

Virtuoso Tasmania Trip Blog



This year the team of Virtuoso and Tourism Australia had their 2nd annual educational to the country of Australia. 48 agents attended after the opening lunch and dinner were divided into groups. Mine went to Tasmania. Tasmania is a rugged beautiful island which gets the cold Antarctic winds to keep the

climate moist and green. The

Our group of 16 (4 cars of 4 each Tourism Tasmania, and 1 independent) started our trek for The Lodge Please be advised to take full coverage of insurance because even though only 1% of the roads are unpaved accidents and money spent for repairs. It is a wonderful 3-4 hour drive with some picturesque stops for leg stretching.



10 agents, 1 Tourism Australia, 1 Virtuoso, 1 Travel2, 1 pendent writer for Luxury Travel Advisor) left the city at Tarraleah in our Hertz 4 door cars. They account for over 50% of the acci-



scenery is varied from sheep pastures to dense forest.



The Lodge at Tarraleah is a new property offering for Virtuoso unique. The property is built around a "town" center having and created by the workers who built the pipeline which feeds lower areas of Tasmania. The "town" includes a small store, which serves tasty delicious food. It consists of cottages (3-4 full kitchen and living room) and the 9 room luxury lodge. The cottages would make a great stay for families or small groups who want to travel together.



and is very been developed water to the pub and cafe bedroom with



They are very comfortable and spacious. The lodge is very modern and brightly colored with a wonderful warm lodge center where drinks are offered prior to dinner. Our dinner was at the pub in the center of the property (town). The Lodge offers (included in the price) tours by very large 4 wheel drive land vehicle to kayaking and hiking. Sport fishing is a specialty with a beautiful lake and trout waiting to be caught and eaten. After a hike, dinner and breakfast we were off for Hobart.



Along the way to Hobart we stopped of the Bay. It will soon become a has great wine tasting with 4 cottages light to heavy and has unique labels The labels range from Foreplay to the way. Also the new museum will have the bottom floor dedicated to "Sex and Death." I know this sounds weird but it certainly stimulated conversation in my car and some of the others.



at Moorilla a winery situated on the bank world class art museum, but for now it for rent. The wine not only being Tassie red ranges from which are meant to stimulate conversation.



Orgy and the body of the wine changes with each step of



Our next stop was to find out how Oysters were grown and we had an opportunity for tasting them also. Barrilla is a wonderful stop for clients who need to get their shopping fix, grab a nice lunch or dinner, and learn about oysters from the pros.

The city of Hobart is both a land and sea destination (a major port for the visiting cruise ships). It is a lively city with cultural and academic centers. The Henry Jones Art Hotel is a wonderful hotel next to the marina and one of the University of Tasmania's art centers.



A stroll from the hotel will bring you to the Salamanca Market every Saturday year round with a variety of vendors of food, and arts and crafts offered for sale. A word of advise make sure you have cash on hand, as the vendors (for the most part) do NOT take credit cards. There are several ATMs in the area so it is convenient to pick up some on your way.



Onward to the prison at Port Arthur with a short cruise and stories of the times when the English wanted to dispose of those 2nd and 3rd time offenders who "stole" a loaf of bread or a shirt to help their families.

This facility was very advanced for its day as far as psychology of human beings was concerned and "progressed" from flogging to the bone to driving men insane because they were denied human contact and sound for months at a time. The tour was conducted by a young lady working on her doctorate and was punctuated with history and stories which had been passed on in written form by former inmates.



On our drive to Freycinet Bay I located the farm where I went to see the sheep shearing demonstration and learn about eco farming when I was in Tasmania Feb 08 on the Sapphire Princess. The name is Curriga Farm. That visit and a trip to Something Wild was one of the highlights of my shore excursions of that trip. It is certainly a must see for anyone wanting to understand the local animals and economy. This trip we chose to stop at the small town of



Richmond for a shopping fix and pub lunch. (they make the best fish and chips in Tassie). The town was very quaint with many small shops and museums to tour. We had an unplanned stop at a Tassie Devil Park which is privately owned and arranged by our writer who had joined on our Tassie adventure. The devils in this park are free of the terrible cancer which is killing off the wild population of devils. This park is undergoing some revamping where the visitors will be enclosed and the animals wild around you. It is a new concept which is still in the design stage by a person responsible for some of the very large zoo exhibits which are seen throughout the world.



Our drive ended with us arriving at Freycinet after dark and this national park is a must see in the day light. It boasts a series of small (2 room) cottages that are spread throughout the property with partial views of the beautiful Bay. That evening we were treated to a delicious dinner of Trout by the team at Freycinet. The caring staff makes this a must stop at on your travels. The lodge have several optional day tours for guest which consist of 4 wheel drive tours, wine and cheese tasting cruises, golf, hikes to hourglass bay and shorter easier hikes for those of us who are not in such great shape. They also have washers and dryers for us to use. The cabins have NO phones or TVs so it is really a relaxing stop along the drive up the east side of Tassie. After a delicious buffet breakfast we each decided on what kind of adventure we would have visiting this national park. My choice was an afternoon 4 wheel drive adventure which took us on short walks through forest and beaches. We stopped at a very desolate beach and had a wonderful Billy Tea made from a herb which grows there. That evening we went to see the small "blue" penguins (Fairy Penguins) in Bichon. At this location you are put on a special bus and taken to a place where the penguins come up on the beach. It is very private and quiet unlike the tourist location at Phillip Island. You are able to walk with penguins all around your feet and listen to their calls and see their homes. Due to the harm that flash bulbs have on the penguin I was unable to get any pictures of them, but will always remember their calls and sights. A pub dinner of fish and chips and a beer topped off a great visit to Bichon.



The next day found us in our cars again and headed to Launceston. We stopped to see the scenery and get a glimpse of the new 5 star resort Saffire which is being completed not far from Freycinet. The scenic drive ended in Launceston



around noon and after a quick bite to eat at a local pub, we headed out for our "safari in Tasmania" with the Qual Patrol owned and operated by Craig and Jeannette. A very lively couple who teach you about the outback and plants and animals along with being chefs for a 5-course dinner in the rough. They drove 4 wheel CRV's and could take those cars anywhere on the rough back roads to teach about their passion the outback animals and plants.



After a 1-2 hour drive learning and seeing various sites we were treated to their "cabin" where they perform their culinary magic and met the animals up close and personal. We had an opportunity to talk business and pleasure with our fellow travelers before dinner. Comparing notes on the up coming ATE and our thoughts of what Tasmania can mean to our clients. It was obviously not all work.





After dinner and dark we loaded into the cars to see the quails and other wild life that was afraid to come up to the cabin because of our noise and gaiety. We were able to spot Quails, wallabies, bandicoots, wombats, possums and other nocturnal animals. It was great fun and you can book this through several wholesalers.



In Launceston we stayed at the Seaport and enjoyed some nice rooms with a marina/harbor view. They do have rooms which are equipped with washers and dryers for that clean up before the next destination of your tour.



The following morning found us on our flight from Launceston to Melbourne for our grand gala evening and Marketplace. The gala was held at the Crown Towers Hotel and Casino and was a great success with all the participants having a great evening with Cathy Holler (the VP of North American Member Sales and Service for Virtuoso and David Evans (a representative of Tourism Australia). Dinner, Music and dancing followed.

