer stone cliffs.

Positioned on 3.4 hectares of overlooked land on the edge of the Brisbane River, the historic wharf buildings have been reworked to redefine Brisbane's food and leisure experiences.

The precinct includes restaurants and bars such as Greca, Arc Dining and Wine Bar, Mr Percival's and Felons Brewing Co where locally grown ingredients are turned into tasty brews. Visit: howardsmithwharves.com

2. THE INK HAS JUST DRIED

Hotly anticipated, Signature is the lux finale to the food offering at five-star Emporium Hotel South Bank. It's an extravaganza of pink marble bars, glass bubble lights, towering pink orchids and a wine library with 6,000 bottles of wine.

The menu from Executive Chefs Chris Norman and Alex Liddle has a focus on local and premium produce frequently changing with seasonality. It's fine dining with a romantic edge and sure to find favour with food lovers.

Finish your meal here with a ride in the lifts which feature surprising floor to ceiling video screens. You will think you are swimming on the Great Barrier Reef.

emporiumhotels.com.au





3. WHALE WATCHING FROM MORETON BAY

There is no need to venture far from Brisbane to catch the annual procession of Humpback whales as they migrate from Antarctica through the clear, clean waters of Moreton Bay. A day out with Captain Kerry Lopez on MV Eye Spy will put you within metres of the whales as they play, breach and blow in the bay. Turtles, dolphins, stingrays and dugongs also appear as the vessel motors along the shoreline of Moreton Island. The VIP package will see you enjoying everything in style in an exclusive lounge, including access to the wheelhouse.

Visit: brisbanewhalewatching.com.au

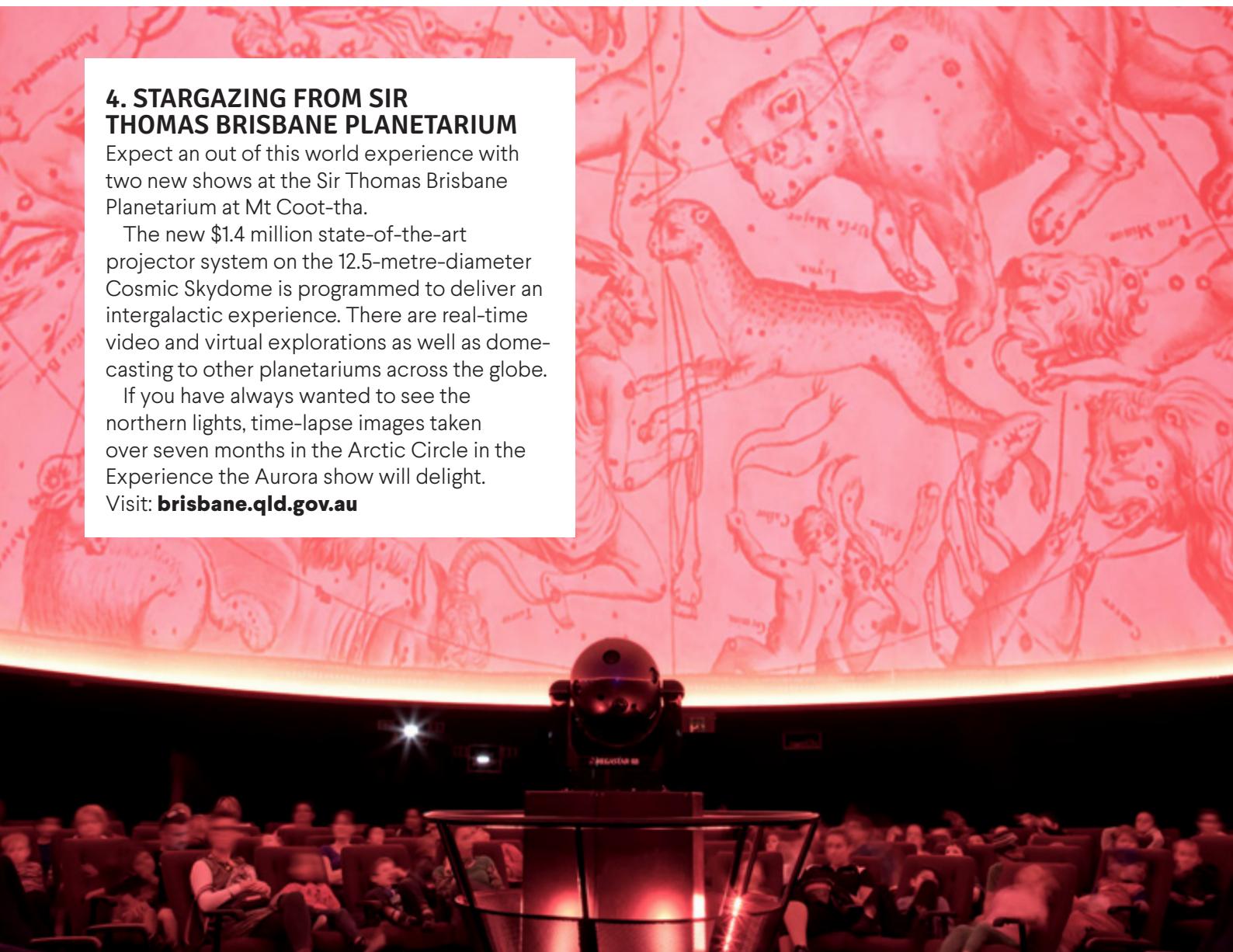
4. STARGAZING FROM SIR THOMAS BRISBANE PLANETARIUM

Expect an out of this world experience with two new shows at the Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium at Mt Coot-tha.

The new \$1.4 million state-of-the-art projector system on the 12.5-metre-diameter Cosmic Skydome is programmed to deliver an intergalactic experience. There are real-time video and virtual explorations as well as dome-casting to other planetariums across the globe.

If you have always wanted to see the northern lights, time-lapse images taken over seven months in the Arctic Circle in the Experience the Aurora show will delight.

Visit: brisbane.qld.gov.au



5. EDITOR'S PICK

Best location for me was Sage Hotel in James Street Fortitude Valley. The hotel is in the heart of the stylish James Street precinct in the 'valley'. The 93 rooms here are crafted to compliment the innovative living areas all with free Wi-Fi. The Standard rooms feature a DreamWeave Sleep System Queen bed, 48" full HD LED television, high speed Wi-Fi, movies, an espresso machine together with a stunning bathroom with a walk-in shower and stocked with revitalising SOAK amenities.

Nestled in the heart of fashionable James Street Precinct in Fortitude Valley and one of Brisbane's premium suburbs, Sage Hotel brings a melding of the traditional and modern

surrounded by designer fashion, award winning restaurants, cafes and clubs, stylish beauty salons and much more.

With parking, complimentary gym access to Function Well 24-hour Fitness and the Valley Pool, both minutes from the hotel, a complimentary chauffeur to transport you to city locations, there is always something to excite and inspire our guest within the neighbourhood.

There's no restaurant in the hotel but you'll receive a voucher for the café next door, Tippler's Tap (and they do particularly good eggs there).

Close by is the The James St Cooking School, the fabulous Gerard's Bistro for retail therapy head to Assembly Label and Kova Lifestyle.

MORE ABOUT BRISBANE?

f @mydiscoveries
o @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



REVISITING THE HOME OF THE

Last Samurai

The English have not always been welcome in Kagoshima, but time heals old wounds. We step ashore from a very British ship to find history and serenity in equal measure.

ROD EIME



SENGANEN GARDEN

The comparative tagline, 'The Naples of the Orient' is not so hard to conjure with the giant, smoking volcano, Sakurajima, ominously shadowing the southern Japanese port city of Kagoshima just as Vesuvius does in the Mediterranean.

As we move through the meticulously maintained Senganen Garden, once the site of Japan's early metalworks and armoury, the Edo-period grounds are now tranquil and all that remains of the once noisy foundry are the bare foundations. The significance of this location is not lost to present day ambivalence as Isoteien (its other official name) achieved UNESCO World Heritage status in 2015 as part of the 'Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution'.

For several centuries, Kagoshima was home to the powerful Satsuma clan, a particularly fierce dynasty of samurai of which Saigō Takamori was the last. The tough warlord's fateful resistance to the new Empire of Japan formed the inspiration for Tom Cruise's 2003 blockbuster, *The Last Samurai*, as well as James Clavell's 1993 novel, *Gai-Jin*.

Kagoshima was bombarded by the British in 1863 after the clan failed to pay reparations demanded by them following the murder of an English trader in the so-called Namamugi Incident. Saigō Takamori ultimately committed ritual suicide in 1877, thus ending the rebellion and paving the way for the city's modern foundation in 1889.

The port was historically a strategic naval base, playing vital roles for Japan in both World Wars. To the south of the port is the Chiran Peace Museum at the site of a former wartime airfield. It was from here that young men and boys flew their one and only mission as Army tokkō pilots





SAKURAJIMA AT SUNSET

of Special Attack Units (aka kamikaze). Opened in 1975, this poignant exhibit contains many personal effects, photographs and stories of these brave young souls whose sole objective was to give their life for the Emperor.

Predictably, Kagoshima was also targeted in the last few months of WWII by the US, when 120 B-29 bombers destroyed nearly half of the built-up area in a single incendiary attack.

Today the port is still a busy mercantile centre and an increasingly popular cruise destination thanks to many cultural and natural attractions in the vicinity. This is my second visit to the southwestern tip of the island of Kyushu and this time I am aboard the new Cruise & Maritime Voyages (CMV) flagship, the 1400-passenger Columbus.

Kagoshima is just one of scores of ports offered by CMV as their ships circle the globe visiting standout destinations such as Japan, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and India in Asia as well as many more in Europe,

the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa.

Columbus will be familiar to many Australian cruisers because up until 2017, she sailed with P&O Australia as Pacific Pearl and now joins the fast-growing CMV fleet as their proud new flagship.

The 10-year-old cruise line has been on something of a pre-teen growth spurt these last couple of years, expanding its fleet to six vessels with the recent acquisition of the former P&O ships, Pacific Pearl and Pacific Eden and converting them for largely child-free cruising in our waters and beyond.

CMV's style of cruising is very 'British' in the classic sense, favouring smaller, more convivial ships compared to the massive megaliners more common today. Even though Columbus represents an increase of around 150 berths over the next largest, Magellan, it does not mean a reduction in any of the services or facilities. Columbus adds 64 balcony cabins, previously in short supply in the rest of the fleet. Also in response to past guest requests, 150 cabins

have been set aside for exclusive use by solo travellers and 75 per cent of all cabins have an ocean view.

The large, two-tiered Palladium Show Lounge plays host to quality theatrical and musical productions. Two specialty restaurants, Fusion and Grill, supplement the main, two-sitting dining room, Waterfront, where I found the quality of cuisine well above that of many ships at a higher price point. Seven bars, 'pubs' and lounges ensure there is ample space to relax and enjoy the company of your companions. Popular shipboard activities include bingo (of course), trivia, arts and crafts, and even music classes where guests form their own band.

Well might we say "Britannia Rules the Waves" because CMV reminds us that 'British' may still be the way to the world.

FOR MORE CRUISE NEWS

f @mydiscoveries
o @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



COLUMBUS POOL DECK



COLUMBUS ATRIUM RECEPTION DECK



FIVE SHIPSHAPE TIPS

1

The biggest ship in the CMV fleet, Columbus, carries just 1400 passengers.

2

CMV will homeport Vasco da Gama in Adelaide and Fremantle for the 2019-2020 cruise season, offering local itineraries.

3

CMV's Astoria is a true classic ocean liner, built in 1948 for the trans-Atlantic route and rebuilt in 1994 at a cost of US\$150 million. She carries just 550 passengers.

4

More than 40 per cent of CMV guests are repeat cruisers, with a 95 per cent satisfaction rating.

5

This year, Vasco da Gama will be the first passenger ship to call at Wallaroo in SA in more than 60 years.



Mixing it up

Grandparents and teenagers!
How to make it work while cruising.

WENDY FERNANDES



As our cruise ship left Tilbury, England, there were four passengers on board with very mixed emotions. Two teenage girls (13 and 15) full of excitement but with absolutely no idea what to expect, and two 70-year-old grandparents wondering if they had made the biggest mistake of their lives! 15 days cruising with seven sea days. What were we all going to do and how would the girls survive without Wi-Fi? They normally have their phones superglued to their hands unless they are eating. We oldies on the other hand view cruising as a great relaxation and have our Kindles loaded with books.

So off we sail - "dinner at six girls, and no you can't wear board shorts and have your midriff showing". We left them to unpack then we explored the ship together. Swimming pool looked small, theatre big like something out of the West End; how many lifts and why is there no deck 13 and which way is the back (aft) and which the front (fore)?

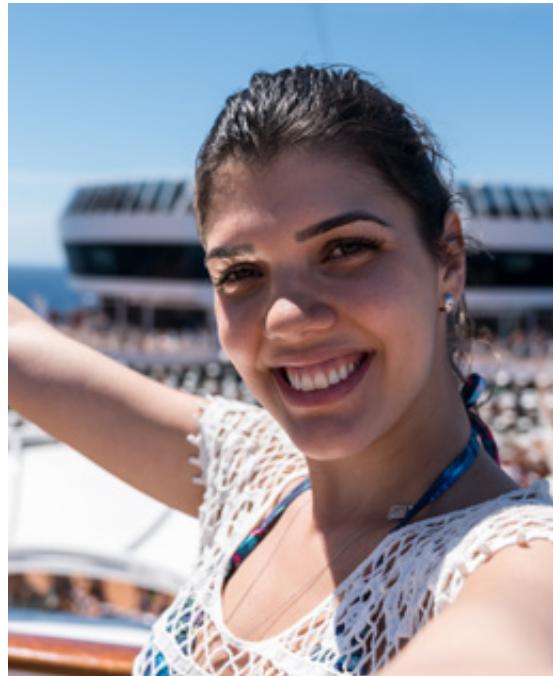
Dinner was a great success - they were more dressed up and made-up than we were! Three courses and a lovely Filipino waiter. "Tomorrow it's Amsterdam so we need to be up at 8 o'clock" - no word of protest "but" can we please skip breakfast?"

And so the pattern of shore days are set. Up and disembark early, see the sights, quick trip to Starbucks ("just to check our messages"), take photos and find somewhere back near the ship to do Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp.

Next three days were sea days so now what? Girls found us in the lounge at midday, which was just as well as if they weren't in their cabin we had no idea where they might be! We quickly learnt to be in one of two places and let them find us if they wanted, and as the days went by that was less and less often. Dinner at six was always

sacrosanct and a great way to catch up on the day. We also always went to the evening shows together and much to our surprise the girls loved them. Talks by guest speakers were a no no and having tried a couple of the activities laid on by the entertainment crew these were deemed to be for 'young kids'. One of our worst fears before we went on the cruise was that there would not be enough other teenagers but they soon found all that there were! Certain areas of the ship were out of bounds to unaccompanied children (casino and bars) and so we began to relax. We purposely didn't activate the girls' ships cards so they couldn't make any purchases and insisted on their coming to our cabin to say goodnight at 10 p.m. Despite listening carefully for the opening and shutting of cabin doors we never heard anything! But we did have a knock on our cabin door one night at 11p.m to be faced with a very embarrassed young man holding one of our Granddaughters' hoodies having got the wrong door! Best not to ask we decided, and anyway we had been chatting to his parents in the bar earlier.

The itinerary was ideal - Amsterdam, Gibraltar, 3 Canary Islands, Madeira and finally Lisbon. As far as teenagers are concerned anywhere new is exciting and days at sea are not a problem to them as that is their free time to spend with their new friends. From a Grandparents perspective it's a great way to spend time with your Grandchildren in a safe environment with both lots having time to themselves as well. Not a cheap option of course, but when you factor in all meals being provided plus entertainment, and doing as we did our own shore excursions not the exorbitant ones offered by the Cruise lines it's not bad value. You need to make sure it's school/college holidays in the country of



embarkation to ensure there are enough other young people and our cruise was advertised as multi generational.

When I asked our two teenagers for their opinions about the cruise they said they loved it and "when can we go again?" They found meeting up with other teenagers easy, they really enjoyed visiting different ports and the good food. They liked that dinner was served but lunch was a help yourself buffet - breakfast didn't feature in their experience! The only negative was that there was very little organised entertainment for teenagers compared to under 12's and over 18's

As for planning for a cruise with Grandchildren we found it a good idea to ask them to do a bit of research about ports of call so they could contribute to the day's planning. We took card games (never opened) and bought them a new book each. Otherwise we just went with the flow and I think I can safely say a good time was had by all.

FOR MORE ON FAMILY CRUISING

f @mydiscoveries
@ @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



Cruising

MAKES A GREAT
ACCESSIBLE HOLIDAY





Cruises are proving a popular choice for Australian travellers. Not only do they offer great value for money with all meals and many activities included in the package price, but there's good accessibility on many of the ships. Passengers with mobility restrictions can take hoists, commodes and shower chairs on board making it easier to travel with specific equipment.

Cabin choice – book accessible cabins well in advance as they are in high demand. Travel consultants know the ships well and will help you with your cabin choice. The location can make the difference between a good cruise experience and a nightmare one (imagine being in the cabin beneath the dance floor).

Research shore excursions prior to booking – Not all shore excursions will be accessible. Some tenders may not be able to accommodate wheelchair users. Check with your travel consultant ahead of time.

Dietary requirements – cruises can cater to specific dietary requirements and provide blended foods if needed. Advise the cruise company at the time of booking if this is required.

Guests with vision impairment – some cruise ships will provide large print menus and orientation tours. Enquire when making a booking



about this service.

Guests with a hearing impairment – some cruise lines will provide visual or tactile alert systems for guests.

Double check all your requirements with your travel agent or travel provider.

Guests with Autism or developmental disabilities – Priority boarding, dietary accommodation and other services are provided by some cruise lines.

Accessible features on board – not all cruise ships are created equal when it comes to access. Some ships offer pool hoists and other facilities which may make your holiday more inclusive and fun.

MORE ON CRUISING?

f @mydiscoveries
@ @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
1300 404 606



A silver lining

Cruising in luxury is attainable. But be warned, once experienced...you can never go back.

BEV MALZARD





To experience a small ship, elegant surroundings, gourmet bespoke restaurants, places to visit that only small ships can snuggle into and... to have a butler on hand is something to save and strive for.

OK, this takes money but so do other cruises that aren't so exclusive... so pick your luxury cruise and work towards it. This will be an incredible experience, and quite likely ruin you for any mega ship trips.

Silversea Voyages was, and is my company of choice for the ultimate 'spoil yourself rotten' experience. Our ship from the fleet is *Silver Muse*.

Silversea Voyages has itineraries that will take you to ply the waters of many countries and continents across the world.

My cruise was from Singapore to Bali. We overnighted at the elegant

Shangri-La in Singapore and took off the next morning for a luxurious, soft cruisy adventure.

We were welcomed onboard warmly by white-gloved staff and promptly escorted to our suite. A large suite opened up with fresh flowers on the table, a bottle of bubbly on ice, a large balcony and two tricky TV's that were really mirrors that were also TV's. (I suddenly became technically challenged re the mirrored tv – one in front of the bed and one in the 'living' room.) Our butler smoothly fixed it all – with no judgement.

Around the world and around the clock, every suite comes with a dedicated butler to pamper you with personalised attention and take care of every detail of the voyage

As the ship departed Singapore my sense of well-being was at

an all-time high and my sense of adventure on alert!

We explored the ship to scope out where all the restaurants were located and planned to try all of them before the cruise ended. The main restaurant, The Restaurant is where our first meal was tasted and we ate outside with new friends. From that night on whether at breakfast, lunch or dinner – the staff remembered how I like my coffee and which brand of tea I preferred. From the first meal, gastronomic excellence was on the menu – and we tried and tested every meal – and could not find fault. As if.

EXPLORING

After a gentle sleep our first day was at sea. A day to be pampered at the Zagara Spa – nothing like a good massage to get the



endorphins into shape.

We checked out the boutique, small with selective items, the theatre, the intimate nooks to read and relax and enjoyed lunch on the pool deck – a casual plate of curry with a cold beer set the tone for the afternoon.

Jakarta hadn't made my 'must visit' travel list so the excursion on the second day was a dive into the sprawling, traffic-crazed place that was a frenetic introduction to a city swelling with 18 million inhabitants.

The city displays the richness of the new buildings, malls, business centres and fancy hotels alongside rows of shanty homes and evidence of entrenched poverty.

No apologies for anything in Jakarta and best way to enjoy is to take in the museums, central

Jakarta's towering National Monument or somewhere more my speed, Jalan Surabaya's gaggle of shops and kiosks where there is eclectic items for sale. Retro rules here and you can pick up old Elvis records, vintage handbags or curious art pieces.

My favourite stop in Jakarta was in the Old Town, where all of life is seen in Fatahilla Square. This is where the famous Wayang Museum (founded in 1975) houses exquisite puppets from all regions of Indonesia and neighbouring countries. The museum is built on a site that dates back to 1640.

But we almost missed the highlight of the square, Café Batavia. We had been looking for love in all the wrong places! This divine café hails from the 1830s and oozes

character. Colonial style furniture in dark wood and tall slatted windows, Dutch-era food blended with the spices of Indonesia, invite you in. We missed what was coming in the evening though – live music on stage every night.

Out of the steamy heat of the spice islands and onboard the *Silver Muse* for the promise of a grand evening ahead in the prettiest restaurant on the ship – Indochine – for an elegant array of tastings from the Asian region reflected in the name.

Next day after breakfast in bed (ooooh the luxury of this), thank you our fave butler. And today was freewheeling on an island by ourselves. A quick tender trip to Karimunjawa, a tropical hideaway where the *Silver Muse* staff had set



up food and drinks while us spoilt passengers swam and lazed about. A grand day indeed.

After such a big day out – it was pizzas on deck and a movie afterwards.

And the exploration continues. Next day we berth in the intriguing port of Semarang, with its network of narrow canals. The city is a mix of various times in history Chinese, Dutch, Javanese influences are seen in temples, mosques and lattice-fronted cottages. Then a drive to the mother load – Borobudur – one of the most photographed Buddhist shrines on the world. A UNESCO World Heritage site, this massive complex is the ultimate guide to enlightenment. Surrounded by lush scenic forests and trimmed

gardens the mountainous structure sprawls and invites the hardy to climb, and climb and climb. I didn't quite reach Nirvana (it was too hot) but got a few spiritual stamps for my effort.

It was built around 780-850AD and wasn't exposed to western eyes until 1814 when Thomas Stamford Raffles stumbled up it (he really got around didn't he?).

After our architectural, spiritual and physical exertions we were lead to a covered annex, where lunch was and were entertained by a local traditional dance troupe.

Another long day and time to try the Atlantide restaurant which is so popular that we had to book the day before.

What a gloriously luxurious cruise this has been. And not a stuffy note

on any given day.

And towards the end of the journey we counted our ship experiences against the excursions – it was a tie! Well, maybe except for the trivia afternoons – it got pretty damn competitive, but fun.

Sad to leave the stunning *Silver Muse* to re-join the real life but as we left we gave a list of our favourite places to our butler and his mate our room attendant who were going to have a couple of days off in Sydney soon. Sharing the love. It's all relative isn't it?

WANT TO GO CRUISING?

f @mydiscoveries
g @mydiscoveries
info@mydiscoveries.com.au
www.mydiscoveries.com.au
 1300 404 606

MyDiscoveries

www.mydiscoveries.com.au

1300 404 606



ANANTARA KIHAVAH, MALDIVES - COULD
ANYWHERE ELSE BE AS DREAMY?