

## EXPLORATION OPPORTUNITIES AROUND AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND

If you have you ever considered some serious seaborne exploration, the owners of *Westwind* would be happy to recommend an itinerary, with routes and tracks to these areas in many cases already installed on the vessel's chart-plotter. *Westwind* has circumnavigated Tasmania on three occasions.

Using the city of Hobart as a starting point you could enjoy the protected waters of D'Entrecasteaux Channel on your way to Recherche Bay. The French visited there in 1792, and little has altered there since. This is a perfect holding point for a weather window prior to venturing around the south coast of Tasmania to Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour. This has many similarities to Patagonia. Bathurst Harbour and Port Davey combined create a waterway three times larger than Sydney Harbour. As you'd expect in southern Tasmania, the land and sea scapes are as dramatic as they come. Jagged mountain peaks cloaked in cloud, island beaches stained deep orange by tannin leeching from the soil. It is not difficult to spend several weeks in this area if you wish to explore thoroughly.

Evidence has been found of human habitation in the South West Wilderness area going back at least 25,000 years. The coastal area was shared by four Tasmanian Aboriginal tribes for at least the last 3,000 years.

Moving clockwise around Tasmania you arrive next after a 12-14 hour travel day at Macquarie Harbour. The quaint fishing village of Strahan services the area. The Gordon River at the south end of the harbour is navigable for more than 25 miles. The shores of Macquarie Harbor are dotted with extinct mining operations and former penal settlements.

During your circumnavigation of Tasmania you can traverse through the Hunter group of islands, berth in the quaint fishing harbour of Stanley. Your itinerary can include the ports of Devonport, Port Sorell, then enter the Tamar River and travel to the city of Launceston. All the stops are accessible from your boat with short walks.

Departing the Tamar River you can visit the Kent group, including Deal Island which once supported the highest elevation lighthouse in Australia. This light was decommissioned because it too frequently was invisible due to low cloud.

Travelling east at *Westwind's* cruising speed for 5 hours you will arrive at Killiecrankie, at the NW corner of Flinders Island. If you do drop anchor there make sure you walk the beach to Stackies Bight and look for some Killiecrankie diamonds en-route.

Travelling southwards along the west coast of Flinders Island, the infamous settlement of Wybalenna, adjacent to Port Davies, can be visited, but this is a dinghy ride ashore. Further south you will reach Franklin Sound and at the Eastern end is one of Flinders Island's major settlements the town of Lady Barron. If you re-fuelled in Hobart you will not need to top up, but if not, this little fishing port supports several commercial boats. Heading back out of the Sound and further south you will come to Armstrong Passage. At Kent Bay there was a sealers settlement in the late 1700s and at the east end is Preservation and Rum Islands. Research how the *Sydney Cove* foundered there and the rum aboard was moved to the small island for safe keeping.

Heading further south you will arrive at Spike Bay. At the SE corner of this bay is a small lagoon which is one of the most pristine, remote, unknown locations on our planet.

You will now cross Banks Strait and pass Swan Island on your way south to the world-famous Wineglass Bay. Anchor at Quiet Corner at the south end of the beach then walk to the lookout for one of the most spectacular views anywhere in the world. Further south is Schouten Passage. A safe anchorage can be located there in almost any wind direction.

Still heading clockwise around Tasmania you will arrive at Mercury Passage and can anchor in Shoal or as the locals call it Chinaman's Bay at Maria Island. At Encampment Cove, if you walk for 20 minutes inland you will see Wombats and kangaroos. Tasmanian Devils show their faces after dark in this area. Drop into Darlington on the NW corner of Maria Island and view the derelict lime kilns and the 1820s penal settlement.

You can then head further south to Tasmania's most infamous penal settlement of Port Arthur. You will pass spectacular geological features of The Lanterns, Cape Hauy and Cape Pillar before entering the all-weather anchorage in Carnarvon Bay.

Port Arthur to Hobart at normal cruising speed will be about six hours. It is possible to berth literally near the middle of the city at Constitution Dock.

The ideal cruising season around Tasmania is from January to May. Later in the year can bring early morning frosts but the usual lower velocity wind conditions favour power boating. If you get caught with cold conditions, *Westwind's* heating furnace will keep the boat cosy.

This scenario is presented to the prospective new owners of *Westwind*. And it's scope could be replicated in the Kimberley Coast region in far NW Australia with whale watching at Deception Sound, crocodile country up any of the several major rivers in that area. Or the Blue Lagoon at Lizard Island off the NE coast of Queensland and thence south to the Whitsunday Islands, and further south again to the remarkable sights and experiences within the Hawkesbury River just north of Sydney in New South Wales, possibly via a stopover at the World Heritage Park at Lord Howe Island. Access to all of these amazing destinations is reachable aboard this fine small ship.

A very detailed cruising itinerary could easily consume two or more years, before possibly heading east via the Pacific Islands and on to the Americas. A safe COVID-19 free platform to travel aboard!