



Exploring Tasmania's Botanic Riches with Geoff Curry

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

5 Day Tasmanian Wildlife and Wilderness

5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS (SHARED / PRIVATE)

5 Day Icons of Tasmania Small Group

5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS (SHARED / PRIVATE)



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Participate in citizen science programs, including atlassing rare flora and fauna
- Includes financial contribution to Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary or Devils @ Cradle as part of their adoption program



When Geoff Curry, long-standing guide with Premier Travel Tasmania, talks about plants, he likes to focus on their ever-evolving relationship with their surroundings. "I'm very interested in how everything interacts with each other. The forest isn't just a bunch of trees, it's a living and dynamic place," he explains. "That's the story I like to tell when I'm guiding."

Aside from guiding tours for Premier Travel Tasmania, Geoff is President of Threatened Plants Tasmania (TPT) group and is the Conservation Officer for a national orchid society. It's no surprise, then, that guests exploring with Geoff can learn a great deal about Tasmania's flora. "There are over 1950 species of endemic plants in Tasmania and over 200 species of native orchids, of which 71 species of these are endemic to the state," he says. "I'm especially fascinated by terrestrial ground orchids, as many do not photosynthesise and rely completely on microscopic fungi to survive."

Close to Hobart, is Mount Field National Park where guests can see a diverse range of plant life in a relatively compact space. "Within 30 minutes of drive time we go from a reasonably low altitude up into alpine country and there is a significant change in the habitat and plant life we come across," Geoff explains. "We see how the trees change in size, starting with the massive giant ash trees and then driving further up to the snow gums, which are quite small. I talk

about geology and glaciation, and how the plants and environment interact with each other."

In Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, Geoff concentrates on the alpine grasslands and open forest. "I like to point out the pencil pines, as some of them may be over 500 years old. I also like to show guests the deciduous beech (*Nothofagus gunii*) in the alpine forest. It's endemic to Tasmania and it's Australia's only deciduous tree," he says. "There are plenty of easy boardwalks to take guests on and we often encounter the local wildlife, including Tasmanian Pademelons and wombats."

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Coles Bay on Tasmania's East Coast again offers a completely different perspective on plant life, with coastal dry forests growing in an area dominated by granite. "Here we explore a completely different habitat and suite of plants," Geoff says. "That includes up to 60 species of orchids that can be found flowering during the year."

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Observing Tasmania's Nocturnal Marsupials with Karin Beaumont

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

5 Day Tasmanian Wildlife and Wilderness

5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS (SHARED / PRIVATE)

10 Day Tasmanian Wilderness Journey

10 DAYS / 9 NIGHTS (PRIVATE)



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Includes financial contribution to Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary or Devils @ Cradle as part of their adoption program



"Dusk in certain locations is a wonderful time to start exploring," Karin Beaumont, tour guide with Premier Travel Tasmania, explains. "When we visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, for example, it's very interesting to go on an evening walk because of the quantity and diversity of wildlife around."

The alpine landscapes of Cradle Mountain provide suitable shelter for a plethora of wombats (one of the three sub-species that are endemic to Tasmania are found in the national park) and Karin explains that wombat sightings are almost a given on a nocturnal walk. "Other easy-to-spot species include Red-necked Wallabies and Pademelons; we keep our eyes out for Ringtail Possums and Tawny Frogmouths; Spotted-tailed Quolls and Eastern Quolls might be around; we look for platypuses; and the elusive Tasmanian Devil is most active in the dark, although it's rare to see one in the wild."

Experts estimate that there are only 17,000 Tasmanian Devils left in the wild, however Premier Travel Tasmania guests are able to get close to the mysterious creatures during an evening visit to Devils @ Cradle.

Guests on some of the longer tours who visit the sanctuary are gifted an adopted Tasmanian Devil as a conservation initiative, and Karin explains that simply booking a tour is an act of conservation support. "Engagement is a huge factor and by going on our tours, guests are contributing to our ongoing conservation efforts, as well as to the operators and programs we support," she says.

Thousand Lakes Wilderness Lodge – a former Antarctic training centre refurbished to provide visitor accommodation in a truly remote and wild setting – is another top location for nocturnal walks. "We quite often see Tasmania's endangered Wedge-tailed Eagle here. The sub-species of the mainland species found in Tasmania is Australia's largest bird of prey," Karin says.

On longer tours, such as the 10-Day Tasmanian Wilderness Journey, Narawntapu National Park is yet another nocturnal highlight. "We visit a bird-hide overlooking the marshy lagoons prior to settling in for an evening picnic where we are often joined by Forester Kangaroos, wallabies and Pademelons," Karin says. "It really is quite special."



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Saving the Orange-bellied Parrot in the Southwest Wilderness with Mark Holdsworth

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

Tasmania - Wildlife & Conservation with Wilderness Flight Safari
9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

Tailor Made Adventure



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

- Includes financial contribution to Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Program

There's only one place in the world where Orange-bellied Parrots (*Neophema chrysogaster*) breed in the wild, and that's in Tasmania's Southwest Wilderness World Heritage Area, a vast and ravishingly beautiful region that is renowned for its wild weather and untamed landscape.

"The power and wonder of this magnificent wilderness is hard to describe," guide Mark Holdsworth explains. "It has to be experienced." Guests can walk for seven days, travel by boat for two days, or fly into Melaleuca, the base for exploring the Southwest National Park, and the best location in the world for close encounters with the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot.

"The entire breeding population calls Melaleuca home and is the focus of the Orange-bellied Parrot monitoring program, which includes the use of feed tables and nest boxes so volunteer observers and biologists can monitor every individual," Mark explains. "Their hard work provides valuable information to the Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team to measure survival and demographic relationships."

Mark first worked on the Orange-bellied Parrot in the early 1980s in the then Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service as a Trainee Ranger, and for 17 years managed the entire Tasmanian Orange-bellied Parrot

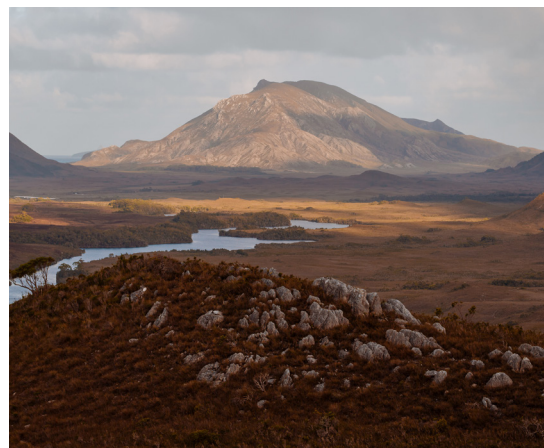
recovery program, up until his retirement in 2014. Mark has since provided specialist nature guiding services across Australia and he now joins the Premier Travel Tasmania team to share his knowledge with guests who book the Australian Geographic tours.

"Melaleuca has been my backyard throughout my career and I love to share the unique insights I have about the biology and conservation of the Orange-bellied Parrot," he says. The small (45 grams) and brightly coloured parrot can be seen in Melaleuca from October to March during their breeding season. By April the entire population migrates northward to coastal Victoria and South Australia, where they feed on a range of plants in windswept salt marshes.

"Interestingly, the adults leave from February through to March, while the juveniles manage to find their own way from late March to early April," Mark says. "I'm always amazed how natural instincts are able to successfully drive migration behaviour."

If guests visit Melaleuca when the birds are not there, Mark can still chat about the program, and those keen to become more involved in conservation work can join volunteer searches along the coasts of Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia through the Friends of the Orange-bellied Parrot (Wildcare Tasmania) and BirdLife Australia.

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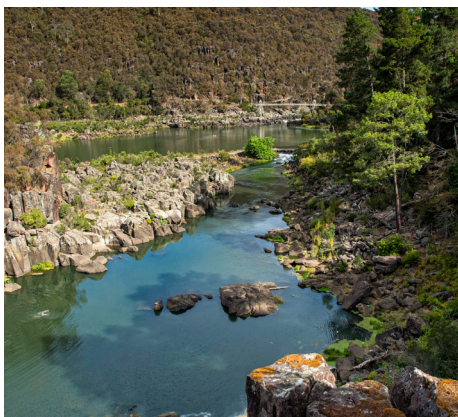
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Wildlife & Wetlands with Andrea Edwards

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

1 Day Tamar Valley Wine
FULL DAY (PRIVATE)



German-born Andrea Edwards was living in Queensland when she discovered the island paradise of Tasmania. "I came from Brisbane for a one-week holiday and fell in love with the island," she says. "I moved here and have been living in the Tamar Valley for more than 20 years now."

Stretching 60 kilometres north from Launceston to Bass Strait, Tamar Valley (with Tamar River at its centre) is one of Tasmania's prettiest regions, with plenty to see, do, taste and drink.

"The beautiful food served at the wineries provides sustenance for guests to explore other Tamar Valley attractions, which range from jungle walks and waterfalls to bird spotting in unique wetlands."

"Tamar Valley is the oldest wine region in Tasmania and it's best known for exquisite cool climate wine. There are 16 vineyards in the valley, as well as 10 vineyards further east and another four located

just south of Launceston, and many of them have wonderful views that stretch across undulating hills covered in vineyards and orchards, with glimpses of the Tamar River," Andrea says.

"Truffles, walnuts, olives, honey and even snails are produced and sold in the valley too, and on the one-day tours I tend to take guests to wineries with fantastic views, and ones where they can sit and enjoy local gourmet platters."

The beautiful food served at the wineries provides sustenance for guests to explore other Tamar Valley attractions, which range from jungle walks and waterfalls to bird spotting in unique wetlands.

"The Cataract Gorge Reserve is an amazing spot to visit and it's only 10 minutes' walk from the centre of Launceston. There's a fern gorge I take guests to, and I've nicknamed it the jungle because it really feels like one. There are several islands we can visit via a boardwalk trail.

And the Tamar River is a tidal and saline estuary in its entire length," Andrea says. "We often see White-bellied Sea Eagles, Purple Swamphens, Black Swans, Royal Spoonbills, Brown Falcons, herons and various duck species, to name just some of the birds around. It really is a wildlife paradise."

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— Reliving Tasmania's Convict History with Jennifer Collins

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

1 Day Historic Tasmania Small Group Tour
FULL DAY (SHARED / PRIVATE)



Tasmania's convict history trail is full of fascinating sites to explore, ranging from the well-known to some that many people have not heard of. "Convict labour was used to build new colonies to expand the economic, military and political influence of Britain around the world," Jennifer Collins, one of Premier Travel Tasmania's history-loving guides, explains. "The transportation of 75,000 convicts in the 50 years from 1804 provided a steady labour force to establish this colony of Van Diemen's Land."

"When I show guests around the settlement, I talk about the backgrounds of some of the convicts and how they reformed, cover some of the industries they worked in, and describe what activities took place day-to-day."

The Port Arthur penal settlement is Tasmania's most-visited convict sight, and Jennifer explains that this was where the worst criminals were housed. "In saying that, a lot of them were sent down from Sydney for repeat offences. There were also political prisoners,

such as Irish rebels, Americans captured before the War of Independence of 1783, and also Canadians as a result of their failed attempts ousting the British," she says.

"When I show guests around the settlement, I talk about the backgrounds of some of the convicts and how they reformed, cover some of the industries they worked in, and describe what activities took place day-to-day."

Jennifer explains that 75 percent of the convicts who were transported to Tasmania were convicted of petty crimes, and that many of those convicts did not end up completing their full sentences. "The assignment system was a better alternative to prisons, as it provided free labour to new settlers and relieved the government of the burden of prisoner upkeep," she explains.

Interestingly, much of the beautiful sandstone seen around Hobart's streets is a result of hard convict work. "From 1804 convict labour was used to create the settlement of Hobart, and that infrastructure, built with sandstone, is evident with roads, bridges, retaining walls, water supply works and public buildings," Jennifer says. "Other towns visited with Premier Travel Tasmania, such as Richmond and Ross, have too retained their charm with a predominance of sandstone construction."

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Discovering Tasmania's Artists with Karin Beaumont

RELATED EXPERIENCES:

1 Day Hobart's Art & Fine Wine
FULL DAY (PRIVATE)

1 Day Best of Hobart Small Group
FULL DAY (SHARED / PRIVATE)



Karin Beaumont's background makes her an obvious choice for leading the art-focused Premier Travel Tasmania tours. "I'm a tour guide with a PhD in Antarctic Marine Biology, but I'm also a contemporary jeweller and artist, and I really enjoy introducing guests to Tasmania's rich art scene," she says.

Hobart is the first port of call for most people when visiting Tasmania, and Karin recommends people book the one-day Hobart's Art & Fine Wine or Best of Hobart tour for a taste of what Premier Travel Tasmania offers. "Sometimes we visit the famous Salamanca Market, where we take out time to peruse the many stalls as we meander through. The vendors make up a very small community: I know a lot of them personally and can introduce guests to them.

"The controversial museum is partially nestled inside a cliff face and is quite unassuming," she says. "And when guests discover the calibre, diversity and profile of international and local art works, as well as the immense scale of the museum for such a small island state, they are genuinely surprised and blown away by the whole concept," she says. "They don't always love all of the artworks on display, but they do find it interesting."

Beyond Hobart, the whole island of Tasmania offers ample opportunities for further immersion in arts and culture. "In Launceston, you have Design Tasmania, a centre that houses the Tasmanian Wood Design Collection, which has ongoing exhibitions and a retail outlet showcasing



"There really is something for everyone, from traditional landscape painting and practical craft, to exquisite design, local studios and edgy contemporary festivals."



We can explore the waterfront precinct, including the Salamanca Arts Centre, as well as the Old Wharf side with more galleries, including an Aboriginal art gallery showcasing Tasmanian Aboriginal art and craft. And of course, no art tour would be complete without a visit to the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA)," she says.

Karin's favourite part of the day is seeing guests' surprise as they approach MONA.

the best of Tasmanian design across furniture, ceramics, jewellery, textiles," Karin says.

"And wherever you go in Tasmania there is likely to be an artist studio, a collective of makers, or a gallery run by the local artists themselves. There really is something for everyone, from traditional landscape painting and practical craft, to exquisite design, local studios and edgy contemporary festivals."

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