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Welcome to Autumn issue 54...

In this issue we have gone somewhat back to how we were a while ago with those home-grown Gippsland features, where we get to share and discover some of the great people, towns, events that make this region undoubtedly the best.

Events are returning to Gippsland. In this edition we have the Mirboo North Italian Festa and Meeniyian Garlic Festival that are bringing the people back to the region after the well-known issues that affected us all. It is wonderful seeing people turn up to events in droves.

We also welcome our new member to the team at Gippsland Lifestyle, Megan Woolfe. Megan comes from West Gippsland and she brings with her, further insights into several new features and ideas for our magazine, as well as her love of Gippsland.

The Middle of Everywhere is gaining great momentum and one of the most interesting features is that of the Heritage Listed Kilmany Park. This grand old building is over 100 years old, and it has a fascinating story to tell.

Meeniyian, our South Gippsland highlighted town is nestled near the Tarwin River and only a ten-minute drive from Leongatha. This very popular town keeps garnering great interest from locals and visitors to the area.

Enjoy the magazine, it has well over 25 features, covering considerable diversity; and remember whilst in Gippsland, always SHOP LOCAL!

Doug Pell | Editor

gippsland
lifestyle



our autumn front cover

Photo by **DJP Photography**
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Raymond Island Feature

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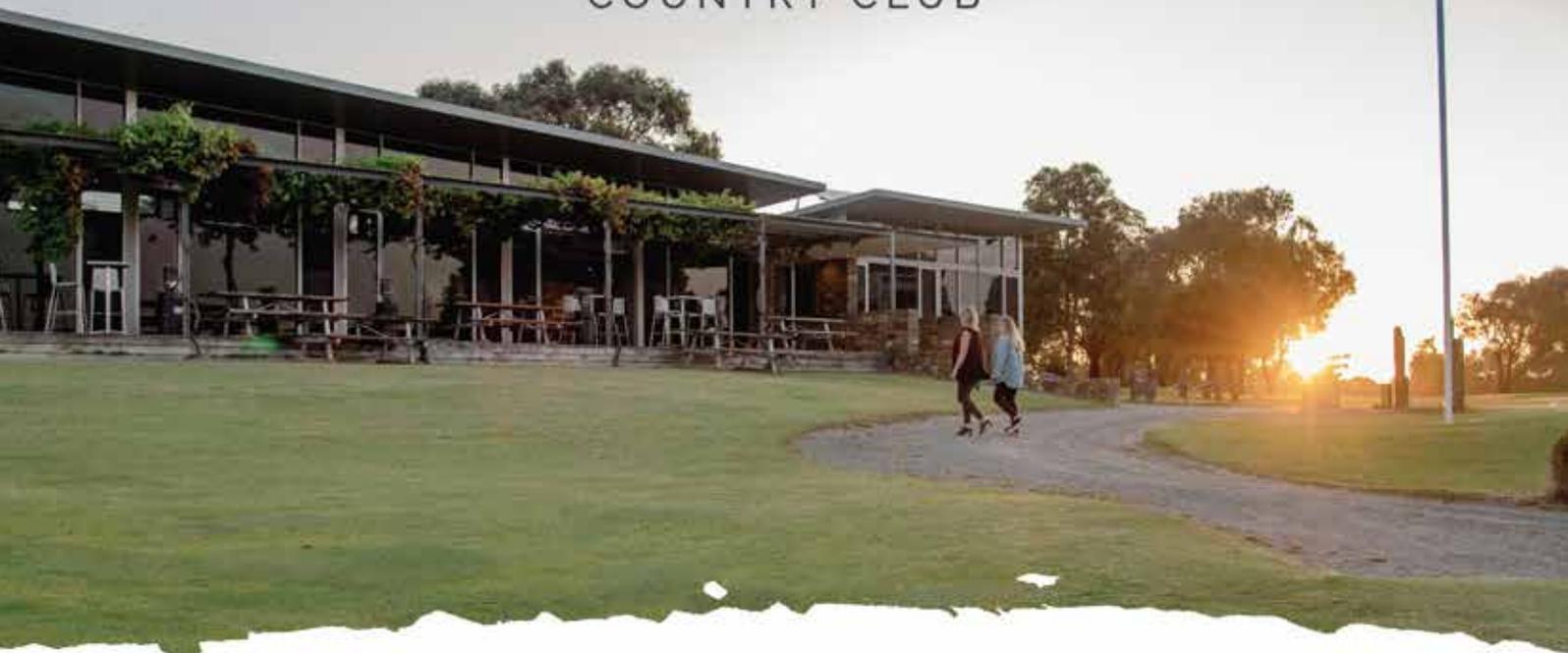
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gippsland lifestyle



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CONTENT COVERAGE AREA



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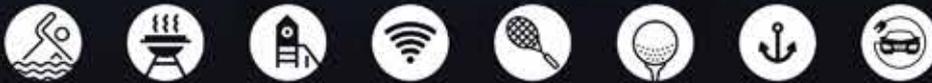
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Brightside is the epitome of a romantic getaway for country life. The cottage is the perfect retreat to relax and restore. The property is set on 2.31 acres, framed by 100 year old Cyprus trees, sprawling lawns and an old farm orchard. The original era 1900's farmhouse cottage has been completely reimaged both inside and out.

Luxuriously appointed with a cook's kitchen, cosy bedrooms, and a sumptuous lounge room with a wood heater and stacked log box. Gorgeous grounds, surrounded by a tapestry of rolling hills. An entertaining array of wildlife and incredible birdsong. Guests can enjoy the creature comforts they expect whilst being a million miles away from it all.





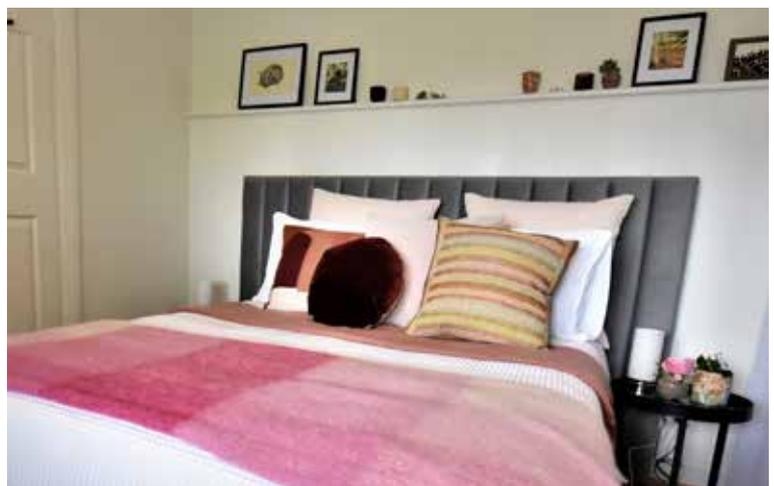
Brightside is the epitome
of a romantic getaway
for country life.

The private garden which is rounded out with an outdoor BBQ, porch, outdoor setting and front yard with stunning views of incredible scenery.

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Remember your special moments with something to treasure

BY PAUL HENDERSON

One of the joyful things about jewellery are the memories it holds – just a glance at your own treasured piece and those wonderful recollections come flooding back.



A unique freeform opal ring edged in yellow gold, with white gold & diamond shoulders



A handcrafted marquise diamond solitaire ring in white & yellow gold



Stunning two tone sapphire & diamond earrings from the Beach Collection

In life there are happy moments that we remember forever – it could be a special anniversary, a milestone birthday – maybe a proposal or a wonderful wedding day. These moments are so magical we often want something to remember them by, and jewellery is a lovely way to do just that.

These sentiments have carried across centuries, with jewellery worn for lots of different reasons, from simple bands to more elaborate expressions of love. Today, jewellery still has the power to capture a moment special to us and hold it close. It's not about the value of a piece in material terms, but rather the priceless memories and emotions evoked when you wear and enjoy your treasured jewellery. We are often moved by significant jewellery, such as Princess Diana's sapphire engagement ring – and who can forget the wonderful diamond jewellery Richard Burton gave to Elizabeth Taylor. Today, celebrity engagements are still focused on the ring, everyone loves to see 'the ring' - and particularly inspiring designs are often recreated more affordably.

Special moments to celebrate also include proposals, weddings and births. Traditionally, these are celebrated most with diamond jewellery, from solitaire engagement rings to matching wedding bands and later perhaps, eternity rings to mark the birth of a child. Look to your local jeweller for help with choosing these important rings, there's a lot to consider, from different gold colours to choosing the right diamonds for you.

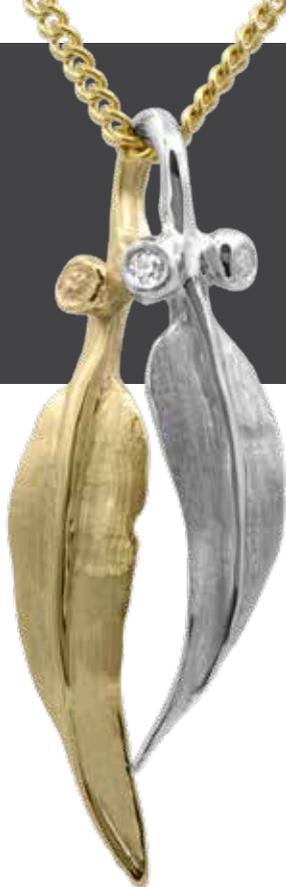
Whatever the reason for choosing or gifting jewellery, it's worth considering a few important points. Firstly, choose a reputable local jeweller who can help and advise, and importantly listen to you.

It's always worthwhile seeing and touching jewellery first hand, trying it on too - something you can't do online. Gems are best chosen in person, no photograph can replace seeing something with your own eyes. And while we're touching on gems, these can hold special significance too – from rubies that represent love, energy and passion – that deep red strikes a chord whenever we see it – to sapphires in beautiful blues that symbolise purity and trust.

Tourmalines, citrines and peridots, with their varied greens evoke springtime and nature with many hues to choose from, or how about tanzanite - less well known perhaps but with a deep purplish colour all its own. Australian opals too have unique qualities, and often, a brilliant fire unlike any other gem to completely capture your heart. Nature's treasures mean you really are spoilt for choice.

Bairnsdale based jewellers Curtis Australia have been designing and hand crafting jewellery for many years. Owner and Master Jeweller, Glenn Curtis has over 50 years experience, and was the only expert from outside the USA to be invited by Rio Tinto Diamonds to judge their Global Jewellery Competition, so you know you're in good hands. You can browse their private showroom, sit down for a chat in relaxed surroundings and even see the adjacent studio – one of the largest self contained jewellery facilities in Australia.

Clients often say how important it is to have their jewellery made somewhere they can actually visit and always appreciate everything staying in house.



'Gum Leaf' pendant in yellow & white gold with diamond gum nut detail



'Lila' ring in amethyst surrounded by diamonds



In white gold, a simply elegant band ring handcrafted by Curtis Australia



Curtis Australia 'Motima RT' automatic watch in polished stainless steel with black dial

So, when you're thinking of choosing jewellery for your special moment or 'just because' why not pop into your local jeweller. Or, if you're near the Curtis Australia studio in Macleod Street, Bairnsdale, call in and see lots of wonderful ready to wear rings, pendants and earrings. You can even commission your own special jewellery, choose your diamonds and remember your own magical moment in your own, unique way.



'Woodland' textured ring forged from two colours of solid gold



An unusual white gold ring set with a sapphire & shoulder diamonds



Handcrafted 'Wish' earrings in yellow gold & sparkling diamonds

The Curtis Australia studio is just behind the Shire Offices in Macleod Street, Bairnsdale. You'll find beautifully coordinated jewellery collections, hand crafted sterling silver and colourful resin pens, as well as solid gold Curtis Australia watches, each individually crafted in house, with both ladies and men's styles to choose from.



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West Gippsland's waterways are home to unique wildlife. That's why we're working with partners and community to help special species such as vulnerable Hooded Plovers survive and thrive. We know we can't do it alone...

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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the region, the Gunaikurnai, the Bunurong, the Boonwurrung and the Wurundjeri Peoples and pay respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.



25 years of
catchment
health

Partnerships protecting wildlife



Hooded Plovers on beach

It's a tough gig being a beach nesting bird - especially for the vulnerable Hooded Plovers (affectionately known as hoodies) that nest along South Gippsland's shores. Life for these tiny birds is perilous as they constantly protect both themselves and their chicks from disturbance, weather and predators. Luckily, there's a lot of plover love going around...

West Gippsland Catchment Authority, BirdLife Australia, Friends of the Hooded Plover, Parks Victoria along with Bass Coast and South Gippsland Landcare Networks have joined forces to deliver a coordinated program of actions to protect the hoodies including:

- Fox control
- Nest monitoring
- Community education

This team effort is part of the Powlett River/Kugerungmome Partnerships project where all partners are playing their part in protecting and raising awareness of these threatened birds.

Hooded Plovers depend on coastal habitats including beaches, rocky headlands, sandy dunes and estuaries like Kugerungmome (Powlett River) to survive. These are not to be confused with the noisy Masked Lapwings (or Spur-winged Plovers) found commonly in urban areas. Hoodies are smaller and more delicate with a distinctive black 'hood', white collar on their throat and a red bill with a black tip.

One key action of the program is controlling foxes which are a major predator of the birds. The program is showing good results to date and targeted control measures will continue along the coast from San Remo to Walkerville to give the plovers the best chance of survival.

Another essential part of the project is regular monitoring of the birds. BirdLife Australia and Friends of the Hooded Plovers volunteers undertook extensive training before the hoodie breeding season to be able to record and observe their behaviour and contribute to the ongoing understanding of their life. Volunteers walk the beaches regularly to observe and record the nesting birds and their chicks and note any changes such as tide damage or nest disturbance.

More recently, volunteers at Powlett River/Kugerungmome were also trained to note any signs of fox activity as part of their bird monitoring. This information helps the fox crew to identify locations to lay soft jaw fox traps and is contributing to the overall success of the fox control program at the river mouth.

Hoodies breed between September to March/April and lay their eggs directly on the sand in a shallow nest scrape on the beach above the high tide mark, or among dunes. This is also the busiest season for people along the coast, so they must share their breeding sites with thousands of beachgoers - and their dogs which are a major threat to the birds if off the lead.

We can all play our part in helping the hoodies to breed and survive so project partners took to beaches to spread the word. They set up pop up stalls at beaches across Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires at locations such as Kugerungmome/Powlett River and Cape Paterson to meet beach goers and engage with them as they took a walk.

The stalls offered expert advice along with useful information such as how to identify the hoodies and how we can share our beaches by simply reading and observing beach signage as you enter an area. All dogs also were given a free lead and treat so they can play their role in doing the right thing for wildlife.

Our coast is a stronghold for Hooded Plovers

The coastline between San Remo and Inverloch is home to the second largest population of Hooded Plovers in Victoria. The beaches provide important breeding, roosting and foraging sites.

The beach between Kilcunda Cemetery and Williamsons and along to the mouth of the Kugerungmome/Powlett River is home to at least seven breeding pairs. The area is also used in the non breeding winter months - with flocks of up to 20 birds having been recorded at the river mouth.

Further east, the coast between Point Smythe (Venus Bay) and Waratah Bay provides important and relatively secluded habitat for Hooded Plovers and other beach-nesting birds to breed and roost all year round.



Left and Right: BirdLife Australia Nesting Shorebird Officer and Friends of Hooded Plover volunteers at the Powlett River/Kugerungmome information stall.



Adult Hooded Plover



Birdlife Australia volunteer training



Parks Victoria and Friends of Hooded Plover volunteers at the Cape Paterson information stall.



Hooded Plover, Image Dean Ingwersen

With around 3,000 individuals remaining in south-eastern Australia, Hooded Plovers are listed as vulnerable in Victoria under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 and federally on the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. They are also considered as a vulnerable species at the global scale, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2022.

This project is funded by the Victorian Government's Our Catchments Our Communities program.

Find out more and get involved www.wgcm.vic.gov.au





Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College

FAITH IN THEIR FUTURE



Education is progressing at an ever-increasing rate. Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College is committed to constant review supported by data and research, to ensure best practice in contemporary learning in order to engage and connect our students in learning. It is our aim to assist all students in developing the confidence and competence as well as the relevant skills and aptitudes they need to enter the world as good Christians and ethical global citizens.



Our students are engaged in a learning environment that is real and purposeful, that embraces 21st century learning pedagogies and technologies. All key learning areas use teaching, learning and assessment styles that draw on each child's strengths. By the time each student is entering the Senior School, they will have been provided with the opportunity and support to reflect on his or her special interests and abilities in order to identify the ideal pathway towards further study or career opportunities.



The Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College Vision Statement speaks clearly of our strong desire to build partnerships with families as together we nurture our students as they develop within a child safe environment.



It is in the spirit of collaboration that we warmly invite you to consider Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College as you discern the next stage in your child's educational journey.

All enquiries are welcome.

Principal: Mr John Freeman

Phone: 03 5662 4255
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Wander along the rugged coastline, and you'll find legendary surf breaks, magnificent rock formations at the **Pinnacles Lookout**, and walking tracks with spectacular views. Oh, and if you time your visit right, that view might include dolphins and whales too.

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Get the adrenaline pumping with an **Ocean Adventures Thundercat** or **Jet Boat Tour** around **Cape Woolamai**, a perfect mix of speed and scenery. For something a little more relaxed, take a sea kayak tour with **Pioneer Kayaking** and admire the sheer beauty of **Cape Woolamai** or the tranquility of the **Rhyll Inlet** and mangroves. If you prefer to take to the sky, marvel at Phillip Island's stunning landscapes and scenery onboard one of **Phillip Island Helicopters** scenic flights - and trust us, the views are worth it.

Phillip Island's culinary scene continues to grow for food and wine aficionados, with several new exciting businesses calling the Island home. Located on the Esplanade, **The Tippy Cowe** is a new edition to the Cowes night scene, offering a range of delicious dishes, all created fresh in-house daily and served with flair, alongside a range of cocktails. For wine connoisseurs, the newly opened **Shearwaters** and **Bandicoots** is a small family-owned retail store and wine bar focusing on boutique wines and craft beers.

For award-winning wines, **Purple Hen Winery** at Rhyll offers tranquil views, cheese platters, and a chance to taste some of the region's best wines.

Phillip Island Winery's atrium space is where you will want to spend cooler Autumn days sipping wine and indulging in charcuterie boards. When the night rolls around, **Grenache Wine Bar** is where you'll find over 100 different types of gin, a wide range of local and international wines, and a flavoursome menu to accompany your beverage of choice.

To completely immerse yourself in the relaxed vibe of Phillip Island, discover one of the Island's many boutique accommodation options. Admire Phillip Island's landscapes with captivating views at **Marlin Beachfront**, **Bunya By The Sea**, **Grey Goose @ Smiths**, **Five Acres**, **Bimbadeen Phillip Island**, **The Waves Apartments**, **Silverwater Resort** and **Omaru Farm Stay**.

If you prefer to hit the wide-open road in your caravan or camper van, Phillip Island has an abundance of fantastic caravan parks to cater for all needs. Set up camp next to the beach and within walking distance to restaurants, cafes and shops at **NRMA Beachfront Phillip Island Holiday Park**, **Anchor Belle Holiday Park**, **Big 4 Ingenia Holidays Phillip Island** and **Amaroo Park**.

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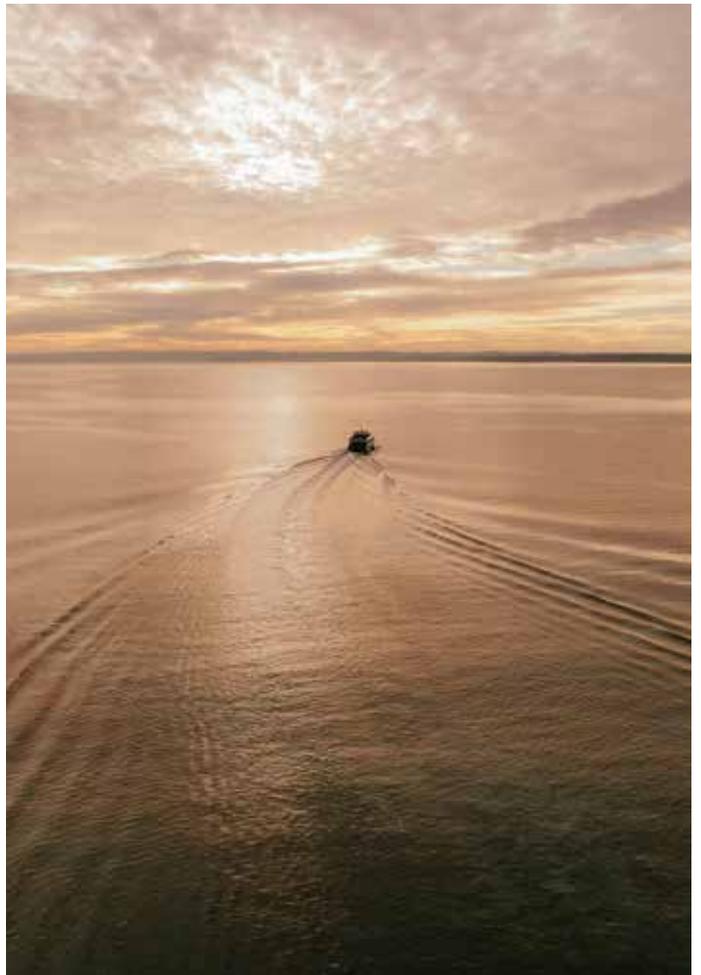
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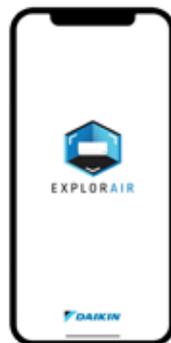
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MEENIYAN

Meeniyán is a small town with a big heart. Located on the South Gippsland Highway it is often referred to as the turning point as a quick flick on the indicator takes you to Fish Creek and Wilsons Promontory, or you can continue along the highway to Foster, Toora and beyond.

But Meeniyán is a destination in its own right. It's central to many South Gippsland attractions and is home to an eclectic array of retailers, galleries and eateries. It also attracts an impressive line-up of local, national and international musical acts to events that are hosted at the Meeniyán Town Hall. People come from far and wide to listen to the musos who grace the stage at this intimate hall. The Jarrah floors are a key feature, as well as the splendid acoustics!

Like other towns in South Gippsland, Meeniyán was built along the railway line. The Meeniyán station was opened during the 1890s and continued servicing passengers, as well as freight from the offshore oil industry in Barry Beach, until its closure in 1991. Today, the station no longer exists but you can still pass through the site of the former platform which is conveniently located at the rear of the town, just a stone's throw from the main shopping precinct.

Meeniyán is a key rest point on the Great Southern Rail Trail and the pump house bridge which extends over the Tarwin River, is a popular stopping point. The bridge is a newer structure, with the old timber rail bridge still in view in the distance as a monument to our region's rail heritage.

Other attractions include the nearby Stony Creek Racecourse which hosts an array of racing events between December and April, including the popular Stony Creek Cup. The Meeniyán Art Gallery in town is also a must-visit attraction with its frequently changing exhibitions. The gallery showcases works using different mediums and often features locally-based artists and crafters.

When you think of Meeniyán, one of the key things that comes to mind is community. Residents of Meeniyán are happy to come together to host events such as Town Tavern nights, the iconic Garlic Festival and the annual Marty Gras festival. The local community garden is also testament to the town's cooperative nature, with residents regularly coming together to plant, share seeds, and create a peaceful environment that can be enjoyed by everyone who passes through.

The Meeniyán Bird Hide is another example of community coming together as it was established through a partnership between the Meeniyán community and South Gippsland Water. The bird hide is located right next to the Rail Trail and is perfectly positioned for walkers and cyclists to view a range of bird species amongst the revegetated wetland habitat.

You can find out more about Meeniyán, events, attractions and accommodation at visitsouthgippsland.com.au



THINGS TO DO IN MEENIYAN:

- Visit the Meeniyán Art Gallery
open 10.00am – 4.00pm, Wed to Mon (Closed Tues)
- Access the Great Southern Rail Trail and walk, ride or cycle to Stony Creek, Fish Creek or Foster and beyond
- Experience country racing at its best at the Stony Creek Racing Club.
The racecourse hosts several events from December to April
- Watch native birdlife at the Meeniyán Bird Hide
- Race around the go kart track at Stony Creek

THINGS TO DO NEARBY:

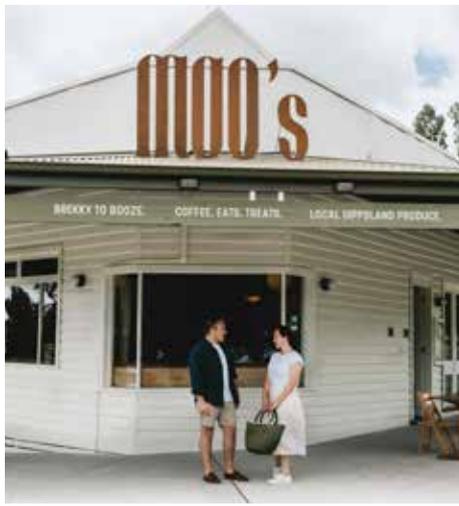
- Wilsons Promontory National Park
(an easy 45-minute drive to the Park entrance)
- Explore Agnes Falls waterfall or picnic in the scenic surrounds (40-minute drive)
- Visit Coal Creek Community Park and Museum and discover the history of South Gippsland (25-minute drive)
- Pick up some local honey at the nearby honey farm (10-minute drive)

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march

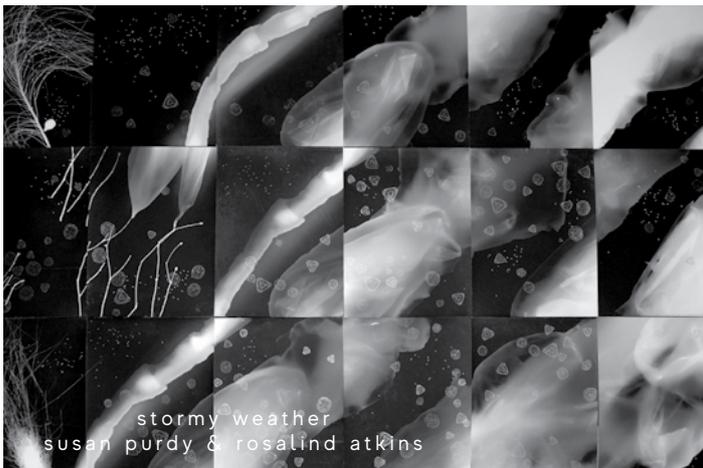
Exhibitions featuring Helen Tiernan,
Susan Purdy & Rosalind Atkins, and
Catherine Blamey.

april

Exhibitions featuring
Phillip Wischer, Sarah Parkes,
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MOOS AT MEENIYAN



Snapshots of Meeniyans

PHOTOS BY DJP PHOTOGRAPHY small town, big heart

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Please Note: When Stony Creek Racing Club is holding a race meeting the venue will be closed. During the winter period the venue is closed mid week unless prior booking is made.





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Up for the Cup

Under the leadership of experienced industry professional Adam Olszanski, the Stony Creek Racing Club is looking to the future with greater ambition.

Adam is a well-known face and voice within the Victorian racing industry, having been calling races since 1999 when he was sixteen years of age. He is now combining his administrative duties as CEO of the Stony Creek Racing Club and Treasurer at Woolamai Picnic Racing Club with his role as a broadcaster and presenter on the Racing.com network.

"I'm in a fortunate position to have come to Stony Creek in the past eighteen months following strong leadership provided by the previous CEO Sarah Wolf. The club is very much on an upward trajectory," he states.

"We are continually striving to enhance our reputation as a family friendly, inclusive club."

With its membership base having grown by 20% this year, Adam says there is a real sense of excitement around the club at present.

"Our membership increase is possibly linked to the strong population growth in South Gippsland and Bass Coast which are amongst the fastest growing regions in the state. It certainly stands us in very good stead for the future," he suggests.

Stony Creek was allocated five race meetings in the current 2022/23 racing season, all fixtured in the Summer/Autumn period between 27th December and the Cup Day finale on Sunday, 12th March.

Adam reports that this season's race meetings have again been successful and enjoyable days at the track.

"The overall crowd size at our Family Day on Tuesday, 27th December was impacted by the thirty-six-degree temperature, but we still had a very good day. We had record marquee and reserved table bookings for that meeting which meant that those who were committed with pre-paid bookings still came along, but less general admission patrons attended due to the heat."

More favourable milder weather greeted the Pink Roses Race Day on Tuesday, 3rd January which undoubtedly contributed to the meeting attracting one of its best ever crowds. The charitable Pink Roses initiative helps raise funds for women who have lost their lives to cancer and became an annual focus of the club after former CEO Ralph Gallagher lost his daughter to the insidious disease.

"One of the keys to the success of the Pink Roses meeting this year was the great entertainment that was provided on course," Adam comments.

"It was fantastic to again have former jockey Chris Symons bring his hugely popular Funky Farm attraction to Stony Creek, having enticed him for the first time last year. It was great for us to be able to team with a former racing industry participant who demonstrates such an obvious passion for animal welfare. The kids loved getting up close with the animals and reptiles, and we are thrilled that Chris is returning with his Funky Farm on Ladbrokes Stony Creek Cup Day."

Pink Roses Day also gained an extra splash of colour and style through the Bliss in Inverloch Fashions on the Field Competition.

"We introduced something different this year with a Buy Local category, which encouraged participants to purchase an element of their outfit from a boutique or clothing store within forty kilometres of Stony Creek," Adam reveals.



Another bumper season at the home of racing in South Gippsland culminates with Ladbrokes Stony Creek Cup Day on Sunday, 12th March.

Words By Chris West | Photos From Stony Creek Racing Club & Doug Pell

"It aligned well with our strategy of continuing to strengthen our connections within the local community," he adds.

Another terrific day of racing at Stony Creek on Tuesday, 31st January was followed by the annual Publicans Day meeting on Monday, 13th February, which is a long-standing tradition at the club.

"This year we had ten pubs and clubs involved from as far east as Toora, up to Mirboo North and across to the west to San Remo, with eight of them sponsoring a race on the card," Adam explains.

"This raceday offers a rare chance for publicans in the region to get together and enjoy our on-course hospitality. The initiative also provides them with the perfect opportunity to reward their loyal customers and staff. A lunch and punters club competition amongst the pub generates proceeds which are donated to charity."

With those first four fixtures from December to February now completed, the club's focus now turns fully to the big one – Ladbrokes Stony Creek Cup Day on Sunday, 12th March.

An exciting eight-race card will be headlined by the \$85,000 Ladbrokes Stony Creek Cup over 2,100 metres.

Last year's winner Vardani went on to win the Werribee Cup in December, whilst the two previous winners Skelm and Don't Doubt Dory also subsequently progressed to win metropolitan races.

"Our Cup is always a very competitive race, and the progression of the last few winners is not only exciting for the club but also a positive endorsement of the race's standing," Adam comments.

A crowd of around 2,500 is anticipated for Cup Day, and as always at Stony Creek, the front lawn area is generally recognised as the place to be.

"The lawn will be a hub of activity with marquees, reserved tables, bean bag lounge and live music, with shade sails providing protection from the sun if needed. There is also plenty of indoor space for members' and public dining," Adam notes.

The Cup Day Fashions on the Field Competition is being supported by Influence Clothing in Leongatha and is offering over \$2,000 in prizes. Leading Australian milliner Peter Jago and owner of Melbourne-based Erika boutique Hilda Simonds are returning to again judge the competition.

"Peter and Hilda's presence over recent years continues to add an extra element of style and expert knowledge to our fashion competition," Adam says.

"This year we are holding four separate categories – Best Dressed, Best Suited, Most Fashionable Couple and Best Dressed Junior."

A range of hospitality packages are available for the general public to make the day a truly memorable occasion for everyone from couples to families or groups of friends.

Bus transport is available from several locations around the region via routes covering Venus Bay, Sandy Point, Foster, Wonthaggi, Leongatha and towns in between (see www.stonycreek.com.au for timetables), whilst the club is providing a free shuttle service departing from the Meeniyan Hotel at 12.00pm.



Stony Creek Cup Day on Sunday, 12th March

Bringing the community together is an integral part of Cup Day at Stony Creek, a theme that extends through all the club's racedays.

"Our ties with the local community are strong," Adam observes.

"As the only professional raceclub south of the Princes Highway, and indeed the only raceclub of any code in South Gippsland, we do cover a big geographical area. One of our strategic advantages is our proximity to some of the state's most popular holiday spots."

For many years the club has involved community organisations in the running of its event services on race days.

"The Stony Creek Football Netball Club run our bars, the Meeniyon Pony Club provide the gate staff, the Foster Football Netball Club handle the supply of ticket gate staff and the Stony Creek Adult Riders manage the horse entrance gate and check-in. Instead of paying casual staff we pay a comparative donation to the clubs who volunteer their time," Adam explains.

Having moved to the region from Melbourne five years ago with his partner and children, Adam is now firmly entrenched within the local community himself. He spent four years as Secretary of the Woolamai Picnic Racing Club and is now their Treasurer. This involvement was a springboard to him being recruited to the CEO position at Stony Creek in July last year.

Given his commitments in the role of CEO, Adam relinquishes his race calling role on racedays.

"I don't call whenever I'm working, either here at Stony Creek or at Woolamai. There's so much going on you couldn't do either job justice if you tried to do both roles," he says.

Although Cup Day will be the last of Stony Creek's five fixtures for the current 2022/23 season, Adam says some exciting changes are in store for the club in 2023/24.

"Next season we will again host five fixtures but our first meeting which this year was held on Tuesday, 27th December will move to Saturday, 30th December," he reveals.

"For us to have been allocated a Saturday meeting is really exciting and I'm sure it will be huge. It may attract more of a racing crowd along with the holiday makers and tourists who will be in the area at the time."

As part of the fixture amendments, the club's second meeting of the season will fall a week later into the second week of January in 2024.

"With our allocation of five meetings unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, the key to maintaining growth is by making those meetings as successful as possible and building our membership base," Adam observes.





The Club offers two affordable membership options, both of which represent great value for money. Full membership provides access and entitlements across all five meetings, whilst the Triple Treat option applies to the club's three main racedays.

At the age of 39, Adam is young enough to connect with the younger generation of event focused attendees and balance their expectations with those of traditional racegoers.

"An appetite for something a little bit more special is definitely evident in the feedback we have been receiving from patrons. They're wanting better food and entertainment, and we're trying to service that desire," he says.

"We've started having live music at every meeting as a standard staple to appeal to people who may not be strict racing devotees."

Adam says the success of its race meetings has enabled the club to be more financial and now start to improve facilities and racing amenities.



"We've had a considerable amount of investment in infrastructure at the racecourse. We're ambitiously looking at upgrading our irrigation and raceday rooms and are working hard with the industry to get some of those projects funded," he states.

"The track surface here at Stony Creek has been excellent for the past couple of years under the supervision of Mick Templeton. Mick also holds a trainer's licence and really understands racing, which makes him a tremendous asset for the club. Being a summer racetrack, the irrigation upgrade is very important to us and is the next major infrastructure project we want to embark on."

So, with everything being prepared in readiness, Adam says all that remains is to head to Stony Creek for all the thoroughbred action and festivities on Cup Day.

"Our aim is for everyone to be comfortable, enjoy a fun day at the track, be entertained and want to come back again," he concludes.



LADBROKES STONY CREEK CUP DAY

Date: Sunday, 12th March 2023

For information and bookings
please go to our website:

www.stonycreek.com.au

Or (03) 5664 0099

Stony Creek Cup Winners

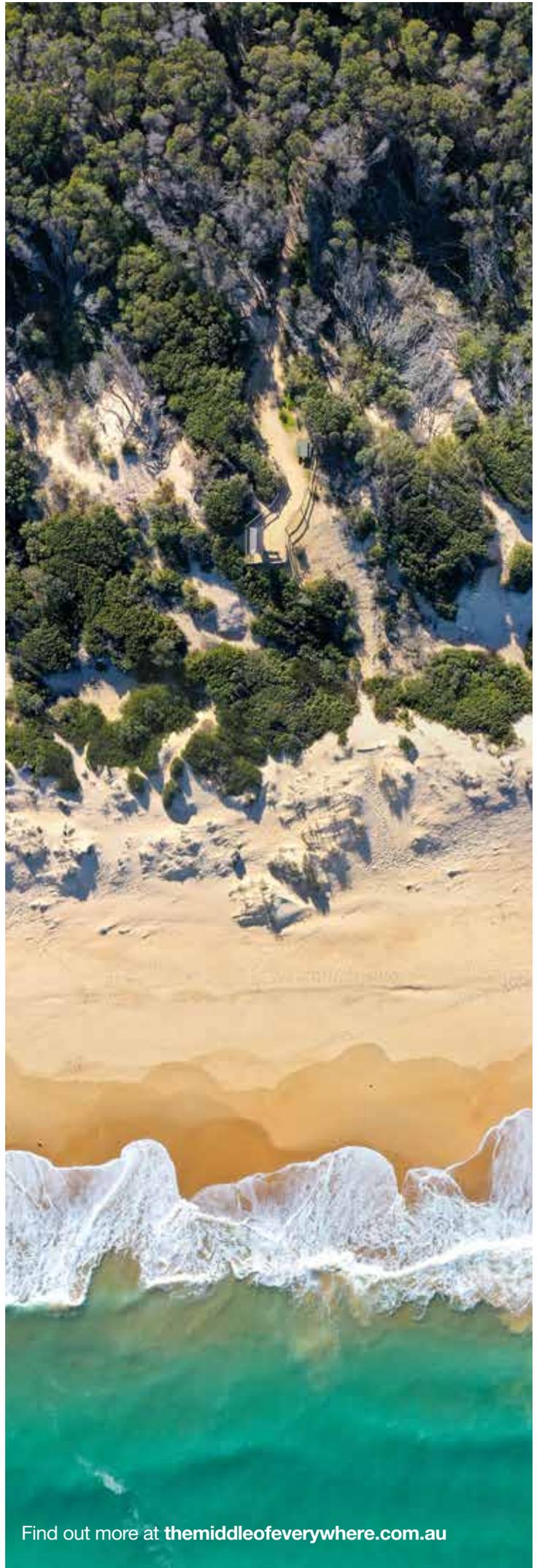
2022 Vardani	2002 Tariama	1982 Autacious
2021 Skelm	2001 Parisam	1981 Sovereign Blaze
2020 Don't Doubt Dory	2000 Red Bustaan	1980 Ancient Times
2019 Prince Ziggy	1999 Hi Aims	1979 Hoofbeat
2018 Gallic Chieftain	1998 Skytalk	1978 Make Mine Brandy
2017 Youl Dash for Cash	1997 Deal Us In	1977 Nichochat
2016 Scelto	1996 Sergeant Pepper	1976 Conscript
2015 Lucciola	1995 Unsolved	1975 Better Coast
2014 Ali Vital	1994 Grass Valley	1974 Crucial
2013 Second King	1993 Tawgantic	1973 Jalna Park
2012 Second King	1992 Helix Gold	1972 Sir Rye
2011 Ma Shang	1991 Clam's Comet	1971 Dark Suit
2010 Bitofado	1990 Raft Boy	1970 Divider
2009 Escape Artist	1989 Favoured Duke	1969 The Shot
2008 Stay All Day	1988 Barry's Gold	1968 Byronic
2007 Our Bahare	1987 Frank Pledge	1967 Sugarmagundi
2006 Aqualine	1986 Hollow Victory	1966 Leeuwarden
2005 Davidoff	1985 Blue Prelate	1965 Meeting Abandoned
2004 Royal Rule	1984 What A Secret	1964 Tradlea
2003 Jangling Jack	1983 Teakwood	

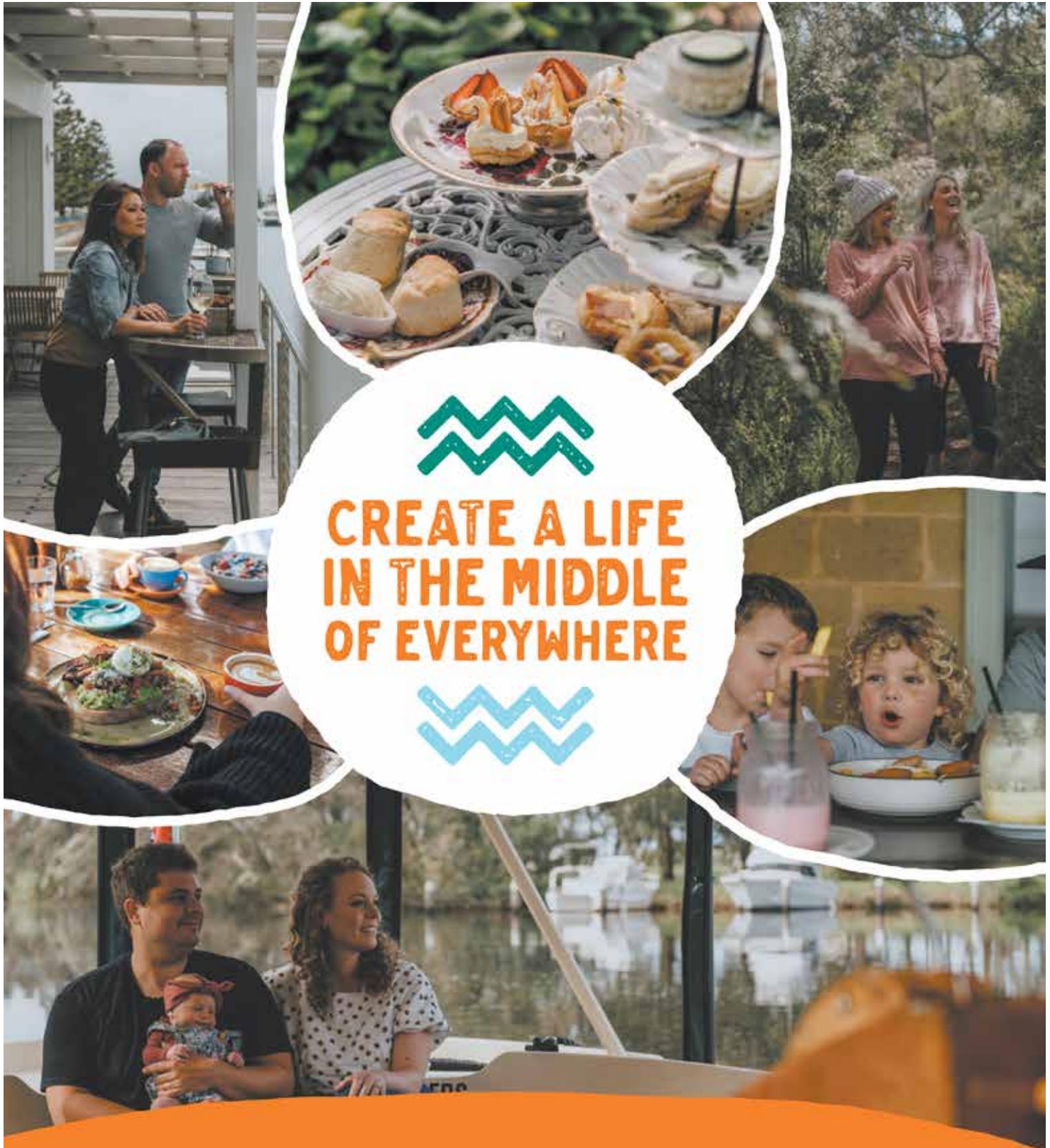


THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE



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Served In Style at the Tinamba Hotel

WORDS BY KEN ROBERTS | PHOTOS KINDLY SUPPLIED BY VISIT VICTORIA & TINAMBA HOTEL

Taking over a much loved and awarded business such as the Tinamba Hotel in the charming village of Tinamba, previously named as one of the top 50 restaurants in Australia, could have been a daunting and overwhelming task, but in 2020 new owners Simon and Tania Johnson have shown they were more than up to the task.

Simon previously worked in the corporate world in Melbourne, and he has been able to adapt his management skills to run a fine dining venue. It has been an enjoyable though steep learning curve and he says he soon discovered that he had to combine finance, marketing, HR and many other departments of a large business under his own control. Tania, when not assisting with the hotel operations, is a local teacher. Their three kids are also involved in helping run the family business. Tania's family background is in the area. When her late grandfather Ernie Durrant was Station master at the now disappeared Tinamba Railway station, he would never have dreamed his granddaughter would one day be running the hotel down the road.

Under the initial revitalisation by previous owners Brad and Damien, the Tinamba Hotel transformed from a typical country pub to a smart venue you would expect to find in the city. They collected many awards for their vision. The accolades have continued to roll in under Simon and Tania's ownership. In 2021 and 2022 the Tinamba Hotel was awarded the 'Best Pub Restaurant' in Regional Victoria at the Australian Hotels Association National Awards for Excellence and being awarded the 'Best Pub Regional Restaurant' in Australia at the national awards in February 2022.

In 2022 and 2023 they were also awarded a Chef Hat in the Australian Good Food Guide Chef Hats Awards. These industry awards are recognition for the Hotel and the passion, dedication and enthusiasm of their whole team in delivering the best dining experience in Gippsland.

From the beginning Simon and Tania were very keen on providing a premium service to their clientele. Being a part of the community, using local suppliers and resources, employing local people, fostering local talent, plus promoting the region and produce have been some of their most rewarding accomplishments since they took over the hotel. They have participated in many festivals and events near and far to spread the word about what they are offering. It continues to be a labour of love to enhance and create something very special and they are leaving no opportunity untouched in achieving their goals.

In Simon's previous work life, he made connections with many growers and producers across Gippsland, and he is very proud that he has been able to continue these associations. The integrity of these connections with some of the best farms and growers in the region results in the hotel using the very best produce available to create tantalising gastronomic experiences for their diners.

The commitment to excellence is also shown in their investment in a total revamp of the hotel kitchen. The new state of the art facilities not only provides a safer workplace but also makes it easier and more functional for the kitchen staff.

The kitchen team is led by Head Chef Gerard Phelan who was born and raised in Maffra. Gerard trained in Melbourne and has worked in many other renowned establishments such as the Lake House in Daylesford.

A desire to bring his own family closer to home in Maffra saw Gerard return to the area. Simon and Tania were fortunate to bring him into the team at Tinamba Hotel where he now leads their culinary staff.



Gerard is equally as passionate about the business and eager to maintain and improve the fine dining fare the kitchen prepares.

He adapts his menu to suit the seasonal produce available, and with his wife Louise they have further developed and are expanding the kitchen garden at the hotel. Gerard uses the produce they grow on site in his menu; you can't get any fresher than that! More garden beds and an orchard are also planned.

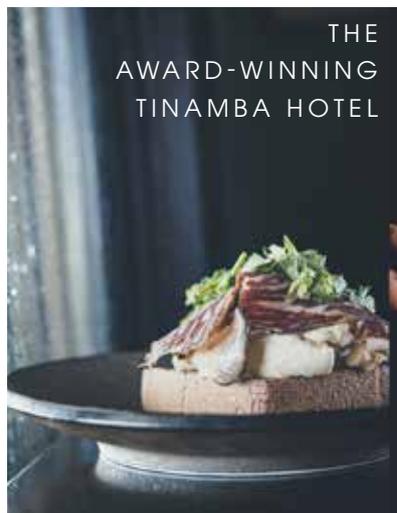
The traditional country pub look, albeit very stylish, of the Tinamba Hotel is somewhat deceiving. Although it offers a traditional bar and caters for regular patrons, its core is that of a refined fine dining restaurant with sophisticated décor. It has become well known across Gippsland and the State as a destination restaurant to where guests can enjoy a superb dining experience.

They encourage booking ahead so as not to be disappointed and its widely regarded as a special occasion place to celebrate and enjoy. As the hotel is ever evolving, Simon, Tania and the team strive to make their visitor experience continually better through innovations and improvements.

It's very obvious that the passion that Simon and Tania have for the fine dining experience available within the Tinamba Hotel is very infectious. They have exciting future plans and are continuing to build their team to make it all possible. It is beneficial to engage with them through their social media as there are ever changing promotions and events happening.

This certainly is a dynamic and happening venue. There is definitely no resting on laurels here as innovations, ideas and dreams abound.

Many Gippslanders and visitors from further afield are already aware of this gem in the lush countryside close to Maffra. Those guests who haven't yet experienced the hospitality on offer are very welcome and as usually happens will return again and again. This is a very special place!



Owner Simon Johnson with Head Chef Gerard Phelan at the Meeniyar Garlic Festival

Attendees have called Saturday's Day @ The Port event a huge success, following 11 hours of wall-to-wall free entertainment.

Wellington Shire Council's first Day @ The Port was held at the Port of Sale Precinct on Saturday 4 February and 10,000 people stopped by to see what all the fuss was about.

The event started at 10.30am, and with many eager to be first in line for food trucks and free carnival rides, the Port of Sale's Grand Canal Drive was soon full of people of all ages and backgrounds.

Day @ The Port was the vision of Council's Arts and Culture team, including The Wedge Performing Arts Centre, Sale Library, and Gippsland Art Gallery, with significant support from The Middle of Everywhere and the Central Gippsland Visitor Centre, based at the Port of Sale's Wellington Centre.

A free family-friendly, carnival-like event was promised in the lead up, and that is exactly what was delivered. Albeit a wet and windy summer's day, the community support for Day @ The Port was unmatched.

Wellington Shire Council Mayor, Ian Bye attended the event and was blown away with the community support.

"I knew how much hard work went into organising the day, but to see so many people at the Port of Sale and exploring the wider precinct was an amazing outcome."

"My favourite part was having so much entertainment in one place, it was easy to bring the family and keep them entertained for hours. The carnival rides were full all day, Sale library hosted kids' activities, and food trucks had to keep restocking to meet demand. Then the live music and outdoor bar came alive after dark," said Cr Bye.

There were clear winners to the day, local food trucks and makers set up along the glorious Port of Sale, carnival rides, and free performances of The Australian Shakespeare Company's Wind in The Willows provided free entertainment for kids and adults all day long. And finally, live entertainment didn't disappoint. The rain cleared just in time for 6pm to roll around and the main stage came alive with local band The Soutanas, followed by Danny Spencer, and headline act, funk band Vaudeville Smash from Melbourne. Thousands of people gathered in the outdoor amphitheatre adjacent to The Wedge Performing Arts Centre to dance the night away.

The community came out in support of all aspects of the event, sharing positive comments in person and on social media in the days following the event. Linda Horstman shared on Facebook that it was "wonderful to see people of all ages out and enjoying a free event", and Sue Centra said, "hats off to all the people that put in the hard yards".

Investment in the local community topped \$800,000, and through promotion of the region by The Middle of Everywhere, visitors spent on average \$80 each during, and in the days following the event.

15 food trucks attended on the day, and with a preference for local businesses, most were sold out and needed to restock after a busy lunch rush. We thank the local creators who braved the weather and set up stalls, offering a Makers Market for visitors. Although many needed to pack up to avoid the wind, their attendance was welcomed by many eager early-morning visitors.

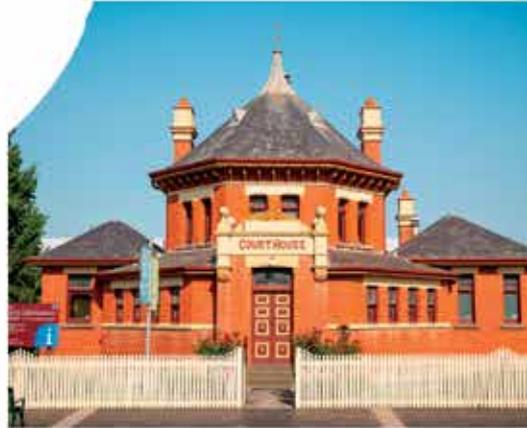
Thousands of visitors made their way back into Sale to catch a glimpse of The Middle of Everywhere fireworks display at 9.40pm, rounding out a fantastic day at the Port of Sale.

Thank you to everyone who braved the wintery weather to support Day @ The Port. Wellington Shire Council hopes to host more community events like this in the future, and community support makes it possible.



Day @ The Port Lit Up THE PORT OF SALE





In The Middle of Everywhere, discover vivid colours amid our street art landscapes. Stop in at many of our towns to get your fill of awe inspiring street art. If you prefer the more 'traditional' means of finding your arty fix, the Yarram Courthouse Gallery, Briagolong Art Gallery and Gippsland Art Gallery all have rotating exhibitions from a great selection of local, national and international artists.



themiddleofeverywhere.com.au





A DAY AT THE BEACH

WORDS & PHOTOS BY KEN ROBERTS

Gippsland has a fantastic selection of waterways to explore from creeks, rivers, lakes, dams and the ocean. Wellington Shire like other areas boasts plenty of options and less than half an hour drive from Sale is the fabulous Ninety Mile Beach. This unspoilt stretch of coastline has long been the perfect getaway for day trips, weekends, holidays and permanent living. There are so many accommodation options that cater to every budget and facilities to suit everyone.

The scenic drive towards Seaspray takes you past farms, bush and pine forests until you can eventually catch a glimpse of the sea in the distance. When you drive down the hill into the town beneath the spreading branches of the cypress trees you really know you've arrived.

Seaspray of today still retains the unspoilt charm of a seaside hamlet. It is slowly becoming gentrified with modern and renovated homes appearing, but there remains many tiny beach shacks and holiday homes that recall times past. The caravan park has up to date modern facilities that cater for different stays from campsites to permanent bungalows with just a short walk to the beach. The beach is pristine and never crowded, with lifesavers guarding a controlled swimming area.

The Seaspray Surf Lifesaving Club worked tirelessly over many years to build a new modern clubhouse with bar and restaurant attached. The building sits in an elevated position that provides a panoramic vista of the ever-changing moods of the ocean. It's a good idea to check opening times.

The Seaspray General Store has recently had a marvellous makeover and stocks everything locals and visitors need. The popular café has coffee and an excellent takeaway menu. It has all essential items needed as well as an array of artisan products and crafts.

A wonderful feature of Seaspray is that Merriman Creek borders the town and provides a great alternative for water activities. It's the perfect sheltered and calm location for kids, a great family spot and an ideal place for paddle boarders and people wanting to dangle a line.

Heading out of Seaspray along Shoreline Drive the last few cottages are left behind and you encounter Lake Reeve on your left. Grass covered dunes soon give way to banksias and other coastal vegetation providing habitat for local wildlife.





The Honeysuckles is a quiet haven just along the road that has slowly developed into a community of holiday and permanent homes.

The beach side soon begins to offer free campsites nestled into the scrub. They are plentiful and range in size so that large and small groups of campers are catered for. It's easy to find a secluded campsite. It's also very easy to find a location where you can have a spot of the beach all to yourself. Even in the height of summer a deserted beach will often await you.

The sealed road ambles along through the coastal park, a slow drive is recommended to not only enjoy the scenery but to be careful of local wildlife. Along the way signage indicates the beach entrance to the wreck of the Trinculo sailing ship from 1879. The iron remains of the hull protrude from the sands with information boards along the pathway to explain its history. It's a great place for photography.

Driving on you will pass Glomar, Flamingo and Delray beaches and as you near Golden Beach you will begin to see appropriately named streets such as Waikiki Way, Seafoam Avenue and Marine Drive.

Golden Beach is a thriving small beachside village with a community run camp park, Bowling Green, Golf course and several commercial enterprises. The Golden Beach General Store is the hub of the community and perfect for holiday makers and day trippers. A large car park with bus parking capacity has direct access to the beach. Paradise Beach adjoins Golden Beach and both places are interesting to drive around and view the many different houses from the grandiose to the humble.

The entrance to Golden Beach from Sale is a divided road which leads to a causeway crossing Lake Reeve. The coastal vegetation soon mostly changes to grazing land. A turn off leads to another Ninety Mile Beach gem which is Loch Sport. It has direct access to the magnificent Gippsland Lakes system.

A quick trip and soon you will find yourself back at your starting point in Sale. This triangular journey can be done either way and is perfect for a day out to the beach with a fish and chip lunch at either location. A stroll along the beach at any of the multiple locations available is an ideal break from the daily grind. With sun, surf, sand, playgrounds, a wealth of scenery and options for so many activities it's suitable for everyone.

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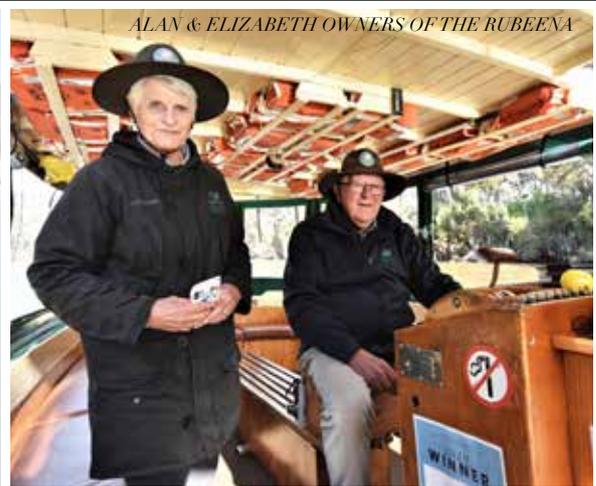


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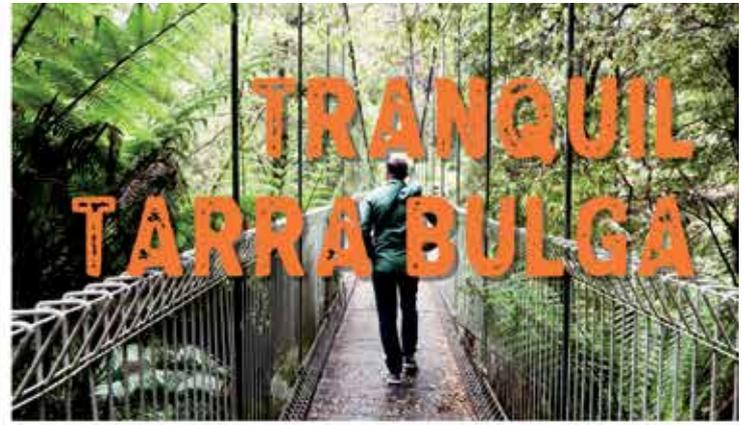
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Jo Caminiti

SCULPTOR, ARTIST, MAKER, GROWER

WORDS & PHOTOS BY KEN ROBERTS

The influences and events of a person's life are many and varied, planned and happenstance. People rarely have a direct route to where they end up and their destination is "coloured" by all that they are drawn into along the way. Such is the case with Cowwarr sculptor and artist Jo Caminiti.

Jo grew up in Northern Victoria, her father's family moved there from South Gippsland to establish a dairy farm, where he met her mother, a city girl turned herd tester. She credits a lot of her ingenuity and aptitude to her 8th grade educated father who could make anything that was needed on the farm from whatever was around. Little did Jo know in her youth how much she would duplicate this, though in an artistic way.

It's incredible that after her education in a tiny one teacher school, with her the only one in her grade, that she went on to study at university and become a scientist specialising in water management. At her small high school, she was already displaying her single mindedness when she and a friend protested that they weren't allowed to enrol in the metalwork class because of their gender. They were successful, another signpost for Jo's later transformation.

After 30 years working in local, state and federal government departments, as well as large corporate companies, a restructure enabled Jo to re-evaluate her future and take the brave step in becoming a full time artist and sculptor. It took some time before she could actually use those terms to describe herself.

A small farm on the verdant banks of Rainbow Creek just outside of Cowwarr is Jo's home and studio. The lush backdrop is an ideal place for an environmentalist and creator like Jo to make all manner of amazing pieces. A humble and unassuming person, her creative journey is inspirational and a lesson to all about what determination and hard work can achieve.

Jo had always been interested in art whilst using her intellectual side to pursue a career. She had no concrete plan about how she was going to achieve her artistic goals but a vague five year plan pointed her in a direction.

With time on her hands, prior to finishing her local government job, Jo decided she would like to learn to weld and perhaps make some handy items for around the home. She researched online and bought a welder. Though forewarned, the first time she touched the flux core welding torch to the metal and depressed the trigger she let out an involuntary scream. She tried to enrol in a local welding class but mysteriously on both occasions her applications were "lost".

Jo did the most obvious choice for today, she went to YouTube! It was the right time for a hands on creative and handy person to learn these skills at home by accessing this digital information at her fingertips.

She found so many tutorials and instructional videos and soon she had completed her first project, a frame for storing firewood. Trial and error, failure and success were all her mentors as she continued to hone her skills. She used all manner of found metal pieces to create both decorative and practical items. Along the way her brother asked her to make a garden fairy from wire like a photo he had seen. Ready for another challenge Jo taught herself to use wire to create this piece. It inspired her to begin to create a large winged horse that rotated in the wind. This stunning sculpture is magnificently silhouetted against the sky.

Spurred on Jo began work on a more ambitious sculpture, a pair of fighting kangaroos. She cleverly also began filming her process and sharing the slow and intricate transformation of rusted wire into anatomically correct kangaroos. She gained an immediate and growing audience of viewers fascinated with her progress. Sharing her journey has been vital in awareness of her skills and development.

The kangaroo sculptures were a hit and have been displayed at various venues including the Melbourne International Flower and Garden show. Jo's diversity as an artist, self-taught, is incredible as she is constantly trying new techniques and developing her current skills. She began using grape vines to weave wreaths, balls and baskets. A local winery asked her to give classes and so she taught others her learned skills.

In 2017, Jo completed a residency with local community group 'Friends of Drouin's Trees', painting portraits of 10 significant old giant gum trees in the town in ten days. This collaboration was to be another signpost in her future journey.

As word spread about her growing body of work and her ingenuity, Jo's next challenge was in creating a sculpture relating to the 2009 bushfires and working with the community around Traralgon South. The result was a fascinating memorial covered archway constructed using relics salvaged from properties affected by the Black Saturday bushfires. Located in the Callignee memorial garden the sculpture titled 'Letting Go' was a way for the people of these communities to both commemorate the tenth anniversary of the fires and to move forward.

Jo's collaboration in Drouin resulted in her being approached by the Baw Baw Shire to create a sculpture for their \$1.48 million park upgrade project of Drouin's Civic Park. A maquette (small model) of a Ficifolia or red flowering gum was approved.

An intrigued social media audience watched as over several months a stunning sculpture slowly emerged. Combining huge rusted steel gum leaves, brightly coloured powder coated flowers and a huge native bee, the sculpture came to life under the hands of this multi-talented creator.

A community call named the sculpture 'Corymbia dreaming', Corymbia Ficifolia being the botanical name for the flowering gum. A public launch of the sculpture on the 20th August 2022 was the final step for Jo in a long journey to create such a stunning piece of public art for the residents of Drouin to enjoy.

Never one to stand still, Jo's next foray into public works is equally exciting!

A long forgotten 'tale' about a stray dog who adopted a train line and rode the rails from Traralgon in the 1930's will be celebrated with several sculptures created by Jo along several stops on the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail in a community partnership with Alinta Loy Yang B.

It promises to be an interesting snapshot of history brought to life and another attraction on the increasingly popular rail trail. Jo is definitely the right person to amazingly bring this story to life, combining her talent, community engagement and public art.

Those who have been following Jo Caminiti's journey from her YouTube trained beginnings are continually astounded by her drive, passion, ingenuity and skill. She is a creator who is a joy to watch as she shares each eventful stage along the way. Keep an eye on her!



Railway Dog with BG Aug22

PORT ALBERT ~ THE TIMELESS MARITIME TOWN



Port Albert remains one of Victoria's oldest settlements and was originally the gateway to Gippsland being Victoria's first established port.

From the mid - 1800s, Port Albert was the supply port for Gippsland's pioneers until the completion of the Melbourne-Sale railway in 1878. It has berthed ships from Europe and America and welcomed thousands of Chinese migrants on their way to the goldfields. More than 40 Georgian and Victorian-style buildings still exist in the town.



Port Albert remains a commercial port, and its reputation for recreational fishing sees its population swell considerably during summer. Visit the Port Albert Maritime Museum, take a walk through history on the Alberton Cemetery guided tours, follow the Old Port Walking Trail, or enjoy scenic boat tours, fishing trips and bird watching.

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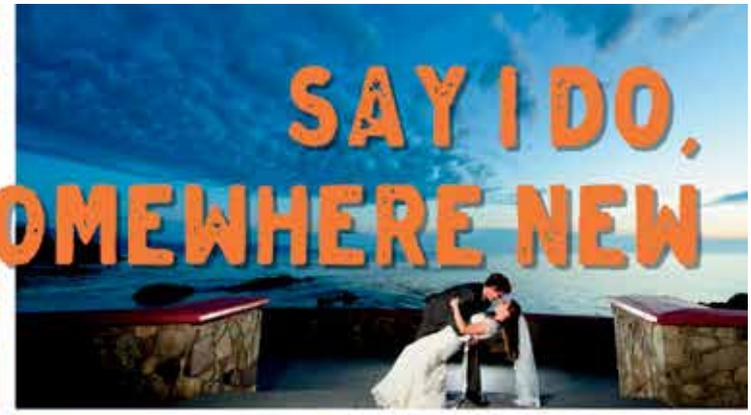


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Kilmany Park Estate

GIPPSLAND'S HIDDEN TREASURE

WORDS BY ANITA BUTTERWORTH | PHOTOS BY DJP PHOTOGRAPHY

Slowly driving up the native and oak tree-lined Kilmany Park Track at Wurruk, a fitting sense of anticipation builds. And rounding the final bend usually leaves first-time visitors audibly inhaling – such is the magnificence of one of Gippsland's true hidden treasures.

A significant page in the region's history, Kilmany Park Estate's mansion has been carefully restored and maintained since it was purchased by Daryl Page in 1995. Aware of the important role it played in the region, the family now allows others to enjoy its beauty through private functions.

Strolling the grand rooms and breathtaking balcony of Kilmany Park Estate's mansion, it's hard not to get swept up in the romance of its highly detailed, soaring ceilings and ornate fixtures.

And for anyone who is lucky enough to tour the grounds, the fascinating history of Kilmany Park Estate is expertly retold by the caretakers, including Operations Manager Narelle Christie.

The property, located near Sale, was first settled in the mid 1800s by young Scotsman William Pearson.

"He took up a squatters' licence to occupy the vast run of Crown Land between the junction of the Thomson and Latrobe Rivers. He named the run after his birthplace Kilmany, in Fife Scotland. Pearson had major influence in the Gippsland and Sale Community through his political appointments and influence."

Pearson had a son, also named William, who took up residency at Kilmany Park after his father died in 1893. The property had expanded to cover almost 30,000 acres, with the freehold secured and permanent structures built in 1847 – which included the first Kilmany Park house.

Nothing like the imposing mansion that currently takes pride of place at the property, it was a weatherboard bungalow with a gabled roof and five sets of French doors that opened onto a veranda. It was not until around 1870 that an architecturally designed house was commissioned, with the original home being left as an annex.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the homestead was developed, which, according to the Heritage Citation, 'reflected the fortunes of both the estate and the Pearson family'. Their social status had climbed, thanks in no small part to their membership in the Victorian horse racing industry, their generosity and the family's political ties.

Over the years more buildings were added to the estate, including stables, a meat-house, bakery, coach house, workshop and Sloyd room. Kilmany Park became a drawcard for 'the upper echelons of Victorian state society during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, including royalty, state governors, Melbourne gentry and notable residents of the Sale district,' according to the Heritage Citation.

"The family was heavily involved in the church and initiated the arrival of the first Presbyterian church minister Rev. WS Login from Scotland in Sale in 1854," Narelle explained.



“The Estate in 1901 hosted the Duke of York (later to become King George V) for a day’s hunting where, as part of tradition, he planted an English Oak tree in the grounds.

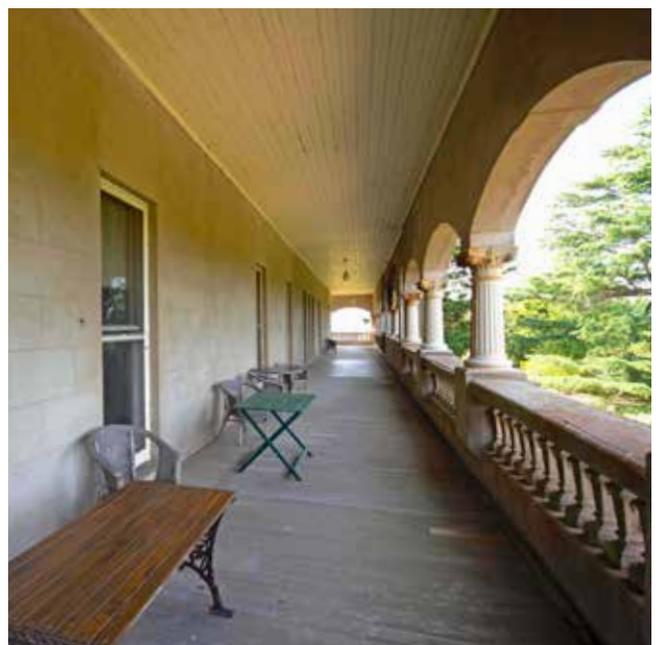
The property boasted among other things a golf course which was used by the Sale Golf Club.”

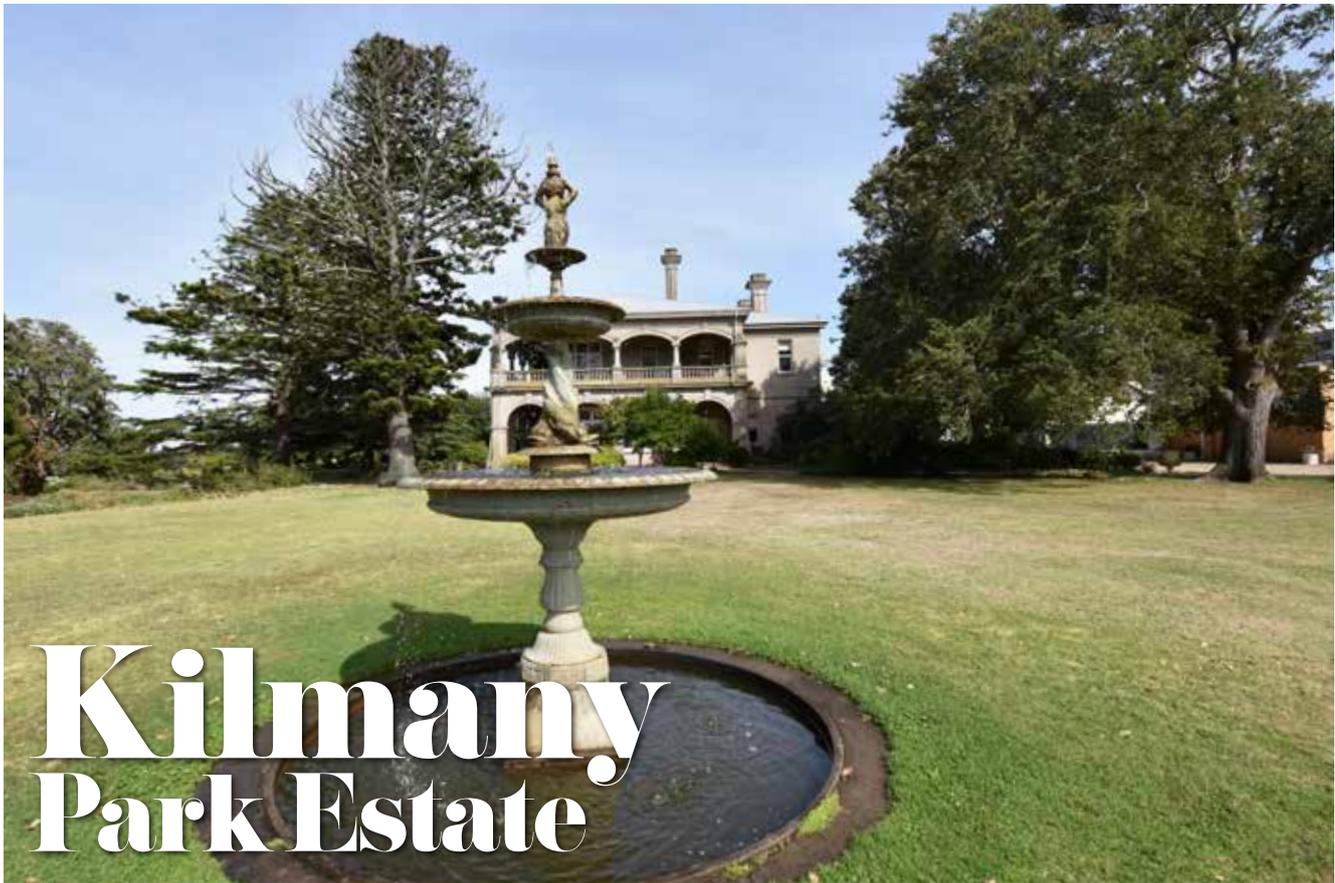
In 1910 the Estate was subdivided; on the condition the purchased small lots be used to grow beets for Maffra’s sugar beer factory. But the land proved unsuitable for root crops, and it was later used for soldier settlement.

“Ironically, it was the Presbyterian Church who purchased Kilmany Park in 1923 for a home for boys to provide training on the dairy farm. A primary school was placed on the property for the younger boys, with the older boys attending Sale secondary schools,” said Narelle.

The following year Kilmany Park Farm Home for Boys was established on the property ‘to transplant city boys who were at social risk, to the wholesome atmosphere of a Gippsland farming property’. It saw more buildings erected at the property including the school which by 1944 had 40 boys and three girls attending.

Grassfires in 1944 caused considerable damage to both the home and the school, with repairs and reconstruction slowly undertaken over several years. By the middle of 1956, the school had closed, however it continued to be maintained by the Department of Education. And in 1978, Kilmany Park Farm Home for Boys also disbanded.







After its closure, the property was maintained as a dairy, with the land tenanted out to farmers until the mid 90s. Kilmanny Park was put up for sale in 1995, and it was purchased by surgeon Daryl Page. He has since undertaken a huge amount of work to preserve and restore the estate, which came with no fixtures, fittings, or furniture.

"There was a false ceiling in the downstairs passageway which was hiding the plumbing and electrics and also hiding the beautiful plaster cornice," explained Daryl. "Now restored to its original beauty."

Narelle details that all the buildings, where possible, are still original.

"The original features in the mansion have been maintained or restored in keeping with the original style. Some of the spectacular interior features include the fret work in the dining room and drawing room, extensive plaster ceilings and cornices, the wood panelling and the magnificent staircase in the main hall, and pressed metal ceilings throughout the first floor."

Kilmanny Park Estate now operates as a B&B and private function facility, hosting weddings, funerals, birthday celebrations, retreats, performance tours and open gardens.

"It doesn't matter who walks in the front door or who drives up the long tree lined driveway they always are overwhelmed with the beauty and grandeur of the Estate and usually don't want to leave." Narelle said.

"Wow' is the most common response as their eyes are drawn up towards the ceiling plasterwork and the staircase before them."

After playing a significant role in Gippsland's history, Kilmanny Park Estate continues to be a part of the lives of many visitors who chose to celebrate and commemorate their important life events at the grand property.

"I get a feeling it's nice to share it with the community who stay as guests or attend various events and functions held here and I would hope this continues in the future," said Daryl.

Kilmanny Park Estate is located at 1613 Settlement Road, Wurruk. For bookings contact Narelle on 0459 293 334.



YORK SUITE LOUNGE



LESLIE SUITE

AUTUMN IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND

Autumn is a great time to explore the scenic walks of South Gippsland and we are fortunate to have fantastic tracks and trails in most of our townships. The longest is, by far, the Great Southern Rail Trail which stretches all the way from Nyora to Port Welshpool – a massive 108.5km.

The Great Southern Rail Trail passes through towns of all sizes, including the picturesque Loch Village, the larger towns of Korumburra and Leongatha before reaching a trio of smaller communities in Koonwarra, Meeniyan and Fish Creek. It then winds across to Foster where you are greeted with spectacular views of Wilsons Promontory as you ride into town and rest in beautiful surrounds of Pearl Park, before continuing on to Toora, Welshpool and then finally Port Welshpool, home of the popular Long Jetty.

One of the best things about the Great Southern Rail Trail is its proximity to local townships. It's easy to break your journey up with regular rest stops, or even plan your trip over a number of days by staying in nearby accommodation.

Excitingly, the Great Southern Rail Trail will soon be even longer, with works already commenced to stretch the trail to Yarram and Port Albert.

Of course, the Great Southern Rail Trail isn't our only rail trail. We are fortunate to also have the Grand Ridge Rail Trail which travels 13km between Mirboo North and Boolarra. It is the perfect trail for a hot day as your walk or ride is shaded by a thick overhead canopy. This trail is surrounded by lush forest vegetation and provides a snapshot of the beauty of the Strzelecki Ranges.

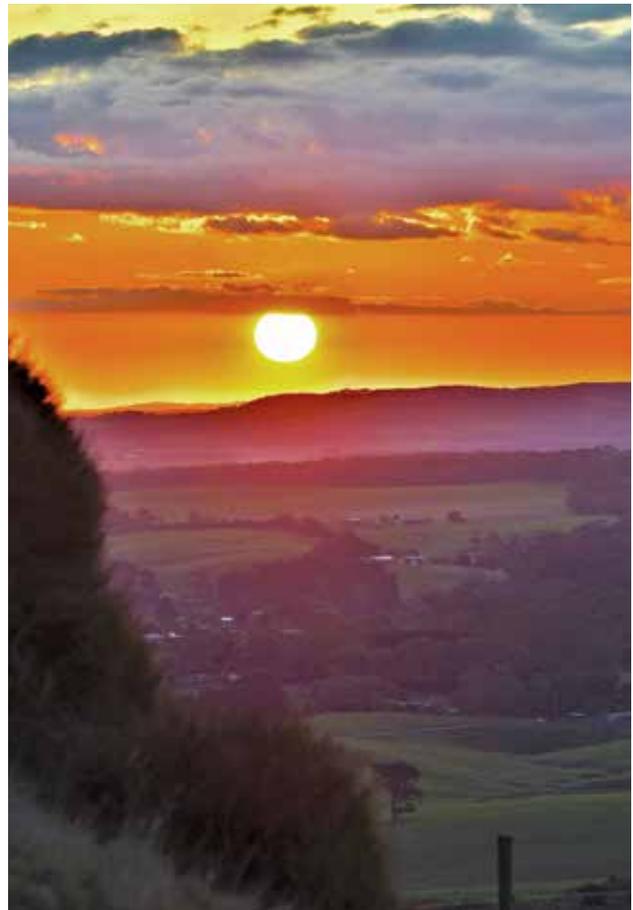
Outside of the very popular rail trails, there are smaller walks in all corners of South Gippsland. A popular coastal walk is the Point Smythe walk in Venus Bay which takes approximately two hours to complete (return) and showcases a variety of coastal vegetation as you weave your way onto the beach at Point Smythe.

A tucked away walk in the heart of Leongatha is the Wetland Walk, which starts on Johnson Street. It's only a short walk, taking just five to ten minutes to complete, but it is perfect for peaceful reflection as you stroll around the lake while watching the ducks and geese. Over in Kongwak is Pioneer Reserve, which comprises a large area of remnant native vegetation. A wander through Pioneer Reserve provides a taste of what the local landscape was once like, with towering Eucalypts and thick forest scrub.

Autumn is also the season for events in South Gippsland and there is a huge variety on offer. From agricultural shows to art exhibitions, festas and food events, South Gippsland is the place to be.

This year, South Gippsland Shire Council is supporting a South Gippsland Festival Event series which features a number of big events between February and August. There are plenty of other events that are also running throughout the year, however. You can find their details at visitsouthgippsland.com.au

If you would like to find out more about things to see and do, please drop-in to our local Visitor Information Centre in Foster or contact the team on 1800 630 704. The team are passionate about South Gippsland and love helping visitor to create exciting itineraries. You can also find out more via our website: visitsouthgippsland.com.au



SOUTH GIPPSLAND FESTIVAL EVENT SERIES 2023

- Prom Coast Festival Friday 10— Sunday 12 March
- Loch Long Lunch – Sunday 19 March 2023
- Loch Village Food and Wine Festival – Sunday 11 June
- Korumburra Southern Lights Festival – Sunday 11 June
- Mirboo North Winterfest – Date TBC

OTHER WALKS IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND

- Hoddle Mountain Trail –Fish Creek
- Lyre Bird Forest Walk—Mirboo North
- Lime Burners Walker—Walkerville
- Roy Henderson Path—Sandy Point
- Wilsons Promontory National Park



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back yard*



**SOUTH
GIPPS
LAND**



VIRTUE HOMES

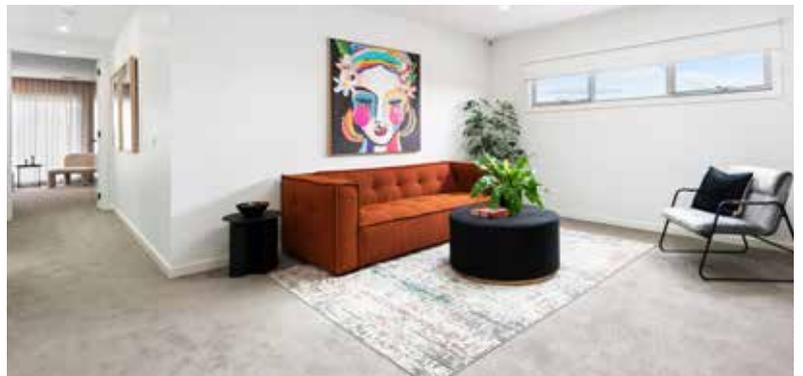
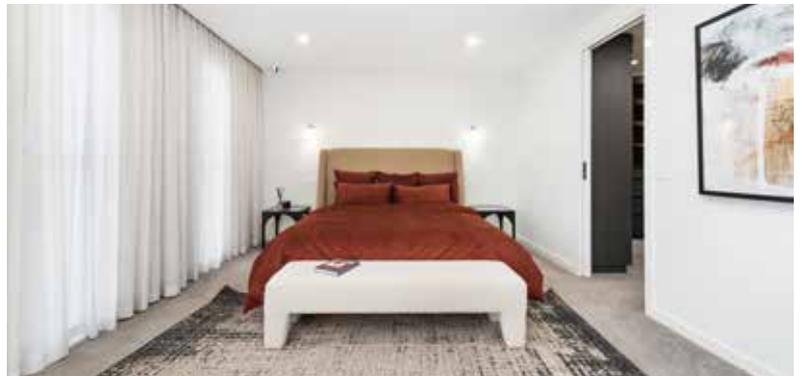
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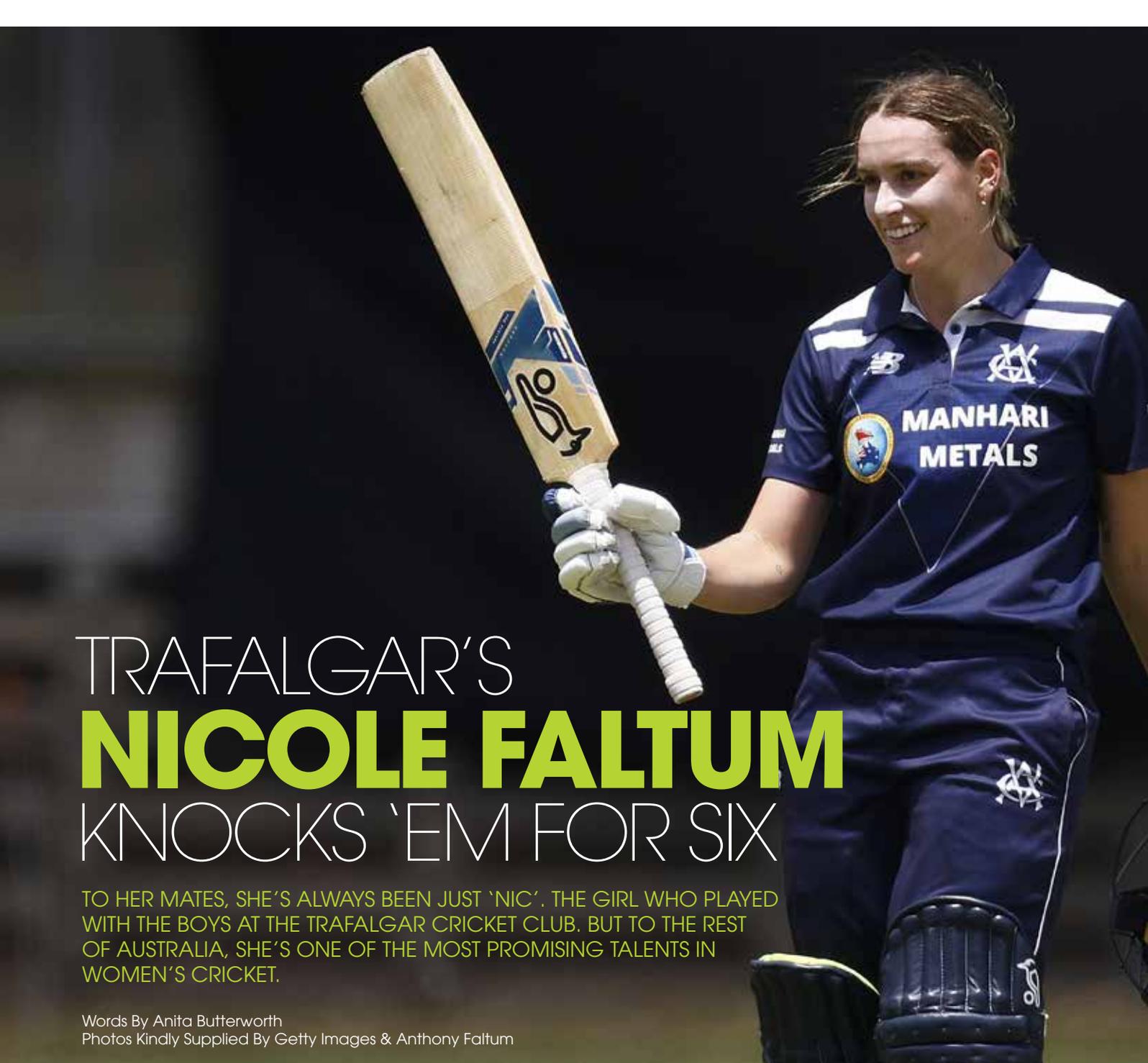
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Photography by Open2ViewGippsland



TRAFALGAR'S **NICOLE FALTUM** KNOCKS 'EM FOR SIX

TO HER MATES, SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN JUST 'NIC'. THE GIRL WHO PLAYED WITH THE BOYS AT THE TRAFALGAR CRICKET CLUB. BUT TO THE REST OF AUSTRALIA, SHE'S ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING TALENTS IN WOMEN'S CRICKET.

Words By Anita Butterworth
Photos Kindly Supplied By Getty Images & Anthony Faltum

Nicole Faltum is a Gippsland girl through and through. Despite her already long list of cricketing achievements at the age of just 22, the right-handed batter and wicket keeper loves nothing more than coming home to Traf and being with family and friends.

"I very rarely get time to head back home, but whenever I do it's one of my favourite things to do, and I make sure I go and see the family and re-energise and get a bit of a kick for it again, which is always really good," Nicole said.

The reason she doesn't head home that often is her ever-growing list of cricketing commitments.

"I play for three teams over the duration of the season, so I obviously have my club team Dandenong Cricket Club every weekend, the WBBL – I play for the Melbourne Stars that's a two-month commitment, and state games in and around."

Like most Aussie girls with brothers, Nicole grew up playing cricket 'all the time'. In fact, any time she could get out and play something competitive, she did.

"When I was younger, I played any sport under the sun. Anything that I could, I would always play. And because the boys always played, I would literally just go and watch them and be dragged along every single week to wherever they'd go and then eventually I got sick of watching and wanted to play myself. So, I just fielded a few times for my brothers when they needed.

"It wasn't until I got into school and some of my mates played, that I just wanted to play with them. And then I joined Trafalgar Cricket Club and that's where I first started playing my cricket."

Country cricket clubs are a fertile breeding ground for talent. But not so much if you're female. It means playing with the boys for the better part of your underage years.

"I just played all my underage cricket for Trafalgar Cricket Club, so I played under 14s and under 16 boys. And then I was lucky enough to play for Gippsland in the women's team, so in the underage competition there."

"And from there I got selected to play in underage State Championships. So, I played a year of under 15s for Victoria and then under 18s for Victoria. And then when I was in year 11, I got my first professional contract which was pretty cool."



PHOTO KINDLY SUPPLIED BY GETTY IMAGES



PHOTO KINDLY SUPPLIED BY GETTY IMAGES

It was an incredible achievement, but one the humble sporting star didn't trumpet to her friends.

"I'm not really sure if they understood it to the full extent. I think the nice thing is they just knew me as Nic, and while I played cricket, that's just what I did, I don't think they really understood the commitment and some of the sacrifices I had to make. I remember just even on weekends, weeknights and school days I had to give up a lot at quite a young age to try and do it. I'm glad I made those sacrifices because I wouldn't be in the position I am now."

Supremely talented with both the bat and gloves, Nicole sets a high standard for herself, which she continues to surpass. Her form in 2022 and 2023 has been exceptional. She was named in Australia's A squad for the series against England A in January last year, and in October she became the youngest captain in the WBBL.

"It's never something that I really thought that I would do growing up. I loved just being myself and playing, but I never saw myself as a captain, if I'm being honest. I guess as I was going through the ranks and being involved in the teams I have been for quite a while, a few people had mentioned it to me when I was a bit younger."

NICOLE WITH HER PARENTS ANTHONY & CAROL FALTUM



NICOLE FALTUM KNOCKS 'EM FOR SIX

"I captained some underage teams, and I captained my club team, Dandenong Women's Club, and still captain them. But it's never really something that was at the forefront of my mind until I started doing it. And now that I'm doing it, I'm really enjoying it and both the on and off-field leadership stuff is pretty cool."

The talented Gippslander has already amassed a long list of tours and achievements, with the obvious highlight playing for her country.

"A real highlight for me would be the under 19s Australian Tour I went on. Not so much for the performances or because it was the Australian team, it was just a really cool team and a really cool set up. We toured to South Africa and the following year we went to New Zealand, so that was pretty cool. I think honestly playing for my state and captaining my state. Being captain of Victoria is pretty cool, I didn't realise it until recently how big of a deal it is and how much of an honour it is."

One thing Nicole does realise is just how lucky she is to be able to live out her dream of playing professional cricket, as an Australian woman.

"Being in Australia we're so lucky that there are so many opportunities for girls to play, not only cricket, but female sport. I think it's probably still got a fair way to go especially in country and regional areas. The city I think provides some really good opportunities for girls, but I still think it would be really nice to have more girls' competitions in the country that allow girls to play in their own competition."

Her advice for girls who are desperate to follow in her footsteps is not to let anything get in your way.

"I think it's the same with anything, if you want to do something then nine times out of ten there's usually not much stopping you. So, I'd say if you can do it, just jump in and get involved. Some of my favourite cricket has definitely been with Trafalgar Cricket Club playing in the under 14s and under 16s boys' competitions and playing with some of my closest mates from school and I was so lucky they were all so amazing to me. I'd say any chance you get to play, whether it's boys or girls, whatever it is, jump in and give it a crack."



PHOTO KINDLY SUPPLIED BY GETTY IMAGES



NICOLE FALTUM IN THE MIDDLE WITH SISTERS RENEE ON THE LEFT AND MEAGAN ON THE RIGHT



PHOTO KINDLY SUPPLIED BY GETTY IMAGES

THE UMPIRES REUNION

AT LEONGATHA ON JANUARY 15, 2023



OUR UMPIRE LEGENDS REUNITE

The Leongatha Cricket Umpires Association formed before the 1989-90 Season with Lance Lancaster as President and Chris Wilson as Secretary/Treasurer.

This day was wonderfully organised by Geoff Wyatt and was well received by the umpires that attended and many a long story was told. Hopefully this will be a regular event and I learnt that all LBW's can never be questioned!

WORDS & PHOTOS BY DOUG PELL



FROM LEFT JOHN SCHELLING & GREG GOSS



FROM LEFT - MICHAEL HEENAN, TERRY ROGERS & GRAHAM WIGHTMAN



FROM LEFT - GRAEME ELLIOT & KEVIN SMITH



FROM LEFT TREVOR STEER & LANCE LANCASTER



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The City Of Traralgon Brass Band Marches On

Words by Anita Butterworth | Photos supplied by Traralgon Brass Band and DJP Photography

It's one of Traralgon's oldest institutions and has been the breeding ground for some of the region's most talented musicians. And now the City of Traralgon Band is shaking off a long pandemic interruption to continue fostering the next generation of musical artists, performers and entertainers.

As with so many other community and volunteer organisations, the City of Traralgon Band took a hit during the Covid lockdowns. Performances and its popular training program were severely affected.

“It had a big impact not only on the band, but it also impacted our training program,” explained past president and the band’s publicity officer Daryl Hill.

“There were some 40 students within our training program within the band. And these were students ranging from primary school age through to mature adults. And it was quite a large group and that was going extremely well, and we had to stop that with Covid. We’re looking to revisit that in the coming months.”

With such a rich history in Gippsland, it's little wonder that the band's training program has proved to be such a drawcard.

Established in 1881, the band has gone through several name changes, but has always remained ingrained in the fabric of Traralgon and the Latrobe Valley.

“It's something that we're proud of. It's one of the oldest institutions in Traralgon. And I think around about the same time the fire brigade was formed, the police station was established, and the football club was founded not long after that. The band is one of the longest-living community organisations in our region.

“The band had a number of name changes over the years. Early last century the band was known as the Traralgon and Ex-Servicemen's Brass Band and then it was the Traralgon Municipal Band following World War II. When Traralgon became a city in the 1960s we changed the name to City of Traralgon Band, which we incorporated. Since then, there have been council amalgamations, but we've retained that name, being a registered, incorporated entity. And that's something we're quite proud of because despite significant changes to local governments, to Traralgon and the region, the band has kept that name.”

In 2015 the band undertook an incredible Tour of Remembrance, to honour local servicemen and women who lost their lives on the Western Front. The band travelled around Belgium and France and performed services at the cemeteries and memorial sites along the Western Front. The band also had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to perform in the famous Whit Friday Brass Band Competition in Yorkshire.

In mid-2022 the band was thrilled to secure the tenure of acclaimed musical director Graeme Cruikshank. After playing with the City of Traralgon Band a decade ago, Graeme has returned to lead the ensemble.

“Graeme is very enthusiastic and musically talented. He'd moved away to Western Australia and successfully conducted the Goldfields Brass Band in Kalgoorlie for a number of years. Covid impacted on that band as well, including the band competition at the National Championships. He's a very capable and enthusiastic young conductor and we're very lucky to have him. Graeme's moved back to Gippsland; he's currently living in South Gippsland, but he travels over because he enjoys conducting the band. Some other members also travel from South Gippsland and other regions to play with the band.”



City of Traralgon Band - pic by Ameli Krafft-Murat



Graeme is planning some exciting projects for the band, including a series of recordings and an event at the Gippsland Performing Arts Centre.

It will also be another year full of community performances, including ANZAC Day, the National Band Championships, the State Band Championships and the Latrobe Valley Eisteddfod.

“It gives the musicians a chance to really push themselves in terms of an arrangement of music that may be a little bit difficult but also has to be entertaining as well. So, there’s a lot of work that goes into these competitions. It also provides an opportunity for brass bands to compete against each other. It gives musicians the opportunity to develop their skills and to play something wonderful.”

Although the band is currently 30 members strong, it’s always looking to train the next generation of musicians and expand the membership.

“A number of the members are young, secondary school student age but very, very capable musicians. And many of them will take music as a career path. Some move on to study music at several places, including universities and the conservatorium of music and then come back to play in the band when we’ve got events happening.

“The brass band members are all volunteers. The key to playing in the band is that it’s a community service. We emphasise this aspect to all our members, and particularly to the younger members in our training program. Our training program focuses on developing respect for our community, our band, our performances, ourselves and each other. It’s a wonderful organisation where people of all ages from six to eighty years of age safely interact and learn to become great team members while relying on each other musically and enjoying each other’s company.”

Daryl says it’s not just the younger generation who are welcome to join the band.

“Adults who have not played a brass instrument before may also join the training program, and many adults have successfully joined the band in this way. Despite Covid, we’ve recently been able to introduce six training band members who have graduated to the senior band. Occasionally, relatively experienced musicians will rekindle their love of playing a brass instrument or move into the area and join our band. They are most welcome to come along any time to rehearsal.

“Just rock up and have a listen, meet some of our people. They’re a very friendly and welcoming bunch. Have a chat to Graeme our musical director and you’re welcome to sit in.”

The City of Traralgon Band hosts rehearsals every Wednesday night in the Traralgon Band Rooms in Albert Street starting at 7pm and finishing at 9pm, followed by a social get-together. Anyone who wants to know more about the band can reach out via cityoftraralgonband@gmail.com.



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GIPPSLAND REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE

Constructing a world-class facility in a regional centre is always a huge undertaking. But during a pandemic, it's a feat of Olympic-sized proportions.

Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre's opening in March 2021 wasn't just the unveiling of a highly anticipated facility. It was a celebration of overcoming adversity. Unsurprisingly it's been a drawcard ever since, with around 400,000 visitors enjoying the state-of-the-art facilities over the past two years.

Latrobe City Mayor Kellie O'Callaghan says it's a triumph for the community and the region.

"You can always anticipate what you think the community will do in relation to adapting to these new facilities, but I don't hesitate in any way to say the response to GRAC has been overwhelming," said Kellie.

"We knew it would be a strong response from the community, we knew that there was a lot of desire to see a facility of this type built not just here but in the region."

The almost \$60 million facility attracted \$46 million in State Government funding, with a further eight-million-dollar investment via Sport and Recreation Victoria's Community Sports Infrastructure Loan Scheme, delivered by the Latrobe Valley Authority in partnership with Latrobe City.

In just two years, GRAC has become a centrepiece of health and well-being in the region.

It boasts an eight-lane, 50-metre, FINA-approved indoor pool with 500 seat grandstand, an indoor water play zone, two large water slides, a learn-to-swim pool, water therapy pool, spa, sauna, steam rooms, wellness centre, cafe and retail precinct and a 25-metre heated outdoor pool.

"The way people use it is fairly diverse. For some it is recreational, for some it is more of a rehabilitation kind of thing. But the social connection and gathering opportunities that's created by significant infrastructure like GRAC is really important and particularly as we come out of circumstances where we couldn't always get together, I think people have taken that opportunity to get involved, get engaged in it and find new ways to find the spaces."

The centre has provided a recreational hub for those in the Latrobe Valley and beyond. Since opening, it's hosted more than 33,000 group fitness classes, and 24,000 learn-to-swim classes. It also provides rehabilitation facilities and opportunities for visitors of all abilities.

"Just a culture of supporting each other in terms of moving and feeling engaged and feeling able to come to health and recreation in a supportive environment, an all abilities-focused environment and that's certainly been something that we've had a real commitment to."





CONTINUES TO MAKE A SPLASH

WORDS BY ANITA BUTTERWORTH
PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY GIPPSLAND REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE

It wasn't just the sheer scale of the facility and the pandemic that proved a challenge during the construction phase. GRAC is Victoria's first public aquatic centre using a deep-bore geothermal heating system. The pool is warmed by 65-degree heat from groundwater in an aquifer located below the ground, reducing carbon emissions by around 700 tonnes and saving \$400,000 annually.

"That can be fairly challenging to install, there's licensing and approvals that we need to make sure that we're going through. But it uses that deep aquifer geothermal technology and the energy opportunity we have to heat the pool itself.

"It saves our community a significant amount of money because these facilities are not cheap to run, they are fairly resource intensive and it's great that we have them in the community, but we've also got to be considerate of what the ongoing cost is to run them. So, there's some real cost benefit and gas savings around having that geothermal opportunity there."

As well as workforce and construction challenges, Latrobe City also had to navigate community engagement during the lengthy build. Not an easy task with lockdowns preventing many residents from being able to physically watch the construction unfold. It meant being creative with social media and direct marketing.

In the end, each challenge only proved to heighten the anticipation surrounding the facility, which has become a drawcard for local sporting events.

GRAC has been well-used by local swimming clubs and schools for carnivals, with Latrobe City Council keen to attract regional and state events in the future.

"It is a real drawcard, it's a destination opportunity within that area and some people just go there to gather with others. For kids to hang out with their mates for families to get together and use a wonderful recreation space. Something that's useful to them the kids really enjoy, but also isn't something they have to travel a great distance to be able to get to."

The centre is operated by the YMCA with 110 staff employed at GRAC, which included upskilling locals in lifeguarding and swim teaching through a partnership with Lifesaving Victoria.

A YMCA spokesperson said the opening of the Wellness Centre is a key focus, with six suites set to provide the community with allied health services.

The success of GRAC is seen as a boon for the entire state of Victoria, both due to the impressive construction phase and the subsequent community support it's attracted. "

"It's probably paved the way for future projects at a state level and in other regional areas. Because now that we've seen it be delivered in terms of our construction but also what it looks like from an operational perspective."





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Dennis & Jim's Murals

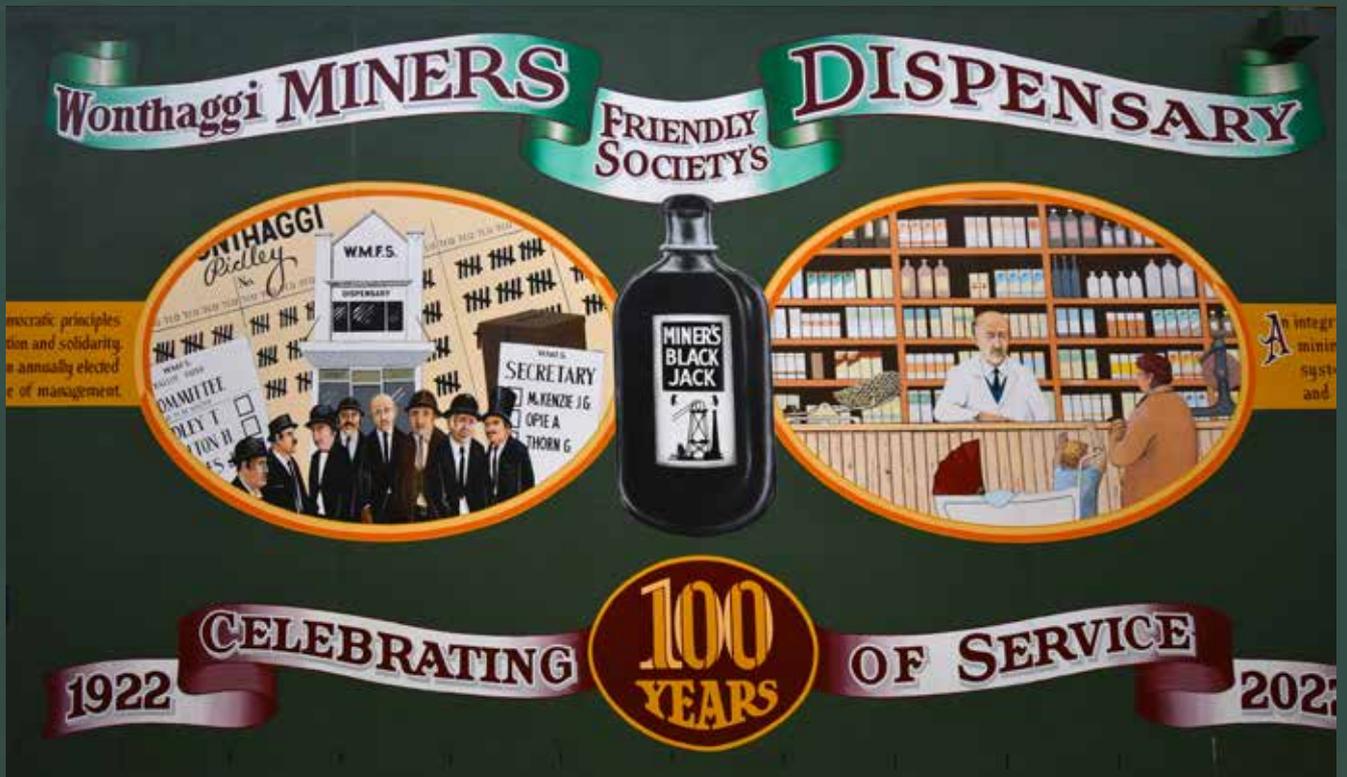
From left Jim Barritt & Dennis Leversha



recreate the past

They say a picture paints a thousand words... Dennis Leversha paints murals that show a rich historical story.

Words By Megan Woolfe | Photos By Doug Pell



Dennis has created over 30 murals, located in the heart of many Gippsland towns, including Mirboo North, Rosedale, Loch and Leongatha. He has a series of murals in Korumburra and the biggest one, in Yarram, stretches 45 metres long!

The life-like details allow children and adults of all ages to pause and travel back in time momentarily. Each mural creates a fascinating contrast between the past and present, providing a window into how history has shaped these towns.

The well-known Bass Coast Artist was chuffed to be able to combine his two passions - history and art - when he painted his first mural, around 30 years ago. His skills at designing and painting large scale artworks were admired by many. Since then, he has been approached by progress and business associations as well as individual business owners and has transformed boring, plain walls into colourful, vivid scenes of past eras.

Dennis has loved drawing for as long as he can remember. He chuckles as he says, "In science class at school, I was far more interested in sketching the Bunsen burner than understanding what the experiment was all about." He says he first realised he had a knack for it when other kids would ask him to illustrate their work.

As a young man, Dennis went off to RMIT to study painting. He reminisces, "One night a friend and I were hitch hiking along Toorak Road... you see, in those days the trams stopped running at 1 am. Blow me down, we got picked up by the musical director of the Australian Ballet. Next thing I knew, I was painting stage scenery at the Princes Theatre!" This unexpected, incredible opportunity allowed Dennis to hone and refine his skills in painting large spaces.

A few years later, he headed off to teacher's college, where he met Bev, who later became his wife. They shared a passion for the arts and in 1972, they both landed teaching jobs in Wonthaggi and have lived there ever since.

Dennis is a very versatile artist and over the years he's painted with oils, acrylics and water colours. As well as that, he has created lino prints, ink drawings and ceramics. Bev specialises in pottery and together, they can be seen at artisan markets showcasing their creations. Their works are also sprinkled in a selection of Gippsland galleries and handmade shops. Dennis and his good mate, Jim Barritt were recently spotted, paint brushes in hands, at the Wonthaggi Miners' Dispensary. Together, they designed and painted a mural to celebrate 100 years that the dispensary (a not-for-profit-pharmacy) has operated and served the community. This was made possible from a community grant from the Bass Coast Shire Council.

Jim's immaculate, vintage-style lettering, coupled with Dennis' detailed illustrative features make it an impressive tribute.

Jim was thrilled with the opportunity to work with Dennis to design and paint the mural. He says, "Dennis has always been someone I've looked up to and admired. I have his artworks on my walls."

Jim describes the time and effort he put into painting the mural as a culmination of his long love for the district. Over the years, he has lived in a few different Gippsland towns but he was drawn back to Wonthaggi because of its strong sense of community.

He has many fond childhood memories spending weekends at Wonthaggi in his family's holiday home. "I was just a young bloke when the mines were closing so I had probably one of the best playgrounds in all of Australia to muck around in," Jim reminisces.

As soon as he finished school, he did an apprenticeship in signwriting. After a few years of mastering the skills and techniques, he started his own business in Wonthaggi. The traditional paint brush signwriting that Jim does has become a dying art but with each of his careful, precise brush strokes, he creates a style and elegance that digital printed signage simply cannot replicate.

It's been a few decades since Jim has painted signs. He went on to work for the CFA, then was a graphic designer and also worked in community services. He says, "Getting the old paint brushes out again, after all these years was quite nostalgic."

Dennis and Jim are both members of the Wonthaggi Historical Society and to create something that reflects the time, energy and passion that has been put into the Miners' Dispensary over the last 100 years was an honour and a privilege.

A century ago, it all started when a meeting was held with State Coal Mine workers. It was led by the Miners Union and the Friendly Society. This is where a motion was passed to establish the Miners' Dispensary. The model ensured that miners were able to afford quality prescription medicines. This was life-changing for miners because prior to this, their low wages wouldn't leave them with enough money to buy even basic medications. The miners were flat out, just trying to make a living. I suppose it was similar to today's version of a health care card.

Dennis & Jim's Murals recreate the past



The gentlemen in the mural represent the town's leading citizens, business owners and committee members who met regularly outside the original dispensary building to discuss the problems of the new government town of Wonthaggi.

The State Coal Mining company opted to make membership of the medical, hospital and dispensary schemes compulsory for all coal mine employees which included their families. Other people in the community could choose to join. In 1927, much-needed dental treatment was added to the benefits.

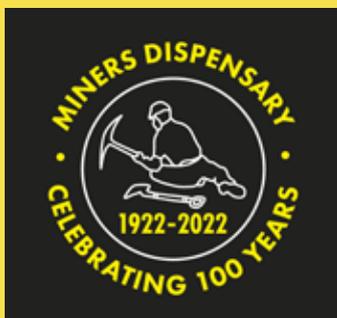
Your eye was probably drawn to the centre of the mural, to a black bottle labelled 'Miner's Black Jack.' Dennis explains, "One of the local chemists came up with this concoction - it was supposedly a remedy for everything and it contained a few substances that are now illegal." It's thought that this particular recipe was fairly local to the area. "Some of the blokes who grew up around here can remember their mums giving them a swig, when they were kids, to clear their cold," Dennis says.

Despite the difficulties during the Great Depression and World War 2, the dispensary continued to provide essential medicines to its members. The pressure eased significantly in 1948, when the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme was introduced. This gave all Australians access to free basic medicines.

Despite the State Coal Mine's closure in 1968, the dispensary remained and continued to adapt to changes. It moved from its original premises, to a larger building, next door. Today, it is run by a board of directors, on an honorary basis.

The dispensary mural and other historical art works that Dennis has presented us with, serve as a reminder of how much times have changed. Not only that, but all things eventually come to an end. Now in his late 70s, Dennis says, "I can't get up ladders and my knees give me trouble, I can't really kneel anymore." For this reason, the latest mural was designed strategically so that the pictures are positioned half way up the wall. He has accepted that the dispensary mural may well be his last. One thing is for sure though, Dennis' murals will be enjoyed and appreciated for years to come.

Local historian and author, **Sam Gatto**, has written a book '**One of a Kind**' about the history of the Dispensary. Copies are on sale at the **Wonthaggi Miners' Dispensary**.



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Through adversity,

When you chat with Kael Coster, there's no superficial small talk. He exudes calmness and is deeply reflective. A spiritual soul, he lives each day with a clear intention of what is most important to him, although this hasn't always been the case. Through times of adversity, Kael has reacted with determination to find solutions. His journey of self-discovery has led him to find what gives him joy, a sense of meaning and inner peace.

Kael describes his formative years at school as 'really rough'. He was bullied for years because he was different, which eroded his self-esteem. Consequently, feelings of anxiety and depression followed him around like a dark cloud.

The bullying escalated when he was 16 and he was violently beaten up. He says, "That day, something flicked in my brain. I didn't want to be a victim ever again. I wanted to make sure I could protect my brother and my mum and the people I loved, if I needed to." He responded by changing himself dramatically. He stopped doing all the 'nerdy' things that had made him a target. He cut his hair short and threw away all of the philosophy and fantasy books he'd loved reading. Every morning he went out running and then lifted weights. He took up Taekwondo four nights a week and even travelled to Melbourne to do boxing classes regularly.

Kael focused all of his energy into martial arts, and with dedication and persistence, he earned himself black belts (the highest rank) in multiple styles. Kael's quest to feel powerful and strong continued. He progressed to professional fighting, earning state, national and international titles in many disciplines, including Taekwondo, Kickboxing and Muay Thai. With hindsight, it's obvious that he was overcompensating for the vulnerability he'd felt when he was younger.

Despite all his wins, Kael was deeply unhappy. He reflects, "I felt like whatever I achieved, it was never enough." He was forever chasing the next victory, but felt empty inside.

He started his own martial arts gym, called 'Coster MMA' in Warragul. For years, he coached people with the aim to help them to lose weight, build strength and get fitter. He says, "I had a very narrow focus back then."

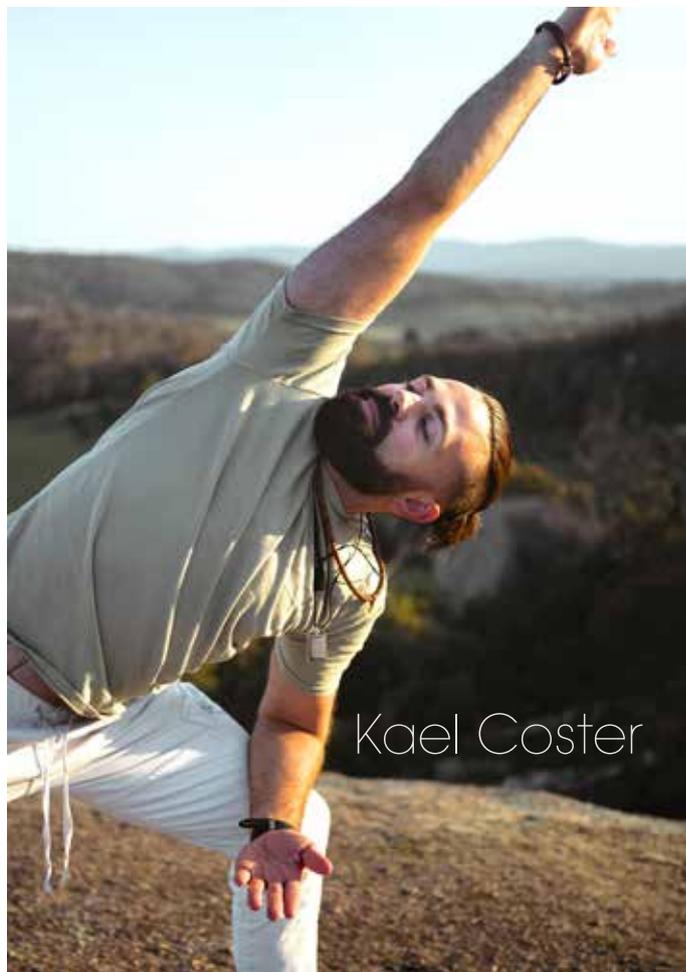
Kael hit a real low point when he was in his early 30s. He states frankly, "I'd just become a single dad, I was broke and was struggling to support my three kids... I just didn't have the emotional energy to coach others."

Desperately seeking something to help him cope with his inner turmoil, he found himself in a yoga class. "I remember at the end of that class, just lying there with tears streaming down my face. It was such a powerful emotional release." He says, "I didn't know how or why I felt so good, but I wanted more of that."

A few weeks later, Kael came up with a plan to climb out of his financial hole. He started up his own arborist business and within 3 years, he'd turned it into a million dollar company. Though he appeared successful to others, things weren't as they seemed. "I was on my phone constantly. I found myself having less patience with my kids and I was always thinking about work."

Outside of work, yoga became a regular part of Kael's routine. He was curious about the profound effect it had on him, which led him to enrol in a yoga teacher course. He realised that what he had known was just the tip of the iceberg.

"It's so much more than just moving and stretching, it's a whole philosophy," he says.



Kael Coster

Kael found purpose

WORDS BY MEGAN WOOLFE PHOTOS BY JARROD EMMERSON

Kael spent all of his spare moments reading books on yoga theory and Buddhism. The teachings resonated with him and gave him clarity he'd been missing. Feeling more in touch with his thoughts and feelings, he was nurturing the inner world that he'd neglected in the past. When he started teaching yoga classes, he weaved in the philosophical elements that he'd learnt and they were very well received.

Meanwhile, running his company each day, he felt pushed into an opposing world. Long hours and stress left him feeling despondent, unfulfilled and trapped. He says, "Yes, I could buy anything that I wanted, but I couldn't buy happiness." He adds, "It took a lot for me to let go of something that was supposedly a token of success." Finally, he knew he had to pursue what gave him joy and purpose and so he sold his business.

Kael now feels free and energised by his strong desire to help others. He spends most days in his 'Tribe MMA' gym, where he incorporates a fusion of martial arts, yoga, meditation and breathwork to guide people of all ages to improve their physical and mental health. Often people join his classes because they've tried other gyms but felt something was missing. Kael offers a more holistic approach, based on individuals' needs.

His classes for children and teenagers are becoming increasingly popular. They have many benefits but the thing that parents comment on the most is the boost in their son or daughter's confidence.

Kael started facilitating Secondary School workshops last year. Being a martial arts champion, he gains instant respect from the students. He shares his personal and relatable experiences, facilitates discussions, incorporates movement activities and makes meditating cool.

His workshops empower teenagers with knowledge and strategies to help them to make wise decisions and improve their well-being. Word has spread fast about the positive impact his workshops have and he now runs programs for secondary schools throughout Gippsland.

Kael's eyes light up when he says, "To make a difference and steer teens in the right direction, it fills me up and I enjoy it so much. To get paid for it is just an added bonus."



Kael taking children's class



The *Caravan* Keeps Rolling

THE TINY BASS COAST COMMUNITY OF ARCHIES CREEK IS NOW OFFICIALLY HOME TO VICTORIA'S LEADING REGIONAL MUSIC VENUE, WHICH CONSISTENTLY ATTRACTS SOME OF THE FINEST AND BEST-KNOWN PERFORMERS FROM AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS.

WORDS: CHRIS WEST | PHOTOS: FROM ARCHIES CREEK HOTEL/THE CARAVAN CLUB AND DOUG PELL





Peter Foley & Mary Howlett

It is often said that crisis creates opportunity.

Peter Foley had already relocated his hugely popular Caravan Music Club from Melbourne to the Archies Creek Hotel before the onset of the COVID pandemic in early 2020 threatened to pull the plug on the entire live music industry.

Together with his partner Mary Howlett, Peter had bought the pub at Archies Creek in 2019 with the intention of it being a retirement business. His sister Sue, who has been a big part of the Caravan story, also acquired an ownership interest in the hotel.

Peter says that after organising, promoting and hosting in excess of 1,300 live shows under his Caravan Music Club brand in Melbourne over the course of more than a decade he had reached a point where he was ready to slow down.

"The plan was for Mary and I to run this quiet little country pub and hold a few small gigs in the corner. I would continue to look after the music side which has always been my baby. However, the circumstances quite by accident led to it becoming very different to what we had originally envisaged. Ironically, it turns out we have never worked harder," he muses.

As major cities around Australia entered COVID lockdowns in 2020, live music venues were plunged into silence virtually overnight. Smaller venues in regional areas which were less hampered by restrictions became a saving grace for the musicians who had suddenly lost access to the places where they perform their work.

During lockdown, Peter and Mary transformed the Archies Creek Hotel into an incredible live music venue with the help of a small group of their network of friends from the music and radio scene including 3RRR personality Jon von Goes. The pub has been equipped with both an indoor stage for smaller, more intimate shows, and an outdoor stage for larger gigs where the audience can either sit close to the performers or congregate further to the back on a grassy hill where it is possible to talk whilst still appreciating the music.

"This place has a great festival vibe and some really odd quirks about it, but most of the great venues are quirky," Peter suggests.

"It's not perfect, but it works. A lot of it is more down to luck rather than any special insight from me," he adds modestly.

Peter also established an arrangement to utilise the Archies Creek Community Hall next door to the pub for some of the Caravan Music Club's indoor performances. He has also equipped this all-weather facility with a fully produced stage and lighting. Around twenty to twenty-five gigs a year are held in the hall, which is particularly beneficial during the winter months when the outdoor stage at the pub is less suitable.

"Looking back at how things have progressed in our time at Archies Creek to date, there is no doubt that COVID contributed to us getting established quicker and becoming more successful here than we possibly would have under normal circumstances," Peter concedes.

"When all the venues were closed in Melbourne, we did seventy to eighty gigs and were getting two to three hundred people through the door. It just went absolutely gangbusters."

Peter says the reputation and trust that the Caravan Music Club had built within the industry over more than a decade in Melbourne added to the willingness of high calibre performers to come to Archies Creek.

"We were able to attract bigger names than what we might have normally got, such as Julia Stone," he states.

"Mark Seymour was another example of someone who hadn't played venues like ours for years. All of a sudden, performers of that ilk were coming here because they couldn't play in the big venues in the cities that were locked down. They really liked it and have come back. Mark Seymour was back only a few weeks ago. Joe Camilleri is another one who loves it here and they all do really."

The Caravan Music Club now brings a veritable who's who of musical talent to Archies Creek on a consistent basis. Amongst the most recognisable names to have performed at the venue in recent weeks have been Ella Hooper, Mick Pealing and Brian Cadd to name just a few. Headline acts coming up in March alone include Tim Rogers, The Whitlams Black Stump Band and Grammy Award winning American songstress Judy Collins.

The Caravan Keeps Rolling

The crowds keep coming in droves and with the Caravan Music Club having almost 30,000 Facebook followers Peter needs to do very little in the way of promotion to guarantee ticket sales. Any hopes of a restful sojourn into retirement have been dashed. Not for the first time, the club has taken on a life of its own and Peter has something that would be better described as a runaway train than a caravan on his hands.

So how does the story begin?

"It all started in the lounge room of the home in Murrumbidgee I was living in back in 2004, when I arranged for Tracey Miller to perform for my then-wife's 50th birthday," Peter reflects.

"We had about fifty guests come along on that first occasion, and we continued with the house gigs which we called our 'Live in the Lounge' sessions for the next two or three years."

It may have commenced with a birthday booking, but the main motivating force behind the house gigs was in fact a very challenging family situation that brought a layer of sadness amidst the joy of the music.

"Our son Jack had muscular dystrophy and required constant care, so the idea was to bring the world to us," Peter reveals.

"Jack unfortunately died in 2007 at the age of 21 and I couldn't ever bring myself to do another house gig after that. It felt like those were something that we'd done with him, so it was just too hard to do that again."

Peter understandably lost motivation for regular work in the wake of his young son's tragic passing.

"I had to find some kind of occupation or activity that was beyond merely making a buck," he says.

"It had to have some kind of meaning or spiritual component where I felt like I was doing something positive for the world as a way of honouring Jack."

From there, what has become the Caravan Music Club evolved on the back of the passion and hard work of its creator, often with meagre profit after drawing a basic wage. Peter's first organised gig at a public venue was at the Oakleigh Bowling Club in 2007, with Tracey Miller again the performing act as she had been at his inaugural house gig.

In the ensuing years, he arranged shows at several Melbourne venues including the Memo Music Hall in St. Kilda and the Flying Saucer Club in Elsternwick, but the Caravan Music Club's main base was at the Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL in Drummond Street in Oakleigh which became its permanent home for a decade. A documentary by Chris Franklin focusing on the Caravan Music Club's final night at Oakleigh in 2017 and its historical back story titled Closing the Caravan won the People's Choice Award at the 2018 Shortcuts Film Festival.

A subsequent move to the South Oakleigh Club in Bentleigh East proved short lived before Peter ultimately hitched up the Caravan Music Club for the ride to Archies Creek.

"By then both Mary and I were aware that we'd had grown tired of the city and had decided we wanted to move permanently down the coast," he recalls.

"We had already bought a house down this way at Venus Bay. We were renting in Melbourne and commuting between both properties. One day while Mary was at the Kongwak market she ran into someone who told her the pub was up for sale. She went and had a look and liked the whole vibe of the place. I then received a text from her saying that she'd found the location of our next business."

Whenever driving to the house in Venus Bay, Peter always travelled through Kilcunda and knew nothing of Archies Creek or its pub.

"It was a Sunday when I drove down from Melbourne to check it out. I made the short detour off the highway to reach Archies Creek and the light in the hills was beautiful. I thought it was just fantastic," he remembers.

"I continued on to Venus Bay and said to Mary why don't we just sell up and have a crack at the hotel. We put a manager in the Caravan Music Club in Melbourne while we were setting up the pub, but when the venue in Bentleigh East we were using went broke that just left us with Archies Creek, so we are fortunate that everything has worked out as well as it has here."

Anyone who visits the Archies Creek Hotel will enjoy the quaint ambience, excellent food and refreshing beverages, many of which are sourced locally from Gippsland. But it's the music that sets this destination apart.

At the 2022 Music Victoria Awards in December, the Caravan Music Club at the Archies Creek Hotel rose above its competitors to be named the winner of the Best Regional Venue Award.

"Having been nominated lots of times before, it was great to finally snag one," Peter remarks.

Peter says the nature of his work in providing musical entertainment places him in the "happiness business" and he prides himself on being real. He believes that staying true to his ideals and beliefs has been an integral part of the Caravan Music Club's enduring success.

"We've always been a little gig that's been able to punch above its weight," he suggests.

"It started out as my lounge room, but it's become everyone's lounge room. The way I often describe it is that was a hobby that got way out of control."

Peter has no intention of trying to expand the Caravan Music Club at Archies Creek beyond how it is operating at present.

"Some weekends we have seven hundred to a thousand people here. That's all that we have the energy and resources to cope with," he insists.

"We recently made the decision to outsource the pub's kitchen and concentrate our focus on the music, which is what we're renowned for and what we do best."

Peter says although the Caravan Music Club continues to attract some of its loyal devotees from Melbourne, he has been overwhelmed by the reaction from the local population around the South Gippsland and Bass Coast areas.

"What's made it so special is the level that we've been embraced by the local community. The people down here are just so excited to have us. It's transitioned from being a bit of a Melbourne curiosity to the local people now having totally attached themselves to it," he comments.

"Major acts like Kate Ceberano or Joe Camilleri are always guaranteed to sell out quickly. The locals love to see artists of that calibre from the big smoke coming down here and we get just as much excitement out of making it all happen."







SBR WEEKEND BASS COAST

ONE WITH THE LOT

WORDS BY CHRIS WEST
PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY ELITE ENERGY

A NEW EVENT TO BE HELD ACROSS SEVERAL LOCATIONS IN THE BASS COAST REGION OVER TWO DAYS ON 18TH & 19TH MARCH PROVIDES SWIMMERS, CYCLISTS, RUNNERS AND TRIATHLETES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE WITH GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF CHOICE.

Mark 'Emo' Emerton is counting down the days to the SBR Weekend Bass Coast event and hoping for favourable weather to greet the competitors, organisers and volunteer crews on both days.

The dynamic and vastly experienced CEO/Owner of organisers Elite Energy is quick to highlight the point of difference between the unique format of this event and a triathlon.

"Across the country, everyone is familiar with specific events for open water swimmers, cyclists, runners and triathletes, but the SBR Weekend appeals to all these different styles of athletes and brings them all together," Mark explains.

A regular triathlon involves swimming, cycling and running consecutively on the same day, whereas the SBR Weekend Bass Coast will stage these as separate events at different intervals over the two days of competition.

The swim will get the event under way on the morning of Saturday, 18th March, followed later that day by the bike ride. The weekend schedule then culminates on Sunday, 19th March with the run.

Although these dates are fast approaching, it's not too late to be involved. Registrations are being taken right up until the day.

"Entrants can participate in one or any combination of the events. The choice is theirs. Participating in all of them as a triathlon over two days is referred to as doing The Lot," Mark says.

"Another beauty of this concept is that entrants can also choose from multiple swim distances, multiple bike ride distances and multiple run distances to suit their individual preferences. This level of flexibility in being able to mix and match enables whole families to be involved," he adds.

The action commences with the 'Swim the Island' event sponsored by Huub on Saturday morning which will take place in the ocean waters at Cowes Beach.

Entrants can choose from four different distances starting from a leisurely 500 metres for beginners or youngsters, up to 1 kilometre, 2 kilometres and 4 kilometres for advanced long-distance swimmers.

Several age categories apply across each of the distances, commencing at 11-15 years for the Main Beach 500 metre swim, 12-15 years for the Lovers Lane 1 kilometre swim, 13-19 years for the Silverleaves 2 kilometre swim and 14-19 years for the Silver Dreams 4 kilometre swim. The age categories increase progressively to 70 plus for the most senior of competitors.



ELITE ENERGY HAWKS NEST ENFORCER SWIM



MARK EMERTON & FAMILY

Following the Saturday morning swim, attention then turns to the 'Bike the Bass' event sponsored by Shimano which will be based out of Woolamai Racecourse. Riders will follow an exhilarating loop course that weaves its way through the hinterland, stretching out to meet the coastline and back again.

Four course distance options are available – 30 kilometres, 47 kilometres, 66 kilometres, or the full 106 kilometres. The minimum age requirements for entrants (determined by age as of 31st December 2022) are 16 years old for the 30 kilometre and 47 kilometre rides, rising to 17 years for the 66 kilometre ride and 18 years for the 106 kilometre ride.

Whilst Bike the Bass is a timed event, it is not a race, but instead an opportunity for riders to set a time which they can aim to improve upon in future years.

E-Bikes will be permitted in all distances but must be notified at the time of registering for the event. It is the responsibility of E-Bike riders to ensure they have sufficient batteries to complete their chosen course distance.

After a night of rest, all focus then moves to the Sunday coastal run between Inverloch and Cape Paterson.

Five distance options are available to 'Run the Coast' entrants – 2 kilometres, 5 kilometres, 10 kilometres, 21.1 kilometres (half marathon) and 42.2 kilometres (marathon).

"We believe this is the first time that this section of road between Inverloch and Cape Paterson has been closed for a running event," Mark notes.

Some of the participants in the run will be completing the third and final leg of 'The Lot'. Those who plan to undertake all the events should note that if you pull up sore at any point during the course of the two days and wish to drop down in distance for the next event you can do so by attending the registration marquee at least one hour before race start.

Entrants in all categories of the SBR Weekend Bass Coast will receive a finisher's medal upon completion, with a special medal for those who negotiate 'The Lot'. All entrants will also be eligible for a range of mementos, giveaways and prize draws depending on the event they participate in.



Cash prizemoney will be paid to each of the three fastest men and women (\$500 for first, \$350 for second and \$150 for third) in both the 4 kilometre swim and 10 kilometre run.

Having Mark and his Elite Energy team directing the SBR Weekend Bass Coast will ensure nothing is left to chance with the organisational logistics and safety aspects of the event.

Mark is renowned as the man behind everything multi-sport in New South Wales. He has a long and impressive history of organising triathlon and ironman events, along with being an experienced triathlete himself. His CV also includes performing the role of Logistics Manager for Triathlon, Marathon, Race Walks and Road Cycling at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

“Although this will be the first SBR Weekend on the Bass Coast, I have successfully staged events under this format style in New South Wales as far back as 2018 and as recently as December last year when we ran a SBR Weekend in Port Stephens,” he says.

“I call these destination events. They are a great opportunity to showcase a region and bring whole families of visitors. The Bass Coast was a logical choice for the first SBR Weekend event in Victoria as it is a wonderful area blessed with spectacular locations for swimming, cycling and running. It’s an iconic destination which everyone competing and watching will be sure to appreciate.”

Mark says he has been amazed by the level of support received towards the event from the Bass Coast Shire Council, along with the local tourism authority and general public.

“We presently manage about thirty-five to forty events all over Australia and one in Fiji, so we go to a lot of different places and meet a lot of different people. We were down the Bass Coast recently as part of the preparation for this event, and I have to say that every single person we encountered was very accommodating and extremely positive about it,” he reports.

“The assistance and co-operation we’ve had from Council, in particular, has been fantastic. We have also formed a great relationship with the Inverloch and Kongwak Primary Schools, whereby a percentage of the competition entry fees for the 2 kilometre run and 5 kilometre run will be donated back to those schools.”

Mark is looking forward to the whole community embracing the event.

“We see a lot of potential for it to grow over the next two to three years. The most successful pathway for future progression down the track is for it to possibly extend to a three-day event, with the swim on Friday, the bike ride on Saturday, and finishing with the run on Sunday,” he comments.

“But for this first year, we’re concentrating all our energy on showcasing everything over two fantastic days of competition in one of the most inviting and naturally beautiful parts of Victoria.”



ELITE-HAWK-STANDAND SPRINT-RUN-40-64




MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.sbrbasscoast.com.au for further information and registration details.

SPECIAL DISCOUNT OFFER

Gippsland Lifestyle readers who wish to register online to participate in any of the **SBR Weekend Bass Coast** events will be eligible for a **20% DISCOUNT** on their entry fees by using the following code at the time of payment: **GLM2023**



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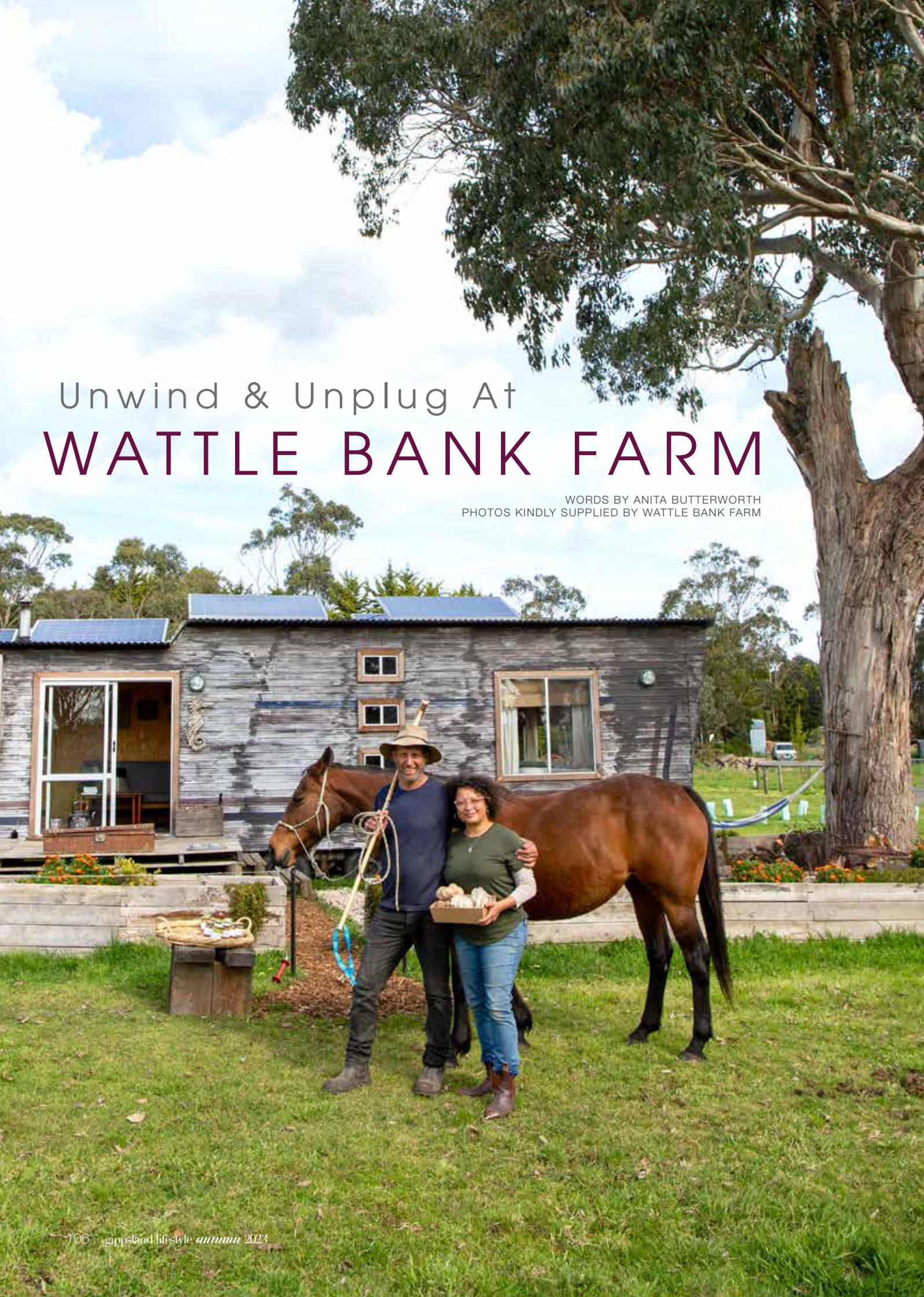
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Unwind & Unplug At WATTLE BANK FARM

WORDS BY ANITA BUTTERWORTH
PHOTOS KINDLY SUPPLIED BY WATTLE BANK FARM





During some of the most chaotic years the world has ever witnessed, a pocket of calm sprouted in South Gippsland. Blooming organically from both necessity and the passion of a driven couple, Wattle Bank Farm has evolved into a destination for foodies, hippophiles and calm-seekers.

Wattle Bank Farm, which is perfectly nestled among fertile farmland about 10kms north of Inverloch, has become a thriving micro-agritourism business. And its eclectic mix of mushroom farming, natural horsemanship and an off-grid farm stay experience reflects the equally diverse couple who created it.

In just three years Beatrice Imbert and Peter Bland have created a stunning oasis at Wattle Bank Farm. An incredible feat made even more unlikely by the fact they did it during a pandemic.

“We look at each other and wonder is it passion or are we a bit mad?” laughs Beatrice.

The couple has drawn on their varied careers to curate a farm with a gentle environmental footprint, that gives back to the community and retrains the thinking of its many visitors.

And it all started eight years ago, when Peter decided he wanted to go vegan, after thumbing through a book while on a holiday with Beatrice. An incredible shift for a man who grew up cattle farming.

“Our children thought we’d gone mad,” Beatrice admits.

After extensive research Peter, a keen adventurer who’s explored the Antarctic and Arctic, decided to exclude meat, sugar, alcohol, coffee and as many chemicals as possible from his diet. And it was the genesis of something much bigger.

While they both continued to work in Melbourne, their Brighton home became somewhat of a makeshift micro-farm.

“We turned Brighton into the Beverly Hillbillies,” Peter revealed. “I had hydroponics hanging on every wall in the house, three layers on every fence. We had raised garden beds throughout the backyard, we had chickens, we had beehives, we even had the odd horse.”

But the couple was ready to pull the pin and go all-in on a sea/green change. And South Gippsland was the perfect location. Peter had often indulged his love of water sports at Inverloch, while Beatrice’s hospitality background drew her to the vast network of Gippsland producers.

But when they originally moved to Wattle Bank in early 2020, they had no idea how it would all unfold.

“Originally, we were just going to do this as a weekend and then the pandemic happened. All of sudden, it was on,” said Beatrice.

Peter was nursing a back injury and some ill health, and spent many hours researching a sustainable, vegan lifestyle and everything that came with it. Which led him to discover mushroom growing. In particular, oyster mushrooms.

“We kicked off with just getting some grow kits in the laundry and just testing it. I love to cook so I thought it was great,” Beatrice explained.

“I really wanted to believe in the product that we wanted to produce. The challenge was that we were in lockdown, and we couldn’t go out and meet anyone else. We couldn’t go and meet any mushroom farmers. It was just at the onset of zooms. So, everything we did was pretty much online. Learn a lesson and then get into the garage and set it up.

“Pete was setting up all the machinery, I thought he’d gone a bit mad, but I just went along for the ride. Fast forward to the first Christmas here in and out of lockdown, Pete said to me, ‘I think we’ve got too many mushrooms, I think we better start selling those’.”

They sold their first commercial bag of mushrooms to Pete’s chiropractor, and Beatrice lined up their first retail stockist – Udder & Hoe in Loch, now known as The Loch Grocer.

“Literally, all of a sudden, the mushrooms were coming through and I realised I’d have to employ my corporate background of sales and marketing. So, in that January, February, March I kicked in that side of the business and before we knew it, we pitched to Prom Coast Food Collective, they’d been looking for a mushroom producer for a while, I had my eyes set on some great local restaurants like Trulli in Meeniyah, Moos in Meeniyah and Long John Pickles in Fish Creek and also Farmer’s Daughters in Melbourne.

“For us it’s really been the quality before the quantity. Let’s really produce a great product that people want. By the February Farmer’s Daughters had said yes. So now we had a really great mushroom business that was starting to grow.”

The couple has gone from producing 15kg of oyster mushrooms a week, to almost 100kg. They focus on growing their mushrooms as organically as possible, including reusing everything from the growing process on the farm.

Unwind & Unplug At WATTLE BANK FARM



But just as the mushroom business was taking off, lockdowns returned. The couple ended up with a glut of mushrooms – but as enterprising as ever, Beatrice found buyers.

"I think that's why so many people call me the Mushroom Lady. Because I literally got in the car and because we were food producers, we were able to travel and deliver food, I was doing care packages of mushrooms. From Korumburra to Inverloch, I was getting all these orders because people couldn't leave home, but they wanted mushrooms delivered to their homes. I would do that just to get rid of stock."

The need to make use of the mushrooms and produce from the farm's vegetable garden and orchard also prompted another incidental venture. The couple created a range of dried goods, which continue to be sold at the farmgate shop and local markets.

In addition to produce, Wattle Bank Farm has another distinct passion project – horses.

Peter's extensive background with horses led him to establish on farm equine experiences. His affinity with horses is evident in the programs he's established at Wattle Bank Farm, including Equine Facilitated Learning and Natural Horsemanship.

"There's a huge need for people to understand horses, as opposed to using gear which allows them to control the horse inside force," Peter explained. "Because that's all they're doing. They're coming at horses like a predator over prey, using the subconscious of both the humans and the horses and as a consequence they're using sharp spurs and it's all force based. And they're wondering why the horse gets agitated."

"I take the complete opposite approach and say horses are prey animals. Through millennia they have evolved and survived because of their capacity to operate as accessible herd, so lets us join their herd as the alpha in the relationship and we're going to tap into what they naturally would do, which is protect themselves from predators. If you come with this approach, you then know how to approach a horse, get close to them, how touch them, how to catch them, how to be the authority in the relationship without force."

Through Peter's incredible knowledge and natural-based approach, visitors to Wattle Bank Farm are given much more than just riding lessons.



"More often than not, people go into a horse-riding school and the horse is already caught for them – here's your horse, hop on it."

"And that's just way, way, way too late to work out the relationship. You want to work out the relationship with the horse on the ground. Whilst you've still got your feet and they've got their feet."

"Most people try to work out the relationship when they've already lost their feet. They're on the horse. And they're already carrying their fear from when they were 14-years-old and they went to a school camp and the horse 'bolted'. The horse probably trotted three steps, but it's this huge, dramatic story and then the 14-year-olds become 50 and they've passed it onto their children."

"I unpack all those fears and all those phobias and get people falling back in love with horses, the beautiful creatures that they are. Understanding them and controlling them really well using their whole body, with nothing but a rope halter."

Beatrice and Peter want nothing more than to share their slice of paradise with others, and it's why they've also created a unique accommodation option. Visitors can book a stay at Seahorse, a converted 32-foot caravan which is now a tiny house that sleeps five.

"When visitors come, they're getting the whole experience of this micro-agritourism business," said Beatrice.

"They can do as little or as much as they want to. The horses could be around them, and more often than not they'll often have an experience with Peter while they're here. They have access to the veggie gardens; they can go and pick their veggies and herbs. They'll purchase some mushrooms – we've got a little farm shop here. They can order some mushrooms or ask me to curate a hamper with local, Gippsland produce. We do see a lot of families. We're pet friendly, we're six minutes from the beach, it's a really nice blend of both."

And more recently the couple has started running other experiences at Wattle Bank Farm, from corporate day retreats to storytelling workshops.

And while all these vastly different experiences seem unlikely bedfellows, they all perfectly intertwine at Wattle Bank Farm, where life is unhurried and perfectly unplugged.

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WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED



THE THOMSON CATCHMENT AREA WITH THE RAWSON POLICE

WORDS & PHOTOS BY DOUG PELL



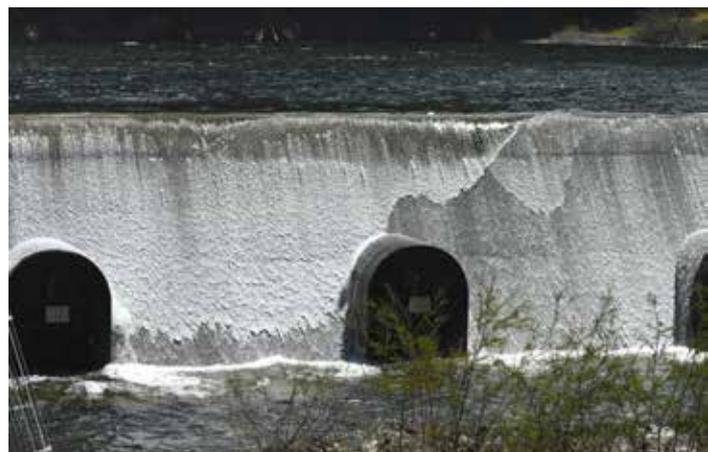
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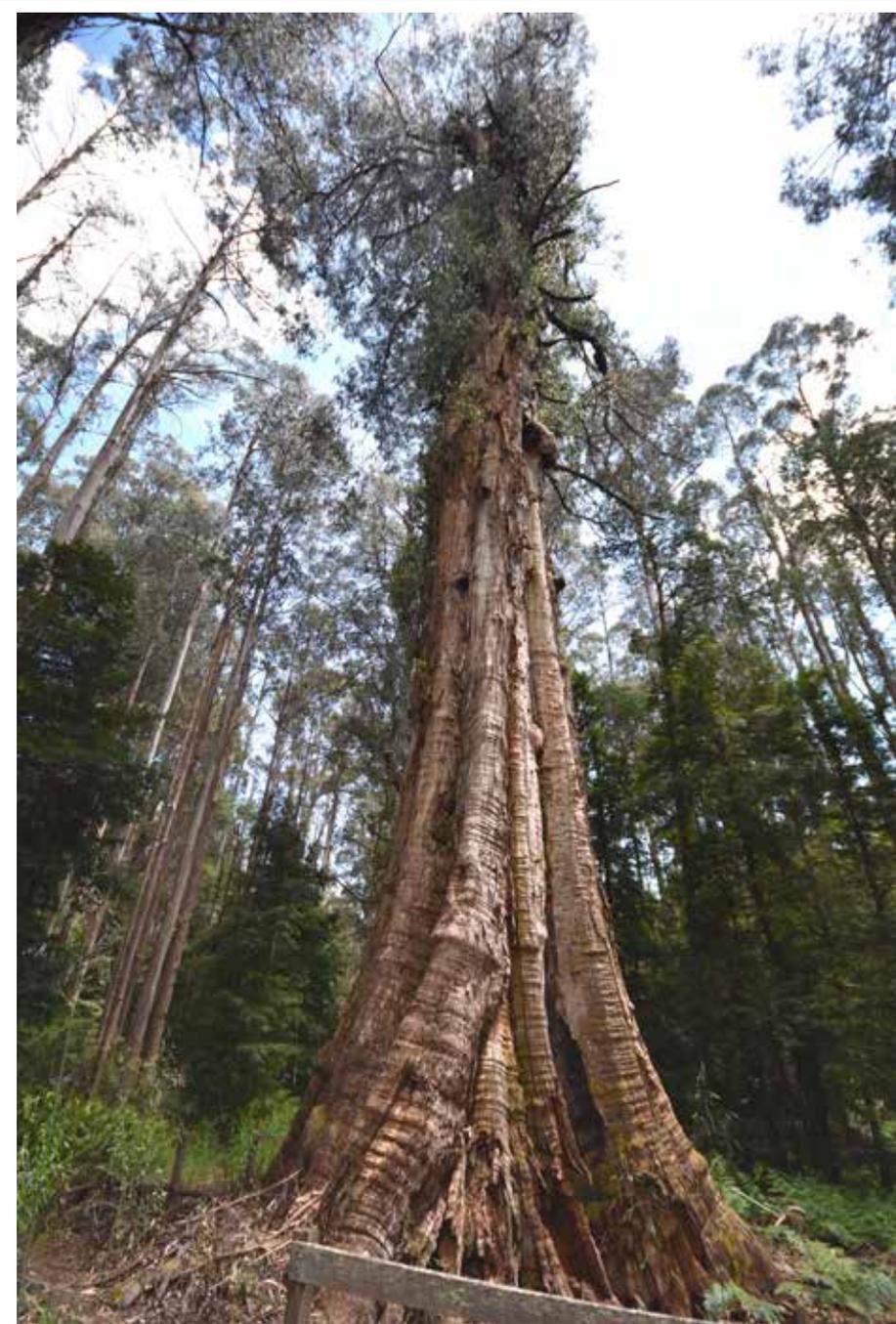
I am very fortunate to have a wonderful relationship with the Rawson Police, namely Leading Senior Constable Ian Naughton who we have featured here in the magazine previously. On this occasion we had Leading Senior Constable Nick Spackman and both of these chaps love the area that they are assigned to and I tagged along to be given the opportunity to take photos and immerse myself into parts of Gippsland that I have not been to or experienced before.

The mountains and the bushland is almost in pristine condition and considering that in the past a lot of this area had been logged and mined for gold it is now almost untouched by human hand.

To also experience the sheer wall of water still rushing down the spillway of the Thomson Dam in the middle of summer just shows how much rain fell into Victoria's biggest catchment area during winter and spring.

This is a unique part of Gippsland and must be preserved at all costs and I hope that the photos have reflected this for all to see and enjoy as I do every time I visit this amazing area.





WALK FOR WELLNESS IN WEST GIPPSLAND

EXPERIENCE THE WONDERS OF NATURE, WHILE YOU WALK

You already know that exercising regularly produces many health benefits. It can help you to lose weight, lower your blood pressure, and is a powerful preventer of diabetes, heart attack and stroke.

Not only that, but you feel an energising buzz when you are outdoors, being active. Your feel-good endorphins are flowing through your body and you feel on top of the world.

When you get walking, running or riding on a nature trail, you can effortlessly slip into a state of mindfulness. You notice the sights, sounds and smells around you. Your head feels lighter, you start to have more creative thoughts and your stress just floats away.

It's more important now, than ever before, that we have times when we switch off our devices. When we do this and prioritise time outdoors, we switch on that strong connection to nature that nourishes us, as humans. Nangara Reserve, Jindivick is the first of my three favourite bush trails.

My other two favourites, the Rokeby Trails and Trafalgar's Uralla Reserve articles will be featured sequentially in the Winter and Spring editions of Gippsland Lifestyle. The trails are easy to get to, and only a short drive from the main towns of Warragul, Drouin and Trafalgar. I've walked each of them many times and every time they are different. Mother nature's exhibitions change with the seasons.

Exploring them in the warmer months, you'll find an abundance of wildflowers including native orchids. Though they are subtly small, they deserve a closer inspection so you can truly appreciate their intricate and unique structures and patterns.

When the cold really sets in, dramatic deep greens dominate, and an earthy damp scent fills the air. These are the perfect conditions for a multitude of mosses and lichens to flourish and spread.

With the arrival of Autumn, we are gifted mild, calm days. Starting with crisp mornings, we can walk through light hazes of mist that linger, heavy in the air. Scattered dew drops decorate leaves like glistening jewels. Exotic toadstools pop up overnight and elaborate fungi frills cling to trees and logs. Crickets chirp softly and cheerfully, their performance bringing a meditative feeling, and interrupted occasionally by birds' melodic songs.

The forests of West Gippsland are inviting you to come and experience their magic this season.

NANGARA RESERVE, JINDIVICK

Nangara Reserve is a 14 hectare area of beautiful bushland just down the road from the main street of Jindivick. It's often frequented by horse riders and walkers.

There are a few short trails that connect to the main loop. 'Nangara' means 'meeting of the waters,' and indeed, you come across a number of tranquil, bubbling creeks that flow through the reserve. At the picturesque waterhole, you can pause and listen to the croaking of frogs.

You pass numerous sculptures. Unobtrusive, they merge into the bush vegetation, with their natural colours and organic shapes. These were created by community members and artists as part of their bushfire recovery process.

A section of the reserve features granite rocks and boulders.



Monument for Black Saturday Fires of 7th February 2009





As you walk, you weave around large cut out chunks, evidence that it was once a quarry site (from the early 80s up until 1998). This whole area has been revegetated with native trees and shrubs, which prevent further erosion.

If you are keen to keep exploring beyond Nangara Reserve, you can make your way up the Bunyip Link Trail that takes you to the Bunyip State Forest access road. Take a right turn and continue along the road. Venturing through this stretch, you are likely to catch a glimpse of wallabies bounding through the bush. The track takes you alongside the 9 Mile Creek and loops back to the carpark.

STEP BACK IN TIME...

One scorching hot day, back in 2009, the Nangara Reserve was completely deserted. The intense heat sent animals retreating to shelter in dark, hidden holes and crevices of the forest.

Storm clouds filled the sky. Lightning strikes ignited trees in the Bunyip State Park. With the strong gusts of wind, flames spread rapidly.

The fire ripped through the northern section of Nangara Reserve. Mammals such as ring-tailed possums and wombats must have been terrified, watching the giant orange flames and feeling the radiant heat getting closer.

Fires also burnt and destroyed 32 houses in the region, as well as sheds and hundreds of kilometres of fences.

Close to the start of the trail, you will come across the Black Saturday Memorial Site, a peaceful place of reflection.

STEP EVEN FURTHER BACK...

In the late 1930s, a Kurnai man, Stuart Hood had come with his family to work on a 550 acre area of farm land and regrowth forest, in West Jindivick. This was owned by the Tonkin brothers.

The plentiful water and fire wood enticed more Kurnai families to come and set up a camp at Jacksons Track, close to where Nangara is now.

Before long, an Aboriginal community settled there, and lived in small bush huts. Though they had limited resources by today's standards, they were happy living off the land.

Two decades later, in the late 1950s, developers started circling the area. Plans were made to open up the land for large scale farming.

The families living at Jacksons Track were told they had to leave, almost immediately. This demand was softened with a promise to give them new homes with all amenities, in local towns.

When they left, this promise was not honoured. The families had to move to the fringe of Drouin, to an area they called 'The Highway Camp'. Many of them had to live in tents. Forcing them to abandon their Jacksons Track home resulted in the deteriorating health of many of these Kurnai people.

This terrible betrayal is a sad part of the history of the area and unfortunately events similar to these have occurred in other areas of Australia.

WORDS BY MEGAN WOOLFE | PHOTOS BY DOUG PELL



Nangara Reserve



Traralgon Railway

WORDS & PHOTOS
BY DOUG PELL

Reservoir Conservation Reserve

There are various gems in Gippsland when it comes to some of our parks and bush walks and this one certainly is a gem. This park has a great history as well, and is sign posted with information of that history, highly recommend this walk at any time of the year.

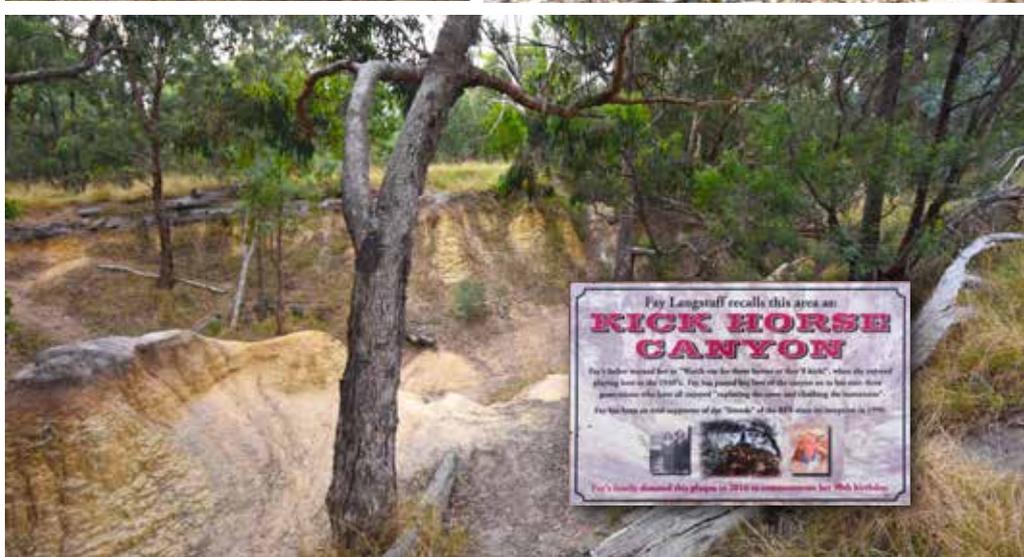
The reserve comprises 29.5 hectares of varied bush and grassland with two wetland areas linked by a canyon. This walk is also accessible for wheel chairs and the area offers viewing platforms for the abundant bird life in the park.

The Victorian Railways saw the opportunity to build a reservoir in the park to supply water for the steam train engines and this was finished in 1880.

The Railways used a 10 inch cast iron pipe to convey the water by gravity to large elevated tanks on the south side of the railway line.

For further information please go to:
www.trccr.com and visitlatrobe.com





Fay Longstaff recalls this area as
KICK HORSE CANYON
 The 3rd letter was not that in "Kick" but the name "Kick" or "Kick" which the original
 spelling was in the 1940's. Fay has passed his love of the canyon on to his sons. Some
 generations who have all enjoyed "exploring the canyon and climbing the limestone".
 Fay has been an avid supporter of the "Stonks" at the RSL since its inception in 1990.
 Fay's family donated this plaque in 2010 to commemorate his 90th birthday.



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Raymond Island

Just a ferry trip from Paynesville

WORDS & PHOTOS BY DOUG PELL

Raymond Island is a haven for wildlife, especially well known for its very large koala population. One of the popular walks on the Island is the well sign posted Koala walk which starts near the ferry arrival point and leads you on a scenic walk and most definitely a good chance in seeing Koalas.

You can drive around most of the Island and there is a fair bit of history, I found the site of the old Raymond Island Primary School and there is a dedication plaque with recognition of the families whose children attended the school.

There is a great walking track which is near the Koala walking trail where you can now experience the history and understanding of the Gunaikurnal culture along this 1.7km walk through the beautiful landscape of Raymond Island on Tatungalung Country.

If you are visiting Raymond Island for a day, you don't need to take your car on the ferry, you can leave it at Paynesville and catch the ferry and walk the Island by foot and even ride your bike. Raymond Island has an accessible car park near the ferry entrance.

Highly recommend taking a day and visiting this Island that is full of charm and surprises and you get great views of Paynesville from the island.

You can stay in the many B and B's that are located on Raymond Island, contact your nearest travel agent or book online but if you want to go to the shops you have to do this in Paynesville.

Check out www.visitgippsland.com.au for more information on the beautiful Raymond Island that is situated between Lake King and Lake Victoria in the Gippsland Lakes.





HISTORIC SITE OF THE
RAYMOND ISLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL





In Victoria, there are around 281 public libraries. Approximately one in nine people are active library members. Libraries are not what they used to be. No longer just a place to find books, they support community health and wellbeing.

Libraries provide safe spaces where people can come together and make social connections, which helps to improve wellbeing. They also offer free, engaging programs that promote physical health and provide reliable information that can help individuals make informed decisions about their health.

Library services in Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Cardinia and South Gippsland are provided by Myli - My Community Library (Myli) a not-for-profit organisation. Myli is committed to provide places and programs that support the community.

Myli have new library spaces in construction in both Korumburra and Cowes. The South Gippsland Shire Council and Bass Coast Shire Council are developing these spaces for their community to include new spaces for libraries and other local community groups. Baw Baw Shire Council have begun detailed planning and advocacy for funding of a new community space in Warragul, which will also include a new library. These new spaces are all designed with the community in mind, featuring places to meet, work and enjoy.

The team at Myli are committed to driving positive change in local communities. They're all about helping people stay connected and feel like they belong and provide free programs and resources that support lifelong learning.

The program and events on offer at Myli libraries are designed to provide free, fun, and social activities that promote physical health, mental health, and community connection. Whether you're looking for a way to stay active or just need a break from the everyday grind, there is something for everyone!

Inverloch Library partnered with Terry Guilford, a certified personal trainer from the Tomfit Training Facility, to introduce library patrons to a low-impact exercise class designed to help you stay fit and healthy while having fun.

The class was set to motivating tunes and provided a great opportunity to get your body moving. Not only does exercise help improve your physical wellbeing, but it'll also help boost mental health. If you're interested in more programs like this, contact the team at Inverloch Library.

Drouin Library has partnered with Reclink to host a weekly walking group every Monday at 9.30am in Civic Park Drouin. With a Walking Group, you can get some exercise, enjoy the fresh air and socialise with others in the community. For more information about this program, contact the team at the Drouin Library.

Korumburra Library partnered with South Gippsland Shire and Local Men Local Communities project to host Chatty Café. The Chatty Café aims to create a space for people to talk, whether it is for five minutes or an hour of good friendly conversation. The 'Have a Chat' tables can increase safe and respectful social connections within a community and possibly reduce loneliness along the way. Guests had a great time catching up over tea and treats from Kelly's Bakery. Chatty Cafe will continue in 2023 at Korumburra Library, free of charge for patrons, on the last Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m. To learn more about this program, contact the team at Korumburra Library.

The team at Pakenham Library have been growing amazing fruits and veggies in the Discovery Garden, including strawberries, raspberries, swiss chard, cherry tomatoes and onions! They're reaping the health benefits of gardening while having fun. Visit the Pakenham library to pick up some free seeds and start growing at home.

There's Chinese cabbage, carrot, lettuce, cape gooseberry, sunflower and oregano available. Plus if you want to donate your own seeds, the team will be happy to chat with you about it. For more information about this program, contact the team at Pakenham Library.

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ARIES ♈

21 March – 19 April

You are a loyal friend, perhaps seeing your closest alliances as true comrades for the ups and downs of life. March sees these alliances come somewhat under siege. This is not necessarily a negative occurrence, but rather that changes in their lives or your own have put matters in a different light. The planets are affecting both your individual friendships, as well as your connections within a group or club. As Autumn progresses you are likely to be more reclusive until a Solar Eclipse lights up your Zodiac Sign at the end of April.

TAURUS ♉

20 April – 20 May

March sees you plan for changes in your professional life, or in your public persona if you are not working. If you are happy then a powerful promotion may be in the stars. Or perhaps a happy occasion that elevates your role in your family or local association. If you are unhappy then you are likely to plan changes. Old friendships change in the coming months as you make commitments to your way forward. Mid-Autumn gives you pause for reflection. And a Lunar Eclipse on May 6 triggers a personal insight into your resources.

GEMINI ♊

21 May – 20 June

It's time to stop sweating the details. See the big picture. And if you can't then seek advice. March is about goal setting rather than juggling daily chores, or hesitating. If possible, take time out, escape in nature, to the cinema or to a nearby art gallery and tap into your imagination. You may like to plan an overseas trip or immerse yourself in sports or attend a spiritual event. As Autumn progresses you are likely to have more time for social events. You can indulge in your innate ability to network in personal and professional circles.

CANCER ♋

21 June – 22 July

Other people and events may have been challenging in recent months, even years. March is the month in which you deal with the changes that have transformed your life. Birth, death, divorce marriage and moving house are all big-ticket events. And the path of Pluto has likely lit up at least one of these recently. By the end of March, Pluto moves on and you can finally make sense of the changes and move forward, having weathered the storm or made your own decisions. Autumn then sees a bit more 'mopping up' and some celebrations.

LEO ♌

23 July – 22 Aug

Relationship politics is your theme for March onwards in 2023. From March 23 your focus changes from being King or Queen of your own domain to your courtiers and how you can best serve them. In particular, your nearest and dearest is asking for you to step up. This is because the transformative planet, Pluto, moves into your opposite Sign and the marriage sector of your Solar Chart. So, marriage divorce, joint investments, inheritances and the like becomes areas that require negotiation and compromise. By the end of Autumn, you are ready to celebrate, and perhaps plan a trip to faraway places.

VIRGO ♍

23 Aug – 22 Sep

This season is your time to look at your work/life balance. Daily habits influence behaviour and physical, emotional and mental health. Do you need to change anything? Are you working too hard or, are you too inactive? Would a pet enhance your life? Do you need a new hobby? These types of questions require honest appraisal. As a logical Virgo you may think that you know the answers. But you need to listen to your heart. This is about how you relate at home and work on a daily basis. It may be time to move out of your comfort zone.

LIBRA ♎

23 Sep – 22 Oct

Children spark up your life in March and beyond. You can gain extra energy from being surrounded by people younger than yourself, particularly little people. Their spontaneity can be infectious. Joy, spontaneity, romance and creativity are the themes this season. You need to tap into your creative side, learning from the young at heart. You may have to tackle your own, or other people's hidden agendas. Once you have had a reality check, then you can make your decisions and steer your course to a fun-filled and joyful expression of your own inner child. A new romance may also charge your creative batteries.

SCORPIO ♏

23 Oct – 21 Nov

Mars is your ruling planet. It is also the planet of action, resources and, of course the god of war. During March, the red planet is travelling the 8th House of your Solar Chart. This is the House of change which means that you are either integrating recent changes that have taken place in your life, or that you are instigating more changes. Either way, March sees you on the go, putting things in order and this sets the course for the rest of Autumn. By the end of the season, you will have adopted a daily rhythm that works well.

SAGITTARIUS ♐

22 Nov – 21 Dec

March is your month of creativity and fun. So, you can take some time at the start of Autumn to focus on what 'play' means to you. The dictionary describes 'play' as the ability to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.' Perhaps you need to have some quality alone time, with a book or in nature? Or maybe spontaneous gatherings with family and friends? Is it time to start a new hobby? The idea is that you can be light-hearted. Even if you have many responsibilities, you can delegate or enlist extra help this season.

CAPRICORN ♑

22 Dec – 19 Jan

This season is a mopping up exercise for domestic and mountain goats. The transformative planet Pluto is moving out of your Zodiac Sign on March 23 bringing resolution to the changes of recent years. If nothing has changed in the structures of your life, and this is unlikely, then your inner world is likely to be completely different. Often the planetary motion coincides with natural life cycles, such as the birth of a baby or adult children leaving home. At other times events confront, enforcing transformation. Now you can assimilate the life lessons and move forward with confidence, sharing your wisdom.

AQUARIUS ♒

20 Jan – 18 Feb

Efforts that have been made in recent years come to fruition by the end of March. The planet of transformation, Pluto, enters your Zodiac Sign on March 23 and stays there till 2043. So, your own personal Age of Aquarius is about to start. You are about to reap what you have sown while serious Saturn has been in Aquarius (since 2020). As Pluto approaches Aquarius you may feel like undergoing a makeover – physical, emotional, mental and/or spiritual. Note your feelings and thoughts and use them to motivate you to make any necessary changes this season.

PISCES ♓

19 Feb – 20 March

The planet Saturn enters your Sign on March 8 and heralds a personal renaissance for Pisces. A natural day dreamer, you may find yourself lost in thought even more this season as the planets move through Pisces. Use the power of your imagination to reinvent yourself in areas of your life that need to change. If you are unsure of your future, then seek inspiration and look for signs from higher realms – such as repetitive dreams, feathers on your path, sign post names that reoccur or specific numbers. Your need to feel your way forward rather than apply logic. Trust your instincts.

Stephanie Johnson (BA/J) is an international consulting astrologer running her own **Seeing With Stars** business for personal and business clients.

Stephanie also heads up Esoteric Technologies, the company that produces astrology software for professional astrologers around the world. She was one of the original creators of the world-renowned Solar Fire for Windows and continues to co-create apps for the iPhone, iPad and macOS. Stephanie lives and works on the Mornington Peninsula, and writes horoscopes for her own business, as well as local bespoke magazines. She is also the author of numerous astrology reports which are

used across the globe. You can follow Stephanie @seeingwithstars on Instagram | Twitter | www.seeingwithstars.net



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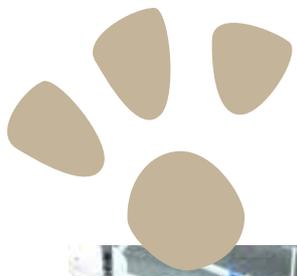
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