

TASMANIA

AROUND THE COAST



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER TURRELL



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Safety fence for Cape Hauy (top left),
one of the famous Three Cape Walks



7th Heaven carefully leads the fleet through Hells Gate.

INTRODUCTION

This book describes a journey that took 30 days to complete but more than six months to plan. Ten large cruising motor yachts set out from Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, to travel south down the west coast of Tasmania and return via the east coast and Flinders Island. There were plenty of stops on the way, but more importantly, we were governed by the weather as to when and where we could anchor or tie up. This is a story about my 'fellow cruisers' – skippers and crew – and all the challenges faced. Seven of the owners are members of Sandringham Yacht Club the others are from Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron, Royal Victorian Motor Yacht Club and Yarra's Edge Marina.

For readers who have not ventured around Tasmania in their boats, I hope this book may inspire you to form your own group to do it. The following pages will outline information about what you need to plan for, as we did for this trip. Details of all the boats and crews (cruisers) are given on pages 12–13. Anchoring, jetty moorings and fuel availability form part of the story.

Thanks to all of the people who made this trip possible. Rob Ungar invited various owners to come along on this trip and helped me to put this book together. Mike Percy (Captain Mike), professional skipper on Rob's 88 foot Princess *7th Heaven*, provided guidance about weather, moorings and a daily update email to all cruisers as to what to expect out on the journey and the various places to stay. Gary Axton played a big part in getting information to all interested parties through countless emails and phone calls. Also, thanks to Gary for allowing me to part of his crew. And Bob Clothier helped me select the photos.

A special thank you to all my fellow cruisers, some old friends and some new, for allowing me to use your photos and personal stories to make all this possible. I have used first names followed by first letters of surnames as reference throughout the book. For instance, Gary A (Gary Axton), skipper on *Allure*.

We appreciate the assistance from organisations and individuals who provided information and helped to produce this book.

Peter Turrell



Richard S searching for fish in his
tender at Bryans Beach



The captains

Captain Mike Percy

Mike Percy has enjoyed his life on the sea since he was a child. He sailed Sabots at an early age with the encouragement from his mum and dad. They both were competent sailors in their own right and taught young Mike to enjoy the open ocean but also to respect it.

His early working life started out selling Caribbean and Haines Hunter boats. This in turn gave him the opportunity to learn how to water ski and fish around the waterways of Tasmania. Later in his working life Mike turned to Real Estate in Launceston where he ran his own successful agency. He contemplated purchasing a tour boat business at Coles Bay and realised that his love for boats could be the escape he needed. He studied and obtained his Yacht Masters ticket for both sail and power.

About this time, Mike was able to purchase his own boat, a 35 foot Bowden-design steel-hull motor cruiser. In the next 10 years he enjoyed cruising with his young family, and learned much about the Tasmanian waterways, which is quite evident today.

After having the opportunity to deliver one of his real estate clients' boats from the mainland to Tasmania, he could see a new career emerging. He registered the name Tassie Skippers. There was a feeling within his

bones that some other owners may need a professional skipper to deliver their boats from the factories up north.

This led to a chance meeting with Rob and Rose Ungar, and he became their professional skipper around 18 years ago. He has been full-time since the Ungars purchased their beautiful 72 ft Princess, *R&R*, in 2011.

In all his time at sea, Mike has estimated he has travelled around 140,000 NM. Trips up and down Australia's east coast, over to Broome and back, and to Port Lincoln in South Australia. He has become a kind of Tasmanian ambassador for tourism, with countless hours cruising around all the ports and harbours the state has to offer.

The trip this year to circumnavigate Tasmania on *7th Heaven* took its toll on Mike. He realised on his holiday with his wife Sharon touring the north Island of New Zealand how exhausted he was.

He believes the journey around Tasmania was one of the hardest and he also had nine other boats to worry about. He admitted that the wind and seas coming out of Port Davey was probably on top of the list as far as the worst he has seen. Safety the most important factor here.

Would he do it again? 'You bet. Can't wait till next year.'



TOP

**Captain Mike Percy in his 'office',
the helm of *7th Heaven***

ABOVE

**Mike on *Angel 1* tender
for *7th Heaven***

Captain David Prior

It was a delight to have one other professional captain to join our trip as skipper for Ray H's Razaway 60 foot Riviera SUV.

Dave has been on boats for much of his life, and started fishing near his home town of Bermagui as a longliner in the late 1980s. He obtained his Master 5 certificate working on local fishing boats and branched out doing local charters chasing the marlin for many years. He sold boats for boat retailer Boatarama in Warrigal Road, Cheltenham in the early 1970s. He turned builder for a time to build his own house in Bermagui. Dave married Rosemary in 1978 and they have two sons who are very keen fisherman and love boating life as well.

Dave has spent the last 15 years delivering boats for excited owners all around Australia from the Queensland manufacturing plant.

His experience came to light with our trip around Tasmania. He became a good friend to all the owners, with assistance given without question. He provided verbal and physical help to most of our skippers.



Captain Dave P with the one and only cray he caught from Recherche Bay.

The fleet and the cruisers



7th Heaven (PRINCESS 88)

OWNERS: Rob and Rose Ungar
CAPTAIN: Mike Percy
Merrin Short (Hostess/Crew)
GUESTS: Sue and Ian Griffiths, Vonn Teoh-Bource,
Bob and Jenny O'Toole



Allure (RIVIERA 45)

OWNER: Gary Axton
GUESTS: David Flood, Peter Hickey,
Andrew Stewart, Peter Turrell



Ti Amo (MARITIMO 48)

OWNERS: Michael and Vikki Kostos
GUESTS: Ross and Gayle Cunningham



Perfect Mix (MARITIMO 48)

OWNERS: Gary and Deb Finemore
GUESTS: Viv and Cherry Edwards



Keeper II (RIVIERA 52)

OWNER: Kevin Hibberson

GUESTS: Phil Harman, Bruce Collings



Marlin (RIVIERA 47)

OWNERS: John and Daria Pfister



Princess 1 (PRINCESS 64)

OWNER: Richard Song

GUESTS: Dor Tu, Lyline Jian, Mr Wang,
Me Chun, Anthony, John



Razaway (RIVIERA 60 SUV)

OWNER: Ray and Jenny Haddrell

CAPTAIN: Dave Prior

GUESTS: Rosemary Prior, Stewart Jackson



L/V Three (78 OCEAN ALEXANDER)

OWNER: Malcolm Watkins, Peter Kerr

GUESTS: Martin Kerr, Lesley Kerr, Tony Gill



Sublime (CLIPPER 45)

OWNER: Len Dockrill

GUESTS: Ron Clark, Mark Rindfleish

Captain's log

Day	Date 2019	Depart			Arrive	Time (hours)	Distance (nautical miles)
1	31 Jan	Preparation					
2	1 Feb	Queenscliff	07.00	Coulomb Bay	16.00	9.0	128
3	2	Coulomb Bay	06.30	Heritage Landing, Gordon River	16.30	10.0	150
4	3	Heritage Landing	09.30	Warners Landing, Gordon River	12.00	3.5	14
5	4	Warners Landing	11.30	Strahan	16.30	5.0	35
6	5	Strahan		Shopping, refuelling sightseeing			
7	6	Strahan	07.00	Bramble Cove, Bathurst Harbour	13.00	6.0	103
8–11	7–10	Cruised Bathurst Harbour		Anchored under Kings Point			40
12	11	Kings Point	08.00	Recherche Bay	12.30	4.5	76
13	12	Recherche Bay	12.00	Gourlays Bay, Huon River	16.00	4.0	28
14	13	Gourlays Bay	11.00	Trial Bay	14.00	3.0	28
15	14	Trial Bay	11.00	Barnes Bay	13.00	2.0	8
16	15	Barnes Bay	09.30	Sullivans Cove, Hobart	12.00	2.5	21
17–20	16–19	Hobart		Sightseeing, shopping, refuelling			
21	20	Hobart	07.30	Stewarts Bay, Port Arthur	17.00	8.5	43
22	21	Stewarts Bay		Visited Port Arthur			
23	22	Stewarts Bay	08.00	Triabunna	17.00	9.0	65
24	23	Triabunna	11.00	Schouten Passage	13.00	2.0	29
25	24	Schouten Passage	10.00	Coles Bay	11.30	1.5	13
26	25	Coles Bay	11.00	Schouten Passage via Bryans beach	17.30	5.5	21
27	26	Schouten Passage	10.30	Wineglass Bay	11.30	1.0	13
28	27	Wineglass Bay	05.00	Lady Barron, Flinders Island	14.30	9.5	146
29	28	Lady Barron	10.30	Trousers Point, Flinders Island	12.00	1.5	19
30	1 Mar	Trousers Point	03.30	Queenscliff	16.00	14.5	222

NOTE: THIS IS THE LOG FOR 7TH HEAVEN

Total trip mileage – 1,202 nautical miles (NM)

Hours run – 102.5

Average speed 10.2 knots [is this the average speed for all boats]

Note: Average speed takes into account slow cruising up the Gordon River, Bathurst Harbour anchoring and berthing in various anchorages and ports.

Most of our longer trips were done at 18–20 knots.

Captain Mike's weather report

A typical report (below) and weather map (opposite) from Captain Mike sent out most mornings to the fleet



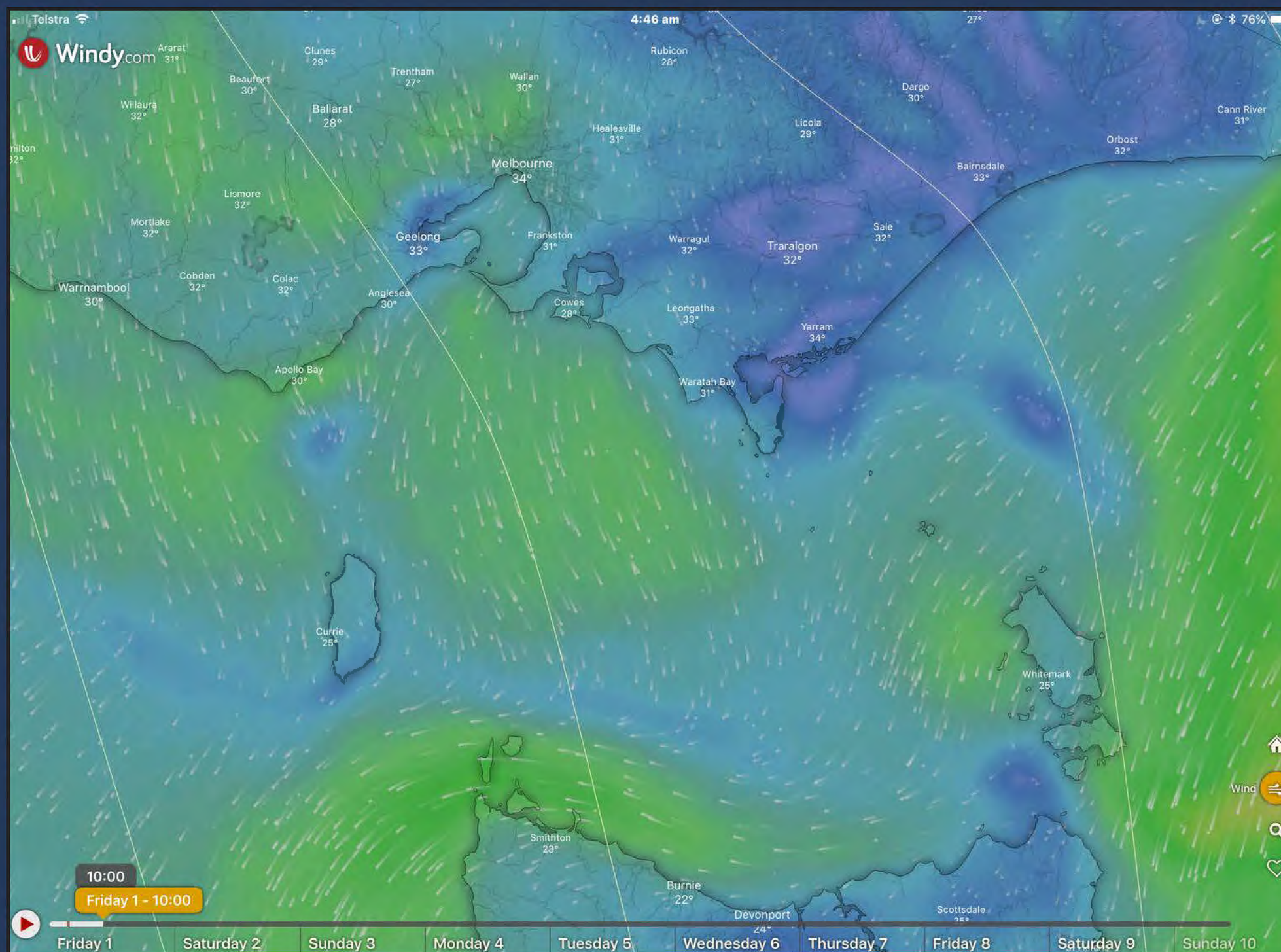
Good morning all.

Weather outlook: Today should be a Glamour as with tomorrow, apart from the possibility of a shower and some smoke. The outlook over southern Tas for next week is for a NW-W air flow, as a deep low-pressure system is south of Tasmania. As expected, a high-pressure system is sitting in the Bight and is moving slowly east. Early next week this system will split, with a high in the Bight and another in the Tasman Sea. This is holding the low south. If (as it should at this time of the year) the high strengthens, it will keep the low south and we should see a moderation in the outlook forecast, as it is this morning, still with fresh NW winds, but nowhere near the original strength. May even continue to be pleasant! I would still expect it to be cold and wet but not the gale-force winds. However, with this morning's outlook on Windy, we might be in Port Davey for at least a week. There is always an option of doing a quick run in and out, as you would need to be around the bottom of Tas late Thursday. I will continue to monitor the weather, and if I see a suitable window Monday or Tuesday that we could take advantage of to get out and around SW Cape, then we will possibly take it. The west coast will see an increase in the swells over the next couple of days.

Everyone has refuelled – we took approx 30,000 litres for the fleet, also had an excellent resupply from the local IGA, coffee shops, pubs and restaurants all benefited from our short stay. I hope everyone has enjoyed Strahan. We say goodbye to our friends on *L/V 3*, as they are going back north today as we continue heading south.

I expect you will get limited mobile coverage in spots going south and in Port Davey, although it could be better than the last time we were there a few years ago.

Enjoy the run. See you all in Port Davey.



This snapshot was taken around 4.30 a.m. with the prediction as to what the sea would be at 10.00 a.m. Follow the arrows on the chart for wind and swell direction with dark blue showing little or no wind. The green shows wind expected to be around 20 knots, not the best to travel in.



7th Heaven in Queenscliff Harbour

DAY 1
THURSDAY 31 JANUARY

The fleet assembles

After more than six months of planning, the day had finally arrived for the fleet to make its way from various home ports to Queenscliff Harbour for a meet and greet, and final briefing.

Seven of the 10 boats – *7th Heaven*, *Sublime*, *Allure*, *Marlin*, *Razaway*, *Keeper II* and *Princess 1* – arrived throughout the day – making last-minute checks, and topping up fuel tanks and supplies. *Ti Amo* and *Perfect Mix* decided to leave early the next morning and join the fleet near the Heads of Port Phillip Bay. *L/V 3* left from Blairgowrie and kept going to meet the fleet at Macquarie Harbour.

The excitement was obvious in all of the crews in anticipation of the voyage ahead, starting in convoy through the Rip into Bass Strait. A tradition that developed among the boats during previous cruises was to follow *7th Heaven* in convoy through the Heads when departing and also on return. In between, the boats suited themselves.

Rob and Rose U organised a 'cocktail party' aboard *7th Heaven* to introduce the crews of the various boats to one another. This gathering of crews had become another tradition from past cruises in company organised by Rob and Rose, and was affectionately known as '6 o'clock rock'. Where possible, this was a daily occurrence. Following introductions and catch-ups, Captain Mike briefed the crews on what to expect the following day with regard to the weather and



the prevailing seas. Mike's weather forecast for the morning's departure, was that we would encounter a large swell and strong south-easterly wind.

Following the 6 o'clock rock and briefing, crews dispersed for dinner and further sharing of stories and experiences at sea.

***Allure* heading
off from Queenscliff
Harbour**



Sunrise under the bow of *7th Heaven*
in Queenscliff Harbour

DAY 2
FRIDAY 1 FEBRUARY

Departure from Queenscliff Harbour

A beautiful sunrise lit up the fleet, berthed close together at Queenscliff Harbour. It was time to slip the ropes in readiness to head out to conquer the rough-and-tumble Rip at 8.00 a.m. The waves here are hard to judge, with a decent swell. We had no problems, but were all hanging on, as our homes for the next four weeks were tested in this notorious patch of water. We soon learned we were in for a wet and bumpy trip ahead. We were heading to Coulomb Bay at the north end of Three Hummock Island, 120 NM (nautical miles) away.

Trouble loomed on *Allure* 30 NM out from the Heads when it was noticed that the cradle mount under the tender had slipped, and had to be lifted to realign the pads. The repairs took about an hour, and *Allure* had to liven up the pace to catch the other boats.

About an hour or so short of our destination, *Allure's* starboard motor suddenly shut down. As we the crew were wondering what had gone wrong, it started again after a few minutes, and *Allure* reached its destination after around 10 hours at sea.

Coulomb Bay is quite safe from most of the swells and an excellent place to anchor. With plenty of daylight left, eight out of the 10 boats dropped anchor, settled in for a barbecue on board and relaxed after a bumpy ride. *Sublime* and *L/V 3* continued on, as they were not travelling as fast as the rest of the fleet, so they had to make up time by travelling through the night.



**Full speed ahead on our way
to Three Hummock Island**



ABOVE

**A couple of miles out of
Coulomb Bay**

LEFT

**The *Allure* crew looking forward
to the adventure**

OPPOSITE TOP

**Looking back to Point Lonsdale on
our way out of the Heads**

OPPOSITE BOTTOM

**Our first night at anchor with some
of the fleet – Coulomb Bay, Three
Hummock Island**





Wind farms south of
Cape Grim at 7.00 a.m.

DAY 3
SATURDAY 2 FEBRUARY

South to the Gordon River

Everybody was up early ready to head south through the Hunter Island Group. We were expecting a fresh wind until we reached the ocean.

Sublime had passed the main fleet during the night and was well ahead by the time the other boats departed. *L/V 3* travels best at a speed of around 12–14 knots and had already reached Strahan.

Once we had the Tasmanian coast on our port side, we could see the enormous wind turbines doing their job generating electricity for Tasmania and Victoria. There was a haze in the air, as Tasmania had been ravaged with huge bushfires from one end to the other, and the easterly winds brought the smoke to the coast. The sea was still lumpy, with the wind following the fleet down the coast for the next 100 NM.

News came through on the radio that the lining of the ceiling on *Keeper II* had dropped to the floor during this rough patch. Richard S on *Princess 1* announced on the radio that his fuel tanks were at about three-eighths full. As there was about 50 NM still to go to Hells Gate, Captain Mike recommended that Richard slow down to 10 knots, 'or you won't make it!' The main fleet was travelling at about 20 knots at this stage, and was on time to reach Macquarie Harbour at around 1.00 p.m. We all welcomed the entrance and the calmer seas, and filed in one behind the other. We motored up to the Gordon River, and

Sublime and *L/V 3* joined the queue as we made our way up to The Heritage Landing to set anchor for the night. We had travelled nearly 150 NM in a day, so it was about time to open a few bottles, relax and enjoy the view.

'6 o'clock rock' on the landing was a chance to meet the balance of the fleet, have a drink or two and discuss the day's events. This was the first of many for the trip. *Princess 1* arrived at about 7.00 p.m., after the group photo.



**7th Heaven and L/V 3 setting up anchor at
The Heritage Landing on the Gordon River**



Keeper II and *Perfect Mix* take on the heavy seas 1.5 hours south of Cape Grim.



ABOVE

7th Heaven leads the fleet into Macquarie Harbour.

LEFT

Just inside Hells Gates, the fleet is already seeing bracken-coloured water.







TOP

The cruisers board their tenders to get back to their boats.

ABOVE

The crew on *Mini Mix* making their way back to *Perfect Mix*

LEFT

Gary A from *Allure* sets up *Allure Drone 2* for a test flight.

OPPOSITE

6 o'clock rock gathering at Heritage Landing



Perfectly still on the
Gordon River at 7.00 a.m.

DAY 4
SUNDAY 3 FEBRUARY

Smoke on the Gordon River

We awoke to very grey and smoky skies. The easterly wind from a bushfire a few hundred kilometres inland brought smoke to the Gordon River. There was a loud splash ahead of the boats, and we later found that there had been a large brown seal thrashing the life out of a large salmon.

After lining up all 10 boats for a picture, it was time to up anchor and travel in single file about 15 NM to Sir John Falls landing. We stopped along the way to look at the massive marble walls and flora and fauna at the river's edge. Once anchored safely, the boats were occupying about 500 metres of the river. We were warned to be careful when anchoring, as there are plenty of hidden objects on the bottom and it is not very deep.

Keeper II and *Allure* were lucky to find spots on the floating jetty. With the boats safely anchored, tenders were deployed for the small journey up to the Franklin River. There were smiles and excitement as the tenders took their passengers up the river. Thank goodness Bob Hawke stepped in to stop the damming the Franklin when he won office in 1983.

What a day it had been for all of us to take in the sights of the Gordon and Franklin rivers. Some boats went up the river again to make sure they did not miss anything.

Six o'clock rock was back on as usual, with *Keeper II* hosting the get-together. Captain Mike talked about the days ahead, giving all the crews a rundown on predicted weather, refuelling, and docking at Strahan.

The freezer on *Allure* was raided to find the best of our grain-fed fillet steaks for a barbecue. The drinks fridge was given a severe workout, and we called it quits around 2.00 a.m.



***Keeper II* and *Allure* were lucky to find spots on the floating jetty.**



The fog rolled in for a few minutes.





One of the spectacular cliff faces
along the Franklin River

DAY 5
MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY

Warners Landing to Strahan

It was time to move down the Gordon River and past Warners Landing on our right, then through Macquarie Harbour to Strahan for a few days. We only travelled around 45 NM on this day. Some of the fleet refuelled and we had seven boats tied or rafted up around the wharf.

Three weeks earlier, a commercial crayfish boat, *Vagabond*, caught fire at the jetty, causing \$150,000 damage. Locals told us that the fire, caused by an electrical fault, had destroyed the top of the boat but did not get to the 6,000 litres of fuel stored below. It was tied up to a small jetty around the corner near the famous fish and chip eatery the Bay Fish Co.

Rob organised our 6 o'clock rock across the road at the Strahan pub. This gave us another chance to get to know our fellow cruisers. The *L/V 3* crew told us they had to head back to Melbourne in a day or two, as the weather was not looking too good and the crew had some business commitments. Malcolm and his crew had thoroughly enjoyed the trip, and have planned to do the next adventure with us. *L/V 3* copped a battering returning up the coast near Cape Grim, and had to shelter near Three Hummock Island for the night.

Our group took over the small dining room at the Strahan pub to the delight of the publican.



A group of cruisers ready to head up to the Franklin River





LEFT

The Franklin River a short distance upstream from the Gordon River junction

FOLLOWING PAGES

Sir John Falls, Gordon River

TOP

Gary A tests his skills flying *Allure Drone 2* while we are moving.

ABOVE

Heading down the Gordon River back to Macquarie Harbour







Allure at Strahan jetty

DAY 6
TUESDAY 5 FEBRUARY

Sightseeing at Strahan

We had a chance to replenish some supplies, particularly fresh fruit and veggies. Captain Mike had spoken to the local IGA store the week before to get ready for an influx of new customers. A local tradie with his ute helped to get supplies from the local bottle shop and pick up some laundry.

The 'cruisers' had scattered all over Strahan, buying up big at the plentiful souvenir shops around town and taking in the local sights. We went for a walk up to Hogarth Falls to take in the fresh air. Some of us mingled around the station hoping to catch a glimpse of the steam train.

All of the boats topped up their tanks, and our fleet had drained the main tank at the jetty bowser of over 30,000 litres of diesel. The weather was abating outside the harbour, so we knew we would be heading for Port Davey in the morning.

The *Allure* team decided to dine around the bay at Risby Cove, as we knew we would be at anchor for at least the next five nights. The food was terrific, and there was a gallery full of great photos and art.



Six boats in our fleet rafted up to the Strahan jetty





Allure entertaining *Perfect Mix* hostesses at Strahan jetty.

LEFT

Abalone boat *Conquister* leaves Strahan jetty watched by the *Sublime* team.

Abalone in Tasmania



Abalone in the hold

There are around 120 diving licences in Tasmania but, due to quota limits set by the government, only about 60 are now working. Divers usually operate for about 120 days a year. Methods for bringing the abalone to the surface have changed. In the old days, they had a large net with a small parachute. They would inflate the chute and manhandle the 50 kilogram catch to the surface. These days, they have a drop line that the crew uses to winch them into the boat. A good diver can collect several hundred kilograms of abalone in an hour. The season usually lasts between 1 January and 30 June. One of the main worries for a skipper returning to Macquarie Harbour is to empty out the hold water in which the abalone are stored. Macquarie Harbour is nearly fresh water, so they must move smartly; otherwise, the abalone will drown.

The Tasmanian wild abalone industry is a significant contributor to the Tasmanian economy. It is the largest wild abalone fishery in the world, providing around 25 per cent of the annual harvest. The fishery is managed under the provisions of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*.

The Tasmanian abalone industry provides over \$30 million of wage income per annum via the harvesting (divers and deckhands), processing (factory workers, truck

drivers and administrators), marketing and exporting (managers and consultants) and service industries (mechanics, technicians, welders and boilermakers).

Ralph's Tasmanian Seafood is the biggest supplier of wild-caught live abalone in the world. After harvest, the live abalone are transported to the factory in refrigerated vehicles. They are placed into holding crates and lowered into state-of-the-art holding tanks. The holding facility can store 25 tonnes of live product, ensuring several weeks supply if the weather turns bad for an extended time. Live abalone are hand-selected and packed into polystyrene boxes, with ice packs added to hold the temperature stable. The factory is only 30 minutes drive from the airport, thus allowing a short time as possible out of water from tank to tank. They have their own plane to get them to Melbourne on time. They are currently exporting over 500 tonnes of live abalone per year, mainly to China and Japan.

The best recipe for this delicacy came from one of the skippers we met: 'Take the fish out of the shell and clean off the not so good bits. With whatever you can find on board the boat, bash the fish as flat as you can, pop it on a hot grill with some butter for a few seconds, then whack it between two slices of bread.'



LEFT

This crate of live black lipped abalone is worth around \$2,000.

BELOW

Abalone boat *Kai Koura* unloads from the Strahan jetty.





Leaving Strahan

DAY 7
WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY

Strahan to Bathurst Harbour

All crews were up early ready for the 100 NM trip to Port Davey. The *Keeper II* crew asked if anybody wanted to go fishing, and *Allure* joined them. The plan was to go about an hour before the others left so we could go out to the continental shelf. That seemed a long way in our minds, but it is not far off the rugged Tasmanian west coast. Phil H from *Keeper II* seemed to know all about it, and was on the radio with all sorts of directions. The water was over 700 metres deep, and the plan was to trawl along the edge of the shelf if we could find it. Not sure what we were after, but some lures were set behind *Allure*. After about an hour, we retrieved the lures and found that only the biggest one had been attacked. *Keeper II* fared no better. What lit up our day was a large flock of mutton birds. With our fishing attempts over, we headed east towards Port Davey.

The weather and the seas were quite accommodating, so we all had a good run south to our planned destination. Upon arrival at the entrance to Port Davey, the view is taken over by the Breaksea Islands, with spectacular cliffs and small caves. Some of our fleet was already anchored in Bramble Cove not far from the islands, and we made our way to our resting point for the night.

Sublime cruised in an hour or so later. Happily travelling at 8 knots, the boat has two 300 horsepower Cummins engines, and has now done over 1,600 hours. The boat seems to have no fixed address. Len D and his crew are members of Royal Victorian Motor Yacht Club, and the boat has a berth in Queensland but comes from Port Stephens.



We had our 6 o'clock rock on the northern beach inside Bramble Cove. It was great to see everyone in shorts and shirts, as the weather had now picked up and was quite warm. Captain Mike gave us a rundown as to what to expect with local mooring spots, and a weather forecast for the next few days, which was not good. The predicted strong winds south of Tasmania were on the change, but it was possible we would be in Port Davey for a week. The plan was to do five days cruising around Bathurst Harbour and its various coves.

A bait board, a barbecue, an esky, fishing rod and Australian Ensign with a sunrise – Australiana at its best



Allure outside Hells Gates

FAR LEFT

**Bonnet Island, home to
fairy penguins**

LEFT

**6 o'clock rock get-together,
north beach Bramble Cove**

OPPOSITE TOP

**Approaching Breaksea Island,
which protects the entrance into
Bathurst Harbour**

OPPOSITE BOTTOM

**Fleet team photo, north
beach Bramble Cove**







From the top of Clyde's Hill looking
north towards Bathurst Harbour

DAY 8
THURSDAY 7 FEBRUARY

Cruising to Kings Point

Today was a lay day for the fleet to explore Bathurst Harbour. Bathurst Channel is a little tricky, as it winds its way through narrow waterways and is around 8 NM travel to the harbour. Here the water opens into a lake. We all made our way around to Forest Lagoon for lunch.

This is where Clyde and Win Clayton set up their house in 1962. More about that on pages 60–63. There is a jetty there with a track up to the top of a hill known by locals as 37MT or Clyde's Hill. MT refers to metres above sea level.

All the boats except *Sublime* moved to the other side of the hill to anchor for the night. The wind was starting to show its force by now, and we all felt the anchors slipping in the shallow White Rock pondage. *Perfect Mix* and *Ti Amo* moved back around the channel and found a safe anchorage in Starvation Bay. They rafted up together, and the 'Maritimo twins' looked like one boat when we went past a few days later.

Once the fleet settled down for the night, Richard S on *Princess 1* was back on the radio claiming payment for keeping everyone amused with his funny quips. He did keep us in laughter, and even named himself 'Drama Boy'.



ABOVE

***Perfect Mix* and *7th Heaven* anchored in Forest Lagoon. Captain Mike speeding in *Angel 1* in the background.**

FOLLOWING PAGES

Nine of our boats anchored in Forest Lagoon. Note the entrance to Melaleuca.







The jetty at Melaleuca Inlet

DAY 9
FRIDAY 8 FEBRUARY

Melaleuca Inlet

After a disturbing night at anchor with a 50 metre chain in 4 metres of water *Allure* was shifting all over, as the strong wind did not let up. The anchor held, but we had been weaving left and right all night. We decided to take the tender for a run up to Melaleuca Airport.

Tasmanian Parks have added a safe walkway from the landing to a small building used as the welcome lounge for Airlines of Tasmania (Par-Avion). A wooden seat outside overlooks vast bushland. There were more people to greet the twin-engine plane than on it. The plane comes in from Hobart when needed. People from all over the world come here for excursions, some organised by Tasmanian Boat Charter. Visitors live aboard MV *Odalisque* for about a four-day tour on kayaks. We saw about 14 people one day braving the rough water, paddling away and enjoying the wilderness.

The area is also known for many bushwalks, with hilltop views overlooking Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour. The waterway here is three times larger than Sydney Harbour. There is a museum dedicated to past inhabitants, including Deny King. There is information and plenty of photographs around the walls showing what life was like many years ago. There is also an Aboriginal heritage walk.

The local volunteers look after visitors, but are having a hard job at saving the Orange Bellied Parrot, which is critically endangered. They say there are only about 40 birds living in this area, but we managed to photograph four of them at the feeding stand outside the museum.

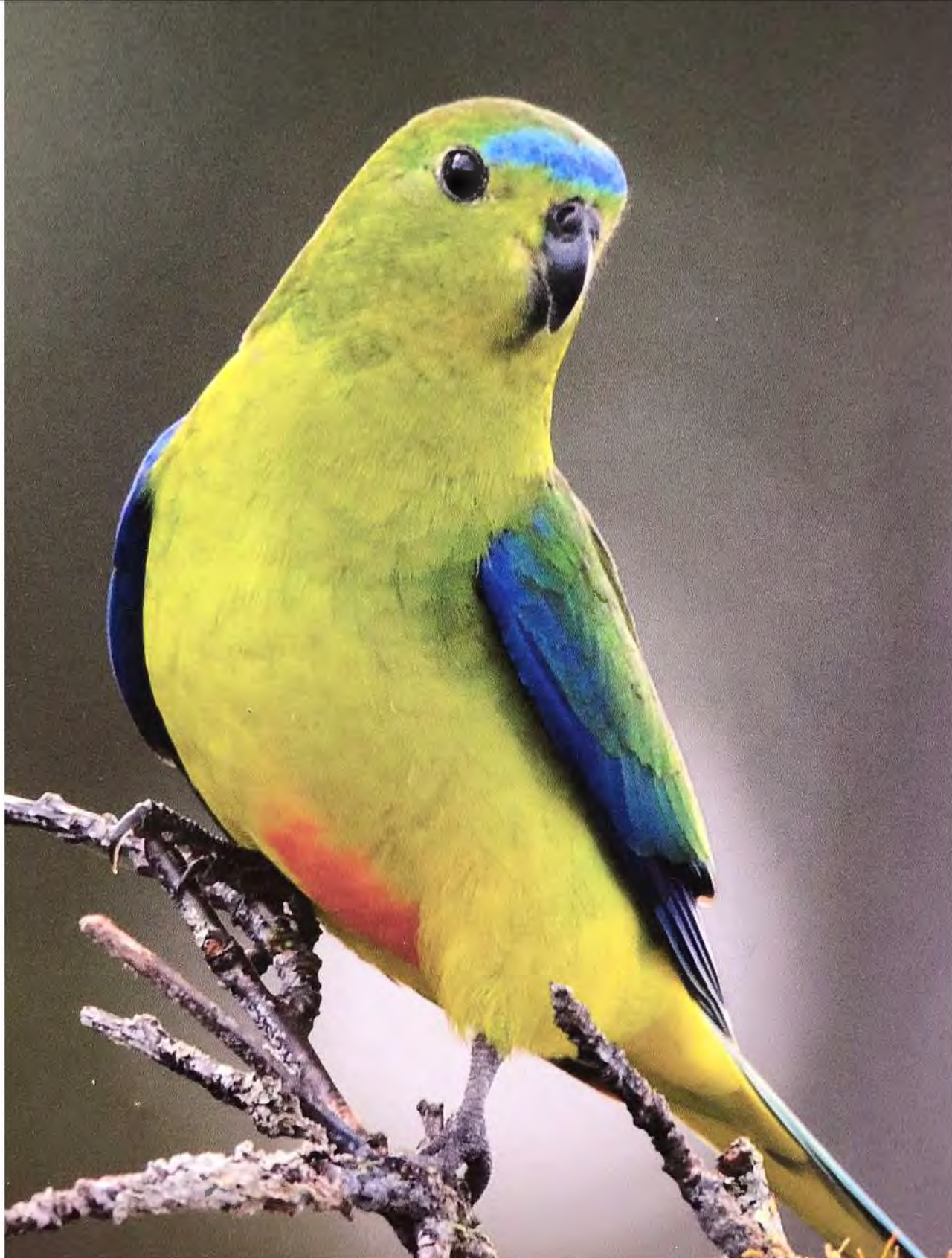
The weather was still bleak, raining and very windy. We could not wait for 6 o'clock rock at the Claytons hut. The *Sublime* team had been tied up to the small jetty at Claytons Corner and found out they could light a fire in the hut. They even had the Rayburn cooker in the kitchen going. Ron C showed his skills cooking scones ready for the get-together that afternoon.

Professional skippers Mike from *7th Heaven* and Dave P from *Razaway* had been in conference as to what the weather was doing for the next few days. The conclusion was that we were not going anywhere for the next few days.

We all went back to our boats after a drink or two and many laughs to cook our dinner. The *Allure* team had plenty of fillet steaks to choose for dinner that night, so it was time to see if the reds were any good. Sure enough, they were superb, and plenty were opened.



Helpful notices on arrival
at the jetty



ABOVE

Orange bellied parrot.
This is one of the exhibits in the small museum built by volunteers in honour of Deny King.



TOP RIGHT

The plane comes in from Hobart when needed



ABOVE RIGHT

The walkway to the airport hut

BOTTOM

Volunteers helping the Orange Bellied Parrot add seed to the feeding table every few days.





Rose P, Ray H, Jenny H, Dave P,
Rose U and Vonn T on the jetty
at Melaleuca



Allure and Sublime take up most of the jetty at Clayton's Corner. The two boats were out of the strong north-westerly wind for a few nights.

DAY 10
SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY

Claytons Corner

The weather had not been favourable for trips around Bathurst Harbour at this stage and, although the wind had stopped howling, we certainly had some rain overnight. About 50 litres of water had to be bucketed from the *Allure* tender.

Allure was tied up next to *Sublime* at the jetty at Claytons Corner, which meant we could relax, not having to worry about the anchor slipping. The hut was a great meeting place for everybody, and we found some dry timber to keep the fire burning. The hut is used by backpackers who walk and kayak around this part of the world. It is important for all who use this hut to preserve it and leave it the way they found it.

The areas around Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour are well mapped, with plenty of information, books and charts available. Visitors to this area need to be well provisioned. We had plenty of frozen meat, some frozen lunches, and a water maker.



Having a beer in the Claytons hut with an open fire going



LEFT
Mark R in the bath at Claytons hut. It took 36 hours to heat the water up from the Rayburn wood stove for this.

Win and Clyde Clayton



Where Melaleuca Inlet broadens into Forest Lagoon before flowing into Bathurst Harbour, there is a quiet nook called Claytons Corner. A jetty here is a refuge from the Roaring Forties for yachts, fishing boats and pleasure craft, and a little up the bank a small cottage is hidden among the trees. The Claytons first built a house at Bonds Bay on the northern side of Port Davey. This was a pretty spot, but a lousy anchorage in a southerly – hence the move to in the early 1960s to where it is today.

The cottage snuggles next to a slope in the rainforest. Win and Clyde Clayton remembered this sheltered nook when weather forced them to move. In fact, Win had her eye on the place since the 1940s. Back then, in a rowing punt, she used to visit what the King family called 'The Big Scrub', with her father Charlie and brother Deny King. Clyde Clayton, the fisherman who brought the mail and stores to the little tin-mining outpost at Melaleuca, was smitten at his first sight of Win. They were married in 1948, and Win's adventuresome life continued. They lived on the fishing boat for the first few years after they were married. They then moved into the house at Bonds Bay, and when it had to be moved it was a do-it-yourself exercise, with the house taken apart bit by bit and transported to the new location on the deck of their boat. It was not long before this spot became known as Claytons Corner. They were able to secure a peppercorn lease for the land they needed to rebuild and plant a garden.

It was a fundamental two-bedroom timber home with a large open fire, and a Rayburn wood stove/water heater. It had a small laundry, kitchen and lounge. The outhouse was to the left of the block. Clyde would have to trek up the hill at the back of the house to position the TV aerial. There must have been a diesel generator for power to the house. The antenna still lies in the bush today on Clyde's Hill.



After 14 years at Claytons Corner, Win and Clyde retired in 1976. They retired to a place in Franklin, where Clyde was able to have his favourite boat moored out the front. The Parks and Wildlife Service purchased their cottage. Win Passed away in 1994 aged 83 and Clyde passed away in 2006 aged 92. They did not have any children.

The house in time deteriorated in the damp climate and was restored with much hard work by the Friends of Claytons during many working bees. The Friends of Melaleuca then took up the project, and have repaired, painted and scrubbed, lopped and dug at Clayton's during working bees over the past few years. Visitors can light the fire and use the stove for cooking scones. There are two large water tanks filled with rain from the tiny roof. In a recent working bee they restumped the place.

Clyde had a passion for old wooden boats, and photos of the four boats that he owned as a professional fisherman are

TOP

The sign says it all

ABOVE

One of the boards inside the hut put together by the friends of the Claytons showing Win's garden layout.



The loungeroom inside Claytons hut as our group saw it



From the friends of
Claytons a board
showing Clyde's boats

featured in an important panel of frames set up by the Friends of Melaleuca. Win was a keen gardener. With the help of photos, and advice from her sister Mary, who had a prodigious memory for plants, they were able to draw a plan view of the garden. The garden is the central feature of many panels and is surrounded by photos of Win's flowers. Another panel tells the 'piano story', a favourite of readers of 'King of the Wilderness', and Win and Clyde tell about the adventures of Win's piano – bushfires, sea voyages and the like. Other panels tell of the Whalers Point navigation light that Clyde erected and serviced for many years, and of the pygmy possums that shared the house with the Claytons.

The fishing fleet and yachtsmen were relieved when, in 1959, Clyde was contracted to install a navigation light on the northern shore of Port Davey. The fleet had been lobbying for this for years.

The lighthouse job began with loading and unloading gear. Many trips were required for such a difficult task. Just as well Stormalong was a solidly built boat with an echo sounder. Material had to be taken ashore by dinghy and winched up a

cliff. The tower, a prefabricated steel structure about 4 metres high, was soon erected. The lantern itself arrived in Port Davey a few weeks later via the Fisheries vessel Fiona. On Monday 16 November 1959, the blink of the little lighthouse welcomed sailors into Port Davey.

To facilitate handling the 95 kilogram cylinders up to the 'billygoat track', Clyde later rigged an ingenious flying fox using wire rope, shackles and a snatch block. He maintained the light and exchanged the gas cylinders every two or three months – Win often working the winch handle – for the next 10 years.

Deny King sometimes helped Clyde service the lighthouse. They would endeavour to leave an extra pair of gas cylinders at the light in case the swell was too big to land new ones in the gulch. If the light went out at times like this, they would take a dinghy into Kelly's and walk overland to the lighthouse to change the cylinders.

Thanks to Janet Fenton and Wildcare Tasmania (wildcaretas.org.au) for information in this story.



ABOVE

**Claytons hut from
out the back**

LEFT

**Claytons hut as you see
it when you arrive by boat**



DAY 11
SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY

White Rock Harbour

The fleet was starting to get restless with nowhere to go, as the wind and rain kept us at our moorings. Crews had explored as far as they could in their tenders, and we were waiting on the two pro skippers to give us their latest weather updates. We were able to keep the fire going, and this filled in some time. The *Allure* team got to know the *Sublime* team during daily get-togethers by the open fire.

I have known Mark R for many years, and when I saw him on the first day at Queenscliff I indicated I was going to do a journal about our trip and would love some feedback from the *Sublime* team. The comment I got back straight away that was he did not have a sense of humour. I had a line straight away. Mark has the distinction of being the world's longest serving commercial airline pilot. He had us in stitches with stories from behind the controls of the world's largest aircraft. Never crashed, and never had a scary moment behind the joystick. Gracefully retired from flying but seems to be on call when needed to solve problems from other serving captains.

A call was made over the radio, and all the skippers made their way to the hut for a meeting. Captain Mike indicated that there was a window in the weather for us to make a break. Otherwise, we may be here for another week. It was predicted that we would have a 3 metre swell from the north-west, with a metre chop on top, driven by 30 knot winds. We were warned that we may have to come back if it became too dangerous. It was our choice, but



Captain Mike indicated he wanted to go, and not to lose too much time, because we still had a long way to go and many places to visit.

It was decided to give it a go in the morning. Captain Mike had a chat with the *Allure* team and it was decided to take some weight out of the flybridge and have two people travel inside the cabin.

With the planned exit from Port Davey the next day, we decided to have a quiet night with just a movie, and to leave the refreshment fridge alone.

Up in *Allure's* Flybridge
having afternoon tea

OPPOSITE TOP

Razaway at anchor
inside White Rock
Harbour with Mt Rugby
behind

OPPOSITE BOTTOM

It's hard to tell but
there are two boats
in this picture. The
Maritimo Twins, *Ti Amo*
and *Perfect Mix* inside
Starvation Bay.



Ostobin – a 45 foot cray boat from Recherche Bay. After two nights it only had 33 crays in the hold from the 44 pots onboard. Its yearly quota is 5 tonnes.

DAY 12
MONDAY 11 FEBRUARY

Kings Point to Recherche Bay

To avoid the strong winds still forecast, we decided to leave by 8.00 a.m. Peter T joined Richard S on *Princess 1*, and to make it seem less risky Peter H joined John and Daria P on *Marlin*. It took some time to get used to steering *Princess 1* in the heavy seas. The predictions were spot on, as we encountered the 3 metre seas with strong winds. This was huge water for all our boats to climb over and surf down. *Princess 1* had wipers, so that made it either more terrifying or easier to see what was coming. *Allure* had clears, and when a wave splashed over vision was restricted for a few seconds.

We made our way out of the protection of the Breaksea Islands in single file heading for enormous seas. *Princess 1* with plenty of power surged her way ahead with reasonable comfort. It was rough for the smaller boats, with the occasional slide down the huge waves. The chatter over the radio expressed anxiety among the group. It soon became apparent that we were going for it, so we had to buckle up and get on with it.

Princess 1 had about two hours in these seas, sometimes slowing to 10 knots, then surfing down the big waves at 22 knots. *Sublime*, which normally cruises at 8 knots, had slipped down a wave doing 18 knots. The crew were a little excited with the extra speed. The boats were now spread about 5 NM apart, as each skipper faced the challenge



to their own craft through this testing time. All the boats encountered huge pods of dolphins and seals, but there was not much time to look at them.

Eventually we could see and feel the enormity of the waves diminishing. At long last and around the South West Cape, the angry seas started to abate. Travelling at 22 knots, we kept our eyes on the twin fuel gauges. We managed to keep the fuel consumption below 280 litres per hour. With 2,000 horsepower under the bonnet, this seemed reasonable.

Props of *Princess 1*, used as brakes when surfing down huge waves. They are 800 millimetres in diameter.



Finally, we all safely reached our planned anchorage in Recherche Bay. We had travelled around 75 NM in seas we had never encountered before. It was a great experience, but we were glad it was all over and happy to be in this protected bay. We were spoilt with a freshly cooked plate of special dumplings before hearing the stories from the *Allure* crew and visiting other boats in our fleet to see what they felt like. Comments included: 'Although a little scary, great to see all the boats handled the heavy seas and all the personnel not losing anything personal overboard.'

There were a few other boats in Recherche Bay. We met Brett Evans on a 35 Riviera just cruising on holidays because of the wooden boat festival and wanting to get out of town. Turns out he works for Hobart

Ports and soon became our new very best friend. I met Mathew on a cray boat, and was hoping he would be our newest best friend, unfortunately this was not to be. This part of Tasmania has the most southerly point of the made road in Australia (Cockle Creek Road), which we had to see. There is a small park, and a tribute to past whalers at the end of the road with photos and history plaques.

Everyone clinked glasses in memory of what we had just encountered. *Ti Amo* hosted the biggest impromptu get-together with no less than five Brigs tied to her. *Sublime* also hosted a get-together for 6 o'clock rock, as the beaches around this area of Recherche Bay were not that user-friendly.



ABOVE

Allure under a rainbow in Recherche Bay

TOP RIGHT

Party time on the back of *Ti Amo*. Everyone had a Brig brand tender.

ABOVE RIGHT

Sculpture of a three-month-old Southern Right Whale – reminder of the early days at Fishers Point

RIGHT

Chef Peter T working hard at the barbecue for the *Allure* team





Entrance to Recherche Bay, with sunrise
and dark rainy clouds

DAY 13
TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY

Gourlays Bay, Huon River

Some of the *Allure* team were out early, and spied skipper Dave P in a wetsuit. He had been online and obtained a crayfish and abalone licence for about \$50. He and John P travelled around Recherche Bay in the tender in search of some crays. They would have needed a bucketful to satisfy the rest of the fleet. The count was one.

The wind was still howling from the north-west, but we were sheltered enough not to feel the effects. The plan was to leave later in the day, as we were only going as far as Dover, about two hours travel.

Deb F from *Perfect Mix* had asked for a quiet word. It seems Gary F had a liking for Richard S's dumplings. He had a birthday coming up on Thursday and could we see if Richard has any left, and how we could get them on board without Gary knowing. We checked that stock was okay, and even had the right cooking methods in place, but we had to work out how to get them onto *Perfect Mix* without Gary knowing.

It was time to up anchor and head towards Dover. There were different opinions about whether to tow the tenders or put them away. *7th Heaven* towed *Angel 1*, which had been here before. *Keeper II* only got a few hundred metres out of the bay before it was realised that *Keeper II Jnr* was going to be a problem and had to be put away. Kevin H showed us *Keeper II* skyhook dynamic positioning skills and

put *Keeper II Jnr* back in its cradle. The rest of the fleet had done the same, and we were all on our way.

The wind predictions were accurate, and we encountered a strong north-westerly gusting to 35 knots. This was not a good place to be, but we ventured north towards Port Esperance. We were only a few nautical miles off the coast, and all getting a battering. At the turn into Port Esperance it was obvious that this was not going to work, and Captain Mike put a call over the radio for us to veer starboard and continue north. Plan B was to go to Gourlays Bay and find a small safe haven for the night.

With all the boats in line, there was a new message over the radio to batten down the hatches – we were about to hit the front. We could see it coming but, strangely enough, the sea was not rough or dangerous. The *Allure* wind gauge reached 54 knots and *7th Heaven* recorded even more than this. This onslaught lasted about 20 minutes, but we all made it to a safe anchor spot near Beaupre Point.

We had the locals fascinated, as they came out to see such a spectacle of boats in the little harbour.





ABOVE

All in a day's travel from Recherche Bay to Gourlays Bay off the Huon River. Although the water was not rough, the effect of the strong winds on the boats can be seen.

RIGHT

The wind indicator shows the direction and speed of the cold blast. 54 knots is not very pleasant cruising weather.





Approaching the Kermadie
River marina

DAY 14
WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY

Huon River to Trial Bay

We awoke to much calmer conditions, with all boats anchored together in a small inlet off Gourlays Bay, except for *Sublime*. The bay was only big enough for eight of the fleet, so she slipped into a more comfortable position in the next bay. Captain Mike suggested that the *Allure* team venture up further to Port Huon. We passed salmon farms, a winery and plenty of houses right on the riverbanks. Not long into our journey, the starboard motor stopped again. Gary A went down into the engine room with his mobile phone in contact with the mechanic back in Queenscliff. Not much could be done, and all sorts of checks were carried out to no avail. The motor did start again, but we were all a little worried.

Upon our arrival at Port Huon, we could see a small marina in the distance. It was a little tricky manoeuvring *Allure* around the channel markers, but the skipper skilfully edged our way into the jetty. Within minutes, a young man arrived wearing a high-vis shirt and a helmet. This was Tom, the marina manager. 'We couldn't help noticing the helmet, Tom.' 'Stick around for a few minutes, and you will see why,' was the reply. Sure enough, we could see the birds circling.

The Kermandie pub across the road looked like an excellent place for lunch. Tom was busy checking if *Allure* could have a berth for the night, as spaces were tight in this small marina. While we were having lunch, the call came



through, but we would have to move quickly to get to our berth for the night. We teased Captain Mike with a photo sent to his phone of the Huon room inside the pub that had an open fire, thinking this would be an excellent place for 6 o'clock rock. Within an instant, the message back read, 'Can we get eight more boats in there?' The *Allure* berth was stretching friendship with Tom, let alone eight more. The lunch was so good that we decided to have dinner there that night as well.

**An older gentleman's home
away from home**

The very helpful barman informed us that the cafe up the road makes a pretty mean scallop pie. After lunch, we made the trek to the famous cafe, and we met Shirley. The scallop pie production line was at full capacity, so we had to put in an order and wait. Shirley drove down to the boat later that day with a box of about 20, as we decided to give the *7th Heaven* crew some pies to help celebrate a few birthdays in the next day or so.

During the afternoon we could hear and see helicopters flying into the local footy ground to refuel. They were busy taking huge buckets of water to fight the bushfires close by. From the marina looking west, we could see snow on the top of the Hartz Mountains and smoke billowing from the forest below.

The marina is owned by Sean Langman, a well-seasoned Sydney–Hobart racer. One of his yachts tied up there is *Maluka*, a beautifully kept 30 footer. This yacht had the distinction of being the oldest, smallest and slowest yacht to compete in the 2012 classic. This is quite a contrast to the maxi *Investec Loyal*, one of the fastest-ever entrants the blue water classic, skippered by Langman.



ABOVE

It was standing room only for the *Allure* crew in the Kermandie pub.

LEFT

Allure hidden in the background at Kermandie marina

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT

In the distance we could see snow high up and smoke from the bushfires low down on the mountain to the left.

OPPOSITE RIGHT

Gary F's new office overlooking Gourlays Bay

OPPOSITE FAR RIGHT

Maluka, owned by Sean Langman

OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT

Shirley and her assistant in the scallop pie kitchen







Three cheers were shouted 200 times for our cruisers celebrating their birthday on Valentine's Day – Gary F, Jenny H, and Rob U.

DAY 15
THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY

Trial Bay to Barnes Bay

After a peaceful night tied up at the Kermadie Marina, the *Allure* team decided to do a full-on eggs and bacon breakfast on the barbecue. We found out through the AIS (automatic identification system) that the rest of the fleet had moved a little closer to Hobart and found refuge in Trial Bay. Word came through from a few boats that they had copped a battering from the strong westerly all night. They were going to stay at Kettering, but there was not enough room for eight boats to anchor in the harbour.

With not far to travel to catch up to the rest of the fleet, we took our time to enjoy the aroma of the barbecue with the bacon sizzling. As we moved away, *Allure* had a few of the locals fascinated, as our skipper had the front and rear thrusters working hard to negotiate the tight spaces to get out of the pen and marina. We then navigated through the tight twisty channel to safer water and opened up the throttles to join the rest of the fleet.

We caught a glimpse of the fleet crossing over the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the distance heading eastward, but our skipper wanted to see his previous boat *Evening Star*, which had been at Kettering Marina for some time. The harbour was very busy, so it was a fleeting chance sighting. The *Allure* crew were on watch, as boats and yachts came out of nowhere. 'Let's get out of here' was the call. We caught up with the rest of the fleet at Quarantine Bay and dropped anchor there for the night.

It's funny how one can go to places around the world and bump into people you know. Past Commodore of Sandringham Yacht Club Bruce Eddington, owner of the 50 foot Riviera *Tick Tock* was anchored in Quarantine Bay. We also ran into our friend Brett E, who we had met in Recherche Bay three days earlier.

As well as being Valentine's day, we had three of our cruisers celebrating their birthday: Rob U. Gary F and Jenny H. We cannot reveal the combined age. Our scheduled 6 o'clock rock started at 4.30 that day and we invited special guest Brett and his wife Vivienne, and who could forget Roger the dog. Brett was able to give everybody the latest update on our planned stay in Constitution Dock, but more importantly valuable information as to where we could refuel at the best prices.



6 o'clock rock at the landing inside
Quarantine Harbour





Sunrise at Quarantine Harbour

DAY 16
FRIDAY 15 FEBRUARY

Barnes Bay to Sullivan Cove

After two weeks on the water, we were finally on our way into Hobart. As the fleet only had about 30 NM cruising up the Derwent River, we did not have to rush. The scene here is quite different each year when the Sydney–Hobart fleet sails in.

Allure moved a little quicker than most of the fleet to a fuel jetty behind the main docking area of the Hobart waterfront. The boat needed a top-up of around 2,000 litres of fuel, which took about 45 minutes. We knew there would be a queue, so it was best to get in early.

Captain Mike had organised for seven of our fleet to be moored inside Constitution Dock. He knew that steering *7th Heaven* through the narrow entrance could be a little tight, so opted to tie up to the main jetty on Elizabeth Street. *Princess 1* had been allocated a berth right behind *7th Heaven*. What a sight to see the two Princess boats taking up about 50 metres of the jetty. The dockmaster had the time of 2.00 p.m. for the arrival of our seven boats. One by one they slowly made their way under the now lifted road bridge into Constitution Dock. A crowd of about 200 watched the boats being skilfully steered into position.

This was going to be our home for at least the next five nights. Hobart was busy with tourists as the wooden boat festival had just finished, and there were still a lot of people in town. To see our fleet moored inside Constitution Dock added to the spectacle.

The boats all had an excellent washdown and time for domestic duties. Plenty of cleaning and washing at the nearby laundromat took up most of the afternoon. The *Sublime* team were way in front of the other boats and with their duties done were already warming the seats of the Custom House pub. This was our planned destination for 6 o'clock rock. There were smiles on the faces of all of our fellow cruisers, as they reflected on the last two weeks.



***Queen Elizabeth* was waiting to greet the fleet at Constitution Dock.**



Ti Amo leads Sublime under the road bridge into Constitution Dock.

RIGHT
Sublime, Ti Amo and Perfect Mix rafted up together inside Constitution Dock





ABOVE

Seven of the fleet inside
Constitution Dock

LEFT

*Razaway, Keeper II and
Marlin* face towards *Allure*
inside Constitution Dock.





Boathouses line the foreshore in the shadow of the Tasman bridge.

DAY 17
SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY

Exploring Hobart

Without having to worry about the boats for a few days, it was time to explore Hobart. The weather had picked up and the temperature was in the mid-20s. The cruisers were all over town doing plenty of shopping to stock up fridges and freezers ready for the cruise down to Port Arthur.

Many Tasmanian towns have their own recipes for scallop pies, and Hobart has a special floating shop selling them near Constitution Dock. The *Allure* team had to try them, and they were delicious. This was our third different scallop pie recipe from our trip so far, and rating the best was difficult.

6 o'clock rock was on the back of *Keeper II* inside Constitution Dock. Skipper Kevin H had already made the decision to leave his boat in Hobart for some time, and this was his last night with us. He had to be back in Melbourne in a day or so.

This was also an opportunity to bid farewell to some crew members who were leaving the fleet in Hobart. *7th Heaven* said goodbye to Sue and Ian G and Vonn T. They welcomed back well-seasoned cruisers Jenny and Bob O for the cruise back to Melbourne.

Razaway welcomed Stuart J from R Marine Jacksons, our local Riviera dealer.

Allure was now down to two crew members, as Peter H and Andrew S had to fly back to Melbourne and David F had left *Allure* for a road trip around Tasmania.

Our group decided to have dinner at the Hope and Anchor tavern.



**The two Princesses at
Elizabeth Street jetty**



**Sailing boat in Hobart
after the Wooden
Boat Festival**

OPPOSITE TOP

***Pacific Basin*, a bulk carrier
for exporting logs**

OPPOSITE RIGHT

***MONA Roma 1* ferrying passengers
between the Museum of Old and
New Art and the Brooke Street
terminal in Hobart**





Salamanca market

DAY 18
SUNDAY 17 FEBRUARY

The Salamanca Sunday Market

It was a lay day in Hobart, with not much to do regarding boat travel. The Salamanca Sunday market was in full swing.

During the day, Sandringham Yacht Club member, Gary Raymond, dropped by and offered to take the *Allure* team around Hobart waterways for a few hours the next day. Gary lives in Hobart for at least four months of the year and keeps a pretty lively 32 foot super cat called *Moggy* at Royal Yacht Club of Hobart.

It was not far to walk to the Arms Hotel for lunch with the *Sublime* team.

One of our best experiences on land was our visit to the Salamanca Market, one of Australia's best outdoor markets, and Tasmania's most visited tourist attraction. With its colourful umbrellas and locally made arts, crafts, clothing and food, its more than 300 stalls offered many treats.



ABOVE

Big Mussels one of the many stalls offering tasty seafood takeaways

LEFT

Miniature Tasmanian penguins for sale



The super cats are built here.

DAY 19
MONDAY 18 FEBRUARY

Incat, MONA and salmon farms

Our sea taxi arrived in the Hobart marina as arranged, with Gary Raymond at the helm. The weather, although not that great, was not a problem aboard the super cat *Moggy*. Gary is a very keen fisherman and travels out to sea from Hobart with reasonable success.

We were taken up the harbour with our guide taking time to show us the industries that have emerged along the Derwent River.

One of the first places we saw after we travelled under the Tasman Bridge was Incat, the manufacturer of large car and passenger vessels made from aluminium. A little further around the corner is PFG group, which manufactures large plastic sea farms for the salmon industry. They are towed to various places around Tasmania when needed.

Further up the Derwent River, one can't help but see the large building called MONA (Museum of Old and New Art), founded by Tasmanian millionaire and professional gambler David Walsh. First established in 2001 the museum closed in 2006 for about five years for a \$75 million renovation.

This is a Hobart icon, with visitors from all over the world dropping in for a visit.

Our tour guide thought the weather was not looking favourable, and we decided to make our way back to his yacht club for lunch. Along the way, we stopped under the Tasman Bridge. The view on the depth sounder screen was



astonishing, showing the remains of a ship 100 feet below us that brought down the bridge in 1975.

The *Lake Illawarra* was a steel, single screw, steam turbine motor vessel bulk carrier. The ship sank after running into and demolishing part of the Tasman Bridge across the Derwent River at Hobart on 5 January 1975. The vessel was en route

Incat, the super cat is enormous, and so is the shed.



from Port Pirie in South Australia with a cargo of zinc. The smelter is still in operation about a mile further up the river.

When approaching the bridge, the captain reduced speed but was finding it difficult to align the ship to the central navigation span of the bridge. Despite several attempts to change the course, the ship was difficult to manage, in part due to the lack of speed. The master finally called out full speed astern in a last attempt to change the course of the ship. It veered into several pylons, bringing the bridge crashing onto the vessel's hull. The ship sank within minutes in deep water. Seven crew members on board the vessel died, and five occupants died from four cars that ran over the gap into the Derwent River.

We made our way back to the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, where Gary Raymond demonstrated his air/water travel lift and proceeded to lift *Moggy* high and dry into its pen. Walking into the clubhouse to make arrangements for lunch, we bumped into the owners of the 'Maritimo twins', Michael K and Gary F, who were busy signing new membership forms, as they had decided to leave *Ti Amo* and *Perfect Mix* in Hobart.

Keeper II left Constitution Dock and went to find a pre-arranged berth in the Derwent Sailing Squadron marina, the plan being to leave the boat there for the rest of the year. The fleet was now down to eight boats.



TOP

A salmon farm frame ready for towing

ABOVE

The rebuilt part of the Tasman bridge after the tragedy in 1975

LEFT

The remains of the *Lake Illawara* can be seen 100 feet below the surface.

OPPOSITE

The MONA gallery seaside





Low tide in Adventure Bay looking
towards Cape Raoul

DAY 20
TUESDAY 19 FEBRUARY

Bruny Island, Cookville and the Friars

The weather gods had started to clear a path to continue our journey to Port Arthur, then up the east coast of Tasmania. With one day left in Hobart, it was an excellent time to go exploring out of town.

Dave F hired a car and picked up the remaining *Allure* crew to take us down to Bruny Island. The plan was to take the car on the ferry from Kettering to Roberts Point on North Bruny Island and head south.

The Hotel Bruny in Alonnah has always had a good reputation, and serves great seafood using local fare. There were patrons sitting outside, so it was apparent we weren't going to get in. Plan B – we didn't have one. After driving for one and a half hours from Hobart, we consulted the iPad and ended up at the Bruny Island Winery. After lunch, we continued down to Cookville. This is where visitors board high-speed adventure boats that travel down to the fantastic Tasman Head and also the Friars.

Before heading back to Hobart, we first had to stop and climb the stairs to the Neck Lookout. Bruny Island Neck is an isthmus connecting Bruny Island North and South. There are 234 steps up to the lookout.

The trip back was a rush, as we hoped we could drive onto the ferry with not much of a wait. We made it to the Phat Fish hotel in time for our last 6 o'clock rock in Hobart.



Looking east towards
Tasman Peninsula



TOP
**Lone surf fisherman
 and a perfect wave**

BOTTOM
**Moorina Bay from
 the Neck lookout**

OPPOSITE
**View of the Neck 234 steps up.
 The narrowest point 0.6 NM.**







John P waves goodbye as *Marlin* leads the small fleet out of Constitution Dock.

DAY 21
WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY

Hobart to Port Arthur

The road bridge was raised at 8.00 a.m. to let the six remaining boats out of Constitution Dock. The other two boats, *7th Heaven* and *Princess 1*, were cruising slowly down the Derwent River waiting for the rest of the fleet to catch up.

The plan was to cruise to Stewarts Bay north of Port Arthur, just 42 NM away. A slight northerly wind and swell was evident by the time we reached the Iron Pot lighthouse, 14 NM south-east of Hobart and with 20 NM to Cape Raoul. The wind had changed direction, and the fleet was now battling a decent swell from the south and the Tasman Sea.

The fleet was slowly making its way to the Tasman Peninsula, which has many scenic highlights protected within Tasman National Park. The cliffs of Cape Pillar, Cape Raoul and Cape Hauy are spectacular. The dolerite cliffs reach 300 metres directly above the ocean, making them the tallest sea cliffs in the Southern Hemisphere. Cape Raoul was at its best, and the sun made a welcome return as we made our way around the eastern side. All the fleet took their time moving in close, backwards and forwards, making sure we had plenty of pictures for our scrapbooks. We only had a short run of 4.5 NM before heading north to Port Arthur.

What a memorable sight for our group to see when we cruised into Mason Cove in single file. Straight ahead was the front wall of the famous Penitentiary of the Port Arthur prison (see page 108).

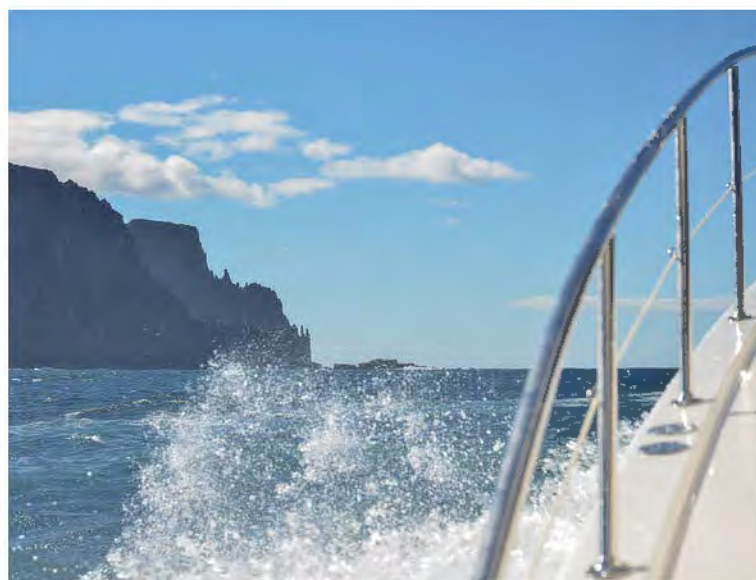


**Full steam ahead as we say
goodbye to Mt Wellington
and Hobart**



It was only a short distance to our anchorage for the next two nights at Stewarts Bay. Ray H on *Razaway* was the first to see the colourful umbrellas through the trees, indicating that there may be a bar there. Quick as a flash after anchoring *Razaway*, Ray H asked Captain Dave to take him to investigate.

Ray had discovered Gabriels on the Bay retreat, and after phone calls to the other skippers, 6 o'clock rock started at 4.00 p.m. *Perfect Mix* played host to the *Allure* crew for dinner that night.



ABOVE

The Iron Pot, the lighthouse that shares its name with the island on which it sits, has guided sailors into the mouth of the Derwent River for almost 190 years.

LEFT

Cape Raoul on our port side

OPPOSITE

These pillars form part of the spectacular Cape Raoul.

FOLLOWING PAGES

Tourists flock to the Port Arthur historical site.









*Razaway leads Marlin into
Mason Cove Port Arthur*

DAY 22
THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY

Walk from Stewarts Bay to Port Arthur

We had been looking forward to our visit to Port Arthur. The historic site was at least half an hour brisk walk from Stewarts Bay, our home for one more night.

The latest news on the weather front for travelling up the east coast of Tasmania was to improve in the next few days. Staying one more night allowed the big swells and windy conditions on the east coast to ease as the fleet still had a week or so to get home.

One by one, the tenders from all our boats tied up to the small jetty inside Stewarts Bay. Most of our cruisers joined in the various tours that are available to see this historic site.

It takes at least half a day to walk around the grounds and take in the history. They have a cafe well prepared for lunches, so this was a welcome break.

The volunteer tour guides are very knowledgeable and good at telling the stories of things that happened here over 150 years ago.

The cold and rainy day walking around the site, although quite invigorating and moving, was also tiring. It was time to go back to the boats and warm ourselves up.

After a quick freshen-up, we made our way to 6 o'clock rock at the Gabriels on the Bay bar, and then some fine dining in the restaurant.



ABOVE

**Our anchorage in
Stewarts Bay**

RIGHT

**Ray H's favourite spot
for a refreshing drink**



If only these walls
could talk.

Port Arthur Penitentiary



The Tasmanian Government has developed Port Arthur as a top tourist attraction. It is one of Australia's best-known historical sites, receiving over 250,000 visitors each year.

The Port Arthur penal settlement was built as a small timber station in 1830 and quickly grew in importance within the colonies. Shipbuilding was introduced on a large scale to Port Arthur as a way of providing selected convicts with a useful skill they could take with them once freed. The 1853 cessation of transportation resulted in fewer transportees arriving at the station. However, the 1850s and 1860s were years of remarkable activity, which aimed to make the station economically sustainable.

The Port Arthur historic site holds a great many stories. It includes the Penitentiary, which was originally constructed as a flour mill and granary in 1843 before it housed hundreds of convicts in dormitories and solitary cells, and the much-feared Separate Prison. The unconsecrated Convict Church was where authorities sought to reform Port Arthur's convicts through a regime of religious instruction and worship.

The Separate Prison System signalled a shift from physical punishment to psychological punishment. Under this system of punishment, the 'Silent System' was implemented in the building. Here, prisoners were hooded and made to stay silent. This was supposed to allow time for prisoners to reflect upon the actions that had brought them there. Many of the prisoners in the Separate Prison developed mental illness due to the darkness and solitude. This was an unintended outcome, although the asylum was built right next to the Separate Prison: a machine to grind rogues honest.

Port Arthur's story did not end with the removal of the last convict. The site was renamed Carnarvon, and during the 1880s the land was parcelled up and put to auction, with people taking up residence in and around the old site. The prison closed in 1877. The walls of the central section collapsed around 1912, and the bricks were sold off at 1 shilling per thousand. Internal walls and part of the tower collapsed progressively, and building materials from them were used for various local building projects.

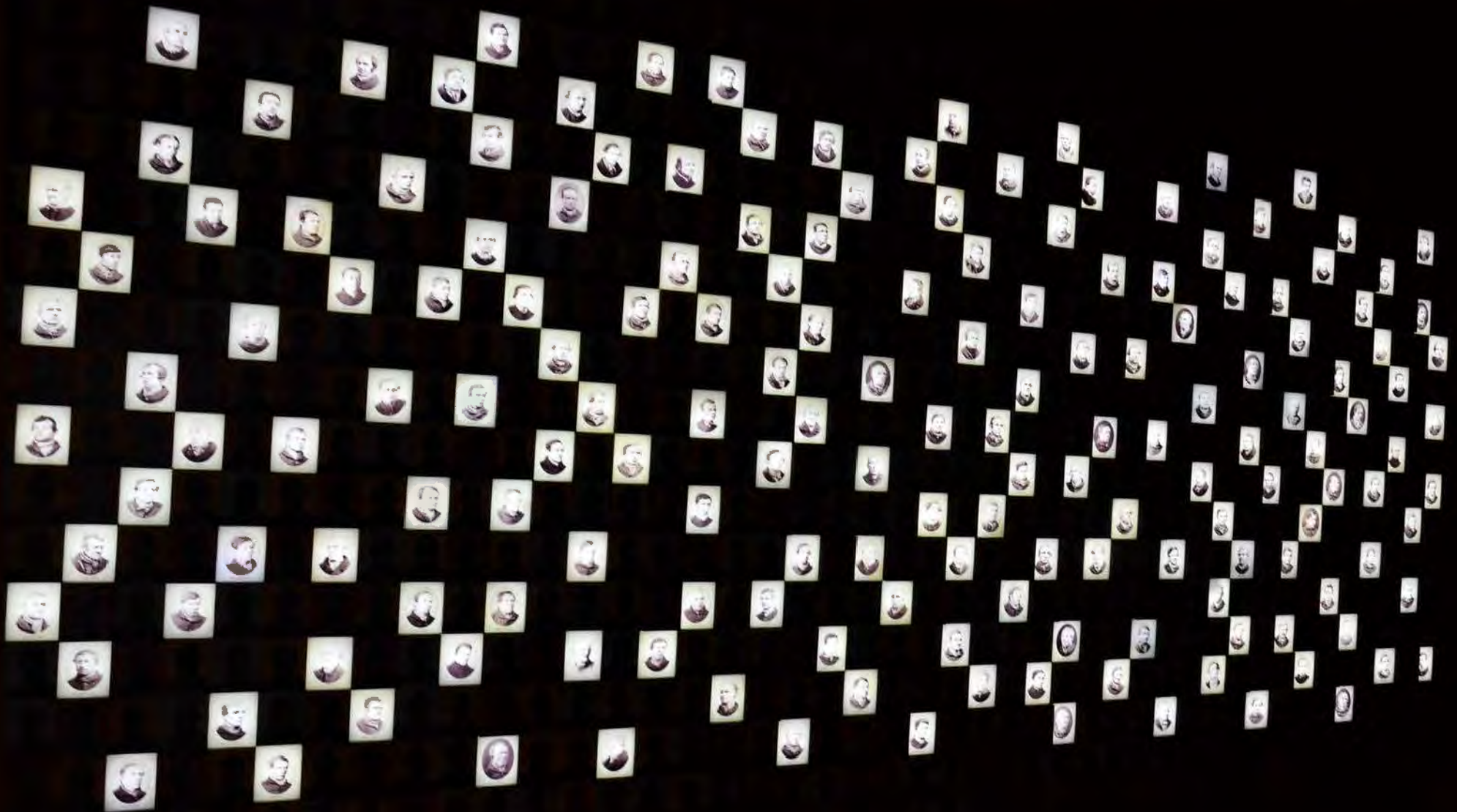
In 1967, the front wall was rebuilt to window level. Work was done between 1978 and 1983 to install the wooden walkway inside the building and stabilise the external walls. Conservation of this building is an ongoing project. The latest restoration we see is the large steel frames erected inside the walls to stop them from falling over. Also, there is a stainless-steel wire embedded in the top row of bricks around the perimeter to hold the whole building together. Seven million dollars was spent on this job to ensure there are no more collapses.

Sadly, we remember that on 28 April 1996 the Port Arthur historic site was the location of a killing spree. The perpetrator murdered 35 people and wounded 23 more before being captured by the Special Operations Group. The killing spree led to a national restriction on high-capacity semi-automatic shotguns and rifles.

There is a pond and a memorial garden at the site incorporating the shell of the Broad Arrow Cafe. It was established as a place of quiet beauty and calm reflection.



The front of the
Penitentiary.





OPPOSITE TOP LEFT

Not the best view in the world

OPPOSITE TOP MIDDLE

**One of 136 individual cells inside
the Penitentiary**

OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT

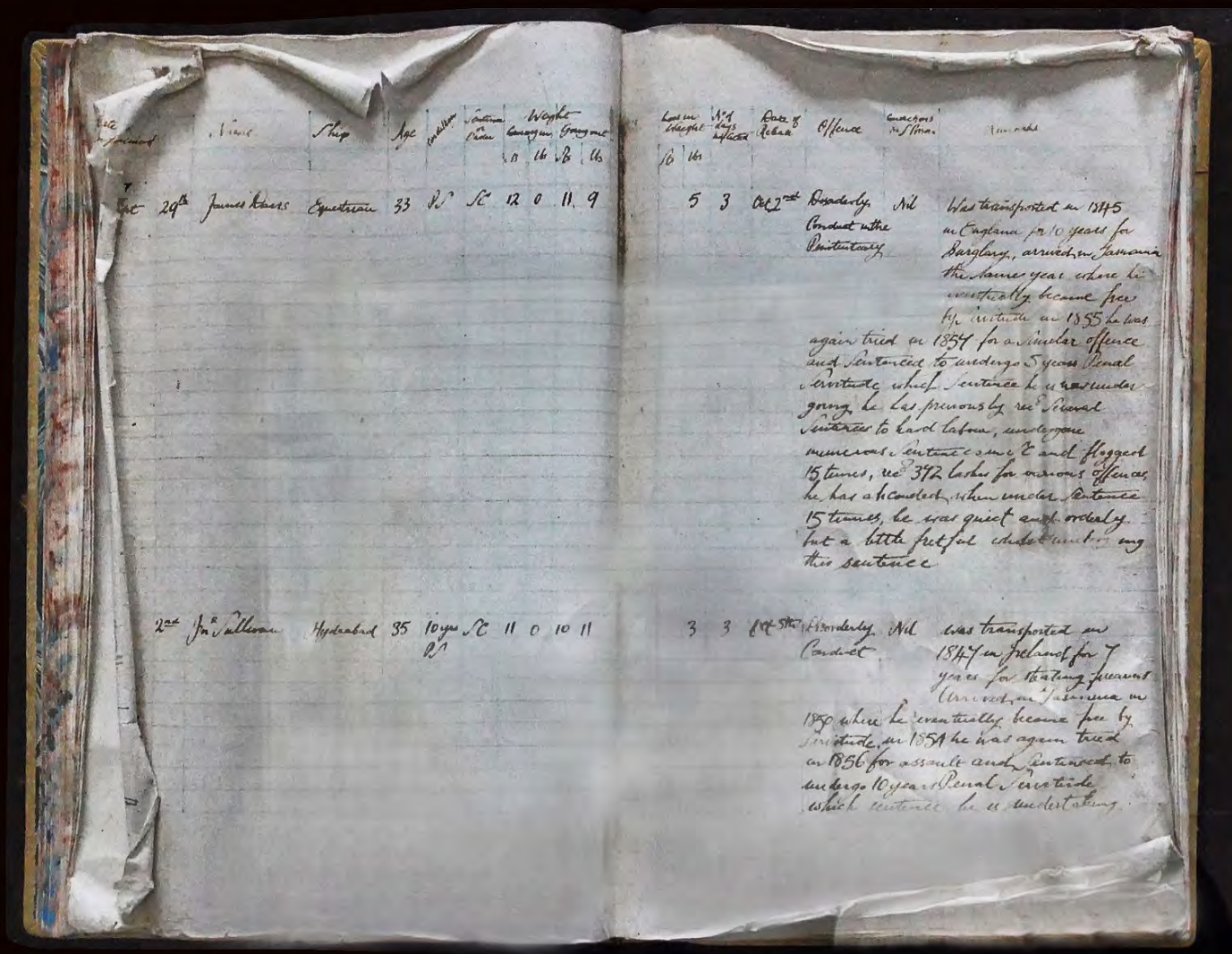
**The steel frames on the inside of
the building supporting the walls**

OPPOSITE BOTTOM

**Photos of some inmates who
served their time at Port Arthur**

ABOVE

**These walls were
built in 1843.**



New arrivals book from the prison dating back to the mid-1800s.

The second entry on the page tells us about 35-year-old Jim Sullivan: 'Was transported in 1847 in Ireland for seven years for stealing firearms. Arrived in Tasmania in 1850 where he eventually became free by servitude in 1854. He was again tried in 1856 for assault and sentenced to undergo 10 years penal servitude which sentence he is undertaking.'

OPPOSITE

From the back of the prison grounds looking over some of the ruins and Mason Cove.



The guard house from the rear (above) and front (right)





Memorial plaque depicting the tragedy in 1996



East side of Tasman Island

DAY 23
FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY

Stewarts Bay to Triabunna

The next port of call for our trip was an overnight stay in Triabunna. The fleet headed south to Budget Head. The swell had changed direction to south-west, and we could feel the wind making the seas quite lumpy as we travelled a further 5.5 NM to the gap between Tasman Island and Cape Pillar. It was uncomfortable as we approached Tasman Island. Once around Cape Pillar, we were protected from the large swell.

Once again, we were blessed as the sun came out at the right time to get the cameras focused and start clicking. Nature had presented us with a wonderful opportunity to see the layers of rock, once horizontal but now vertical, rising up like spirals hundreds of metres out of the sea. The old landing on Tasman Island is still visible, albeit dilapidated, with the remnants of an old rail track for taking supplies to the lighthouse keeper going up to the top. Cathedral Rock, at the start of our journey heading north and just metres off the rocky coast, must have taken a beating over the years.

The fleet still had over 50 NM to Triabunna, with many different cliffs to see. A few miles north, we stopped at the Lanterns – three large individual rocks (small, medium and large). Between the small rock (the Candlestick) and Cape Hauy is the Totem Pole. Rock climbers from all over the world risk their lives to climb about 70 metres to the top to say they have done it. This part of the south-eastern coast is made up of dolerite columns, with cliffs covering a long distance. This is also part of the famous Three Cape Walks.



We passed Fortescue Bay and continued north to the Three Sisters, a strange looking formation with rocks that are horizontal for the bottom half, then vertical for the top half.

Captain Mike called every boat on the radio and indicated that Mercury Passage with Maria Island on our starboard side was an excellent place to stop and try our hand for a few flathead. *Princess 1* seemed to bag out the quickest

**You can drive a
boat into the gap
and be safe.**



and reached their quota with good sized flathead inside an hour. Also, in our briefing the night before, Captain Mike said: 'Triabunna only has a handful of floating berths available for the night and tricky to manoeuvre the large boats close in. Be careful.'

Captain Dave navigated the tight entrance well ahead of the fleet, and from his position at the start of the jetty greeted each boat as they came in. His guidance on the radio helped each skipper to their selected berths for the night. *7th Heaven*

stayed out in the bay waiting for the fishing boats to clear after refuelling at the dock. Michael K carefully brought *Ti Amo* alongside *7th Heaven* for a raft-up.

Rob U had booked out the front dining room at the Sandy Bay Hotel for our 6 o'clock rock and dinner get-together. Many interesting stories surfaced the next morning from a few of the crew after keeping the bar open well after hours in a private room.

The landing had a railway track above it to the top.

OPPOSITE TOP

Some of our boats round Cape Pillar.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM

Cathedral Rock

FOLLOWING PAGES

***Perfect Mix* approaches Munroe Bight cliffs.**

Part of the Three Sisters group













Triabunna House as it stands today

DAY 24
SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY

Triabunna to Schouten Passage

It was time to top up the fuel tanks. *Allure* was able to top up the day before when a spot became vacant at the fuel jetty. It was important that all fuel tanks were full, as our next stop to top up was at Lady Baron around 200 NM away.

It was a chance to take a walk around Triabunna (see pages 126–127), as we did not have far to travel to Schouten Island for the day's cruise.

Once the ropes were off, it was only a short 4 NM trip south out of Sandy Bay. The weather had improved, and the seas were calm, as once again we were in the Tasman Sea. Once out of the bay, the fleet headed for a 22 NM cruise to Schouten Passage.

Allure suffered a stopped starboard motor again, for the fourth time on our trip. The skipper was not happy, as we still had over 400 NM to get to Port Phillip Bay in the next five days or so. Luckily, the motor started again after a few minutes.

Just after half way to Schouten Passage, there was a huge rock standing all alone called Ile Des Phoques. This is home to a colony of seals large and small, and also a bird habitat. It is also called White Rock.

Once the fleet arrived in Schouten Passage, we all made our way into a small inlet near a sandy beach at the north end of Schouten Island. There were plenty of other boats anchored there already, so we had to navigate very carefully to find our spot to anchor for the night.



This beach proved to be an excellent spot for our 6 o'clock rock. Most of the discussion among the skippers that night was, 'What can we do about *Allure*.' Many suggestions came forward, as most of our skippers and owners are very mechanically minded. A plan was hatched for the next day to look for loose wires in *Allure*'s engine room.

Old windcheater used as curtains in the front window of Triabunna House

The Spring Bay Hotel dates back to 1838.



Captain Dave P, Gary F, Viv E



Ross C, Jenny H, Bob O, Ray H



Cherryn E, Deb F, Rose P, Vikki K, Daira P

Triabunna

Triabunna is the second-largest township on the east coast of Tasmania, after St Helens.

It became a whaling base in the 1830s. The township was once a garrison town for the Darlington convict settlement on nearby Maria Island.

The Spring Bay Hotel and Triabunna House have been there since the late 1800s. Triabunna House was built as an inn for Thomas Martin, a publican, to provide accommodation for the military from Maria Island. From 1906, it provided accommodation and meals for visitors and passengers on horse and motor coaches, and a new dining room was added in 1925. Timber extensions were added to the large stone-built house in the late 1880s. These included the electric telegraph and the post office, where Annie Robinson and her daughter, Clara, were the postmistresses until 1911.

The wooden part of the house looks like it has a resident even today, but the boarding house (the stone structure) closed when a bigger dining room opened at the Spring Bay Hotel further down the road. Currently it looks like it is storing furniture.

The Spring Bay Hotel, built by John Felmingham, was originally known as the Pembroke Hotel. John applied to the Spring Bay Council to make the bricks, but it was later stated that the bricks for the hotel actually came from Maria Island. Sometime before 1909 the veranda was added, and the navigation light suspended beside it was the responsibility of the licensee. The hotel was extended in the 1930s.

The town has been a fishing port for more than 100 years, and is known for its scallops, abalone and crayfish. There is a huge woodchip mill at Point Home, and Rostrevor Orchard nearby was once the largest apple orchard in the Southern Hemisphere, when Tasmania was commonly called the Apple Isle.

There was one other crazy thing that was peculiar to Triabunna involving the Spring Bay Hotel. It was called the Crayfish Derby. Some of the yachts that had competed in the Sydney to Hobart race would sail home via Triabunna. This tradition started in the early 1980s whereby they would have a race, unofficial of course, from Hobart to Triabunna.

The winner had to sail into the port, then race to see the publican at the Spring Bay Hotel. They had to have a plaque, a sticker, or something from their yacht to prove they had competed in the Sydney–Hobart race. The first skipper to the front bar with such memorabilia would win a large bottle of Glenfiddich scotch. To this day these prized pieces are the names of each room in the accommodation part of the hotel. There are around 14 rooms upstairs named like this. Unfortunately, this yearly tradition stopped around 1996.

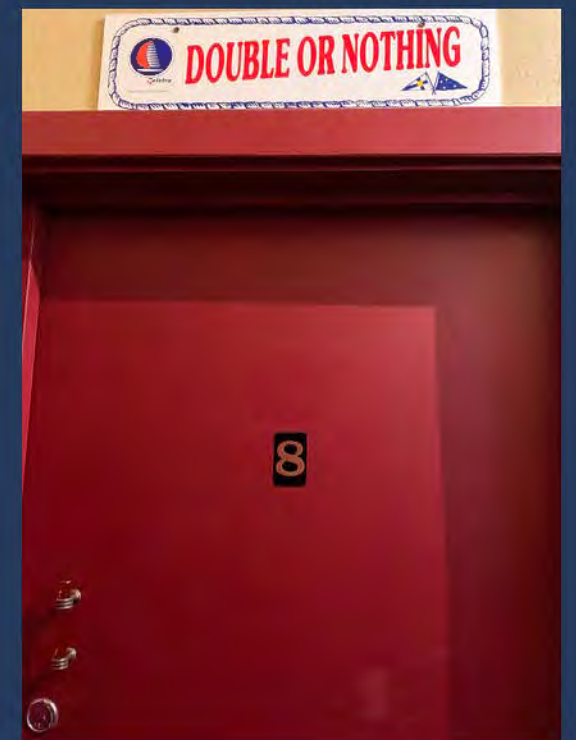
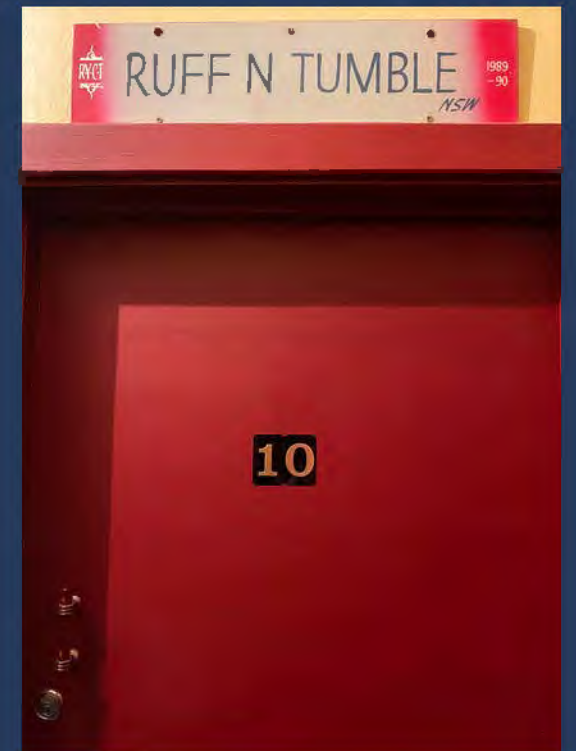
Once all the competing yachts completed Sydney–Hobart the race and were in town, organisation for the Crayfish Derby started. With weather permitting, each yacht would take on as many locals as they could for the derby. There were marks set in the Prosser Bay area, and they would do at least two laps. The winner was rewarded with a score of beautiful big crayfish.

Triabunna has two companies running passenger ferries out to Maria Island, which was used as a prison settlement in the early to mid-1800s. Backpackers now visit by the dozens, and usually take about five days to explore the island.

There is also a butcher, bakery, an IGA store and a chemist apart from the pub. Most of our fleet used all of these services for the 24 hours we were there.

BELOW

Official memorabilia
from the Sydney Hobart
yachts, naming the rooms





ABOVE

Triabunna Harbour

LEFT

Spring Bay Hotel





Captain Mike working in a tight space under the helm of *Allure*

DAY 25
SUNDAY 24 FEBRUARY

Schouten Passage to Coles Bay

The fleet had a disturbing night at anchor, with the wind frequently changing direction and a constant slapping of small waves against the sides of our hulls. There is often a fear that the anchor is slipping, and with 30 boats in our proximity, each skipper was vigilant, making sleep for some difficult.

The fleet only had to travel 9 NM to the north to anchor in Coles Bay for our next night. Most boats had problems getting their anchors to set, as Coles Bay has what they call a loose bottom. *Allure* found a public mooring and hooked onto that. These moorings are marked with the size of the boat they can handle. The forecast indicated some severe squalls through the night, so it was up to each skipper to anchor correctly.

As *Allure* was in Coles Bay early, there was time to have the mechanically trained crew members come over to see if they could find the problem. Many thanks to Michael K, who appeared first, rolled up his sleeves and made his way down into the engine room. Gary A and Michael K spent hours cleaning electrical leads and checking for loose fittings. We had a visit from Captain Dave and Stuart J from *Razaway*, who led the brains trust on the back deck. They thought they had found the problem, and everyone was crossing their fingers, but the motor stopped two minutes into the test.

The wind picked up during the afternoon, making Coles Bay choppy. Richard S from *Princess 1* still had a fridge full of dumplings and sent some on his tender to the other boats. This was a real treat, and no mean feat, as the waters of Coles Bay were bouncing the tender like a cork in a washing machine.

The *Allure* skipper was not panicking, but a little worried about the trip home. In consultation with Stuart J, who happens to be our local Riviera dealer, there were many phone calls seeking help from all over Tasmania. We needed to find a marine electrician. It proved to be a little dangerous getting between the boats and Freycinet Resort for 6 o'clock rock. Travelling in the small tenders in Coles Bay was getting really uncomfortable, and it was tough using the ladder to the jetty.

Seeing we were there, it was decided to have dinner there as well. This was also farewell to the 'Maritimo twins'. Both skippers and crews aboard *Ti Amo* and *Perfect Mix* were leaving the fleet in the morning and heading back to Hobart via Dunalley through the Denison Canal.

As predicted, the wind gusted up to 40 knots for most of the night.



Sunrise at Coles Bay

DAY 26
MONDAY 25 FEBRUARY

Bryans Beach and Schoutens Passage

Allure was securely tied to the public mooring after some heavy wind during the night, but a few of the other boats had some anxious moments hoping their anchors would hold. By morning the wind had calmed down, but was due to change direction later in the day, so our call was to go back to Schouten Passage that night.

Gary A was busy on the phone still trying to find a marine electrician. Many suggestions came forward from these phone calls, and we were able to talk to Shaun, who was an auto-electrician. When Shaun answered the phone, he indicated he was under a truck, working, somewhere west of Launceston and would call Gary A back.

The rest of the fleet had moved back down south to Bryans Beach. This was agreed to before we had any contact with Shaun, as we thought we may be lucky and have someone local to help us out while we were at Coles Bay.

The fleet was now down to five boats, as *Sublime* had moved ahead of the group a few days earlier due to one crew member having to be home to catch a flight overseas. *Allure* was left alone now, so headed south to meet up with the fleet.

The colour of the water at Bryans Beach was a highlight. The sand, as white as snow, stretched out in a long banana shape. The wind was due to pick up from the south later, so this was only a short stop before travelling back to anchor at Schouten Passage.



***Ti Amo* anchored at
Bryans Beach**



Bryans Beach

RIGHT
 Richard S decided to do a lifeboat drill for the crew aboard *Princess 1*.

OPPOSITE TOP
 Gary A, Captain Mike, and Michael K on Moreys Beach, Schouten Island

OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT
 Ray and Jenny H celebrating their 42nd wedding anniversary at Moreys Beach

OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT
 Stuart J, Peter T and John P at Moreys Beach





Keeper II
Riviera 52



Sublime
Clipper 45



Ti Amo
Maritimo 48



DAY 27
TUESDAY 26 FEBRUARY

Wineglass Bay

The *Allure* crew were up very early, as Shaun had sent the skipper a text saying he was making good time and would meet us at the ferry jetty in Coles Bay at 7.30 a.m. He must have left home before 5 a.m. The tender was back on board, and the anchor was up, and *Allure* was making haste to meet Shaun when the starboard motor stopped again. At this stage, we were running okay for time, but we had to press on with one motor. A few minutes later, it fired up, and we were at full speed making up time to avoid keeping Shaun waiting.

As we had the last rope tied, Shaun arrived. There needed to be good vibes aboard *Allure* now, and positive thinking to see if we could get the problem fixed. After an hour or so, Shaun tested all the electrics with his sophisticated equipment. The skipper, still not convinced we had the right man, was waiting for Shaun's analysis. He felt that the starboard alternator was not charging as much as it should and maybe we needed to replace it. We even took *Allure* for a run, hoping the problem would happen with Shaun aboard, but no luck there. After about an hour, Shaun found an accommodating guy in Launceston. What a gem of a find, as he had exactly what the boat needed, although we had to get it, then fit it.

With still a few doubts, we had to make a run for Bichino as quick as we could to get the parts, which were coming by bus. It was 9 NM to the south to go through Schouten Passage, then a further 28 NM up the coast to the Gulch jetty at Bichino.

Gary A had to make a call to Captain Mike and let him know of our intentions, so we fired up the boat and headed off. The rest of the fleet was going to Wineglass Bay for the night, and



Perfect Mix
Maritimo 48



Razaway
Riviera 60 SUV

7th Heaven

Princess 88



hopefully, we would see them in the morning around 8 a.m.

The southerly swell and wind were quite evident as we turned out of Schouten Passage and headed north. We were told to approach the Gulch very cautiously from the north. Two large rocks only 50 metres away from the jetty act as a breakwater but create a dangerous passage of water 200 metres in length.

Luckily the jetty was vacant, but with the wind now howling straight from the south *Allure* struggled to get close first time in. Huge tyres protect the jetty, as local cray fishermen use this during the season. Finally, with a few ropes in the right places, *Allure* was secure for the night.

The bus arrived and the driver opened up the trailer and said, 'I guess this is for you? We then had a new alternator in hand. After many attempts to find somebody who could do the repair, we found Otis, who stepped down into the engine room and made his assessments. From his van the appropriate spanners, pliers, hammers and screwdrivers were found.

Twenty minutes later, out came the old alternator from the engine room. Next thing, Otis had a screwdriver and hammer to pry off the pulley to do the repair. Within 15 minutes, a voice was heard from the engine room: 'Start her up.'

The starboard motor fired up, but unfortunately, the amp meter gave out the same reading as the old alternator. *Allure* now had a spare alternator. One cannot explain the disappointment on the skipper's face after all that we had been through. This problem was later resolved on return to Melbourne.



Allure
Riviera 45 Flybridge

Princess 1

Princess 64



Marlin

Riviera 47 Enclosed

L/V 3

Ocean Alexander 72



L/V Three

Ocean Alexander 72





Early morning, awaiting the rest of the fleet to catch up to *Allure* in Bichino

DAY 28
WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY

Lady Baron, Flinders Island

After a shocking night tied up to the jetty at the Gulch, we were awakened by engines very close to us. The local cray fishermen wanted to load their cray pots early, as the season was to start in a few days. The wind had calmed down and it looked like a pleasant morning ahead.

On the horizon looking south, we could see *7th Heaven* and the other three boats approaching Bichino. Captain Mike was on the phone to the skipper of *Allure* to see how things went the day before. It was time for *Allure* to push off the jetty and head north to join the others. On our way out to join the other boats the motor stopped again.

Captain Mike was on the phone straight away, as he could see *Allure* slowing. We had experienced this problem on *Allure* now for four weeks. Captain Mike suggested that Gary A turn off all the electrics and start the generator. Reluctantly, the skipper went through the routine and did what Captain Mike thought would be best.

Fortunately, we had an iPad with a Navionics program, which meant we wouldn't get lost, and we could see our speed. There was a discussion on *Allure* about perhaps heading to Launceston, getting it fixed there and coming down over Easter to bring the boat back.

The skipper, however, wanted to keep up with the fleet. The starboard motor had started again, so we throttled up to join the other boats. It seemed that running the



generator had made an impact on the starboard side amp meter. Things were improving – the weather, the seas, and more importantly, the vital signs from the amp meter. The skipper chanced his luck by turning on the chart plotters and sounders. All good signs, but with fingers crossed.

We were able to cruise comfortably at 22 knots heading towards Lady Baron on the southern end of Flinders Island 110 NM away. Our plan was to stay close to Tasmania and travel past Little Musselroe Bay. Dozens of wind turbines can be seen capturing the wind on the top eastern part of Tasmania. The fleet stayed west of Clarke Island and Cape Barron Island,

***Allure* all alone at the Bichino jetty. Note the cray pots ready to be loaded onto the cray boats.**





then around into the tricky channels of Franklin Sound. It is essential to remain within the channel markers when cruising up the last 14 NM to the jetty, as it is very shallow in parts.

The wind had picked up and the tide was very strong, so getting to the pier was difficult. *Razaway* had left hours ago and was already tied up. *Allure* waited for the two Princesses to move outside the jetty. We tied up at the pier and had *Marlin* raft up next to us. All hands were needed on deck, with ropes everywhere to secure us safely.

That night's 6 o'clock rock was at the Furneaux Tavern, one of two pubs on Flinders Island. With a population of around 800 on Flinders Island, the Furneaux Tavern was full. Wednesday night is raffle night, with meat trays, pizzas and cooked chooks as prizes. Minor prizes included a few beers at the bar, which was won by our very own teetotaler Richard S. Captain Dave P won a cooked chook, Rob U won a pizza, which he donated back, as we were having dinner in the restaurant. Ticket 19 was called, and Captain Dave P put his hand up for a second cooked chook. He was nearly out the door when another fellow tried to claim the same prize. Dave had tried to pull a swiftie, handing his ticket number 61 to the official upside down. There was much laughter around the bar after Dave had fessed up.

Group shot on
the balcony



Sunrise from Lady Baron jetty

DAY 29
THURSDAY 28 FEBRUARY

Lady Barron to Trousers Point

Captain Mike had arranged for the local fuel truck to come down to the jetty at Lady Barron around 9.00 a.m. The five remaining boats all needed a top-up for the long cruise back to Port Phillip Bay in a day or so. The fleet drained the truck of around 13,000 litres of fuel.

The weather gods had been good so far, with safe travel on the seas since leaving Port Davey on Day 12. The greatest challenge for Captain Mike was to see the window of opportunity regarding the swell and the wind for our most extended cruise to get home. Friday 1 March was always in his mind to get back to Melbourne, so at this stage things were looking good.

Captain Mike indicated to the group that Friday was okay, and we all should take it easy today. There is a sheltered bay around at Trousers Point on the south-west of Flinders Island, and that would be a safe anchorage for the night. As this was only around 18 NM, we could take our time to get there.

Once there, we could feel the squalls come through from the north-east. We all had to let plenty of chain out, as this was predicted to go on through the night. Most of the boats were close to the beach, so it did not get rough. It was strange to see the clouds roll over the peaks of Flinders Island and Mount Razorback. It was as though they were on a string as they fell over on our side then disappeared back over the peak again. There are some lookouts the bushwalkers can get to on top of Mount Razorback that peaks at around 543 metres.



Once anchored and settled, all the boats craned their tenders over the side, ready to explore the beautiful beach. Similar to Bryans Beach at Schouten Passage, this moon-shaped beach stretches out for several kilometres. As this was our last night for this tremendous cruise, Rob U called the rest of the fleet for one last 6 o'clock rock aboard *7th Heaven*. This was a great way to say goodbye to our fellow cruisers.

**The birds up early
enjoying the view from
*Princess 1***



TOP

The fleet at rest – Lady Barron jetty

ABOVE

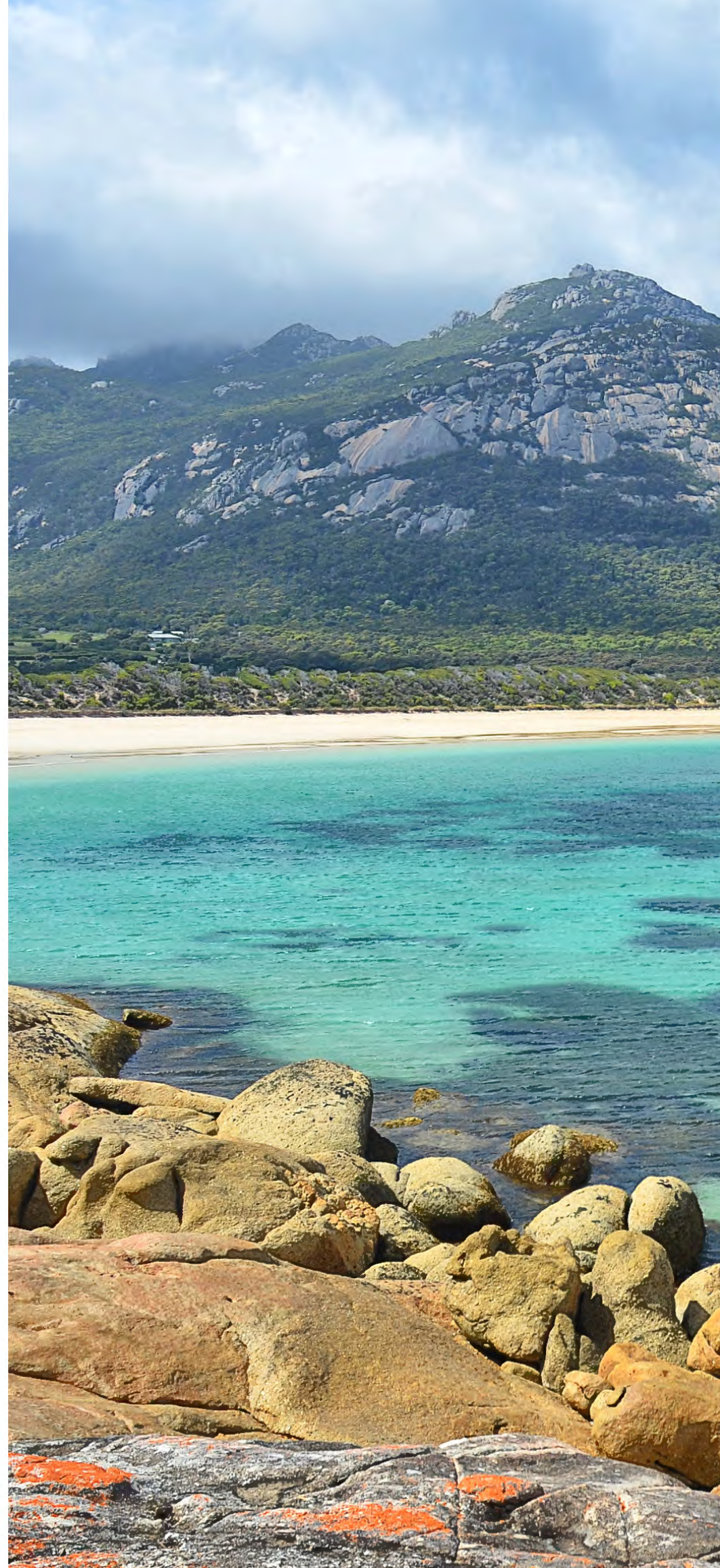
A great effort to catch two lovely flathead for dinner, and congratulations to John and Daria P for doing the trip two-handed. This was their second trip outside the Heads.

RIGHT

The colourful water of Trousers Bay

FOLLOWING PAGES

Strzelecki Peaks overlooking Trousers Bay











Leaving Flinders Island
for Port Phillip

DAY 30
FRIDAY 1 MARCH

Arriving home

We all knew that *7th Heaven* was leaving early, around 3.00 a.m. Captain Mike indicated that we would have a north-easterly swell to deal with once we were out of the protection of Flinders Island. He wanted to get ahead of the fleet, knowing we could be a little faster and catch up to him. *7th Heaven* happily cruises at 10 knots in all weather and some heavy swell. Two large stabilisers help stop the boat from rocking and rolling. This helps people sleep while the boat is underway. The rest of the fleet had their tenders stored safely the night before, as we were planning to leave at 6.00 a.m. The anchors were up at sunrise. One by one, the boats followed each other out of Trousers Bay. We had just on 200 NM to get to Port Phillip Heads.

Today was going to be the longest day of travel for the whole trip. All the boats were happy to travel at around 20 knots while the sea allowed us. We knew the north-easterly swell would probably kick in about 30 NM into the trip. Bass Strait is reasonably shallow for its size, and when you see Pyramid Rock in the distance, you can see the swell increasing. The depth around to the east of the rock drops to 10 metres and affects the waves and swell, making it necessary to slow down. By now the fleet was spread apart, and we were able to pick up speed 20 NM or so after the big rock. All the boats were on AIS, so we knew where they were and how fast they were going. Hour after hour, the weather had improved, and the



Rob and Rose Ungar on the beach at Trousers Bay

Bass Strait and the Southern Ocean are some of the most dangerous seas on our planet. They are definitely no-go zones for the uninitiated or novice sailors. Our fleet comprised experienced, intermediate sailors as well as the crew on *Marlin*, John and Daria P, who had only once before ventured outside of Port Phillip Bay. It was a particularly inspiring effort by Daria, which drew recurring favourable comment from the other crews.

This was all made possible by the generosity of Robert Ungar who encouraged, assisted and supported crews months prior to the final day of the cruise. On behalf of all the skippers and crews we would like to give an enormous thank you to Rob for taking us on this amazing adventure.

This was not the first time that Rob has led a fleet out to sea and we know that at least two future cruises are on Rob's agenda. His continued efforts in this area have been recently recognised at the Victorian Sailing Awards where Rob was awarded Victorian Motor Yachtsperson of 2019.

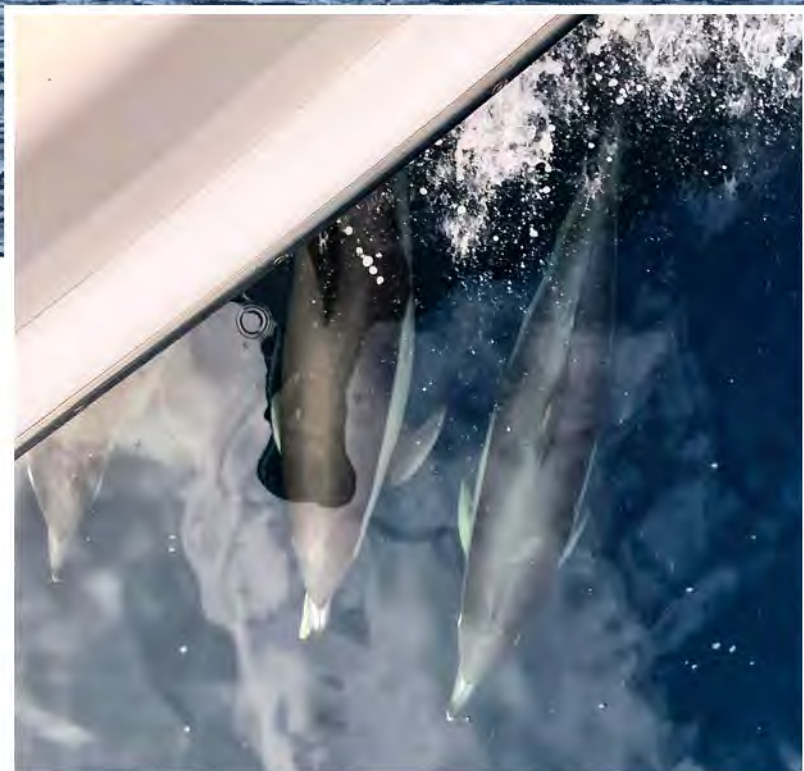


**A lone dolphin trying to
keep up late afternoon
crossing the very flat
Bass Strait**

large swell had abated, so we were able to move along a bit more quickly. Cape Woolamai around 5 NM away was visible on our starboard side.

The fleet made a formidable sight cruising through the Heads doing 22 knots in convoy with *7th Heaven* leading, as is our tradition. The sea had calmed down and was flat, glass like with little if no swell. With clear skies, the water colour was a beautiful inviting blue. It was around 3.00 in the afternoon, and what a sight to see the lighthouses known as the Four Fingers in front of us as we entered Port Phillip Bay.

Our 30-day adventure Around the Coast of Tasmania had come to an end, with all boats safely in ports of choice and crews left to contemplate their amazing adventure and stories to be told.



ABOVE

The four fingers at Queenscliff – a welcome sight for any boat coming into Port Phillip Bay.

ABOVE

Three dolphins just ahead of the bow of *Razaway*





Rob and Rose enjoyed
the trip with their guests
on their *7th Heaven* Princess 88
motor yacht.





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The profit from this book generated by sales and advertising revenue will be donated to Sailability Australia and Sandringham Yacht Club. Sailability Australia is a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organisation, and through the activity of Sailing enriches the lives of people of all abilities – the elderly, the financially and socially disadvantaged, as well as people with physical challenges. Sandringham Yacht Club provides through its junior sailing programs opportunities for children to engage in and learn the sport of sailing.

FRONT ENDPAPER

**Fleet team photo, north
beach Bramble Cove**

BACK ENDPAPER

Sunset over Trousers Bay