

YARRA VALLEY, HEALESVILLE, MELBOURNE, THE DANDENONGS

6 DAYS DEPARTING MONDAY 8TH OCTOBER TO SATURDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2012

MOTEL ACCOMMODATION – RESTAURANT MEALS



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HIGHLIGHTS

SEEING EYE DOG CENTRE
MELBOURNE MUSEUM - PARLIAMENT HOUSE
MELBOURNE CITY CIRCLE TRAM
MCG TOUR – HEALESVILLE - MARYSVILLE
PUFFING BILLY -WARBURTON
BUXTON TROUT FARM - CUCKOO RESTAURANT
WILLIAM RICKETTS SANCTUARY
BLUE LOTUS WATER GARDENS
MT DANDENONG LOOKOUT
YARRA VALLEY DAIRY
EUREKA OBSERVATION DECK
YARRA RIVER CRUISE
CROWN CASINO

DAY 1: MON 8TH OCTOBER

HOME TO MELBOURNE

D.

Today we leave Ararat and travel to Melbourne via Ballarat to our first stop, which is the Melbourne Museum. The Museum is located in the Carlton Gardens and is the largest museum in the Southern Hemisphere and is a venue of Museum Victoria, which also operates the Immigration Museum and Scienceworks Museum. Participating in one of the tours will allow us to explore the Melbourne Museum and discover some highlights of the fascinating collections and treasures on display. We then visit the Seeing Eye Dog facility in Kew where it costs \$30,000 to breed, train and match each dog. At the centre, we learn the history of the organization and the role of Seeing Eye dogs. Our tour will allow us to see the breeding kennels and vet clinic. The handlers will demonstrate their techniques with dogs in training or working dogs. We make our way to the Yarra Valley and to our motel accommodation, which is our home for the next five nights.

DAY 2: TUE 9TH OCTOBER

PUFFING BILLY – YARRA VALLEY

B.D.

This morning we make our way to Belgrave, which is the main entrance to Sherbrooke Forest a cool lush scenic fern-clad area on the edge of the Dandenongs. Here we join a real Victorian favourite in "Puffing Billy". Puffing Billy Railway is the oldest steam railway still operating in Australia, and one of the finest preserved steam railways in the world. It is lovingly maintained by an army of volunteers who take the utmost pride in the trains. Perhaps you travelled on Puffing Billy as a child with your legs dangling outside the carriages almost touching the magnificent tree ferns that reach out towards the train. Well nothing has changed and as part of the round train trip, we arrive in Lakeside for lunch and time to stroll the street of this scenic small village. After returning to Belgrave, again on Puffing Billy, the Yarra Valley Dairy is next on our itinerary and with luck, we can watch the cows parade in for milking. We can taste the farm's delicious homemade cheeses from the Cheese Shop, which is located in the original 100-year-old milking shed, right beside the cheese factory. Complimentary cheese tastings of five cheeses selected each day from the entire range of over fifteen are on offer. Farmhouse cheeses are available to buy. Many of these are so fresh and fragile they are available only on the farm. There is also a range of delicious regional and specialist produce available as well as some beautiful home wares and giftware. We make our way back to the motel with time for a biscuit and cheese before dinner at the motel restaurant.

DAY 3: WED 10TH OCTOBER

HEALESVILLE – MARYSVILLE – BUXTON TROUT FARM

B.D.

A special day today as after breakfast we will visit Healesville Sanctuary, nestled in a glorious bushland setting and with the largest collection of Australian native wildlife in the world. It is one of Australia's most acclaimed wildlife sanctuaries. Showcasing more than 200 species of Australian wildlife, the Sanctuary is a fantastic location to view native animals in their natural habitat. Here we can experience close-up encounters with some of Australia's most unique and captivating wildlife, including koalas, kangaroos, wombats, emus, dingoes, birds of prey and the elusive platypus. After lunch, we drive through the Black Spur and visit Marysville, which is rebuilding after the Black Saturday fires of February 7, 2009. From Marysville we visit the Buxton Trout and Salmon Farm which is Australia's first commercial trout farm where trout have been reared for nearly 50 years, the gravity fed water supply originates from the snowfields of Lake Mountain before cascading down Stevenson's Falls and through its streams providing the perfect place to grow a clean natural food. Our round trip for the day is completed returning to our motel for dinner at the restaurant.

DAY 4: THU 11TH OCTOBER CITY OF MELBOURNE - EUREKA TOWER - MCG TOUR B.D.

This morning of our six-day tour gets off to a start in the City of Melbourne where we visit Parliament House for an interesting and personally conducted tour. Public tours of Parliament are conducted on days when Parliament is not sitting. The State Parliament House in Spring Street was built in 1856, and the original building was constructed of beautiful old sandstone from the quarries of the Grampians. Next we visit the Eureka Tower which is a 297metre skyscraper located in the Southbank precinct of Melbourne. The 90 storey, \$ 241 million project is a shining beacon seen from many kilometres' away as it dominates Melbourne's skyline from its position by the Yarra River and Southbank. Eureka Tower is a must for a real skydeck eagle eye's view experience. Eureka is perfectly positioned for 360 degree, floor-to-ceiling views taking in Melbourne's CBD, sports precinct, Port Phillip Bay, Docklands and everything in between. Certainly one of Melbourne's icons is the historical old tram, which is arguably the most serviceable way to traverse the city. Board a City Circle tram for a ride around the edge of the central business district in the distinctive burgundy and cream coloured W-class tram. The City Circle tram service operates within Melbourne's central business district. The service operates in a circular route passing major tourist attractions. Free time to shop and to explore the city's attractive departmental stores, boutiques, arcades and Melbourne Central, rejoining the coach to visit another of Melbourne's icons, the hallowed birthplace of test cricket the MCG. The MCG Tour gives us the opportunity to relive great sporting memories through a comprehensive tour of this marvellous stadium. MCG Tours include a tour guide who explains the glories of our sporting history and we see prints, paintings, trophies and portraits that can only be seen behind the scenes. Leaving Melbourne city we return in time for dinner tonight, which is at the motel restaurant.

DAY 5: FRI 12TH OCTOBER WILLIAM RICKETS SANCTUARY - CUCKOO RESTAURANT B.D.

Today we visit the Dandenong Ranges National Park but our first stop is at Warburton, which is often described as the jewel in the crown of the Dandenongs. It's easy to feel the sense of wellbeing descend as we arrive in this quiet, attractive and charming old gold mining town. Warburton on the upper reaches of the Yarra River is surrounded by lush, tall forests of mountain ash. Mid morning, we return to Yarra Junction to enjoy the Blue Lotus Water Lilies. The 14 acre display garden of exotic lotus and waterlilies has lakes, islands and bridges. All the islands are surrounded by a mass of colourful flowers. The hothouses have a tropical display and the whole garden is landscaped with native and exotic trees and shrubs. Mount Dandenong awaits us, and is an erosion-resistant volcanic peak, 633 metres above sea level and the highest point in the Dandenong Ranges. The first horse-drawn tourist coaches were making the trip up to the mountain by 1904. Amid cool fern glades and lush towering native forest, this peak and the Mount Dandenong Observatory are one of the premier tourist attractions in the area. On a good day, we can look at the big picture, from the Mornington Peninsula across the majestic sweep of Port Phillip Bay, surrounded by Melbourne's growing urban fringes, to the You Yangs on the southern horizon. Nearby the remarkable William Ricketts Sanctuary situated in a ferny glade is not to be missed. We will enjoy the sanctuary, as it is a place of beauty and tranquillity due to the natural setting and the mystical clay sculptures half hidden along the pathways. Tonight at nearby Olinda we kick up our heels at the famed "Cuckoo Restaurant", a delightful Bavarian styled restaurant. We will enjoy a European smorgasbord, floorshow and live entertainment at this award-winning venue.

DAY 6: SAT 13TH OCTOBER YARRA RIVER CRUISE – CROWN CASINO – HOME B.

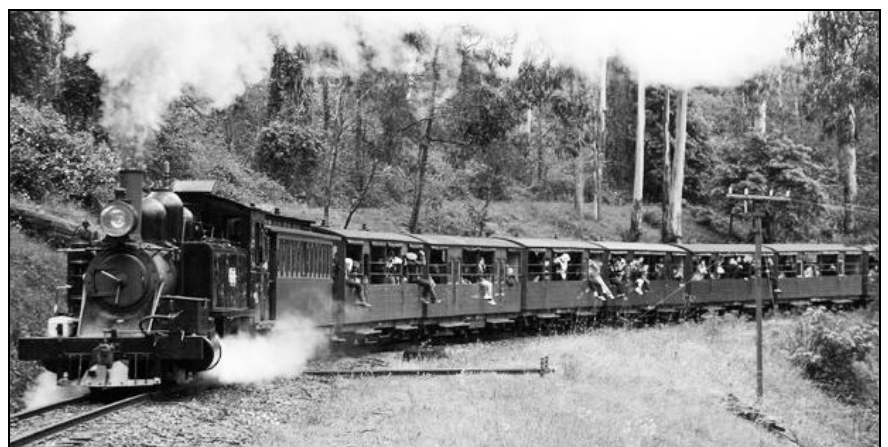
After breakfast this morning, we take to the water. Melbourne's lower Yarra River is the city's tourism and recreation heart. It hums with activity, on land and water. River boats link the vibrancy of Federation Square, Southgate and Crown Entertainment. With City River cruises we travel downstream to the Port of Melbourne, we pass Southgate, Melbourne's Crown Casino, Melbourne Aquarium, World Trade Centre, Melbourne Exhibition Centre, the Polly Woodside, the containerised cargo port and of course the famous Westgate and Bolte Bridges. Melbourne is the Southern Hemisphere's busiest general cargo port and is a vital link in Australia's economy. Back on dry land we lunch at the glittering Crown Entertainment Complex a centre that encompasses the largest Casino in the southern hemisphere. There is free time after lunch at the Casino to perhaps have a try on the pokies or to take a leisurely walk along Southbank. Departure for home is later this afternoon after six days enjoyable touring of Melbourne and the Yarra Valley.

PRICE: \$1980.00
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$ 350.00
All prices include GST

PRICE INCLUDES:

- **Luxury Coach Travel**
- **Motel Accommodation – Twin Share**
- **Admission to attractions as specified**
- **All meals as specified:**
B: Breakfast D: Dinner
- **Pick up and return to your home**

Travel Insurance is highly recommended and is the responsibility of each passenger.



Puffing Billy a highlight of the Yarra Valley – Melbourne Tour

