

The Good Life

TASMANIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET – *Flinders Island*

Be captivated by Flinders Island **By Tilly Smith Dix**

Some weeks ago, my beloved started drawing up charts and slacked off on the house renovations. The reason? Dear friends from the UK were visiting Tasmania and were keen to meet us somewhere midway from their current base in Launceston, Tasmania, and our home in the Yarra Valley of Victoria.

Himself is a strategist of note, one of the many reasons I married him, and, once he'd done all his plotting, planning and charting of the proposed flight, he pointed out we'd be flying along a row of islands, starting off the mainland of Victoria's verdant Wilsons Promontory and its islands, which eventually lead to the Tasmanian islands. In aviation terms, we had a GREAT landing in the Sling 4 after a two-hour flight from Coldstream to Flinders Island in the Bass Strait, Tasmania.

Driving in the rental car we saw magnificent livestock, large sheep and glossy cattle as the feed is ideal, I am told. Free range everything, even the enormous crayfish.

Flinders Island, one of some 60 islands of Tasmania's Furneaux Island Group, is the largest in the Bass Strait,

famously sailed by George Bass and Matthew Flinders back in 1798-9, in their search for Van Diemen's Island, now known as Tasmania. The Bass Trait is 250 km wide and 500km

long. The island is 75km long and 40km wide, with plenty unspoilt beauty to explore.

Suffice to say if you love nature, the ocean, mountains, savannah,



bushland, wildlife, and birdlife, this is an enchanting destination for a bucket list adventure. However, if you want fine-dining restaurants, bright lights and boho chic, stay away, as you'll just be spoiling it for those wishing to truly enjoy nature in its most magical form.

Picture high, granite mountains, lush vegetation, grasslands, golden beaches, panoramic walks, azure waters, blue skies and a sparsely populated island, offering vineyards, olive groves, and hospitable people. Blue Lagoon? This is the cherry on the cake of paradise.

We hiked along forests, bushland, cliffs and beaches with quirky names like Trousers Point, where someone did land after losing their trousers, hence the title, clambered along Castle Rock, which does not resemble a castle at all but proves equally impressive, and bathed in a welcoming cove in the bay at Killiecrankie.

Some of the Flinders Island history includes the sad demise of Aboriginal people exiled here to survive disease



from mainland Tasmania, who ended up dying of those very perils, mostly.

We met a yachtsman from Melbourne at the Lady Barron Tavern, where we decided to enjoy a mid-morning coffee, watching fishermen and yachtsmen braving the choppy waters on that windy day.

The prolific birdlife here includes the spectacular green rosella, a parrot I sadly could not capture on film this time but spotted several times in flight. We saw lyrebirds, the yellow wattle bird, superb wren, Pacific gulls and beautiful, but aggressive Cape Barren Geese. The geese, we are told, don't like human interference and will gang up and run at you. Our sailing friend, who had found himself amidst such

warmongering geese on a previous trip, was saved by a large wallaby that came dashing out of the bushland, sending the birds on their way. These are just some of the over 200 bird species recorded on the island to date.

Plenty of wallaby crossed our path, some will make their escape from prying eyes, whilst others will shyly stay put in the bush to ascertain if you are friend or foe.

We were captivated, seemingly far from the madding crowd, yet only a one-hour flight from Melbourne on scheduled flights. ❶

For flights and ferries to Flinders Island from Melbourne, go to visitflindersisland.com.au for information.

See the full story at tillythegoodlife.blog

