

Devonport & the Northwest



There's a rule of thumb in this part of Tasmania: the further west you go, the remoter it gets. Start in the countryside around the port city of Devonport and you'll see a land of rich, red earth chequered by an agricultural patchwork of fields. This is prime farming country: Tasmania's dairy, beef and vegetable heartland, framed by the jagged peaks of the island's alpine core.

As you work your way west along the shores of Bass Strait, the seaside towns become smaller, the beaches more rugged, the inland forests more dense. Rich farmland gives way to windswept cattle paddocks bounded by groves of the northwest's emblematic, papery-barked tea tree. If you make it to the furthest northwest reaches, you'll discover an isolated territory, excoriated by the buffeting winds of the Roaring 40s, with an excitingly world's-end feel.

There's plenty to attract the traveller to Tasmania's less-visited quarter. You may arrive right into the heart of it if you voyage here on the *Spirit of Tasmania*. Close by you'll find such varied diversions as the magical caves near Mole Creek, the mountain highs of the Walls of Jerusalem and the arty little towns of Deloraine and Sheffield. Explore along the coast and you'll find the idyllic beach of Boat Harbour, rugged Rocky Cape National Park and historic, seaside Stanley. From here you can plunge into the remotest west of all: the mysterious, deep rainforests of Tasmania's Tarkine; the fierce beaches of Marawah, with their gigantic western waves; or Woolnorth, where they farm the wind and you can breathe the cleanest air on earth.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Watching Mexican-waving glow worms in the limestone caves at **Mole Creek Karst National Park** (p242)
- Meeting the eclectic Paper People and browsing the handmade paper display at **Creative Paper Tasmania** (p253) in Burnie
- Camping at the dramatic **Walls of Jerusalem National Park** (p243), especially snow-blanketed in winter
- Tiptoeing through the tulips in the ancient volcano of **Table Cape** (p257)
- Feeling the power of the Roaring 40s at **Stanley** (p260) as you stand victorious atop the Nut
- Driving – or better, cycling – the achingly remote **Western Explorer** (p268) on a true back-blocks adventure
- Marvelling at the phenomenal reflections in the black waters of the **Pieman River** (p269)
- Hiking the deep forests and savage beaches of the **Tarkine Wilderness** (p268)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 03 ■ www.devonporttasmania.travel ■ www.tasmaniasnorthwest.com.au

Getting There & Around

AIR

QantasLink (☎ 13 13 13) connects Devonport to Melbourne and **Regional Express** (Rex; ☎ 13 17 13) services Burnie/Wynyard airport at Wynyard.

BICYCLE

The main (A1) route west from Launceston is best avoided due to heavy traffic, but there's plenty of good cycling on the minor routes in this area: the B54 is better for travel to Deloraine. There's less traffic on the A2 west of Burnie and it makes for pleasant cycling. There are plenty of meandering backroads throughout the northwest region where you can really get off the beaten track into rural Tasmania. The absolute highlight of cycling here is the remote gravel of the Western Explorer (C249) connecting Arthur River and Corinna. This traverses the glorious Tarkine Wilderness and is about as wild a region as it's possible to access by bike in Tasmania.

BUS

Redline Coaches (☎ 1300 360 000, 6336 1446; www.redlinecoaches.com.au) services the north and northwest coasts daily, with buses from Launceston to Devonport (\$24.40, 2½ hours), via towns including Deloraine (\$16.60, 45 minutes) and Latrobe (\$5.40, 15 minutes). This service picks up passengers at the *Spirit of Tasmania* ferry terminal. From Devonport buses continue west along the Bass Highway to Ulverstone (\$6.70, 25 minutes), Penguin (\$8.80, 40 minutes), Burnie (\$13, one hour), Stanley (\$32, two hours) and Smithton (\$32, 2½ hours).

Tassielink Coaches (☎ 1300 300 520, 6336 9500; www.tassielink.com.au) work their way west from Launceston two to three times a week, depending on the season, ending up in Strahan. These buses stop in Devonport (\$21.20, 1½ hours) Sheffield (\$27, two hours 10 minutes), Gowrie Park (\$35.60, 2½ hours) and Cradle Mountain (\$53.30, three hours). From here they head southwest to Rosebery, Zeehan, Queenstown and Strahan. For further details, see p283. Tassielink also operates a daily express service, picking up passengers from Devonport's *Spirit of Tasmania* ferry terminal and running them to Launceston (\$21.20, 1½ hours) and Hobart (\$51.40, 4 hours). This service also runs daily in reverse from Hobart, reaching Devonport in time for the nightly ferry sailing.

There's a local bus operated by **Merseylink** (☎ 1300 367 590; www.merseylink.com.au) from

Monday to Saturday, running between Devonport and Latrobe (\$3.10), and a separate service also run by Merseylink between Devonport and Port Sorell (\$4) Monday to Friday. Both services depart from the Rooke St interchange in Devonport.

DEVONPORT

☎ 03 / pop 25,122

Devonport is best known to visitors to Tasmania as the port of the *Spirit of Tasmania I and II*, the smartly red-and-white ferries that connect the island state with the mainland. It's quite an evocative sight to see them, all lit up at night; when after three deep burps of the horn they cruise past the end of the main street to begin their voyage north. Devonport is a waterside city: it straddles the Mersey River and seascapes stretch out from it to either side. One of the landmarks in town is the Mersey Bluff Lighthouse, built in 1889 to warn ships off the rocky coastline and guide them safely into port. The protected Mersey River mouth still serves as an important harbour for exporting agricultural produce from surrounding fertile lands. Many visitors get off the ferry in Devonport, jump in their cars and scoot. This quiet little port town is possibly not the most glamorous spot in the state, but take your time to ground your feet on Tasmanian soil here: walk along the Mersey and up to the lighthouse for unmissable views over the coastline and Bass Strait.

Orientation

Devonport is spread about the banks of the Mersey River. East Devonport is the location of the docks and the *Spirit of Tasmania* (italics) ferry terminal, while the west bank of the river is where you'll find the centre of town. Formby Rd, alongside the Mersey, and Rooke St are the main thoroughfares, and Rooke St becomes a pleasant pedestrian mall in the heart of town.

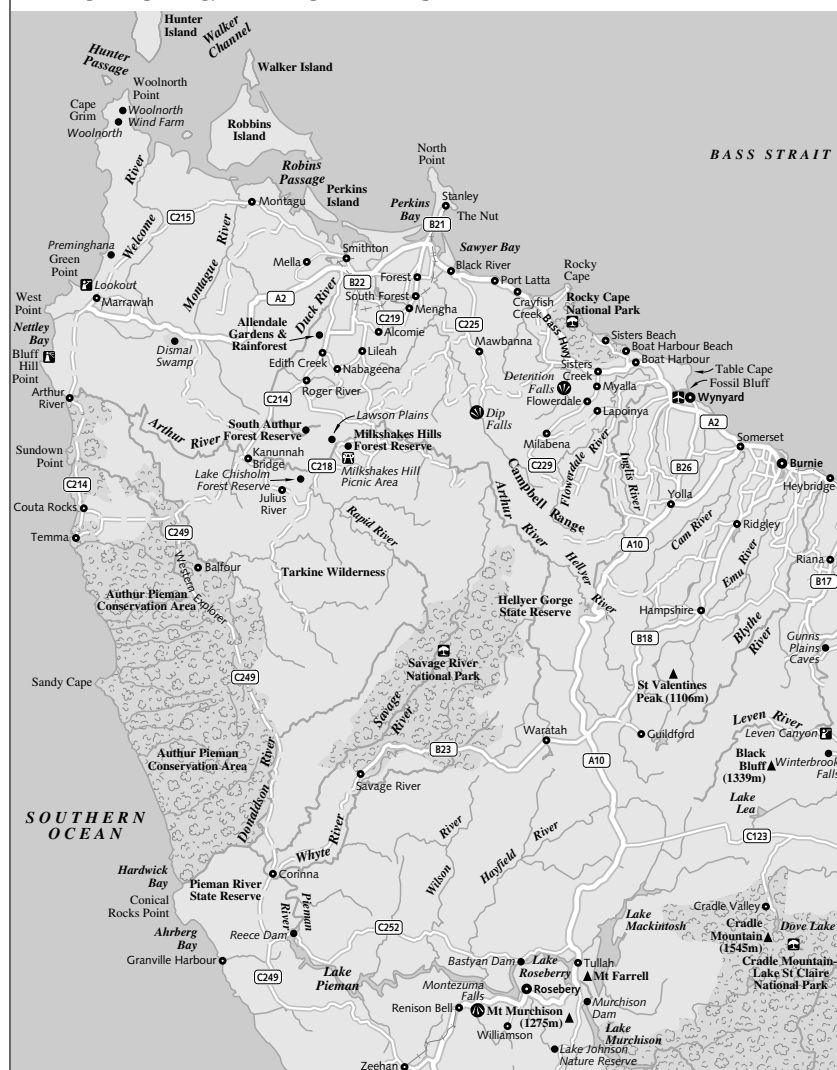
Information

Most banks have branches and ATMs in or near the Rooke Street Mall.

Visitors centre (☎ 6424 4466; tourism@devonport.tas.gov.au; 92 Formby Rd; ☎ 7.30am–5pm or 9pm) This friendly and efficient visitors centre has smiling faces to meet all ferry arrivals – the 9pm closure is when there are day crossings of the ferry, which arrive at 7pm.

Post office (88 Formby Rd)

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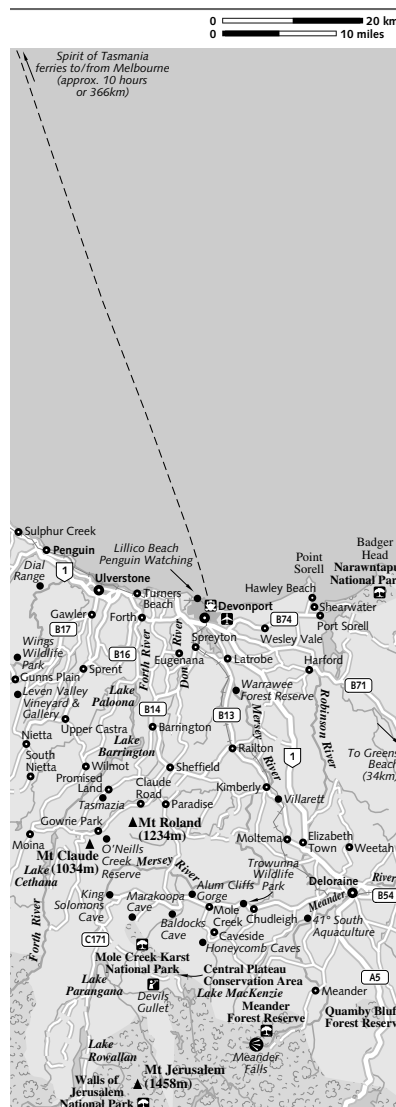


Online access centre (☎ 6424 9413; 21 Oldaker St; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 1.30 Sat; per 15 min \$2) This centre is located in Devonport's library.

Backpacker's Barn (☎ 6424 3628; 10-12 Edward St; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) This is the spot in Devonport to buy or hire outdoor gear and get advice on outdoor adventures. They also have showers for weary travellers (\$4) and storage lockers (\$2 per day).

Sights & Activities
TIAGARRA

Get your grounding in Tasmania's Aboriginal history at **Tiagarra** (☎ 6424 8250; Bluff Rd; adult/child/family \$4/2.50/10; ☎ 9am-5pm) on the Mersey Bluff headland close to the lighthouse. The absorbing displays here tells the story of Aboriginal culture in Tasmania, from the time humans



10,000 years old. At time of research, Tiagarra was in the planning process for a brand new building and enhanced displays.

DEVONPORT MARITIME MUSEUM
This excellent **museum** (☎ 6424 7100; 6 Gloucester Ave; adult/child/family \$4/1/8; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar, to 4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep) is in the former harbourmaster's residence (c 1920) and pilot station near the foreshore. It has an extensive collection of flags and other maritime paraphernalia, including a superb set of models from the ages of sail through steam to the present seagoing passenger ferries.

DON RIVER RAILWAY
You don't have to be a trainspotter to love this collection of locomotives. The **railway** (☎ 6424 6335; www.donriverrailway.com.au; Forth Main Rd; adult/child/pensioner/family \$10/6/8/25; ☎ 9am-5pm) is 4km west of town, just off the Bass Highway. Trainheads will go crazy over the brightly painted rolling stock. The entry price includes a half-hour ride in a diesel train (between 10am and 4pm), and you can hop on the puffing steam train on Sundays and public holidays.

DEVONPORT REGIONAL GALLERY
This excellent **gallery** (☎ 6424 8296; 45-47 Stewart St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) houses predominantly 20th-century Tasmanian paintings, contemporary art by local and mainland artists, plus ceramics and glasswork.

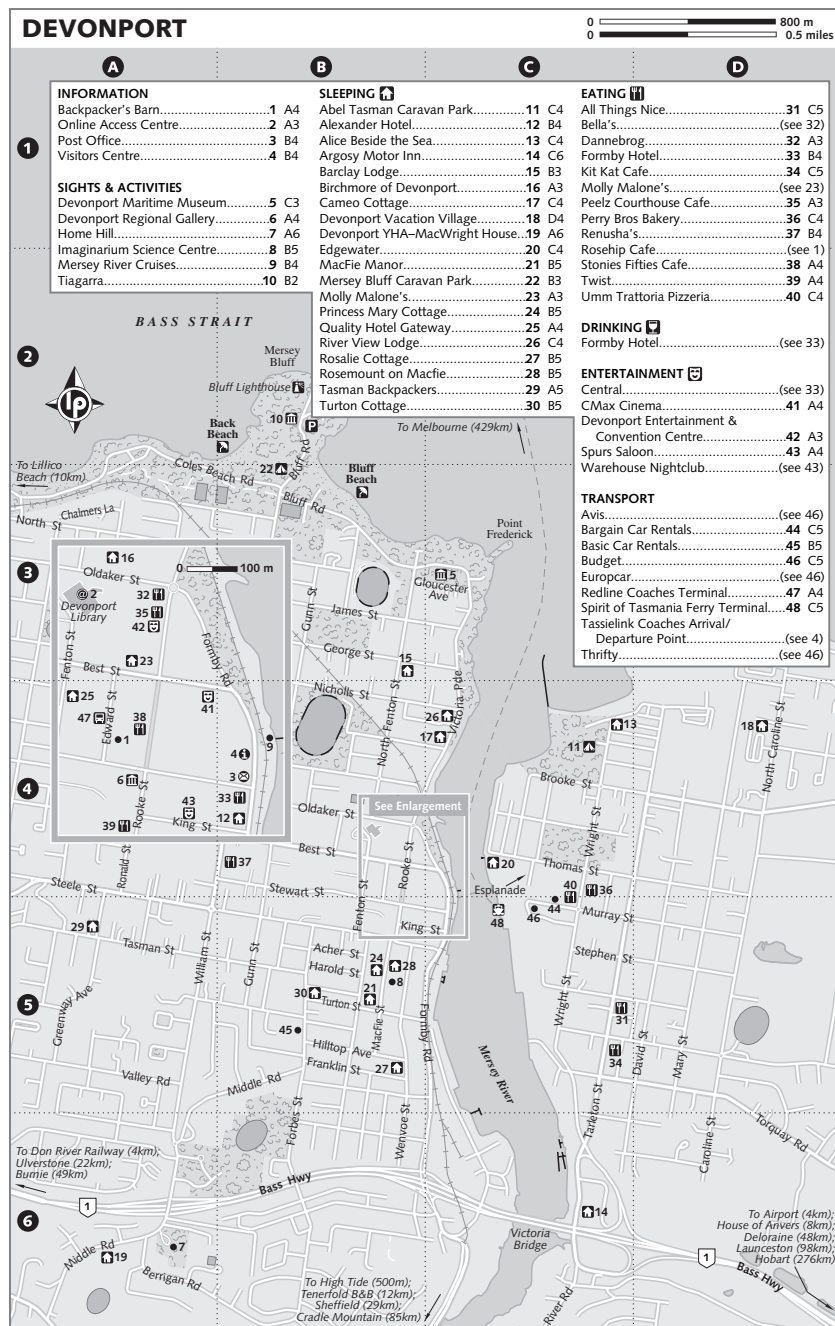
HOME HILL
The National Trust-administered **Home Hill** (☎ 6424 8055; 77 Middle Rd; adult/under 18/concession \$8/free/6; ☎ 1.30-4pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, Jul-Aug by appointment) was the residence of Joseph Lyons (Tasmania's only prime minister of Australia; 1932-39). Lyons lived here with his 12 children and his wife Dame Enid Lyons, who was the first woman to be sworn in as a member of the House of Representatives (1943) and as a federal cabinet minister (1949).

HOUSE OF ANVERS
You could wander through the museum here and learn about how the delights of the cocoa bean were first discovered by the Aztecs, but you might as well give in: everybody knows you're here for the chocolate. **House of Anvers** (☎ 6426 2958; www.anvers-chocolate.com.au; 9025 Bass Hwy, Latrobe; ☎ 7am-5pm) is a chocolate factory that creates a range of sweet treats: fudges,

first crossed over the land bridge that's now under Bass Strait. There's a soberingly frank assessment of the decimation of Aboriginal society and culture at the time of European invasion. Outside, you can follow the marked trail around the headland to see some of Tiagarra's collection of aboriginal rock carvings (petroglyphs); some are thought to be more than

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truffles, and the most amazing chocolate-orange slices. You can also come here for your breakfast *pain au chocolat* washed down with what's surely one of the best hot chocolates known to man. The factory is 8km southeast of town on the Bass Hwy.

IMAGINARIUM SCIENCE CENTRE

This unexpected find in Devonport is a hit with kids. The **Imaginarium Science Centre** (☎ 6423 1466; 19-23 MacFie St, access via Wenvoe St carpark; adult/4-17 yr/concession/family \$8/5.50/6.50/26; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Thu, 12-5pm Sat & Sun) has all sorts of hands-on scientific displays: you won't be able to tear the young ones away from the tower puzzles, echo tube and air-message contraption. There are magnetic trains in the area for kids aged three to seven, and a dressing-up wardrobe that will transform your little darling into anything from police officer to pirate.

PENGUIN-WATCHING

Between late August and March at Lillico Beach, off the Bass Hwy on the western edge of town, you can watch little penguins emerge from the sea and return to their burrows at dusk. There's a special viewing area where you can get up close, and volunteers are usually on hand to explain the secrets of these creatures, the smallest penguins on earth.

Tours

Mersey River Cruises (☎ 6424 4466) operates the cruise vessel *Centurion*, which departs from the pontoon opposite the visitors centre. You'll head upriver towards Latrobe and views of Mt Roland, then edge out through the mouth of the river onto Bass Strait in search of dolphins. There are 1½-hour cruises daily at 1pm and 3pm (adult/child \$22.50/11) and a three-hour dinner cruise at 6.30pm (\$60/30).

You can swoop over the beauties of northern Tasmania in a light plane on a sightseeing flight with **Tasair** (☎ 6427 9777; www.tasair.com.au). For a snapshot of Devonport's environs there's the Northern Experience, which will take you over Lake Barrington, Mt Rowland and Port Sorell (\$77 per person). See Tassie's Alpine heart with the Cradle Experience flight (\$121 per person).

To be shown some of Tasmania by an entirely passionate and charming Tasmanian, consider taking a tour with **Murray's Day Out** (☎ 6424 5250; www.murraysdayout.com.au; day trips per

person from \$110). Murray offers 'service with humour' and can take you all over the place in his comfortable van (seating up to seven). Go all the way west to Marawah, drop in on Cradle Mountain or just tool around the back lanes near Devonport.

Sleeping BUDGET Hostels

Tasman Backpackers (☎ 6423 2335; www.tasmanbackpackers.com.au; 114 Tasman St; dm/tw per person \$16/18, d \$50, without bathroom \$40) This recently renovated hostel was once a sprawling nurses' quarters but it's now a friendly place to stay with a great, international feel. The en suite doubles all have TV/DVD player – and there's an in-house movie theatre for the rest. They offer free ferry/bus station pick-ups, and can make tour and bus bookings.

Devonport YHA-MacWright House (☎ 6424 5696; 115 Middle Rd; dm/s from \$18.50/25.50) This YHA hostel in a large old house offers simple, clean accommodation and a friendly vibe. It's 3km from the city centre, about a 40-minute walk or a five-minute bus ride (bus 40). There's a discount for YHA members. A good share kitchen and laundry complete the facilities.

Pubs/Hotels

Molly Malone's (☎ 6424 1898; mollymalones@vantagegroup.com.au; 34 Best St; dm/d \$20/50, d without bathroom \$35; ☎) Even Devonport has a go at your ol' Irish pub – and they do a pretty good job. This place has an excellent reputation for its bar food. Upstairs it's not quite so salubrious. There are basic (bordering on grungy) dorms and doubles. Still, it's a good place to crash cheaply and there's a lively atmosphere on Friday and Saturday when the pub below (see p236) gets thumpin'.

Alexander Hotel (☎ 6424 2252; 78 Formby Rd; dm/s/d \$25/49/59) The rooms here are no great shakes, but it's a cheap and simple place to stay, close to the centre of town. The pub downstairs is the kind of place where you're sure to get talking to locals.

Formby Hotel (☎ 6424 1601; fax 6424 8123; 82 Formby Rd; dm/s/d \$45/69/79, extra person \$20) There are clean and simple rooms above this pub, some of which have superb views of the river – you can watch the *Spirit of Tasmania* voyage past your window. There's also great food downstairs (see p235). Note that the dorm room is men only.

Camping & Cabins

Mersey Bluff Caravan Park (☎ 6424 8655; mbc1@bigpond.net.au; Bluff Rd; unpowered/powerd sites d \$15/18, on-site vans d \$40, cabins d from \$62) In a seaside setting on Mersey Bluff, this pleasantly treed park is just steps from the beach. There's a campers kitchen and BBQ facilities, a takeaway shop on site and walks nearby.

Abel Tasman Caravan Park (☎ 6427 8794; www.tigerresortstas.com.au; 6 Wright St; unpowered sites \$20, powered sites \$23-26, on-site vans \$45-60, cabins \$75-120) Right by East Devonport Beach and only 800m from where the *Spirit of Tasmania* docks, this friendly park has neat cabins, clean amenities, BBQ areas and a campers kitchen.

Devonport Vacation Village (☎ 6427 8886; fax 6427 8388; 20-24 Nth Caroline St; unpowered/powerd sites/en suite sites d \$22/26/30, cabins d \$62-92) This large village is another budget option and its location in East Devonport makes it a convenient place to stay if you need to hop on or off the ferry.

MIDRANGE**Cottages**

our pick **Cameo Cottage** (☎ 6427 0991, 0439-658 503; www.devonportbedandbreakfast.com; 27 Victoria Pde; d \$140-160, extra person \$30) Tucked away in quiet back streets, this ultra-neat two-bedroom cottage was built in 1914, but is now thoroughly up-to-date. It's got a well-equipped kitchen, cozy lounge where you can watch DVDs to your heart's content, a laundry, and a quiet garden where you can cook up a storm on the BBQ.

Devonport Historic Cottages (☎ 1800 240 031; www.devonportcottages.com; d \$150) manages three attractive weatherboard cottages: **Rosalie Cottage** (66 Wenvoe St), **Turton Cottage** (28 Turton St) and **Princess Mary Cottage** (42 Macfie St). All date from the late 1800s, and have been beautifully refurbished as fully equipped accommodation and are only a short stroll from the city centre. There are ample breakfast provisions and log fires to doze in front of. Extra touches include an old gramophone in Rosalie and hand-stencilled walls in Turton.

Guesthouses & B&Bs

Alice Beside the Sea (☎ /fax 6427 8605; www.alicebesidethesea.com; 1 Wright St; d \$99-130) Located close to the ferry terminals, this compact B&B offers comfortable, two-bedroom, self-contained accommodation across the road from the beach and close to supermarkets.

River View Lodge (☎ 6424 7357; www.riverviewlodge.com.au; 18 Victoria Pde; s with/without bathroom \$103/90, d

with/without bathroom \$120/100) This friendly lodge is just across green parkland from the waters of the Mersey, only minutes' walk from town. It's clean, bright and homely: there's a piano and roaring log fire in the guest lounge, and scrumptious cooked breakfasts are laid on.

Rosemount on Macfie (☎ 6424 7406; www.rosemountonmacfie.com; 47 Macfie St; d \$100-145) A heritage home set in rose-filled gardens awaits you here. Rosemount offers spacious, two-room apartments, with queen sized beds and period décor. Some rooms have spas and include ample continental breakfast provisions.

Macfie Manor (☎ 6424 1719; www.macfemanor.com.au 44 Macfie St; s \$100, d \$110-130) The beautiful wrought-iron tracery on this handsome Federation home tells you you've found one of Devonport's nicest places to stay. The comely decoration continues inside, with four-poster beds, carved timber fireplaces and a Scottish theme: you can choose from the Edinburgh, Kilmarnock or Stewart rooms. Fully cooked breakfasts are part of the deal.

Tenerfold B&B (☎ /fax 6427 3170; www.tenerfoldbandb.com.au; 84 Melrose Dr, Aberdeen; d \$140) Just a 10-minute drive south of the CBD, this luxuriously appointed two-bedroom apartment is good value, with rural views in a secluded and private setting surrounded by a tranquil garden. To get here take the Devonport Main Rd (B14) south continuing on Sheffield Rd, turning right at the C146. There's a fully cooked breakfast included in the rate.

Birchmore of Devonport (☎ 6423 1336; www.bedsandbreakfasts.com.au/Birchmore; 10 Oldaker St; s \$145, d \$170-190) This old Federation dame has spacious, well-appointed rooms and is just a minute away from the city centre. A good cooked breakfast is served each morning in the conservatory.

Motels & Hotels

Argosy Motor Inn (☎ 1800 657 068, 6427 8872; Tarleton St; s \$80-120, d \$80-129) It can't be said that this brick establishment is a thing of great beauty, but the rooms are clean and tidy, ranging from standard to 'executive' suites with spa, and the views over the Mersey are lovely. There's also a bistro on site.

Edgewater (☎ 6427 8441; www.edgewater-devonport.com.au; 4 Thomas St; d \$90-230; ☎) This once-dowdy motel has been snazzed up recently and is now a good place to stay in East Devonport, in a better-than-motel sort of way. Some rooms have spas and pleasant water views, and there's a popular restaurant on site. It's

just a hop and a skip from where the *Spirit of Tasmania* docks.

Barclay Lodge (☎ 1800 809 340, 6424 4722; 112 North Fenton St; d \$105-130, units \$135-165, extra person \$25; ☎) This may not be your most architecturally rewarding stay in Tasmania but you'll find all sorts of good facilities, including a tennis court, swimming pool and tourist information. All units have a kitchen, and one unit is equipped for disabled travellers.

Quality Hotel Gateway (☎ 6424 4922; www.gatewayinn.com.au; 16 Fenton St; d 155-250; ☎) The standard accommodation here is of the rather ordinary motel variety, but if you are after somewhere really top-notch to stay in Devonport, check out the hotel's deluxe spa rooms: these are swanky and super-stylish and feel like they belong to an entirely classy establishment.

Eating**RESTAURANTS**

Renusha's (☎ 6424 2293; 132 William St; mains \$9-18; ☎ lunch Wed-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) The gaudy décor here may be what first catches your attention, and you'll be glad it did: the food is sensational. It serves superb Indian food and a fine Italian pasta too, and has earned a local reputation for being consistently great.

Umm Trattoria Pizzeria (☎ 6427 7055; 13 Murray St; mains \$12-20; ☎ dinner Wed-Sun) There's fine Italian fare at this friendly little place in East Devonport. The pizzas, straight out of the wood oven, are simply superb – light, crispy and delicious. Try the blackboard specials for a new take on your pizza favourites.

Bella's (☎ 6424 7933; 159 Rooke St; mains \$15-25; ☎ 7am-10pm Tue-Sat) Don't be put off by the slightly daggly décor and the faux olive trees. Bella's has a reputation for its traditional Italian pizzas and great pastas, with a range of lip-smacking sauces. They serve good cooked breakfasts and light lunches too.

High Tide (☎ 6424 6200; 17 Devonport Rd; mains \$15-30; ☎ lunch, dinner Mon-Sat, breakfast Fri-Sun) The panoramic views over the Mersey River, Mt Roland and the Great Western Tiers aren't the only excellent thing here. There's a varied and frequently changing menu that sports choices such as marinated venison fillet, Moroccan prawns, curried scallops and a famously good seafood chowder. To get here, follow Formby Rd south towards Quoiba. The restaurant is off to the left on the river bank shortly after crossing under the Bass Highway.

Dannebrog (☎ 6424 4477; 161 Rooke St; mains \$16-35; ☎ lunch & dinner) There's nothing Scandinavian about this restaurant, but it's named after the Danish flag in honour of Tasmanian Crown Princess Mary of Denmark (see p119). If you're a committed carnivore you'll feel at home here amid all the steaks. There's a highly recommended 800g rump steak served with salad, chips and a sauce of your choice (\$35).

Twist (☎ 6423 2033; 5 Rooke St; mains \$22-27; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, dinner Sat, brunch & lunch from 10am Sun) This smart new restaurant with a lime green 'twist' to its décor is getting rave reviews from locals. Try the pan-fried wallaby sirloin served with pepperberry sauce.

PUBS

Molly Malone's (☎ 6424 1898; 34 Best St; mains \$9-27) Hungry for some down-home fare with the occasional Irish twist? Then you can't go wrong at Molly's. There's a fine seafood platter for two (\$55), with enormous king prawns; excellent bangers and mash; and, of course, a fine Belfast Beef and Guinness pie.

Alexander Hotel (☎ 6424 2252; 78 Formby Rd; mains \$17-25; ☎ lunch & dinner) This local favourite does all the standard pub fare. The roast is the hit in the friendly dining rooms, and the steaks and seafood have a good reputation among Devonport's townsfolk.

Formby Hotel (☎ 6424 1601; 82 Formby Rd; mains \$19-27; ☎ lunch & dinner) The refurbished dining room here offers slap-up bistro meals including pizza, pastas, salads, steaks and seafood. There are excellent fresh juices and smoothies at the café bar, and coffee and cakes between meal times.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

All Things Nice (☎ 6427 0028; 175 Tarleton St; ☎ 24hr) This bakery and café is located near the ferry terminal. It offers all manner of bakery items: gourmet chunky pies, including that Tassie icon, scallop pie (\$5); cakes and other sweets; and a good strong cuppa.

Perry Bros Bakery (☎ 6427 8706; 67 Wright St; ☎ 6am-8pm Mon-Fri, 6am-1pm Sat) specialises in excellent curry scallop pies (\$3.60), great lunchtime menus and good cakes for in between. After an early-morning ferry arrival you can fill up here: the excellent gourmet breakfasts come with hash browns, baked beans and the lot.

Kit Kat Cafe (☎ 6427 8437; 175 Tarleton St; ☎ breakfast from 5.30am, lunch & dinner) This welcoming café

offers hungry arrivals off the ferry big bacon-and-egg breakfasts (\$7) and eat ins or take-aways including juicy, delicious burgers, fish and chips, wraps and sandwiches. There's a play corner where the little tackers can keep busy while you break your fast.

Rosehip Cafe (☎ 6424 1917; 10-12 Edward St; meals \$6.50-10.50; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) This café next to the Backpacker's Barn (p230) is the healthiest option in town. It prepares wholesome food and light snacks using plenty of organic produce. The spinach and sweet potato frittata is fantastic. Also available are delicious breakfasts and plenty of good salads.

Stonies Fifties Cafe (☎ 6424 2101; 77 Rooke St; meals \$8-18; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) You can eat hearty all-day breakfasts at this classic Devonport diner, or choose from a good range of burgers: the Chubby Cheeser is its renowned cheese burger. The coffees here are the standout: they have 18 different types – all named after '50s music stars: say 'Little Richard' for an espresso.

Peelz Courthouse Cafe (☎ 6423 5373; 145-151 Rooke St; meals \$9-17; ☎ 8.30am-4pm) There are freshly squeezed juices, smoothies, great coffees and fine chai lattes here. On Sundays you can enjoy a big brekky (\$10.50) under the umbrellas outside. There are also good gourmet baguettes, burgers and pastas.

Drinking & Entertainment

Check the *Advocate* newspaper for entertainment listings.

Central (☎ 6424 1601; 82 Formby Rd; ☎ 3pm-midnight Wed, 3pm-1am Thu & Fri, 1pm-1am Sat, 1pm-9pm Sun, closed Mon & Tue) Set in the Formby Hotel, locals regard this as Devonport's best bar. It's all done in leather sofas and laid-back cool, and they fold the concertina windows open onto the river on warm nights. There are live bands Friday nights, Saturday nights are huge, and Sunday afternoons see acoustic sessions and a sophisticated crowd.

Warehouse Nightclub (☎ 6424 7851; 18 King St; admission \$6-10; ☎ 10pm-late Thu-Sat) This is one of Devonport's few clubbing hangouts and draws a young crowd to boogie to up-and-coming bands a few times a month and Saturday-night DJs.

Spurs Saloon (☎ 6424 7851; 18 King St; ☎ 5pm-late Thu-Sat) Serves you drinks in a Wild West setting with barrels for tables and the requisite stuffed animal-head menagerie on the walls. There's karaoke here Thursday night, and

the eight-ball tables are popular with the young blokes.

Molly Malone's (☎ 6424 1898; 34 Best St) An expansive, wood-panelled Irish den that gets big crowds guzzling its beer and watching live music on Friday and Saturday nights.

Cmax cinema (☎ 6420 2111; 5-7 Best St; adult/child \$12/9) The Cmax hosts blockbusters and teen flicks. The plusher cinemas have deep sink-into seats.

Devonport Entertainment & Convention Centre (☎ 6420 2900; 145-151 Rooke St; ☎ box office 10am-4pm Mon-Fri) This venue stages everything from children's concerts to ABBA impersonators.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are regular flights to/from Melbourne with QantasLink while Tasair flies between Devonport and King Island via Burnie/Wynyard.

BOAT

The **Spirit of Tasmania** (☎ 1800 634 906, 13 20 10; www.spiritoftasmania.com.au; ☎ telephone bookings 6.30am-9.30pm) sails ferries between Station Pier in Melbourne and the ferry terminal on the Esplanade in East Devonport. For details of services, see p336.

BUS

Redline Coaches (☎ 1300 360 000, 6336 1446; www.redlinecoaches.com.au; 9 Edward St) has its terminal opposite the Backpacker's Barn and will also stop at the ferry terminal when the ferry is in. For details of services to and from Devonport, and for information about **Tassielink** (☎ 1300 300 520; 6230 8900, www.tassielink.com.au) services to Strahan (via Cradle Mountain), Launceston and Hobart, see p229. In Devonport, Tassielink coaches pull up outside the visitors centre and the ferry terminal.

If none of the scheduled services suit your bushwalking needs, charter a minibus from **Maxwells** (☎ 6492 1431, 0418-584 004) to take you exactly where you want, when you want. Prices are for a group of up to four people (for groups of more than five people the price is per person). Devonport to Cradle Mountain costs \$160 (or \$40 per person). Devonport to the Walls of Jerusalem National Park costs \$185 (or \$45 per person), Devonport to Lake St Clair via Great Lake \$289 (or \$70 per person). Importantly they also do the Lake St Clair-Cradle Mountain run at the time

you specify for \$360 (or \$90 per person). They can also arrange trips to Launceston and Hobart.

CAR

Budget (☎ 13 27 27, 6427 0650), **Avis** (☎ 136 136, 6427 9797), **Europcar** (☎ 6427 0888) and **Thrifty** (☎ 1800 030 730, 6427 9119) have representatives at the airport and ferry terminal, while **Hertz** (☎ 6424 1013; 26 Oldaker St) is in town. **Bargain Car Rentals** (☎ 1300 729 230; 25 Murray St, in Dockside Food & Coffee) and **Basic Car Rentals** (☎ 6424 4757; 50 Forbes St) offer cheaper cars.

Getting Around

The airport is 5km east of town. A **shuttle bus** (☎ 0400-035 995) runs between the airport or ferry terminal, the visitors centre and your accommodation for \$10 per person. Bookings are essential. A **taxi** (☎ 6424 1431) will cost approximately \$15.

Serenity Shuttles (☎ 6424 9251; 0424-596 370) operates services between the northwest coast and Launceston Airport. The Devonport-Launceston Airport fare is \$45.

To get across the Mersey other than by the road bridge, you can take the **ferry** (\$2.50 one way) from opposite the visitors centre to the eastern side of the river, beside the ferry terminal. This ferry runs on demand between 7.30am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday.

LATROBE

☎ 03 / pop 2770

Only 10km south of Devonport on the Bass Highway, Latrobe exudes an entirely different flavour to its larger neighbour. It's an attractive historic town, with heritage buildings housing some commendable restaurants, cafés and antique shops. Once a busy shipping port on the Mersey River, Latrobe was built on mining and agricultural fortunes: it's no surprise there are 75 National Trust-registered buildings on the main street alone. There are beautiful riverside forest walks here, and you have an excellent chance of spotting a platypus. The town also has the distinction of being the home of that most Tasmanian of sports: competitive wood-chopping.

Information

The Latrobe **visitors centre** (☎ 6421 4699; tourism@latrobe.tas.gov.au; 48 Gilbert St; ☎ 9.30-4.40pm Mon-Fri, to 4.30pm Sat & Sun) sits just in front of Kings Creek, adjacent to Lucas' Hotel.

Sights

Warrawee Forest Reserve (☎ gates 9am-dusk) is a fantastic Mersey-side 2.3-sq-km recreational area. Walks here include a 10-minute, wheelchair-accessible Pond Circuit, a 20-minute walk downstream to Farrell Park, and a one-hour return Forest Circuit. However, the area's star attractions are the resident platypuses. Warrawee is 4.5km south of town down Hamilton St; turn off Gilbert St at the ANZ bank. **Platypus-spotting tours** (\$10; 2 hours) are organised through the visitors centre, usually at dawn and dusk; be sure to book ahead. Pick-up is from the visitors centre.

The town's history is depicted through the 600 prints and original architectural drawings on display in the **Court House Museum** (Gilbert St; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 1-5pm Fri & Sun), next to the post office in the centre of town.

The **Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame** (☎ 6426 2099; www.australianaxeman.com.au; 1 Bells Pde; adult/child/concession/family \$10/5/8/25; ☎ 9am-5pm) honours the legendary axemen of the northwest, who dominate the sport of competitive wood-chopping. The roof of the main competition arena is held up by 14 massive timber columns representing native Australian timbers from each state. The hall exhibits logging memorabilia and includes displays of wood-chopping trophies. Included in the entry fee here is the **Platypus & Trout Experience**, which sheds much light on the breeding life and habits of this shy monontreme. There are no live examples in the display – but they're often spotted in the Mersey River just over the road. There are live trout in display tanks, and you can get information on trout fishing in nearby waters and fishing licences here. A café-restaurant serves light snacks and refreshments.

Adjacent to Axeman's is **Sherwood Hall** (☎ 6426 2888; Bell's Pde; adult/under 15 \$2/free; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue & Thu, 1-4pm Sat, Sun & public hols, or by appointment), a historic cottage built by a remarkable pioneer couple, ex-convict Thomas Johnson and his half-Aboriginal wife Dolly Dalrymple Briggs.

If you're visiting Latrobe in the summer months, you also shouldn't miss the **Cherry Shed** (☎ 6426 2411; cnr Gilbert St & Bass Highway; ☎ 9am-6pm December 20-mid-April). Here, you can sample and buy the plump red cherries that grow around these parts. Also on offer are cherry wines and liqueurs, jams, pies and a divine cherry ice cream.

Festivals & Events

Henley-on-the-Mersey carnival Held on Australia Day (January 26) at Bells Pde in Latrobe, site of the town's former docks.

Latrobe Wheel Race Annual bicycle race held on Boxing Day, attracting professional riders from around Australia.

Sleeping & Eating

Lucas' Hotel (☎ 6426 1101; www.lucashotellatrobe.com.au; 46 Gilbert St; s/d \$95/105, without bathroom \$70/80, with spa \$115/130) This excellently restored pub has superb rooms with the feel of thoroughly upmarket accommodation. There's fantastic food on offer (mains \$10 to \$30) in an elegant old-world dining room too, including such meaty specials as filet mignon and beef vindaloo. They also have a kids menu and some wickedly good deserts. The dining room is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Out back, adjacent to the tourist information office, Lucas' also has a licensed coffee shop (open 9am to 3.30pm) serving all-day breakfasts, cakes and snacks. Any meal over \$10 includes a free glass of vino.

Latrobe Motel (☎ 6426 2030; latrobemotel@ozemail.com.au; 8 Palmers Rd; s/d \$80/90; 📺) These standard (but fastidiously neat and roomy) ground-floor brick lodgings are a decent option for a night. The motel sits just off the Bass Hwy roundabout, opposite the hospital.

Lucinda (☎ 6426 2285; www.lucindabn.com.au; 17 North St; s \$85-105, d \$105-140) Lucinda provides handsome accommodation in a National Trust-classified home, set in parklike grounds. A couple of its heritage rooms have spectacularly intricate moulded ceilings: see if you can spot the one red rose in the plasterwork as you lie in your four-poster bed.

Bicci Blue (☎ 6424 1622; 147 Gilbert St; mains \$9.45-11.50; ☎ 6.30am-5pm Tue-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) Speciality breads, pastries and delicious homemade pies are served here, and all are made using natural ingredients where possible.

Café Zeta (☎ 6426 1622; 20 Gilbert St; mains \$9.45-11.50; ☎ lunch Tue-Sat) This stylish new establishment serves beautifully presented café food and heartier meals, including melt-in-your-mouth salmon penne and some exquisitely tender lamb shanks. Friday and Saturday evenings things get pretty fancy here: try the chicken breast stuffed with spinach, almond and pecorino, or the superb seafood platter (\$27), which diners are said to travel miles for.

Glo Glo's (☎ 6426 2120; 78 Gilbert St; mains \$22.50; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat) Glo Glo's is housed in Latrobe's

grand 1880s bank building, and in the elegant dining room you can sample food that's equally sophisticated. There's a fine Chateaubriand, prime aged eye fillet, exquisite duck and local venison. The accompanying vegetables are of the just-plucked, home-grown variety. All this is accompanied by one of the best wine lists in Tasmania, served from the wine cellar in the original bank vault.

PORT SORELL

☎ 03 / pop 1820

Port Sorell, just east of Devonport, is much lauded as a place for seaside holidays, but, despite its attractive rural location, it's rather barren and treeless and feels like it's sprung up overnight. Set along Hawley Beach and the tidal flats of the Rubicon River, it has some large holiday conglomerates such as Shearwater, and several retirement villages.

There are walks at low tide on the muddy tidal flat nearby, and also to Point Sorrell, 6km north along the shoreline. Hawley Beach has sandy, sheltered swimming beaches, and is a popular fishing spot. It's just a 20-minute drive from here to Narawntapu National Park (p219).

Sleeping & Eating

Port Sorell Lions Caravan Park (☎ 6428 7267; fax 6428 7269; 44 Meredith St, Port Sorell; unpowered/powerd sites d \$12/20, on-site vans d \$40, cabins \$60) This friendly camping ground has sites sprawled along the enticing waterfront. There's a laundry, a big camp kitchen and a kids playground.

Shearwater Cottages (☎ 6428 6895; shearwatercottages@vision.net.au; 7-9 Shearwater Blvd, Shearwater; d \$90-130) This incredibly neat little enclave is set around a manicured garden and has simple, attractive rooms with all the mod cons. A breakfast basket or BBQ pack is available on request.

Sails on Port Sorell (☎ 6428 7580; www.sailsonport.sorell.com.au; 54 Rice St, Port Sorell; d/apt \$120/135, villa d \$150, extra person \$30) These boutique apartments are just a hop and a skip from the beach and have been kitted out with stylishly contemporary décor in a nautical theme: there are sails and a minilighthouse, plus a stranded boat for kids to play in. The villa sleeps up to six people.

Hawley House (☎ 6428 6221; www.hawleyhouses.com; Hawley Esplanade, Hawley Beach; d \$150-200) Hawley House is a white Gothic 1878 mansion set in beautifully landscaped gardens with wide

ocean views. It offers luxury accommodation in the main house or the stables/lofts (some with spa). Candle-lit dinners in the home's grand dining room are possible by arrangement.

Ghost Rock (☎ 6428 4005; 1055 Port Sorell Rd, ☎ 11am-5pm Wed-Sun, daily Jan & Feb) Just off the road between Devonport and Port Sorell is this attractive vineyard and cellar door that serves antipasto platters, teas, coffees and cakes in stylish surroundings.

The area's other gastronomic options are restricted to the various takeaways around town and the busy bistro at the **Shearwater Resort** (☎ 6428 6205; Shearwater Blvd, Shearwater; mains \$15-22; ☎ lunch & dinner).

DELORAINE

☎ 03 / pop 2500

You could hardly go wrong if you decided to establish a town in such beautiful rural surroundings as stretch out around Deloraine. At the foot of the Great Western Tiers, the town has wonderful views just about wherever you look. Wisely, they've made the street-scapes here pretty lovely, too. Georgian and Victorian buildings, ornate with wrought-iron tracery, crowd together along the main street that leads to green parkland on the banks of the Meander River. The town has an artsy, vibrant feel, with several cool little eateries, some bohemian boutiques and secondhand shops. The strong artistic community here celebrates annually with the Tasmanian Craft Fair (p240), drawing tens of thousands of visitors in late October/early November: bear in mind that accommodation is tight if you're visiting at this time.

With Deloraine as a base you can bushwalk the Great Western Tiers, explore the caves of the Mole Creek Karst National Park or get acquainted with Tasmanian devils at the nearby Trowunna Wildlife Park (p242).

Information

Bushwalkers can pick up food supplies in Deloraine, but for specialised gear you're better off buying in Devonport or Launceston. **ANZ Bank** (54 Emu Bay Rd) Has an ATM.

Commonwealth Bank (24 Emu Bay Rd) Has an ATM.

Great Western Tiers Visitor Centre (☎ 6362 3471; 98-100 Emu Bay Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm) Shares premises with the Deloraine Folk Museum & YARNS: Artwork in Silk and has information on antique, arts and crafts, and gallery outlets. Internet access is also available (\$2 per 15 minutes).

Online access centre (☎ 6362 3537; Emu Bay Rd; per 30min/hr \$3/5; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 1-4pm Sun) Located down the steps behind the Library.

Post office (10 Emu Bay Rd)

Sights & Activities

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

The Deloraine Folk Museum & YARNS: Artwork in Silk (☎ 6362 3471; 98 Emu Bay Rd; adult/child/concession/family \$7/2/5/15; ☎ 9.30-4pm) The centrepiece of the museum here is an exquisite four-panel, quilted and appliquéd depiction of the Meander Valley through a year of seasonal change. It's an astoundingly detailed piece of work that was a labour of love by 300 creative local men and women. Each of the four panels entailed 2500 hours of labour and the whole project took three years to complete. It's now housed in a purpose-built auditorium, where you can witness a presentation explaining the work: it's fascinating and truly worth seeing. Also on display at the museum are slightly moth-eaten local history exhibits.

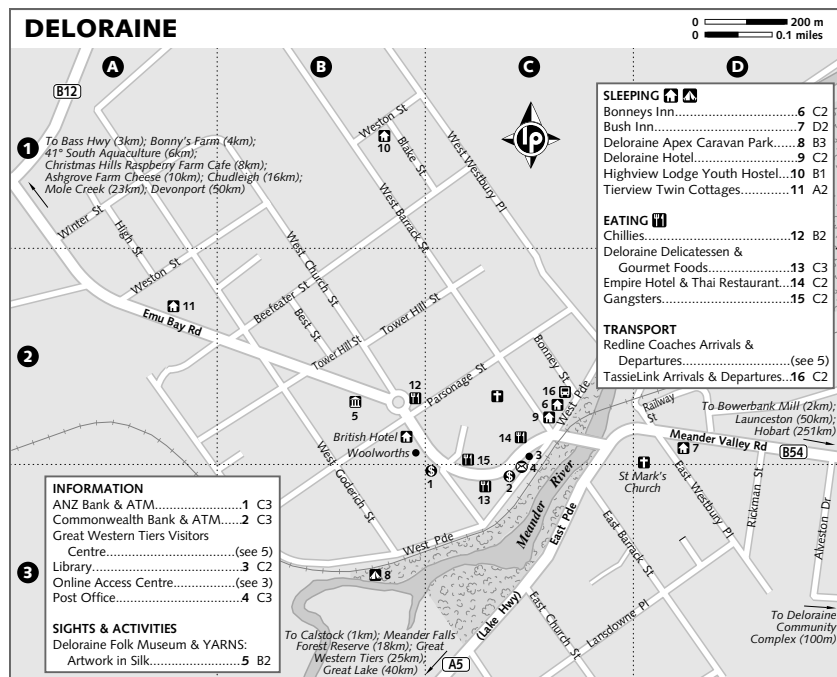
ASHGROVE FARM CHEESE

Journey 10km north of Deloraine to find **Ashgrove Farm Cheese** (☎ 6368 1105; www.ashgrovecheese.com.au; 6173 Bass Hwy, Elizabeth Town; ☎ 9am-5.30pm), a cheese factory specialising in award-winning traditional varieties such as Rubicon red, smoked cheddar and creamy Lancashire. You can watch the cheeses being made and then taste the fine results in a crumbly vintage cheddar or an adventurous *wasabi*-infused sample. It's also a great place to purchase deli fare for a picnic.

BUSHWALKING

Dominating the southern skyline are the Great Western Tiers (their Aboriginal name is Kooparoona Niara, 'Mountain of the Spirits'), which provide some excellent walking and feature waterfalls, exceptional forest and some long climbs. The **Meander Forest Reserve** is the most popular starting point. From the swing bridge over the Meander River here – where there are bowers of man ferns and tall trees – you can walk to **Split Rock Falls**. This route takes about three hours return, or you can walk to **Meander Falls** – five to six hours return.

Other good walks on the Great Western Tiers include those to **Projection Bluff** (two hours return), **Quamby Bluff** (five hours return) and **Mother Cummings Peak** (three to five hours return). Note that several tracks on the tiers



that require the crossing of private land have been closed due to public liability issues, including Montana Falls, Westmoreland Falls and the South Mole Creek Track.

41° SOUTH AQUACULTURE

About 6km out of town in the direction of Mole Creek (well-signed down Montana Rd) is **41° South Aquaculture** (☎ 6362 4130; 323 Montana Rd; adult/child/concession/family \$10/5/7/25; ☎ 9am-5pm Nov-Mar, 10am-4pm Apr-Oct). You don't have to be a fish-lover to visit this interesting farm where salmon are reared in raised tanks and a wetland is used as a natural biofilter. This no-waste, no-chemical fish farming is the cleanest way of raising fish: 10,000 to 15,000 salmon are growing here art any one time, without any negative impact on the environment. This also makes for superb smoked salmon, which you can taste and buy in the tasting room, or you can lunch on smoked salmon sandwiches, salmon roulottes and snack platters in the café.

Festivals & Events

The impressive **Tasmanian Craft Fair** is held in annually in Deloraine and runs for four days,

ending on the first Monday in November. Up to 30,000 people visit 200 stalls at 10 venues around town, the main one being the Deloraine Community Complex.

Sleeping BUDGET

Deloraine Apex Caravan Park (☎ 6362 2345; West Pde; unpowered/powerd sites d \$11/14) At the bottom of the main street and on the banks of the Meander River is this simple camping spot with basic facilities. Don't be alarmed if an almighty thundering disturbs your slumber here in the middle of the night: there are train tracks right beside the park. Just block your ears as the freight train rolls through.

Highview Lodge Youth Hostel (☎ 6362 2996; 8 Blake St; dm/d from \$21/49, f \$49-84) It's a bit of a steep climb up to this hilltop YHA, but you'll be rewarded by the expansive views over the Great Western Tiers. It has a cosy, homely atmosphere, and when the wood heater is roaring, you could just imagine you're out in a bushwalking hut, somewhere in the wilds. Travellers not staying overnight may use the shower facilities for \$5 per person.

Bush Inn (☎ 6362 2365; fax 6362 2329; 7 Lake Hwy; r per person \$25) There's spacious pub accommodation here, and although there are no en suites there are just seven rooms – and there's rarely a full house – so you won't be sharing the bathroom with too many others. The price includes a self-serve continental breakfast.

Deloraine Hotel (☎ 6362 2022; www.delorainehotel.com.au; Emu Bay Rd; r \$30 per person) This 1848 pub is veritably draped in wrought-iron lace, and itsubbish interior is being renovated bit by bit into what will eventually be an altogether salubrious establishment. In the meantime you can get one of the simple rooms upstairs for the night, and dine on fair pub grub (mains \$12 to \$13) in the restaurant below.

MIDRANGE

Bonney's Farm (☎ 6362 2122; 76 Archer St; d from \$90-100, extra person \$15) Set on a working farm among the crops and the cattle are three fully self-contained two- or three-bedroom units, with excellent views of the Great Western Tiers. To get here, head some 4km out of town towards Devonport and take the turn-off to Weetha.

Tierview Twin Cottages (☎ 6362 2377; 125 Emu Bay Rd; 4-person cottage d \$115, 6-person cottage d \$135, extra person \$20) These identical twin cottages are just off the main street, and offer comfortable self-contained accommodation. One cottage has an open fire and sleeps up to four in two bedrooms, the other sleeps up to six and has a spa bathroom. Get your keys from the Shell service station opposite.

Bonney's Inn (☎ 6362 2974; www.bonneys-inn.com; 19 West Pde; s/d/tw \$120/148/168) Built by John Bonney, son of a convict, in the 1830s, this was Deloraine's original coaching inn: horses were tied up out the back, and servants camped in the garden. Inside, travellers still stay in an old-world atmosphere in attractively modernised rooms. The days begin with hearty cooked breakfasts including homemade pastries and fresh, local fruit.

Bowerbank Mill (☎ 6362 2628; www.bowerbankmill.com.au; 4455 Bass Hwy; s/d without bathroom \$125/155, cottage \$195) This fantastic B&B is set in a historic 1853 flour mill some 2km east of the town centre. It's thoughtfully furnished, with beautiful antiques throughout, and the cottage has an amazing six-storey high bluestone chimney and a great fireplace to toast by. Substantial continental breakfasts are provided and there are reduced rates for longer stays.

TOP END

Calstock (☎ 6362 2642; www.peppers.com.au/calstock; Lake Hwy; d \$305-475) On this 80-hectare property just south of Deloraine, parklike grounds filled with mature trees surround a Georgian mansion, which now houses a much-awarded boutique hotel. There are seven bedrooms (one wheelchair accessible) and two magnificent suites decorated in French provincial style, as well as grand lounges, gourmet breakfasts, and a three-course set menu dinner (\$80) by arrangement. Leave the kiddies at home.

Eating

Deloraine Delicatessen & Gourmet Foods (☎ 6362 2127; 36 Emu Bay Rd; mains \$5.50-11.50; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) A fine place for late-morning baguettes, bagels and focaccias, with a variety of tasty fillings. Its coffee is pungently superb, and it does dairy- and gluten-free meals too.

Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm Cafe (☎ 6362 2186; www.raspberrymill.com.au; Christmas Hills Rd, Elizabeth Town; meals \$9.50-29; ☎ 7.30am-5pm) There are 16 acres of raspberries grown here, and you can take a short walk to see them in all their glory – before indulging in everything raspberry at the lakeside café. Think raspberry sundaes piled high with the ruby-coloured fruits, homemade raspberry ice cream, raspberry waffles, baked raspberry cheesecake, pavlovas, smoothies and even a shocking pink raspberry latte. The farm is 8km north of Deloraine on the Bass Highway.

Gangsters (☎ 6362 3882; 53-55 Emu Bay Rd; mains \$9.50-18.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) The roomy dining room here is decked out with gangster-theme touches, but the menu will keep you on the straight and narrow: there are pizzas, burgers, sandwiches, focaccias, soups and excellent smoky pork ribs.

Chillies (☎ 6362 3669; 81 Emu Bay Rd; mains around \$10; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Fri) Brightly painted and terracotta tiled in a faintly Mexican theme, this place across the road from the visitors centre serves good light meals and the best seafood chowder ever. There's also great coffee and cake for just \$6.

Empire Hotel & Thai Restaurant (☎ 6362 2075; 19 Emu Bay Rd; mains \$10-20; ☎ 7.30am-9.30pm summer, 11.30am-3pm winter, dinner 5.30-9.30pm year-round) The newly renovated café in this heritage hotel serves breakfasts, cakes and coffees, while the adjacent Thai restaurant serves up fine lunches and dinners. There's also a bar next door that has live entertainment a few nights

a week. There are plans to open an upmarket backpackers upstairs by late 2008.

Getting There & Away

See p229 for details of the Redline Coaches service from Launceston to Deloraine, which arrives at and departs from outside the visitors centre.

Tassielink (☎ 1300 300 520, 62 72 7300; www.tassielink.com.au) Tassielink does ply the route from Launceston to Deloraine, but (for complicated reasons) can only pick up passengers here who are travelling further than Devonport, and can't drop people off. This means you can only travel with Tassielink from Deloraine if you are heading to Sheffield (\$27, two hours 10 minutes), Cradle Mountain (\$53.30, three hours), or further along their west coast service to Strahan. See p229 for more information.

CHUDLEIGH

☎ 03

Make a beeline (sorry...) for Chudleigh's **Honey Farm** (☎ 6363 6160; www.thehoneyfarm.com.au; 39 Sorell St; ☎ 9am-5pm Sun-Fri) where you can get sticky fingers lingering over the free tastings of some of their range of over 50 different types of honey, or sample some of the superb honey ice cream. In the shop you can browse through all things bees and honey – from beeswax boot polish to propolis supplements, to honeycomb, to bee cuddly toys. Less cuddly – but much more fascinating – are the 1000 bees you can watch hard at work in a glass-walled hive in the museum display corner.

Two kilometres west of Chudleigh is the **Trowunna Wildlife Park** (☎ 6363 6162; adult/child/concession/family \$16/8.50/14/44; ☎ 9am-5pm Feb-Dec, to 8pm Jan), which specialises in Tasmanian devils, wombats and koalas. The park operates an informative 75-minute tour where you get to pat, feed or even hold the critters. Tour start at 11am, 1pm and 3pm. The park also has many birds, including rosellas, geese, white goshawks and two wedge-tailed eagles.

MOLE CREEK

☎ 03 / pop 260

About 23km west of Deloraine and just around the bend from Chudleigh is pretty Mole Creek, a tiny rural town with beautiful mountain views and a couple of good places to stay and eat. It's also a great jumping-off point for spelunking and bushwalking. There's a **Parks and Wildlife Visitors Centre** (☎ 6363 1487;

☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri; ☎) here, which can help with info on bushwalking in the area – particularly at the Walls of Jerusalem – and on visiting the nearby caves.

Sights & Activities

MOLE CREEK KARST NATIONAL PARK

The word 'karst' refers to the scenery characteristic of a limestone region, including caves and underground streams. The Mole Creek area contains over 300 known caves and sinkholes. The park itself is in a number of small segments, including the public caves which you can tour. For bookings contact **Mole Creek Caves** (☎ 6363 5182, fax 6363 5124; mccaves@parks.tas.gov.au).

Public Caves

The national park's two public caves are **Marakoopa** (its name derives from an Aboriginal word meaning 'handsome'), and **King Solomons Cave**. Visits to Marakoopa can be made on two different tours, which run several times each day between 1 October and 31 May. The first tour shows you underground rivers and an incredible display of glow worms, as well as sparkling crystals and beautiful reflective pools. These easy tours leave at 10am, 12pm, 2pm and 4pm and are suitable for all age groups. A more demanding tour involves climbing a steep stairway and visits the Great Cathedral, with delicate limestone gardens of shawls and straws and glow worm clusters. It leaves at 11am, 1pm and 3pm daily. (In winter, from 1 June to 30 September, there's no 4pm tour.) Tours of King Solomons Cave will show you lavish colours and formations in this more compact cave. Tours depart at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 3.30pm and 4.30pm daily from 1 December to 30 April. Prices for admission and tours are adult/child/concession/family \$15/8/12/38. (In winter, from 1 May to 30 November, the 10.30am and 4.30pm tours are dropped.) The caves are a constant 9°C so wear warm clothes and good walking shoes. Snappers beware: there's no flash photography allowed in the glow worm chamber as this affects their natural luminescence. Entry to King Solomons Cave is payable only by credit card or Eftpos – no cash. Cash payments for entry to both caves can be made at Marakoopa, 11km away. When you come back up into the light you can hang out at the picnic grounds or use the free electric BBQs.

Wild Caves

Cyclops, Wet, Honeycomb and Baldocks are among the better-known wild caves in the Mole Creek area that are without steps or ladders. If you're an experienced caver who wants to take on some vertical rope work, you'll need to make arrangements with a caving club. Alternatively you can take one of the excursions offered by **Wild Cave Tours** (☎ 6367 8142; www.wildcavetours.com; 165 Fernlea Rd, Caveside), which provides tours for \$85/170 per half/full day, including caving gear (not for children under 14 years). Your guide is an environmental scientist and her love of the caves really shines through. She'll show you a host of endangered species in the caves, and knows of species yet to be described. Book ahead on the tours and bring spare clothing and a towel – if the drought ever breaks, you could get very wet.

R STEPHENS LEATHERWOOD HONEY FACTORY

At this **factory** (☎ 6363 1170; 25 Pioneer Dr; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Jan-Apr), you can watch leatherwood honey extraction and bottling plant in operation. (Leatherwood trees – *Eucryphia lucida* and *Eucryphia milligani* – are endemic to Tasmania.) There are also honey sales here and if you ask nicely, they might give you a low-key guided tour of the factory.

DEVILS GULLET

Those with transport should head for the Western Tiers. The only road that actually reaches the top of the plateau is the gravel road to Lake Mackenzie. Follow this road to **Devils Gullet**, where there's a 40-minute return walk leading to a platform bolted to the top of a dramatic gorge: looking over the edge isn't for the faint-hearted.

BUSHWALKING

There are a number of popular short walks in the area, including **Alum Cliffs Gorge** (one hour return), a short scenic walk along a sloping spur to an impressive lookout. Alum Cliffs (or Tulampanga, as it's known to the tribal custodians, the Pallitorre people) is a sacred celebration place where tribes met for coroborees. Note that the South Mole Creek Track crosses private land and remains closed to walkers due to public liability issues. For information about walking in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, see right.

Sleeping & Eating

Mole Creek Caravan Park (☎ 6363 1150; cnr Mole Creek & Union Bridge Rds; unpowered/power sites \$15/17, extra person \$3) This is a thin sliver of a park about 4km west of town beside Sassafras Stream, at the turn-off to the caves and Cradle Mountain.

Mole Creek Hotel (☎ 6363 1102; tigerbar69@hotmail.com; Main Rd; s/d \$50/90, extra adult/child \$25/15) This attractive pub was built with breezily high ceilings in 1907 and has clean better-than-pub rooms – some with good views – upstairs. The restaurant here (mains \$12 to \$21, open lunch and dinner) does great, meaty meals like lamb shanks in red wine and rosemary sauce. If you're tiger-curious, you should pop into the Tiger Bar here, where you can see a life-sized model of the Tasmanian tiger, jaws dramatically agape, and a collage of tiger sighting articles from the local paper.

Mole Creek Guest House & Laurel Berry Restaurant (☎ 6363 1399; 100 Pioneer Dr; s \$105, d \$135-150; ☎) This place is a real find. There are beautifully renovated, spacious rooms and a little private cinema upstairs. Downstairs Laurel Berry restaurant serves really excellent food all day – from the hearty walkers' breakfasts to the homemade quiche and salad at lunch (mains \$11 to \$26), to the fantastic steaks at dinner (mains \$18 to \$27). You can't go past the bread-and-butter pudding with laurel berry syrup.

Blackwood Park Cottages (☎ 6363 1208; www.blackwoodparkcottages.com; 445 Mersey Hill Rd; cottages \$125-165), this place offers two lovely self-contained cottages set among well-maintained gardens in a rural setting, with views to the surrounding mountains. There's handcrafted furniture, heated floors, and breakfast is homemade bread, muffins, real coffee and free-range eggs. Children are most welcome. It's well signed off a side road just to the Deloraine side of Mole Creek.

WALLS OF JERUSALEM NATIONAL PARK

This compact national park is one of Tasmania's most beautiful. It's a glacier-scoured landscape of spectacularly craggy dolerite peaks, alpine tarns, a diverse array of flowering plants and forests of ancient, gnarled pines. The park adjoins the lake-spangled wilderness of the Central Plateau and is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Several walking tracks lead through it, and also join the park with hikes in the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park.

The park is reached from Mole Creek by taking the Mersey Forest Rd to Lake Rowallan. The last 11km is on well-maintained gravel roads. The most popular walk here is the full-day trek to the 'Walls' themselves. A steep path leads up from the car park on Mersey Forest Rd to Trappers Hut (two hours return), Solomon's Jewels (four hours return), through Herod's Gate to Lake Salome (six to eight hours return), then Damascus Gate (nine hours return). If you plan to visit historic Dixon's Kingdom hut and the hauntingly beautiful pencil pine forests that surround it (10 hours return from the carpark) or climb to the top of Mt Jerusalem (12 hours return), you are far better to camp up in the Walls for at least one night. There are tent platforms and a composting toilet at Wild Dog Creek. You'll need to be fully equipped and prepared for the harsh weather conditions: it snows a substantial amount here particularly – but not only – in winter, and it's not unheard of to be snowed in here in a tent for days. Walks across the park are described in *Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair and Walls of Jerusalem National Parks*, by John Chapman and John Siseman, and in Lonely Planet's *Walking in Australia*.

Tasmanian Expeditions (☎ 1800 030 230, 6334 3477; www.tas-ex.com) has a six-day Walls of Jerusalem circuit (\$1390) taking in the park's highlights as well as some of the more out-of-the-way spots such as Lakes Adelaide, Myrtle and Mt Rogoona.

Getting There & Away

BUS
For buses on demand contact **Maxwells** (☎ 6492 1431), which runs from Devonport to the Walls of Jerusalem (\$185 for up to four people or \$45 per person for larger groups) and from Launceston to Cradle Mountain via the Walls of Jerusalem (\$240 or \$60 per person).

CAR

The quickest access to the Walls is from Sheffield or Mole Creek. From Mole Creek take the B12, then the C138 and finally the C171 (Mersey Forest Rd) to Lake Rowallan; remain on this road, following the C171 and Walls of Jerusalem signs to the start of the track.

MOLE CREEK TO SHEFFIELD

Head north on the C137 some 4km after Mole Creek and you'll traverse the Gogg Range before passing through the little settlement

of Paradise – surrounded by emerald green fields and forested hills. Shortly after Paradise there's a T-intersection at which you can follow signs right to Sheffield or left to Gowrie Park and Cradle Mountain.

Gowrie Park

Situated at the foot of Mt Roland just 14km from Sheffield, Gowrie Park makes an excellent base for mountain walks or for a rural retreat. There are walks to the summits of Mts Roland (1234m), Vandyke (1084m) and Claude (1034m), and shorter walks in the cool, shady forests of the lower slopes, such as the pleasant meander through the bush at nearby O'Neills Creek Reserve. Bird lovers take note: there are 94 species in the Mt Roland area.

SIGHTS

Mt Roland is a comb of rock that's the prominent mountain backdrop to the picturesque rural views here. This steep-sided mountain looks spectacularly difficult, but it can be climbed by confident walkers: just don't attempt it when its icy in winter.

There are two access points. The first is from Claude Rd village, a short distance towards Gowrie Park from the T-junction at Paradise. To use this access, turn off at Kings Rd and head south for about 1.5km to the start of the Mt Roland Track, which is 6.5km long and takes 3½ hours return (this track is very steep and awkward in places, necessitating clambering up and over boulders). The other access point is at Gowrie Park itself, where you turn off the main road just near the sports ground and travel 2km to the start of the track. The track itself is 10km and takes approximately four hours return.

SLEEPING & EATING

Mt Roland Budget Backpackers (☎ 6491 1385; www.weindorfers.com; 1447 Claude Rd; powered sites d \$5, dm, tw & d per person \$10; ☒) Tucked into the foothills of Mts Roland, Vandyke and Claude, this place is an ideal hiking base. It will also give new meaning to the idea of camping with wildlife: you'll have pademelons, possums and wallabies visiting every night. They also have simple, hostel-style accommodation with a well-equipped kitchen, free laundry and internet use.

Gowrie Park Wilderness Cabins (☎ 6491 1385; 1447 Claude Rd; d from \$72; ☒) Adjacent to the back-

packers and run by the same people are these four comfortable self-contained cabins. In winter (May to the end of September) you get a second night for free. When we visited, we noted that the complex was for sale. The settlement here is also home to the much-loved restaurant Weindorfers.

Silver Ridge Wilderness Retreat (☎ 6491 1727; www.silverridgeretreat.com.au; 46 Rysavy Rd; apt \$125-250; ☒) Right at the foot of Mt Roland, these cottages are about as peaceful as you can get, and have fantastic mountain views. You can soak in the heated indoor pool, climb mountains, watch the birds and the beasts, or go horse riding on Mustang Sally, Misty or Mac.

Weindorfers (☎ 6491 1385; Cradle Mountain Main Rd, Gowrie Park; mains \$10-26.50; ☒ 10am-late Nov-April) This rustic wooden cabin is the place to sample wonderful home cooking in front of a roaring fire. Come here with a post-bushwalk appetite and start with a steaming soup and fresh bread, then try the house special of smoked trout or the divine lamb mushrooms. Leave room for the legendary golden-syrup ice cream. Weindorfers also caters of vegetarians, gluten-free and other special diets. Reservations are essential. Open by prior arrangement in winter.

C140 & Lake Barrington

Approximately 6km down the road from Gowrie Park to Cradle Mountain, turn off onto the C140, which will take you northwest back towards Sheffield. From the southern end of this road, there are heartstoppingly panoramic views of Mt Roland. Two kilometres along you'll pass **Highland Trails Horse Riding** (☎ 6491 1533, 0417-145 497; www.highland-trails.com.au; 1st hr \$40, then per hr \$30) which can take you out on horseback into the foothills of Mts Roland, Van Dyke and Claude on rides ranging from one hour to several days. Longer trips involve overnight camping.

Slightly closer to Sheffield is **Cradle Vista** (☎ 6491 1129; www.cradlevista.com.au; 978 Staverton Rd; d \$130), where you can get your first wonderful views over Cradle Mountain on a clear day. There's comfortable, bright B&B accommodation here in a couple of en suite rooms in the main house and a large, open-plan unit.

The **Granary** (☎ 6491 1689; www.granary.com.au; 575 Staverton Rd; s \$110-120, d \$120-180; ☒) has half a dozen well-equipped timber cottages featuring the windows produced at the **stained-glass workshop** (☒ 9am-5pm Wed-Fri, to noon Sat) here.

Linen and electric blankets are supplied. This is the perfect spot for families as there's oodles for the kids to do: from the treehouse to the games room and the video library. Mum and dad can soak in the spa or sweat it out in the sauna.

Just 400m from the Granary, and well signed from every direction, is **Tasmazia** (☎ 6491 1934; www.tasmazia.com.au; 500 Staverton Rd; adult/child \$16/9; ☒ 10am-4pm April-Nov, 9am-5pm Dec-March) and the **Village of Lower Crackpot**. This whimsical complex of hedge mazes, a colourful miniature village and a lavender farm is well meaning in tongue-in-cheek, crazy pantomime style. Adults don't scoff: the kids will love it. Look out for such waggish touches as Nancy the witch, who appears to have crashed her broomstick, or the sword in the stone: if you can retrieve it, King Arthur style, it will win you this whole fanciful kingdom for yourself. When you're famished from all the fun, you can retreat to the large **pancake parlour** (pancakes \$8.95-17.95; ☒ 10am to 4pm) to feast on sweet and savoury pancakes – possibly the best is a sweet nutty concoction known, rather appropriately in the context, as the Nutcase.

The approach road from the turn-off near the maze leads to the section of **Lake Barrington** that has been marked out for international, national and state rowing championships. Other access roads lead to picnic areas and boat ramps; camping is also available.

Further along the C140 road, and flanked by a hedge the size of Texas, is **Carinya Farm Holiday Retreat** (☎ 6491 1593; www.carinyafarm.com.au; 63 Staverton Rd; d \$115, extra person \$20). Staying in pine-lined loft-bedroom chalets overlooking peaceful farmland and Mt Roland, guests receive homemade bread and freshly laid farm eggs. Dinner can be arranged.

Lovers of fine food and wine should visit **Barrington Park Vineyard** (☎ 6492 3140; 60 Gillams Rd, Lower Barrington; ☒ 10am-5pm daily Jan-Feb, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun March-Dec), where there are tastings and cellar-door sales of handcrafted cool-climate wines. You can sit out on their deck, savour a gourmet platter with your vino, and be awe-inspired by the glorious views.

Wilmot

☎ 03
Wilmot, on the western side of Lake Barrington, is worth staying at if you're visiting Cradle Mountain and don't mind a drive (note the amusing trail of novelty letter boxes all along

the C132). You can fill up on petrol and diesel here, and there's an ATM.

The township boasts the first **Coles store** (☎ 6492 1335; ☎ 7.30am-6pm) – the Coles name is now part of one of Australia's largest supermarket chains.

Set in the 1893 Wilmot bakery, the **Old Wilmot Bakehouse** (☎ 6492 1117; www.oldwilmotbakehouse.com.au; Cradle Mountain Rd; s/ste \$55/145, extra person \$35) offers lovely country accommodation. There are just four rooms – ranging from backpacker to king-sized suite, all with en suites. You'll be tempted into the adjacent **bakery** (☎ 10am-4pm) by the wonderful aromas of baking bread. The pies here are renowned, as are the enormous cooked breakfasts that go for \$15. There are dinners for house guests and pizza nights on weekends. Bookings are essential.

Five kilometres north of Wilmot is the turn-off to **Lake Barrington Garden Café** (☎ 6492 1394; Lake Barrington Rd; meals \$8.50-32.50; ☎ 10-4pm Oct-Apr), a further 3km down a gravel side road in a beautiful garden setting beside Lake Barrington. Sit outside and you can listen to native birdsong and gaze over to Mt Roland and the lake, and savour all things yummy from the excellent menu, including the Garden Gourmet Platter (\$32), delicious deserts like the plum teacake, and fine wines, coffees and smoothies. The two-hour return walking track to beautiful **Forth Falls** starts in the café's car park.

SHEFFIELD

☎ 03 / pop 1020

The lovely 'Town of Murals' wasn't always the thriving rural hub it is today. In the 1980s Sheffield was a typical small Tasmanian town in the doldrums of rural decline. That was until some astute townfolk came up with an idea that had been applied to the small town of Chemainus in Canada, with some surprisingly wonderful results. The plan was to paint a few large murals on walls around town, depicting scenes from the district's pioneer days. What started with these humble beginnings has been a roaring success: Sheffield is now a veritable outdoor art gallery with over fifty fantastic large-scale murals, and an annual painting festival to produce more. People come from all over the world to wander its streets and appreciate what's now a collection of really excellent artwork – and the influx of visitors has allowed the town to thrive way beyond those early mural-painting dreams.

Information

Newsagency (Main St) Acts as a Westpac agent; also has a multibank ATM. There's also a Commonwealth Bank with an ATM on Main St.

Slater's Country Store (☎ 6491 1121; 52 Main St; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun) Has an ATM.

Visitors centre (☎ 6491 1036; 5 Pioneer Cres; ☎ 9am-5pm) Supplies information on the Kentish region, and provides internet access (\$2 per 15 minutes). Also makes accommodation and tour bookings.

Sights & Activities

MURAL AUDIO TOURS

You can now grab a headset from the visitors centre and take a thoroughly informative **audio tour** of Sheffield's alfresco art. Headsets cost \$7 or you can get two for \$10. It's the perfect way to see the murals, and the interpretation is first class. The tour takes about 90 minutes with strolling time between murals, but you can keep the headset all day. You'll hear all about the best-known paintings like *Stillness and Warmth*, which features Gustav Weindorfer of Cradle Mountain fame (see p295); *Butlers Mail Coach 1910*, a huge, magnificent depiction of a coach and horses against the backdrop of Mt Roland; and *Cradle Mountain Beauty*, a wide panorama of Cradle Mountain in snow. Spot the park ranger carrying a bathtub to one of the Overland Track huts! The audio tour takes you to some 20 of the best of the murals in town and also leads you through the **Working Art Space** (☎ 11am-3pm Fri-Tue), where you can see local artists at work and buy some of their oeuvre.

KENTISH MUSEUM

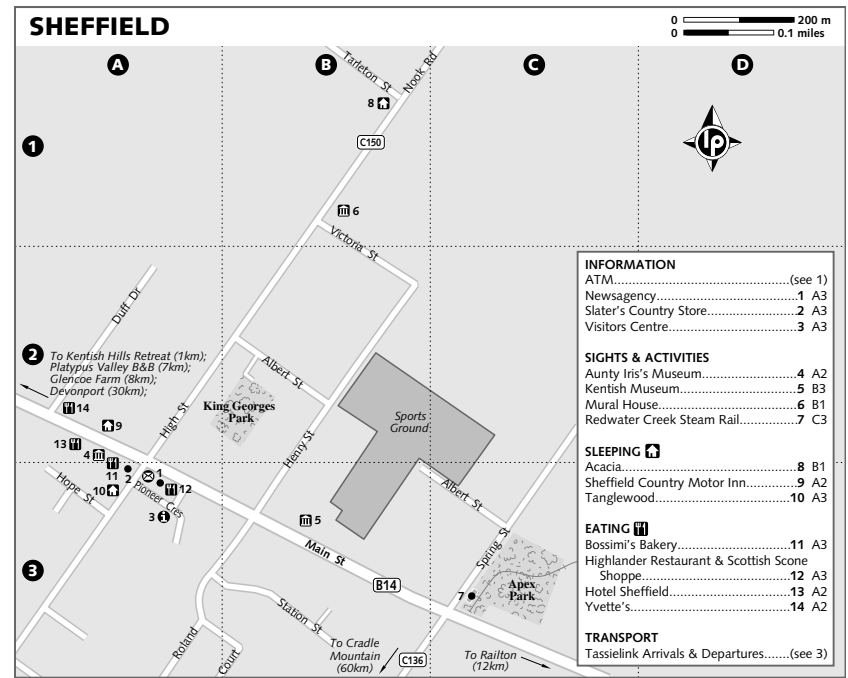
This **museum** (☎ 6491 1861; 93 Main St; entry by donation; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-4pm Mon & Wed, 10-3pm Tue, Thu & Fri) has all sorts of historic clutter on display: an early telephone exchange, old organs, military paraphernalia, and the world's first automatic petrol pump, invented by a local Sheffield boy.

MURAL HOUSE

The odd little **Mural House** (☎ 6491 1784; 100 High St; adult/child/student \$2/\$0c/\$1; ☎ 1-5pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun) contains interpretations of native art of various cultures in the form of internal wall murals. You may be better off with the outdoor art in town – but if you want to actually buy some art, you can do so here.

AUNTY IRIS'S MUSEUM

This **doll museum** (☎ 6491 1559; 44 Main St; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 9am-5pm) bills itself as one of Australia's



most comprehensive and boasts over 1500 dolls from the 1800s to the present day. If you can bear all those glassy eyes googling at you, it's the kind of place where the kids will be fascinated.

REDWATER CREEK STEAM RAIL

Departing from the original Sheffield train station at the eastern end of town, the **Steam Rail** (☎ 6491 1613; cnr Main & Spring Sts; adult/child/concession/family \$5/3/4/12) offers rides on locomotives running on a narrow-gauge track from 11am to 4pm on the first weekend of each month, for two weeks in early January and on some public holidays – dependent on volunteer train-driver availability. Train buffs will ooh and ahh at the rare A Krauss 10 locomotive here. There's also **Steam Fest**, a grand three-day occasion on the long weekend of March that's a true celebration of steam and bygone days, and a must (not just for trainspotters). The tractor pulling competitions are a hoot!

Festivals & Events

Mural Fest, Sheffield's celebration of outdoor art is held late March to early April each year.

It's a massive paint-off; a theme is set and artists from all over Australia descend upon the town to compete for a cash prize, and to add another nine murals to the town's walls. The best thing about all this is that you get to watch some incredibly skilled artists at work on their creations. If you plan to visit at this time, be sure to book accommodation well ahead.

Sleeping

There's an overnight parking facility for caravans and campervans next to the recreation centre on Albert St. Water and toilets are available, but there are no showers and no other facilities. There's a shower at the information centre (three minutes for \$1).

Sheffield Country Motor Inn (☎ 6491 1800; fax 6491 1966; 49-53 Main St; motel s/d \$85/95, units d \$90-100, extra adult/child \$20/15) There are neat and well-equipped motel rooms here, one with three bedrooms, set just back off main street. Some of the town's best murals are immediately adjacent.

Tanglewood (☎ 6491 1854; www.tanglewoodtasmania.com; 25 High St; s from \$90, d \$95-110, extra person

\$10) There are three large bedrooms here, all with en suites, delicious feather doonas and electric blankets, and a great sense of old-world style. You can sip a port in front of the open fire in the guest lounge, or stroll the English gardens. They also serve evening meals by arrangement.

Kentish Hills Retreat (☎ 6491 2484; www.kentishhills.com.au; 2 West Nook Rd; d \$100-130, apt \$130-150, extra adult/child \$25/20; 📺) In a quiet location just west of town with superb views of Mt Roland, this option offers a range of accommodation from double rooms to apartments sleeping up to six. It's more motel than hotel in style, but there are good facilities, including spas, minibars, queen-sized beds and a guests' laundry.

Acacia (☎ 6491 2482; www.acaciabbtas.com.au; 113 High St; s from \$80, d \$110-135; 📺) This welcoming B&B is set in a 1906 home surrounded by attractive gardens and has appealing guest rooms, excellent breakfasts and friendly hosts. You can make yourself tea or coffee and grab a homemade biscuit, or perhaps relax in the guest lounge by the cosy fire with a board game or a DVD.

Platypus Valley B&B (☎ 6491 2260; www.platypusvalley.com.au; 10 Billing Rd; s \$99-130, d \$110-150, extra adult/child \$60/30) Tucked away in green country just outside Sheffield (off the C141; take the turn-off onto the B141 about 1km outside town), this beautiful spot is somewhere you're almost guaranteed to see platypuses gambolling. This is a beautiful timber home with attractive guestrooms, in an environment where the key ingredient is peace.

our pick Glencoe Farm (☎ 6492 3267; www.glencoe-ruralretreat.com.au; 1468 Sheffield Rd; d \$165-185) Just north of Sheffield on the B14 at Barrington, this gorgeous property, owned by celebrated French chef Remi Bancal, is making a great name for itself. You can stay in its romantic and eminently stylish rooms, and you just mustn't miss the superb three-course dinners (\$50) – available by prior arrangement.

Eating

Yvette's (☎ 6491 1893; 43 Main St; mains \$9.90-18.90; 🍷 lunch Thu-Mon) This French-style café has cool red-leather sofas, an upmarket bistro feel and friendly service. There's an excellent mezze tasting plate with warm Turkish bread (\$18), and there's a popular Cajun chicken burger (\$9.90). Try Yvette's cob sandwich: a three-layered wonder of chicken, bacon, tomato, egg and mayo (\$9.90).

Bossimi's Bakery (☎ 6491 1298; 44 Main St; 🍷 breakfast & lunch Mon-Fri) This bakery does the industry proud with lots of speciality pastries, cakes and bread.

Hotel Sheffield (☎ 6491 1130; 38 Main St; mains; \$10-16; 🍷 lunch & dinner) You can always try the pub, which offers good-value counter-meal options and a lively local atmosphere to boot.

Highlander Restaurant & Scottish Shoppe (☎ 6491 1077; 60 Main St; mains \$18-20; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) No kilt required! This is a delightful place serving delicious pumpkin scones (\$5) and hearty café fare such as homemade pies and desserts by day, and an à la carte menu including traditional roasts by night.

Getting There & Away

Tassielink buses stop directly outside the visitors centre.

ULVERSTONE

☎ 03 / pop 9800

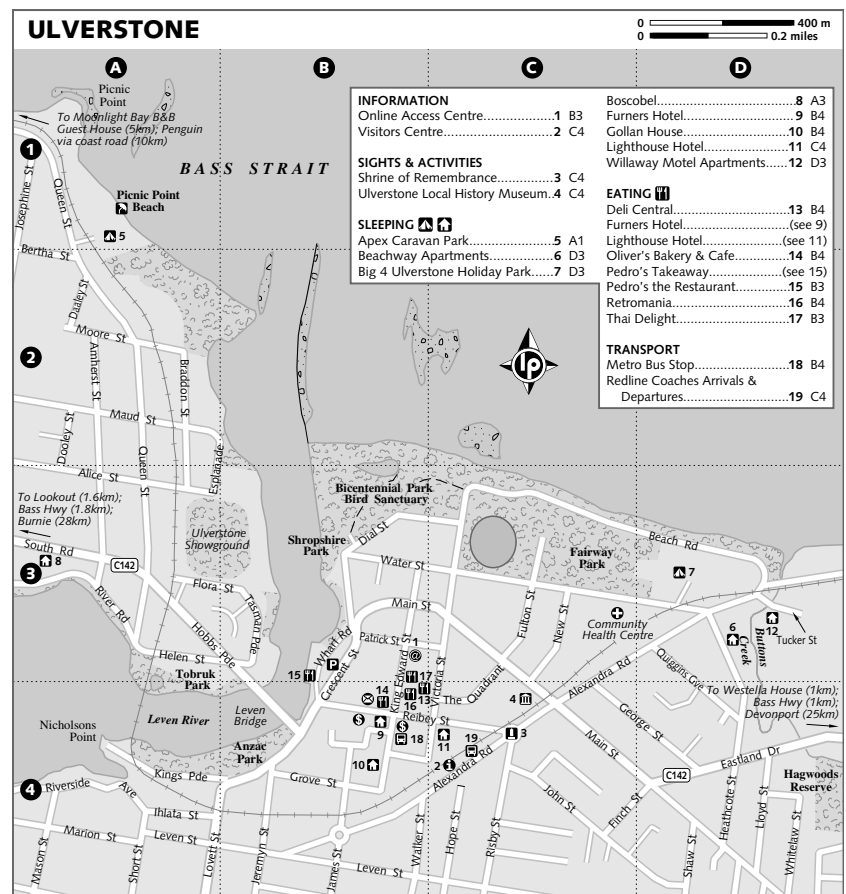
Quiet little Ulverstone sits around the mouth of the Leven River, and though it has all the services visitors expect, it also has a pleasantly old-fashioned rural town feel – you could be forgiven for thinking you have stepped back in time 30 years.

The commanding feature in town, which you can't miss as you drive in (at the intersection of Reibey St and Alexandra Rd) is the vastly imposing **Shrine of Remembrance**, built in 1953 and incorporating an older WWI memorial. It's rich in symbolism: look for the laurel wreath, the chain links of togetherness, and the torch of remembrance – or at least set your watch by the clock on top.

The **Ulverstone visitors centre** (☎ 6425 2839; 13 Alexandra Rd; 🍷 9am-5pm) is a treasure-trove of local knowledge. The internet is available at the **online access centre** (☎ 6425 7579; 15 King Edward St; per hr \$2; 🕒 9.30am-12.30am & 1.30pm-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-12.30pm Fri) in the local library.

The **Ulverstone Local History Museum** (☎ 6425 3835; 50 Main St; admission \$4; 🕒 1.30-4.30pm) concentrates on the area's early farmers, displaying tools, manuscripts, an extensive photographic collection, and assorted artefacts behind a mock-pioneer façade.

Ulverstone is a pleasant, quiet town to stop if you're touring this part of the world. You may not want to hang around for ages, but it's certainly worth ducking into for its friendly, old-fashioned country-town feel.



Sleeping BUDGET

Apex Caravan Park (☎ 6425 2935; Queen St; unpowered/power sites \$14/16) There's not much shade here but you can hardly be more seaside than this location off Picnic Point Beach on the western side of the mouth of the Leven River.

Big 4 Ulverstone Holiday Park (☎ 6425 2624; fax 6425 4654; 57 Water St; sites d \$31, on-site vans \$68, 3-bunk cabins from \$95, units \$105-140; 📺) Set in grassy, treed surroundings just behind East Beach, this park, close to the town centre, is friendly and has good facilities, including a campers kitchen, playgrounds and plenty of adjoining parkland to run free in.

Furners Hotel (☎ 6425 1488; 42 Reibey St; s/d \$60/80) It's all grand wooden staircases and flowery

carpets here, and the rooms are comfortable in a pleasingly old-fashioned way. Each has its own bathroom. The meals downstairs are excellent (see p250).

Beachway Apartments (☎ 6425 2342; 1 Heathcote St; s/d from \$72/80, extra adult/child \$20/15, 1-2-/3-bed apt \$185/220/320; 📺 📺) This complex has some motel-style rooms as well as recently upgraded self-contained apartments. There's an outdoor heated pool and spa, and a satisfying restaurant on site, serving breakfast and evening meals (mains \$25 to \$27).

MIDRANGE

Westella House (☎ 6425 6222; www.westella.com; 68 Westella Dr; s \$80-110, d \$110-128) This Gothic Revival home looks as pretty as a gingerbread house.

Inside you'll find just three beautifully decorated rooms, and friendly hosts who serve a slap-up breakfast. The highway has encroached since the house was built in 1865, but there's not much traffic at night and the bedrooms' windows are double glazed.

Boscobel (☎ 6425 1727; www.boscobel.com.au; 27 South Rd; d \$95-160; 🚗) Boscobel has rather old-fashioned accommodation in a National Trust-listed home. The frills extend from the bedrooms through to the alfresco-dining tablecloths. There's a heated indoor pool in summer, but you may opt instead to go swimming in your bathroom: the deluxe room has the biggest spa you've ever seen.

Willaway Motel Apartments (☎ 6425 2018; www.willaway.southcom.com.au; 2 Tucker St; d \$100-130; 🚗) You can't go wrong with this collection of generic, tidy self-contained modern units. They're opposite a nice stretch of lawn with BBQ facilities, only a minute to the beach, and have wireless internet for communications junkies.

Lighthouse Hotel (☎ 6425 1197; lighthouse@goodstone.com.au; 33 Victoria St; d \$109-129) The faux lighthouse crowning the central well here feels a little like a circus tent, but the motel-style rooms are neat and clean. All have mini bars and tea- and coffee-making equipment. A rather minimalist continental breakfast is included in the tariff. Meals are served in the central dining area daily (see right).

Moonlight Bay B&B Guest House (☎ 6425 1074; www.moonlightbay.worldstays.com; 141 Penguin Rd; d \$140-165) With absolute beach frontage, this luxury (and gay-friendly) boutique B&B commands views over Bass Strait. Both suites include a lace-canopy four-poster bed (one king-sized). The rate includes full English buffet-style brekky and the use of a spa. The guesthouse is 5km northwest of town and is unsuitable for children.

Gollan House (☎ 6425 3613; 58 King Edward St; d \$150; 🚗) Built in 1910 for a Dr Gollan and his family, this attractive mansion has been meticulously restored and houses boutique accommodation in expansive rooms with fireplaces, spas, and high ceilings. Breakfast is delivered to your room.

Eating

Pedro's Takeaway (☎ 6425 5181; Wharf Rd; mains \$4-9; 🕒 11am-8pm) Next door to Pedro's Restaurant, this place does superb fish 'n' chips, as well as fresh fish and seafood to take away.

Deli Central (☎ 6425 5205; 48b Victoria St; meals \$5-13; 🕒 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) You'll find Ulverstone's best breakfasts here: try the chewily delicious French sourdough with poached free-range eggs and home-made relish. At lunch you can't go past the roast pumpkin and caramelised-onion tart. The food is organic and locally grown as far as possible. Stock up for picnics at the impressive deli here. It's slightly tricky to find: ask for the car park off Edward St, behind Thai Delight.

Oliver's Bakery & Cafe (☎ 6425 4118; 41 Reibey St; sandwiches from \$5.60; 🕒 6am-6pm) Oliver's has inventive focaccias, tasty savoury pies and crispy all things sweet, including great apple pies, cream buns, caramel slices and custard tarts.

Retromania (☎ 6425 1900; 31 King Edward St; \$7-15; 🕒 breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) This little café sells retro gifts and memorabilia and serves fine Italian coffee as well as sandwiches, soups and jacket potatoes. There's also a 1950s meal deal: a hamburger with corn chips, salsa and milkshake (\$13.50).

Furners Hotel (☎ 6425 1488; 42 Reibey St; mains \$10-21; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Furners is set in an ornate Federation building – perhaps Ulverstone's best – with a wide veranda and liberal wrought-iron lace. Inside they serve a hearty menu that includes all sorts of carnivorous fare from the wood-fired grill. You can get all your greens at the salad bar. Save room for some commendable deserts.

Thai Delight (☎ 6425 3055; 25 King Edward St; mains from \$10; 🕒 dinner Tue-Sat) Locals rave about this place and you can tell why: the Thai chef in the kitchen whips up everything from scratch, to order, and it's perfectly, pungently spicy. If you can't tell your *Tod Mon Gai* from your *Peek Gai Tod*, the friendly servers will explain.

Lighthouse Hotel (☎ 6425 1197; 33 Victoria St; mains \$18-25; 🕒 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) You can get the usual pubby fare here: roasts, fish, steaks, chicken schnitzels, chips and salad to overflow your plates.

Pedro's the Restaurant (☎ 6425 6663; Wharf Rd; mains \$24-29; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Grab a table right by the water at this top-notch restaurant, perched on the banks of the Leven River where it empties into Bass Strait, and savour tastes of the sea as the sun goes down. What a view! The paradise seafood platter for two (\$89) is the most popular offering here. Make sure you

arrive on an empty stomach. The menu caters to both carnivores and vegetarians.

Getting There & Away

Redline Coaches arrive at and depart from Alexandra Rd, near the War Memorial clock, outside the IGA Supermarket, opposite Gunns/Mitre 10. For further details of transport services in the region, see p229.

During the week, **Metro** (☎ 13 22 01, 6431 3822) operates regular local buses from Burnie to Ulverstone (\$3.40). Buses heading to Burnie leave from the corner of King Edward and Reibey Sts.

AROUND ULVERSTONE Penguin

☎ 03 / pop 4040

Penguin feels like one of those pretty little English seaside towns where its all ice creams, buckets and spades, salt-tousled hair, and the occasional sneaky breeze as you try to brave it out on the beach. But there's one very un-English thing about this place. You guessed it: penguins! The beaches and dunes around town are some of the spots where the world's smallest penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) comes ashore during its breeding season, and even if you don't see any of them in the feather, you can get acquainted with the model penguins around town: perfect for photo ops. The town also attracts visitors for its glorious roadside garden displays, as well as its sandy beaches and azure shallows.

Staff at the friendly **Penguin visitors centre** (☎ 6437 1421; 78 Main Rd; 🕒 9am-4pm Oct-Mar, 9.30am-3.30pm Apr-Sep) will ply you with the local lowdown, including details on the little-known 80km Penguin-to-Cradle walking trail that starts at Dial Range just outside town (see p252).

The **online access centre** (☎ 6337 0771; 125 Ironcliffe Rd; 🕒 8am-3pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 8am-9pm Tue & Thu, 9am-noon Sat) is located on the grounds of the Penguin High School.

From September to March, real penguins return from their daytime ocean foraging at dusk at **Penguin Point**. You can view them independently, but ask at the visitors centre about any tours being offered when you're in town. Note that flash photography of the penguins is prohibited.

Hiscutt Park, beside Penguin Creek, has good playground equipment and a scaled-down working **Dutch windmill**. In September, the tu-

lips surrounding the Wipmolen mill are so abundant, you might suddenly feel like you're in Holland.

Every Sunday the popular **Penguin Market** (🕒 9am-3.30pm) takes place. There are over 300 browse-worthy stalls here selling everything from fresh local produce to art and crafts, gifts and trinkets. Foodies will love the gourmet grub and Tassie wines.

SLEEPING & EATING

Neptune Grand Hotel (☎ 6437 2406; 84 Main Rd; s/d/tw without bathroom \$39/49/49) Right in the heart of Penguin, this friendly pub has clean but basic accommodation: rooms have sinks, but facilities are shared. The dining room serves some cheap staples (mains \$5 to \$26): there's a parmi (chicken parmigiana) special from \$5 to \$7, and the surf 'n' turf is only \$15 for weekday lunches.

Glenbrook House B&B (☎ 6437 1469, 0417-293 275; glenbrookhouse@bigpond.com; 89-91 Browns Lane; d \$85-110) Want to really get away from it all? Then come to Glenbrook. It's only 3kms from Penguin, but surrounded by 50 peaceful acres of natural bush, orchard and trout-filled creeks. There's B&B accommodation in the house or a self-contained cottage. Continental breakfast is included in the tariff.

Madsen (☎ 6437 2588; www.themadsen.com; 64 Main St; d \$148-195; 🚗) This boutique hotel is housed in a truly grand edifice right on the waterfront. Many of the rooms have breathtaking views of Bass Strait, and the views of the interior aren't half bad either. Decorated in meticulous good taste, with a touch of the antique and a good measure of contemporary cool, this is a particularly pleasurable place to stay. Don't book just one night.

Groovy Penguin Café (☎ 6437 2101; 74 Main Rd; mains \$8-13; 🕒 breakfast & lunch Wed-Sun; 🚗) This lesbian- and gay-friendly retro-gallery café sports melamine tables, crazy-coloured walls, and a menu that's strong on organic. You can't go wrong with a zesty veggie burger, a huge, creamy smoothie or a potent coffee from the hands of some mightily skilled baristas. The sea views come free.

Wild Café Restaurant (☎ 6437 2000; 87 Main Rd; lunch mains \$12-19, dinner mains \$20-29; 🕒 lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) The whole northwest coast is talking about this upmarket addition to Penguin's dining scene. The cuisine includes Thai-inspired char-grilled calamari, and five-spice brioche with marinated duck, orange and Grandmarnier. Wow!

DETOUR

The forested hinterland near Ulverstone is perfect off-the-beaten-track exploring territory. There's a circuit using the B17 from either Ulverstone or Penguin known as the **Coast to Canyon Circuit**. Start by driving to Penguin along the picturesque coast road, then delve south to Riana. In the **Dial Range**, just behind the Penguin, there are some good walking tracks, including the start of the little-known **Penguin Cradle Trail**: an 80km, six-day bushwalk through rugged backblocks to Cradle Mountain. It's for experienced walkers only. Ask for a route guide at Penguin's visitors centre (p251).

From Riana, a scenic drive brings you to the **Woodhouse Lookout**, with excellent views over the Leven Valley. More winding road leads to **Wings Wildlife Park** (☎ 6429 1151; www.wingswildlife.com.au; 137 Winduss St; adult/child \$17/8; ☹ 10am-4pm) which has an eclectic collection of creatures, native and exotic, ranging from devils to camels, crab-eating macaque monkeys and even bison. There's a **camping ground** (unpowered/power sites d \$10/13.30; dm s/d \$15/20, cabins \$85-139), and light meals in the **café** (☹ 10am-4pm).

Close by are **Gunns Plains Caves** (☎ 6429 1388; adult/child/concession/family \$12/6/10/35; ☹ 10am-4pm), filled with magical limestone formations and glow worms. There are guided tours between 10am and 3.30pm that involve some clambering and ladder work.

Back on the B17 you can complete the circuit back to Ulverstone or take the C127 and C125 to the Leven Canyon. On the C124 at Gunns Plains is **Leven Valley Vineyard & Gallery** (☎ 6429 1186; www.levenvalleyvineyard.com.au; 321 Raymond Rd; ☹ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon Nov-April, Fri-Mon May-Oct), a boutique vineyard where you can taste and buy wine, and browse pottery, wood turning and jewellery. Signposted just off the road near the vineyard are lower and upper **Preston Falls**: all cascading water and primeval man ferns.

Continue via Nietta to **Leven Canyon**. A 15-minute track leads to the sensational gorge-top lookout, a sky platform peering 275m down to the Leven River below. From the Leven Canyon picnic ground you can drive approximately 1km down Loongana Rd to the car park for a 20-minute walk to the canyon floor. There's a 10-hour walk through the canyon for experienced walkers. Nearby day walks lead to **Winterbrook Falls** (four hours return) and **Black Bluff** (six hours return).

There's B&B accommodation and visits to the gorgeous gardens (adults \$5) at **Kaydale Lodge** (☎ 6429 1293; www.kaydalelodge.com.au; 250 Loongana Rd, Nietta; s/d \$80/120). The tearoom here serves morning and afternoon teas, and home-cooked meals by arrangement.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

During the week, **Metro** (☎ 13 22 01, 6431 3822) runs regular local buses from Burnie to Penguin (\$4.50) and return (see p256). The main stop is at (the now defunct) Penguin Station on Crescent St.

BURNIE

☎ 03 / pop 19,335

Try as you might, you can't exactly call Burnie an outrageously attractive town. It's certainly in a dramatic natural setting – tumbling down steep hillsides to the shores of Emu Bay – but Burnie has long been an industrial stronghold for paper making, heavy-machinery manufacturing, agricultural services and shipping. Perhaps the biggest features in town are the shockingly gigantic piles of woodchips on the dockside – the fate of much of Tasmania's forests – most of it being readied for export to Asia. It has plenty of services for visitors,

though, and is a handy jumping-off point for Cradle Mountain and the far reaches of the northwest coast. Lovers of architecture will appreciate the abundance of fine Art Deco buildings around town.

Information

North West Regional Hospital (☎ 6430 6666; Brickport Rd) A few minutes west of the city centre: take Brickport Rd off the Bass Hwy just east of Cooee.

Online access centre (☎ 6431 9469; 2 Spring St; per hr/30 mins \$6/3; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30-12pm Sat) Internet access is also available at the visitors information centre.

Visitors centre (☎ 6431 4391; Little Alexander St; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) Located in the same building as the Pioneer Village Museum. Offers several interesting brochures about walks, including a 17km-long circuit that will take you to parks, creeks and beachside boardwalks. If you're an art and architecture fan, ask for maps of the public art and Art Deco walking trails around Burnie.

Sights & Activities

PIONEER VILLAGE MUSEUM

This absorbing **museum** (☎ 6430 5875; Little Alexander St; adult/child \$6/2.50; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, Sun & public hols), is a re-creation of a 1900s village streetscape – including a blacksmith, wash house, stagecoach depot and boot-maker – complete with appropriate soundtrack.

BURNIE REGIONAL ART GALLERY

This **art gallery** (☎ 6431 5918; gallery@burnie.net; Civic Centre Precinct, Wilmot St; admission free; ☹ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 1.30-4.30pm Sat, Sun & public hols) has excellent exhibitions of contemporary Australian artworks, including photography, sculpture and painting.

PARKS & GARDENS

Burnie Park (☹ car access sunrise-sunset) features rose-filled flower beds and the oldest building in town, **Burnie Inn**. This National Trust-classified inn was built in 1847 and later moved to the park from its original location. You can admire it from the outside only. The adjacent oval is home to New Year's Day Burnie Athletics Carnival, and also the revered Burnie Dockers Aussie Rules football team.

The serene **Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden** (☎ 6433 0478; Breffny Rd; adult/child \$5/3; ☹ 10am-4pm Aug-Feb), 8km south of Burnie (on the B18) via Mount St and then Cascade Rd, has 20,000 rhododendrons that flower in riotous colour from mid-September to mid-November. For more green, visit **Annsleigh Gardens & Tearooms** (☎ 6435 7229; 4 Metaira Rd; adult/child \$4.50/free; ☹ 9am-5pm Sep-April), 9km south of Burnie on the B18. The lovingly manicured outdoors here features gazebos, water features and cottage garden beds.

Just outside the city centre, **Round Hill Lookout** and **Fern Glade** are the best places for views and peace. Round Hill is accessed by a side road off Stowport Rd, which departs the Bass Hwy on the eastern fringe of suburban Burnie. Fern Glade is also east of the city centre – turn off the Bass Hwy into Old Surrey Rd, just past the old Australian Paper Mill, then take Fern Glade Rd to the left. Fern Glade is renowned as a top spot for platypus spotting at dawn and dusk.

CHEESE TASTING

Down Old Surrey Rd, on the way to Fern Glade, you'll find the cheesemaker **National Foods Australia** (☎ 6433 9255; 145 Old Surrey Rd; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) and its cheese-tasting centre. There's usually a range of brie, cam-

embert and hard cheeses to try here. Light meals like – you guessed it – ploughman's lunch – are also available.

CREATIVE PAPER TASMANIA

Just beside the large Australian Paper Mill is **Creative Paper Tasmania** (☎ 6430 7717; www.creativepapertas.com.au; East Mill Studios, Old Surrey Rd; entry by gold coin donation, tours adult/child/concession/family \$15/8/12/40; ☹ 9am-5 Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun), where you can meet the Paper People – life-sized models in paper – and browse the shop and gallery for some incredible paper creations. Half-hour tours here explain the process of making paper with personality, using all sorts of recycled and ecofriendly material including jeans, cotton and even roo poo!

HELLYERS ROAD WHISKY DISTILLERY

About 1km further up Old Surrey Rd is this **whisky distillery** (☎ 6433 0439; www.hellyersroaddistillery.com.au; 153 Old Surrey Rd; tours adult/child under 16 \$10/free; ☹ 9.30am-5.50pm, reduced opening in winter). You can tour the distillery here to see how this golden single-malt whisky is made, and afterwards take a tasting of whisky or Southern Lights vodka, which is also made here (nips \$2 to \$4). The on-site café serves snacks and lunches.

PENGUIN-WATCHING

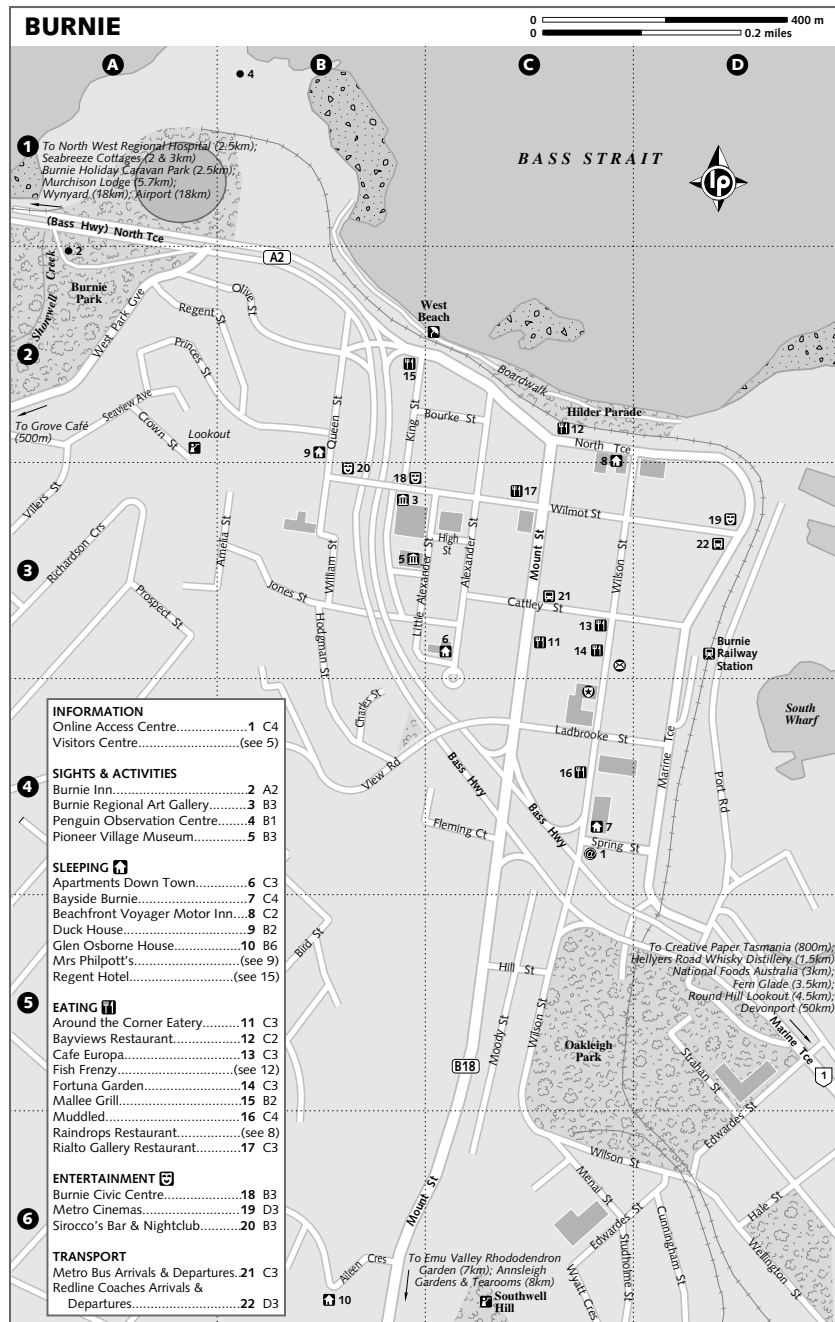
A boardwalk on Burnie's foreshore leads from Hilder Pde to the western end of West Beach, where there's a **penguin observation centre**. Over summer you can observe the birds for free at dusk as they emerge from the sea and waddle back to their burrows. Volunteer wildlife guides are usually present to talk about the penguins and their habits.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Burnie Holiday Caravan Park (☎ 6431 1925; www.burniebeachaccommodation.com.au; 253 Bass Hwy, Cooee; unpowered/power sites d \$18/25, dm \$25, on-site vans d \$50, cabins d \$88-98, extra person \$15; ☹) Located 4km west of the city centre, this park has two backpacker rooms (four and six bunks) equipped with fridge and stove, some grassy camping sites at the property's rear, vans with kitchenettes and a range of cabins.

Regent Hotel (☎ 6431 1933, 26 North Terrace; d \$45, s without bathroom \$30) Not a flashpacker's by any means, but there are basic rooms above the pub here: the ones at the front have sea views.



Double rooms have showers but other facilities are shared.

MIDRANGE

Duck House (☎ 6431 1712; www.ozpal.com/duck; 26 Queen St; s/d \$100/140, extra adult/child \$30/20) Salvation Army stalwarts Bill and Winifred Duck lived here for 30 years, and have been immortalised in this charming little two-bedroom cottage that bears their name. The decoration, predictably, has an emphasis on ducks.

Mrs Philpott's (☎ 6431 1712; www.ozpal.com/philpotts; 28 Queen St; s/d \$100/140, extra adult/child \$30/20) Managed by the same people as Duck House, this equally attractive cottage next door is enhanced by leadlight, a claw-foot bath, brass bedsteads and an unusual keyhole-shaped entry.

Murchison Lodge (☎ 6435 1106; fax 6435 2778; 9 Murchison Hwy, Somerset; r/units \$105/145; ☑) At Somerset, just west of Burnie, this motel has good, clean rooms, a decent restaurant (open for dinner Monday to Saturday) and free wi-fi. You can't beat the location: it's right on the edge of the crystal-clear Cam River, where you can swim and fish to your heart's content.

Bayside Burnie (☎ 6431 4455; cburnie@southcom.com.au; 139 Wilson St; d \$115-150) This large hotel right in town keeps changing its name, but it's also had a recent change of décor, which is all for the better. The rooms here are decent, but the pick of the place is Maginty's Irish Bar downstairs – one of Burnie's better-loved watering holes.

Glen Osborne House (☎ 6431 9866; fax 6431 4354; 9 Aileen Cres; s/d from \$120/160) It may be set in the suburban hills in Burnie's south (off B18), but there's nothing suburban about this establishment. It provides high-standard hospitality in a lavish, National Trust-listed 1885 Victorian house with established gardens. The rate includes a home-style cooked breakfast.

Beachfront Voyager Motor Inn (☎ 1800 355 090, 6431 4866; www.beachfrontvoyager.com.au; 9 North Tce; r \$129-160; ☑) Right across the road from West Beach, this motel has spacious rooms – many recently renovated. Those on the waterfront are the pick, with superb ocean views. The on-site Raindrops Restaurant (see right) is much loved by Burnie-ites.

Apartments Down Town (☎ 6432 3219; www.apartmentsdowntown.com.au; 52 Alexander St; apt \$145-190) Didn't we say Burnie was big on Art Deco? This 1937 building is Deco through and through, and has been thoroughly modernised

to house spacious and well-equipped two- and three-bedroom serviced apartments.

Our pick Seabreeze Cottages (☎ 6435 3424; www.seabreezecottages.com.au; s/d \$130/170, extra adult/child \$40/20) These cottages west of the city centre may just be Burnie's best. There's the cool, contemporary Beachhouse (243 Bass Highway, Cooe) just a stroll across the road from the beach; the romantic heritage three-bedroom Somersby (82 Bass Highway, Cooe); and cute Number Six (6 Mollison St), all kitted out with modern chic décor, juke box and all. We love them!

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Fortuna Garden (☎ 6431 9035; 66 Wilson St; mains \$10-23; ☑) lunch Mon-Fri, dinner) This is a licensed and BYO Chinese restaurant serving great garlic prawns, Mongolian beef, and piles of stir-fry veg to keep vegetarians happy. Eat-in or takeaway.

Muddled (☎ 6431 9393; 104 Wilson St; lunch mains \$10-33, dinner mains \$24-33; ☑) lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat until 10pm) There's nothing muddled about the international cuisine served up here. There is a fine seafood paella, and unusual delicacies such as BBQ ox tongue, periwinkles and char-grilled quail. This is the only place in Burnie where you can order until 10pm or later.

Rialto Gallery Restaurant (☎ 6431 7718; 46 Wilmot St; mains \$14-25; ☑) lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) It's no wonder that this restaurant is such a well-loved Burnie institution: it's been doing a roaring trade for 28 years with its mouthwatering Italian fare. Dishes include tortellini in butter and sage, meltingly delicious ravioli with a pungent four-cheese sauce and fine wood-oven pizzas.

Raindrops Restaurant (☎ 6431 4866; 9 North Tce; mains \$19-32; ☑) lunch & dinner) This eatery at the Beachfront Voyager Motor Inn serves up a good range of locally sourced surf and turf in a convivial atmosphere. Vegetarians are also catered for.

Bayviews Restaurant (☎ 6431 7999; 1st fl, 2 North Tce; mains \$16-34; ☑) breakfast Sat & Sun, lunch & dinner). This new upmarket establishment is right on the beach and serves a brief menu of excellent café-style dishes, from shitake risotto to ocean trout blini and roast lamb. The wraparound views are sublime.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Around the Corner Eatery (☎ 6431 5963; 53 Mount St; meals \$4-16.50; ☑) 8am-5pm Mon-Fri) Aaah...this is

a place to relax on the soft furnishings with a hot choc and the newspaper. They do fab wholesome breakfasts, lunches and afternoon teas, including great homemade burgers and delicious cakes.

Cafe Europa (☎ 6431 1897; cnr Cattley & Wilson Sts; mains \$4.90-15.90; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Thu, 8.30-10pm Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) Step into this café-bar with its sky-blue walls and you'll feel you're somewhere on the Med. The bar sells Italian, French and Spanish wines, and all the likely suspects in European liqueurs. Food includes cooked breakfasts, excellent *pides* (Turkish bread) and salads for lunch, and a host of sweet treats including baklava and Greek biscuits.

Grove Café (☎ 6431 9779; 63 West Park Grove; mains \$8.50-14.50; ☎ breakfast Sat & Sun, lunch) Next to a garden centre and sharing its outdoor ambience, this little café serves light lunches and morning and afternoon teas. The coffee here is excellent and you can accompany it with fresh mixed-berry muffins or a slice of Death by Chocolate. It's at the West Park Nursery (drive up West Park Grove alongside Burnie Park).

Fish Frenzy (☎ 6432 1111; 2 North Terrace; meals \$9.50-24; ☎ 11am-9pm) Downstairs from Bayviews Restaurant, this gourmet fish 'n' chippery does all the usual takes on this seaside favourite, and also offers healthy options such as grilled fish with Greek salad.

Mallee Grill (☎ 6431 1933; 26 North Tce; mains \$15-43; ☎ lunch Sun-Fri, dinner) In the Regent Hotel, the Mallee Grill is a meat showcase, specialising in steaks. The juicy large rump steaks go for \$28, served with chips and potatoes, and there's also the carpetbag variety – steak stuffed with oysters. The all-you-can-eat salad bar (\$4 at lunch and \$6 at dinner) is the best bet for vegetarians.

Entertainment

Metro Cinemas (☎ 6431 5000; www.metrocinemas.com.au; cnr Marine Tce & Wilmot St) This is a shiny cinema showing shiny, mainly first-release Hollywood flicks, but it also serves up some marathon, all-night screenings of old classics.

Burnie Civic Centre (☎ 6431 5033; Wilmot St) This multifunctional complex sees everything from concert divas to comedy acts to readings. Entry is via King St.

Sirocco's Bar & Nightclub (☎ 6431 3133; 64 Wilmot St) This late-night venue entertains a mixed crowd with a regular line-up of live music and DJs pumping out the latest techno, dance, pop and rock.

Getting There & Away

AIR

The Burnie/Wynyard airport (known as either Burnie or Wynyard airport) is at Wynyard, 20km northwest of Burnie.

BUS

See p229 for details of Redline Coaches services to and from Burnie. These buses stop on Wilmot St opposite the Metro Cinemas.

From Monday to Friday, except public holidays, **Metro** (☎ 13 22 01, 6431 3822) has regular local buses to Penguin, Ulverstone, Wynyard (\$4.50 each), departing from bus stops on Cattley St beside Harris Scarfe department store.

WYNYARD & AROUND

☎ 03 / pop 4200

Arranged around the wooded banks of the sinuous Inglis River, Wynyard is a quiet little town that's a service centre for all the agriculture that surrounds it. It's sheltered from westerly weather by prominent Table Cape and Fossil Bluff, and has a pleasant, sedate air. On its doorstep are unpeopled beaches, wind-blasted lighthouses, and the amazing spring display of tulips – spread like a giant coloured bar code across the rich red soils of Table Cape. There are lovely walking trails beside the Inglis River, accessed from several spots close to the centre of town.

Information

Visitors centre (☎ 6443 8330; info@wowtas.com; 8 Exhibition Link; ☎ 9am-5pm) The friendly and super-knowledgeable volunteers at this swanky new visitors centre preside over a real treasure-trove of tourist information. Ask them for the brochure *Scenic Walks of Wynyard and the Surrounding Districts* if you're keen to get out and about on foot. At the library, just behind the police station and ATMs on Goldie St, is the **Online access centre** (☎ 6442 4499; 21 Saunders St; per hr \$5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri). There's also internet access at the visitors centre.

Sights

FOSSIL BLUFF

Three kilometres west of the town centre is 275-million-year-old Fossil Bluff. It was created by an ancient tidewater glacier and is rich in fossils, including the remains of prehistoric whales and the oldest marsupial fossil found in Australia. The species was named *Wynyardia bassiana* in honour of the town. At

low tide you can walk around the base of the bluff and fossick for some of the hundreds of different kinds of fossils preserved here. Ask at the visitors centre for the geological guide *Looking for Fossils*.

TABLE CAPE

An extinct volcano, right here in the verdant hills of Tasmania? Believe it or not, the rocky ramparts of Table Cape once encircled a lake of boiling lava. To visit the Cape in its present, more benign, condition, take the minor road (C234) 4km northwest out of Wynyard, and drive right up to the **lighthouse**, which began its seaside vigil in 1888.

With all that volcanic past, the chocolate-red soils of the cape are extraordinarily fertile. It's just the spot to grow tulips and there's a mesmerising array of colour at **Table Cape Tulip Farm** (☎ 6442 2012; 363 Lighthouse Rd; admission free; ☎ 10am-4.30pm late-Sep-mid-Oct) when the bulbs are in flower in October. A **Tulip Festival** is held usually on the first weekend of October, and is a fun family affair with food, song and dancing against the bright backdrop of the flowers. From March to August you can buy bulbs in the farm's shop.

WONDERS OF WYNYARD

Adjacent to the visitors centre is the **Wonders of Wynyard** (☎ 6443 8330; 8 Exhibition Link; adult/under 15 yr/concession/family \$6/3/5/15; ☎ 9am-5pm), a veteran car collection owned and restored by a Wynyard local. There's a rotating collection of at least 15 ancient Ford cars and motorbikes, including the world's equal-oldest Ford.

FLOWERDALE LOBSTER HAVEN

Signposted west of Wynyard on the C229 is the **Flowerdale Lobster Haven** (☎ 6442 2800; 241 Robin Hill Rd, Flowerdale; adult/child \$5/1; ☎ 10am-4pm Feb-May). Here you can get a close-up view of the giant freshwater crayfish. It's strangely deep-blue, grows up to 1m long, and is an endangered primeval inhabitant of the west coast's creeks and rivers. The tearoom provides light snacks.

Activities

Hire scuba gear from the **Scuba Centre** (☎ 6442 2247; 62 Old Bass Hwy; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) for dives in Wynyard Bay and Boat Harbour.

South of Wynyard the hills of the Oldina State Forest Reserve feature the **Noel Jago Walk**, a short nature walk beside Blackfish Creek. Passing under man ferns and eucalyptus trees,

it takes 30 to 45 minutes to complete. There are reputed to be platypuses in the creek.

Scenic flights over Cradle Mountain (\$140 per person, one hour) and the west (\$250 per person, 2½ hours) can be arranged with **Western Aviation** (☎ 6442 1111), located next to the airport. They even offer a full-day trip around Tasmania, stopping in Hobart for lunch (\$1200 per person).

Sleeping

Beach Retreat Tourist Park (☎ 6442 1998; 30b Old Bass Hwy; unpowered & powered sites d \$24, backpacker s/d \$30/45, s or d motel units/cabins \$80/90) This has to be one of the prettiest caravan parks anywhere. It's in a peaceful spot right by the beach in grounds that are meticulously manicured and pleasingly green. The backpacker's accommodation is in simple double rooms – none of that dorm-sleeping nonsense. There's an excellently equipped kitchen to share.

Wharf Hotel (☎ 6442 2344; 10 Goldie St; s/d \$49/75) The Wharf is slowly being upgraded throughout and the clean and pleasant rooms upstairs are really decent. Some have baths (baths!) and look out over the peaceful Inglis River. The bistro downstairs (p258) is excellent.

The Waterfront (☎ 6442 2351; www.waterfront.net.au; 1 Goldie St; s/d from \$90/110; ☎) As motels go, this is a particularly satisfying one. As the name implies, this place is slap-bang on the water and has clean, stylish rooms with extras like wireless internet. The Riverview restaurant (p258) is quite a sophisticated affair.

our pick Seaward (☎ 6442 2657; www.seawardbb.com; 31 Old Bass Highway; d \$135-165, extra adult/child \$35/25; ☎) The guest book says staying here is 'like walking into a magazine' and it's really true. The owners have kitted out this swish self-contained apartment using exemplary taste and style. There's a corner spa bath, cool leather sofas, wireless internet, brekky provisions – and it's child friendly, too.

Eating

Buckaneers for Seafood (☎ 6442 4104; 4 Inglis St; lunch \$7-15, dinner \$18-27; ☎ lunch & dinner) This is a hugely popular seafood emporium – you won't ever be surrounded by more marine paraphernalia unless you're underwater. Diners sit around the clinker-built sailing boat and chow down on fresh catches; steaks, pasta and takeaways are also available. Inglis St angles off Goldie St at the roundabout in the town centre. Bookings are advised.

Wynyard Hotel (☎ 6442 2048; 1 Inglis St; mains \$9-30; 🍷 dinner Tue-Sat) The glass panel above the dining room door here says 'Dining Room and Cabaret' but we're sad to report you can no longer take in any high kicks here. There's good, solid pub fare to fill you – all the usual dishes represented, including (how many is it now?) that good old chicken parmigiana.

Riverview (☎ 6442 2351; 1 Goldie St; mains \$18-32; 🍷 dinner Mon-Sat) There's quite a stylish dining room here on the edge of the river, and it serves the kind of thing you wouldn't expect from a motel – from *char sui* pork stack with fried wontons to a steaming rabbit pie.

Wharf Hotel (☎ 6442 2344; 10 Goldie St; mains \$19-26; 🍷 lunch & dinner) There's bistro-style dining here, specialising in Tassie seafood and steak. It's a busy place right on the waterfront: judging by its popularity, you're bound to get a good feed. Blackboard specials daily.

Getting There & Away

AIR

The Burnie/Wynyard airport (often listed as Burnie airport) is just one block from Wynyard's main street. If you're looking to get a ride to or from Burnie, the **Burnie Airbus** (☎ 0439-322 466; adult \$10) meets most flights and can pick up from prearranged points and from the visitors centre; bookings are advised.

Rex (☎ 13 17 13; www.regionalexpress.com.au) fly to Burnie/Wynyard from Melbourne.

Tasair (☎ 1800 062 900, 6248 5088; www.tasair.com.au) flies between Devonport and King Island via Burnie/Wynyard once a day. One-way flights from Burnie/Wynyard to either Devonport or King Island cost \$165. Tasair also flies to Burnie/Wynyard from Hobart on weekdays for \$165 one way.

BUS

During the week, **Metro** (☎ 6431 3822) in Burnie runs regular local buses from Burnie to Wynyard for \$4.50. The main bus stop is on Jackson St.

BOAT HARBOUR BEACH

☎ 03 / pop 400

Picture-perfect Boat Harbour has the kind of blond-sand beach and sapphire-blue waters to make you feel like you've taken a terribly wrong turn off the Bass Hwy and ended up somewhere in the Caribbean. Not to worry: no pirates here – apart from a particularly Jolly Roger on the beach, that is.

You can take to the harbour's remarkable waters to swim and snorkel, discover the rock-pools, or paddle in the shallows. The usually calm seas are perfect for kids, and it's a low-key family-friendly place, but get here quick: there are developers sniffing around to build resorts at Boat Harbour. The crowds are bound to follow.

Sleeping

Sunny Sands Holiday Units (☎ 6442 2578; www.sunnysands.com.au; 285 Port Rd; d \$130-170) Fresh and simple, these well-thought-out self-contained units have balconies to relax on and wide views of the sea.

Boat Harbour Beach Houses (☎ 6445 0913; www.boatharbourbeachhouse.com; d \$150-200, extra person \$30) There are two beach houses managed by the same owners: the View (12 Moore St) is set high on the hillside with endless panoramas, and the Waterfront (314 Port Rd), whose deck is so close to the water, you could fish off it. They're both excellently equipped.

Harbour Houses (☎ 6442 2135; www.harbourhouse.com.au; Esplanade; d \$200, extra person \$40) These perfect little waterfront cottages are open plan, brightly decorated and liberally doused with a good dose of cool. We love the surfboard tables and rugs.

our pick Paradise House (☎ 6435 7571; 22 Azure Beach Houses, 263 Port Rd; d \$240, extra adult/child \$30/20; 📺) This supersmart beach house is part of a new complex and has absolutely top-notch accommodation in three bedrooms. The trendy living areas have mod cons including free wi-fi. Bikes, fishing gear, surfboards, boogie boards and all manner of beach gear come free. Standard rate is for up to two adults and two children.

Azure Holiday Houses (☎ 0400-142 222; 263 Port Rd; d \$280, extra adult \$30; 📺) It's all contemporary style at the beach houses in this complex. There's every convenience you could imagine: DVD/CD players, wi-fi, air conditioning, a swanky kitchen, and walls hung with contemporary art.

Eating

Jolly Rogers (☎ 6445 1710; 1 Port Rd; mains \$10-25; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner) This laid-back beachside café serves real-hunger solutions: burgers, pastas and, of course, great fish and chips. Try the fabulous salt-and-pepper squid (\$17). There's also a fenced play area where you can stow the little ones.

Getting There & Away

If driving from Wynyard, the best route from the cape is to follow C234 northwest; there are some great views of the cliffs and rocky coast along this road. By bus, the daily Redline Coaches service from Burnie will drop you at the turn-off to Boat Harbour (3km) or Sisters Beach (8km) for \$6.

ROCKY CAPE NATIONAL PARK

This is Tasmania's smallest national park, stretching 12km along Bass Strait's shoreline. It was known to Aboriginal Tasmanians as Tangdimmaa and has great significance to the Rar.rer.loi.he.ner people, who made their homes in the sea caves along the coastline here 8000 years before European occupation.

Inland, the park is made up of coastal heathland and rare *Banksia serrata* forests. The rolling green hills are splashed bright with wild flowers in the spring and summer months; those fond of flowers will be thrilled by the orchid-hunting here. The rocky quartzite coastline has abundant rockpools brimming with seaweeds and brightly coloured anemones and sea stars.

There's good swimming in the park at Sisters Beach, Forwards Beach and Anniversary Bay. **Sisters Beach** has an 8km stretch of bleached-blond sand, picnic tables and a shelter. Close by is Sisters Beach village, reached via C233 from Boat Harbour.

On Rocky Cape itself, you can drive out to a stunted **lighthouse**, with the Nut (p260) floating distantly on the horizon.

Bushwalking

From Sisters Beach, the walk to **Wet Cave**, **Lee Archer Cave** and **Banksia Grove** takes 45 minutes (one way); to reach the start of this walk, follow the signs to the boat ramp. You can continue further along the coast to Anniversary Point (three hours return). It's also possible to follow the coast to Rocky Cape and return along the **Inland Track** (eight hours return).

From the western end of the park at Rocky Cape Rd (accessed from a separate entrance off the Bass Hwy, west of the turn-off to Sisters Beach), you can walk to two large Aboriginal caves, South Cave and North Cave, the latter off the road to the lighthouse. The caves are significant Aboriginal sites, so visitors are encouraged *not* to enter them. There's also a good circuit of the cape itself –

allow 2½ hours. There's no drinking water in the park, so carry your own, and watch out for snakes, particularly in summer.

Sleeping & Eating

There are no camping facilities inside the national park itself, only on the highway near the entrance to Western End (see below).

SISTERS BEACH

Sisters Beach General Store (☎ 6445 1147; Honeysuckle Ave; 🍷 7.30am-7pm winter, 7.30am-8pm summer), which sells supplies, takeaways and park passes, also runs Bamboo Beach House and Shifting Sands.

Sea Change (☎ 6445 1456; 6 Elfrida Ave; d \$99, extra person \$25) Billed as a B&B, it's actually more of a self-contained apartment, nicely decorated, and with all you need to stay a few days. There's a tannin-brown creek nearby where platypuses are frequently spotted.

Bamboo Beach House (☎ 6445 1147; 19 Kenelm Ave; cottage d \$130-150, extra adult/child \$25/15) A self-contained, low-key three-bedroom cottage that can sleep up to six people.

Shifting Sands (☎ 6445 1147; 119 Irby Blvd; cottage d \$130-150, extra adult/child \$25/15) This is a new two-bedroom unit with great sea views and a sunny deck. It can sleep up to six people.

WESTERN END

Rocky Cape Tavern & Caravan Park (☎ 6443 4110; Bass Hwy; unpowered/powered sites \$11/22, motel d \$70) Conveniently located on the highway just near the western end of the national park, this place has clean and tidy facilities. The tavern serves counter meals daily (mains \$18 to \$27.50).

CRAYFISH CREEK TO BLACK RIVER

This part of the coastline is a series of pretty little beaches and rocky coves marred by the heavy-industry complex at Port Latta, the terminus for the 85km iron-ore pipeline from the Savage River Mine. Fortunately there's only one factory located here, and away from the busy smokestack the coast is pleasant.

You can camp at **Peggs Beach Conservation Area** (camp sites per adult/child \$2.50/1.50), where there are toilets, tables, fireplaces, water and an on-site caretaker with whom you register. This area is popular for fishing and is prime Australian salmon territory (October to March).

Camping is also available at the **Crayfish Creek Caravan Park** (☎ /fax 6443 4228, 0419-302 354; 20049 Bass Hwy; unpowered/powered sites \$18/22, on-site

DETOUR

Head into the hills south of Rocky Cape (on C225) and you'll discover forests, waterfalls and timber-getting the way it used to be done. At **Water Wheel Creek Timber Heritage Experience** (☎ 6458 8144, www.waterwheelcreek.com.au; 1314 Mawbanna Rd; adult/child/family \$10/5/25; 🕒 10am-5pm Nov-Apr, to 3pm May & Sep-Oct) there's a timber-working museum, interpretative forest walks, a working timber tramway and a warm, wood-lined café. Further south you can visit **Dip Falls**, where a short, steep walk will get you to the cascades' base. About 1km from the car park, you'll find the **Big Tree**, its circumference a whopping 16m.

vans \$40, cabins \$75-140), in a quiet bush setting among the tea trees on the banks of Crayfish creek, or take one of their pretty timber cabins. There's also a delightful multilevel 'tree house' (double with spa for \$140) for those who prefer lofty accommodation.

Gateforth Cottages (☎ 6458 3248; www.gateforthcottages.com; 40 Medwins Rd; d \$180, with spa \$220) Offering comfortable and very relaxed accommodation in self-contained cottages, and with fantastic views of Circular Head, Gateforth is also a terrific base from which to wander the farm lanes, pat the animals and go fishing. Kids are most welcome. To get here, travel about 6km west of Port Latta. Gateforth Cottages are signed to the left about 1km past the C225 to Mawbanna.

STANLEY

☎ 03 / pop 550

Get this far west in Tasmania and you begin to feel it: there's a whiff of something in the air that feels quite distinctly like the very end of the world. Little Stanley exudes more than a trace of this frontier, life-on-the-edge ambience. The town is a scatter of brightly painted cottages, sheltering in the lee of an ancient volcano, the Nut, that's been extinct for 13 million years. In Stanley's harbour bobs a fleet of fishing boats, piled high with cray pots and orange buoys, but beyond this shelter the ocean is often whipped into whitecaps. Stroll through town on a fine day and you may not feel that underlying edginess that comes from being on the world's rim; but when the Roaring 40s blast through, you'll feel it sure

enough, and that's part of the excitement of being here.

Information

There's an ATM located inside the town's minimart (on the corner of Wharf Rd and Marine Esplanade).

Newsagency (☎ 6458 1372; 17 Church St) You can make Eftpos withdrawals here.

Post office (Church St) Also serves as an agent for Commonwealth Bank and National Bank.

Visitors centre (☎ 6458 1330; info@stanley.com.au; 45 Main Rd; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun, reduced hours in winter) Friendly and knowledgeable staff with extensive regional advice. Also offers internet access (\$2 per 15 min).

Sights & Activities

THE NUT

This striking 152m-high volcanic rock formation can be seen for many kilometres around Stanley. It's a steep 20-minute climb to the top: worth it for the views. The best lookout is a five-minute walk to the south of the **chairlift** (☎ 6458 1286; adult/child/family \$9/7/25; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Oct-May, 10am-4pm Jun-Sep), and you can also take a 35-minute walk (2km) on a path around the top. From here, in summer, you can wait to view mysterious short-tailed shearwaters (also called mutton birds) as they return to their burrows at dusk after a day's foraging in the ocean.

STANLEY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

To learn more about Stanley, visit the diminutive **folk museum** (Church St; adult/child \$3/50c; 🕒 10am-4pm), filled with old Circular Head photos and artefacts, including marine curios. It also runs a genealogical service (\$5, including museum entry).

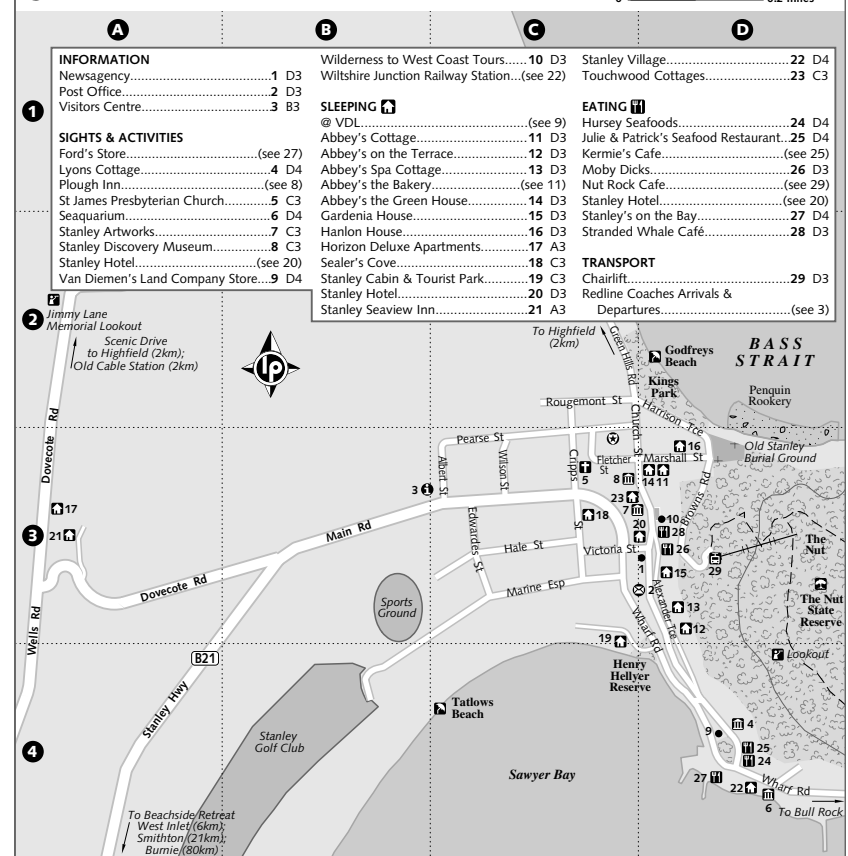
STANLEY ARTWORKS

You don't have to be an art buff to enjoy the amazing skill and creativity that's on offer at this **gallery** (☎ 6458 2000; 29 Church St; 🕒 9am-6pm, reduced hours in winter). There's usually an artist in residence who you can watch at work.

SEAQUARIUM

Providing a great display of marine life, **Seaquarium** (☎ 6458 2052; Fisherman's Dock; adult/child/family \$8/5/23; 🕒 9am-5pm daily 7 Sep-14 May, 11am-3pm Sat & Sun 15th Jun-6 Sep) is a great place to bring the kids. It's educational fun; they'll be squealing over the touchy-feely tank.

STANLEY



HIGHFIELD

This impressive **homestead** (☎ 6458 1100; Green Hills Rd; adult/child/family \$9/4/22; 🕒 10am-4pm) was built in 1835 for the chief agent of the Van Diemen's Land Company, a wool-growing venture launched in 1824. The impressive home – with equally impressive views – is a rare example of domestic architecture of the Regency period in Tasmania. Highfield is 2km north of town. You can tour the house and outbuildings including stables, grain stores, workers' cottages and the chapel.

OTHER HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The bluestone warehouse on the seafront is the 1844 **Van Diemen's Land Company Store** (16 Wharf Rd), and while it once held bales of wool

for export, it now houses an exclusive boutique hotel, @VDL (p262). Also near the wharf is the particularly fine old bluestone **Ford's Store** (15 Wharf St), first used for grain storage and then as a bacon factory. It's believed to have been built in 1859 from stones brought here as ship's ballast. Today it's home to a top restaurant, Stanley's on the Bay (p263).

Next door to the Discovery Museum is the restored **Plough Inn** (Church St), a Georgian terrace that began life in 1854 as a hotel. It's now a private residence.

Other buildings of historical interest include **Lyons Cottage** (☎ 6458 1145; 14 Alexander Tce; admission by donation; 🕒 10am-4pm Nov-Apr, 11am-3pm May-Oct), the birthplace of one-time prime minister Joseph Lyons (b 1879); the **Stanley Hotel**

(19 Church St), formerly the Union Hotel and dating from 1849; and **St James Presbyterian Church** (Fletcher St), possibly Australia's first pre-fabricated building, transported to Stanley from England in 1885.

The **Wiltshire Junction Railway Station** (Wharf Rd) was saved from demolition by being transported to Stanley, where it's now part of the Stanley Village accommodation complex (right).

DOCKSIDE FESTIVAL

On the weekend before the Melbourne Cup (which is held the first Tuesday in November), Stanley hosts the Dockside Festival. This annual feast of food, entertainment and jazz music celebrates the culmination of the Melbourne-to-Stanley yacht race (the precursor to the Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race).

Tours

Stanley Seal Cruises (☎ 6458 1294, 0419-550 134; www.stanleysealcruses.com.au; Fisherman's Dock) Provides 75-minute cruises to see some 50 to 500 Australian fur seals sunning themselves on Bull Rock, near Stanley. Cruises depart at 10am and 3pm from October to April, and at 10am in May and September, sea-conditions permitting. Tours cost \$49/9/19/130 per adult/child under five/child/family. The same company also provides offshore fishing charters; these cost \$200 for four people for two hours, all equipment supplied.

Wilderness to West Coast Tours (☎ 6458 2038, 0417-593 158; www.wildernesstasmania.com; 8 Church St) This operation has platypus- and penguin-spotting excursions (adult/child \$50/25) from 1 September to the end of May, departing Stanley at dusk. During the same months they also offer full-day 4WD wilderness tours (\$249 per person) to the Tarkine rainforests and to wild beaches near Arthur River. Your guide is a chef, and cooks a gourmet lunch in the rainforest. Longer, all-inclusive camping tours to Sandy Cape are available from November to April, costing \$339 per person per day including chef-prepared meals.

Sleeping

TOWN CENTRE

Stanley Cabin & Tourist Park (☎ /fax 6458 1266; www.stanleycabinpark.com.au; Wharf Rd; unpowered sites d \$22-24, powered sites d \$24-26, dm \$24-26, cabins d \$75-105; 📍) With wide views of Sawyer Bay in one direction, and towered over by the Nut in the other, this park is in a spectacular spot. There are waterfront camp sites and neat little cabins. There's also a backpackers hostel comprising six twin rooms. Linen is supplied, but it's BYO

towels. A good share kitchen, BBQs, and an internet kiosk complete the facilities.

Stanley Hotel (☎ 6458 1161; www.stanleytasmania.com.au; 19 Church St; s \$45, d from \$65, without bathroom from \$45) This historic pub has a rabbit warren of rooms upstairs. They're brightly painted and truly delightful – this has to be some of the nicest pub accommodation around. The shared bathrooms are superclean and the staff superfriendly. You can sit out on the upstairs veranda and spy down on the Stanley streetscape.

Sealer's Cove (☎ 6458 1414; fax 6458 2076; 2-4 Main Rd; d \$95-110) There's simple, comfortable B&B accommodation here. It's nothing flash, but is certainly good value. Bear in mind this option closes its doors in the winter months, from May to August. You can roll right home from the on-site restaurant (see opposite).

Hanlon House (☎ 6458 1149; 6 Marshall St; s \$100-145, d \$160-185) Originally a Catholic presbytery, this place has comfortably old-fashioned en suite rooms ('Mary Ellen' is the spa suite) accompanied by generous breakfasts. It's a nice spot to enjoy the seaside views with victuals and vino in front of the log fire.

Stanley Village (☎ 6458 1404, 15-17 Wharf Rd, www.stanleyvillage.com.au; d \$130-140; 📍) The reception here is in the old Wiltshire Junction Train Station which will conduct you to rather brickly motel-style rooms on the water's edge, with good views over Sawyer Bay. You can dine at the excellent on-site restaurant Stanley's on the Bay (opposite).

Touchwood Cottages (☎ 6458 1348; www.touchwoodstanley.com.au; 31 Church St; d from \$170, extra person \$30) The three accommodation options here – Touchwood Cottage, the Studio and the Pines – have been painstakingly decorated in good old colonial style. There are pressed-metal ceilings, bluestone walls, roaring log fires and an abundance of frill. The largest (Touchwood Cottage itself) sleeps up to six.

Gardenia House (☎ 6458 1109; www.gardeniahouse.com.au; 44 Alexander Tce; d from \$275 for 2 nights) This incredibly smart and luxurious cottage can be rented in part or in full. It's been beautifully renovated and is filled with a good mix of antique and contemporary furniture. There are expansive sea views, log fires and a claw-foot bath. If you want the whole house (sleeping six) you'll pay \$675 for a two-night minimum stay.

our pick @VDL (☎ 6458 2032; www.atvdlstanley.com.au; 16 Wharf Rd; s \$180-220; 📍) What's been done

within the bluestone walls of this 1840s warehouse is quite incredible. This ultra-hip two-suite boutique hotel is frankly the coolest of the cool. Everything's top class, from the bedding to the artworks on the walls. If you've booked just one night you'll be disappointed.

There's a collective of 'Abbey' accommodation in town, all of which can be booked at the **Stanley Hotel** (☎ 1800 222 397, 6458 1161; 19-21 Church St). There's the period-style **Abbey's Cottage** (1 Marshall St; d \$185), across the road from Hanlon House; the more modern **Abbey's on the Terrace** (34 Alexander Tce; d \$185); the light-and-bright **Abbey's Spa Cottage** (46 Alexander Tce; d \$185); **Abbey's the Green House** (26 Church St; d \$185); and **Abbey's the Bakery** (1 Marshall St; d \$150). The extra person charge is \$30 for all cottages. Continental breakfast is included in the rates.

OUT OF TOWN

Stanley Seaview Inn (☎ 6458 1300; www.stanleyseaviewinn.com.au; 58 Dovecote Rd; s \$95-150, d \$96-166; 📍) With million-dollar views of the Nut and the township, this welcoming option has a selection of motel rooms and self-contained accommodation. The on-site Nut View Restaurant is open for dinner from September to May, and has a great local seafood platter on its satisfying menu (mains \$24 to \$30).

Old Cable Station (☎ 6458 1312; www.oldcablestation.com.au; 435 Greenhills Rd, West Beach; d \$110-160, spa cottage \$220) Having maintained a telephonic link with the mainland for over 30 years from 1935, it now upholds a sophisticated guesthouse. Comprising private en suite accommodation (some rooms with spas) and a self-contained cottage (sleeping up to four), this option offers sea views, seclusion and peace. The on-site restaurant (see right) is sensational.

Beachside Retreat West Inlet (☎ 6458 1350; www.beachsideretreat.com; 253 Stanley Hwy; d \$168-198, cabin \$268-288, cabin with spa \$338-368, 3-bedroom lodge \$318) There's luxurious and ecofriendly accommodation in a Land-for-Wildlife property here (a voluntary scheme whereby landowners devote part of their property as a reserve for native species), just metres from a secluded beach. You'll enjoy magnificent sunsets, spot sea eagles, and thoroughly unwind in this natural haven.

Horizon Deluxe Apartments (☎ 0448-251 115; Dovecote Rd; www.horizonapartments.com.au; d \$450; 📍)

You can hardly beat the views from these luxurious new hilltop apartments, and inside they're kitted out with spas, surround sound, luxury toiletries, fluffy robes and touch-of-a-button climate control. Chocolate truffles and personal bar are provided: you bring the romance.

Eating

Nut Rock Cafe (☎ 1800 222 397, 6458 1186; The Nut State Reserve, Brown Rd; cakes \$3; ☺ 9.30am-5.30pm) To keep your energy up as you conquer the Nut, or to restore you when you come down, this café offers coffees and frothy hot chocolates, soft drinks, Tassie's favourite Valhalla ice cream and a good range of cakes: the moist carrot cake is tops.

Stranded Whale Café (☎ 6458 1202; 6 Church St; mains \$7-10; ☺ lunch) Just down from the Town Hall, the Stranded Whale serves excellent homemade meals, including filling soups and seafood crepes.

Moby Dicks (☎ 6458 1414; 5 Church St; mains \$8-12.50; ☺ 7.30-11.30am) This is where to tuck into an enormous breakfast before you go out and battle the wild west winds. Try the protein rush for power: scotch fillet, bacon and fried eggs on toast (\$14.50); or the Canadian Breakfast: bacon and eggs on homemade waffles with maple syrup (\$9).

Stanley Hotel (☎ 6458 1161; 19 Church St; mains \$12-26; ☺ lunch & dinner) This pub serves better-than-bistro fare, including year-round fresh seafood and servings the size of the Nut itself. The venison-and-cranberry sausages are juicily divine.

Sealer's Cove (☎ 6458 1234; 2-4 Main Rd; mains \$13-20; ☺ dinner Tue-Sun) Painted an attractive neptune-blue, and with laid-back, wooden-table style, this eatery not only serves beer-battered flathead, salt-and-pepper calamari, mussels, scallops and prawns; it also offers lip-smacking pastas and pizzas. Try the eclectic sassafras pizza: peanut satay sauce base, fresh local veggies and fetta cheese.

Stanley's on the Bay (☎ 6458 1404; 15 Wharf Rd; mains \$18-30; ☺ dinner Mon-Sat Sep-Jun) Set inside the historic Ford's Store, this fine-dining establishment specialises in steak and seafood. The wonderful seafood platter for two burgeoons with local scallops, oysters, fish, octopus and salmon (\$80).

Old Cable Station (☎ 6458 1312; 435 Greenhills Rd, West Beach; lunch mains \$14.50-29.50, dinner 2 courses \$44, 3 courses \$55) This is a truly sophisticated dining option offering fine food in the salubrious surrounds

of the Cable Station. Don't miss the Stanley Crayfish or the delectable Black River lamb.

Hursey Seafoods (☎ 6458 1103; 2 Alexander Tce; ☎ 9am-6pm) is awash with tanks of live sea creatures – including fish, crayfish, crabs and eels – for the freshest of (uncooked) seafood takeaways. The Hursey complex includes **Kermies Cafe** (mains \$10-18; ☎ 9am-4pm), a café-takeaway serving battered prawns, crayfish salad and abalone patties, and upstairs, the licensed **Julie & Patrick's Seafood Restaurant** (mains \$20-29; ☎ dinner), where you can dine on Thai crayfish salad or flathead in riesling sauce. Grab a table with a red gingham tablecloth by the window for dreamy views over the bay.

Getting There & Around

BUS

Redline Coaches offers a weekday evening service into Stanley (arriving 5pm) from Burnie (\$19), but the next service out is in the morning departing 7.15am (heading to Burnie again). Buses stop at the visitors centre.

SMITHTON & AROUND

☎ 03 / pop 3361

A 22km stretch of rugged coast further west of Stanley, small-town Smithton is a bit of a backwater – in the nicest possible way. Set on the banks of the Duck River, it's a service centre for the beef farming and vegetable cropping that occur in the surrounding countryside, and is also the administrative centre for the Circular Head region. Forestry has always been big here, and Smithton is now the location of one of the biggest hardwood-timber mills in Australia, owned by Gunns Ltd (see p47).

You might not come to Smithton for Smithton's sake, but it's certainly a good place to stock up before you head off into the rainforests to the south or the wilds further west.

For insights into pioneer days here, visit the **Circular Head Heritage Centre** (☎ 6452 3296; cnr Nelson & King Sts; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-3pm Sun). The most fascinating exhibit is the skeleton of the mysterious, wombat-like *Zygomaturus tasmanicum*. Few such complete examples of these have ever been found.

You'll find all the major banks here, and there are two ATMs on Emmett St.

Sights & Activities

WOOLNORTH

About 25km from Smithton, and sprawling across the northwestern tip of Tasmania, is

the 220-sq-km cattle and sheep property of Woolnorth, still a holding of the Van Diemen's Land company, nearly 200 years since it was first founded. Today its commercial operation comprises over 4000 sheep, 12,000 beef and dairy cattle and 10 dairies that can each milk 1000 cows a day.

Also at Woolnorth, enormous wind turbines harness the power of the Roaring Forties, adding nearly 4MW of energy to the Tasmanian grid. You can view them up close with **Woolnorth Tours** (☎ 6452 1493; www.woolnorthtours.com) who offer informative one-hour excursions (adult/child \$17.50/12) around the wind farm, as well as a half-day tour (adult/child \$70/45) and full-day tour (adult/child \$130/75). These visit Cape Grim, the Woolnorth property, and take you to see the shipwreck off Woolnorth Point, weather permitting.

Take deep lungfuls of the air here: the Baseline Air Pollution Station off Cape Grim declares this to be the cleanest air in the world.

DISMAL SWAMP

Thirty kilometres southwest of Smithton (just off the A2) is another of Tourism Tasmania's ventures, the dubiously named **Dismal Swamp** (☎ 6456 7199; www.tasforestrytourism.com.au/pages/site_nw_dismal.html; adult/5-16 yr \$20/10; ☎ 9am-5pm Nov-March, 10am-4pm April-October). There's a 110m-long slide here that provides a thrilling descent into a blackwood-forested sinkhole. To slide, kids must be over eight and at least 90cm tall. There's a café, retail and interpretation centre on the edge of the sinkhole, and boardwalks on the forest floor, 50m below. Among the sculpture and interpretation, look out for a frighteningly large replica of a giant wombat – imagine meeting that on a dark night in the forest!

SOUTH ARTHUR FOREST DRIVE

There are some ancient, dripping rainforests and tannin-brown rivers south of Smithton, which you can get into the heart of via the **South Arthur Forest Drive**. The drive was a circuit crossing the Arthur River in two places, at Kanunnah Bridge and Tayatea Bridge, until massive flooding washed away the latter. A new bridge is expected to be built in 2009: ask at Stanley visitors centre for updates. In the meantime, this is an out-and-back drive via the (part-gravel) C218. Highlights are the

roadside **Sumac River lookout**, and the incredibly still, forest-encircled **Lake Chisholm**, a flooded dolomite sinkhole that's a 30-minute walk from the car park through man fern and myrtle forest. There's also the **Milkshake Hills Forest Reserve**, where you can take a one-hour return walk and get Serengeti-like views over **Lawson Plains**.

Tours

Tall Timbers Adventure Tours (☎ 1800 628 476; 6452 2755; www.talltimbershotel.com.au; Scotchtown Rd) offers adventure tours to the Tarkine Wilderness in a 4WD OKA bus (\$179 per person) and also helicopter sightseeing tours in several variations. Flight options include 20 minutes (\$140 to \$300 per person), 45 minutes (\$275 to \$635 per person) and romantic coastal sunset experiences (\$259 to \$575 per person). Prices vary according to the number of passengers.

Sleeping & Eating

Montagu Camping Ground (Old Port Rd; camp sites \$10; ☎ Nov-Apr) This ground is just east of the diminutive Montague township, which is 16km west of Smithton.

Bridge Hotel/Motel (☎ 6452 1389; bridgehotel@our.net.au; 2 Montagu Rd; hotel s/d \$49/59, without bathroom \$39/49, motel s/d \$89/99) This place has comfortable rooms with shared facilities in the hotel proper and several dozen with en suite motel units round the back. Seafood, steak, roasts – your usual pub suspects – and platters are available nightly in the Colloboi restaurant.

Tall Timbers Hotel/Motel (☎ 1800 628 476, 6452 2755; www.talltimbershotel.com.au; Scotchtown Rd; motel d/tr from \$140/175, with spa d/tr \$165/185, 1-2-bedroom units \$210/240; ☎) Some 2km south of Smithton, Tall Timbers has an impressive portico of massive timber beams and a reception area under an amazing timber cathedral ceiling. The rooms are comfortable and a reliable bistro serves lunch and dinner (mains \$16.50 to \$29). But perhaps the best thing about Tall Timbers is the tours they offer (see above).

Rosebank Cottages (☎ 6452 2660; www.rosebankcottages.com; d 160-170) Comprises three charming and quaint B&B cottages, one in Smithton (42 Goldie St) and the other two set in sweetly perfumed gardens 6km east of town at Sedgy Creek (46 Brooks Rd), 500m off the highway. Breakfast is provided.

Getting There & Away

See p229 for details of bus services.

MARRAWAH

☎ 03 / pop 370

Untamed, unspoilt Marrawah is a domain of vast ocean beaches, mindblowing sunsets and green, rural hills. The power of the ocean here is astounding, and the wild beaches, rocky coves and headlands can have changed little since they were the homeland of Tasmania's first people. The coast here is abundant with signs of Aboriginal Tasmania – and somehow there's a feeling of lonely emptiness here, as if these original custodians had only just left this land.

It's vast ocean waves that Marrawah is best known for today. Sometimes the Southern Ocean throws up the remains of long-forgotten shipwrecks here – things tumble in on waves that sometimes reach over 10m. Experienced surfers and windsurfers come here for the challenging breaks.

Marrawah General Store (☎ 6457 1122; 800 Comeback Rd; ☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7.30pm Sat & Sun) sells supplies and petrol, and is an agent for Australia Post and Commonwealth Bank. Fill up on fuel here if you're planning to take the Western Explorer to Corinna (p269) as there's no other petrol outlet until Zeehan, some 200km away.

Activities

SURFING

The annual **West Coast Classic**, that most excellent round of the state's surfing championships, is regularly decided at Marrawah, as is a round of the state's windsurfing championships. Green Point, 2km from the town centre, has a break that's impressive in southerly conditions, and there's also good surfing further along the road at Nettley Bay.

South of Marrawah, there's good surfing in an easterly at Lighthouse Beach (at West Point) and great reef surfing in similar conditions at Bluff Hill Point. West Point surf beach is reached by taking the left-hand branches of the road from the turn-off on C214, while Bluff Hill Point surf beach is to the right of the lighthouse off Bluff Hill Point Rd.

BEACH WALKS

There's a lengthy beach walk from Bluff Hill Point to West Point (four hours one way) and a coastal walk from Bluff Hill Point to the mouth of the Arthur River (two hours one way). There's also a highly scenic walk north along the beach from Green Point to

DETOUR

As you head south on B22 out of Smithton, just 3km north of Edith Creek you'll come upon **Allendale Gardens & Rainforest** (☎ 6456 4216; fax 6456 4223; Edith Creek; adult/5-16yr \$10/3.50; 🕒 9am-5pm Oct-Apr), over two hectares of bird-filled exotic gardens.

This place is truly a wonder of green-fingered creativity, and it's the life's work and passion of Max and Lorraine Cross, who nurture it. You can wander through an incredible variety of trees and flowering plants here: there's the glorious birch walk, a spectacular dahlia-and-rose garden, a wisteria pergola, spring blossoms, autumn colours and a panoply of trees from Himalayan spruces to redwoods, tulip trees and the exquisite Chinese dove tree. Allen Creek ripples its way through the gardens, crossed by no less than six bridges.

On the garden's fringes there's a peaceful stand of rainforest. Here you can admire towering old-growth stringy-barks with girths of over 15m, spot a rare creeping fern and perhaps even see the platypus in the creek. Suitably well-walked, you should then indulge in tea, scones and cream in the teahouse, with lashings of Max's homemade raspberry and blackberry jam.

To head back to Stanley, take the scenic route (30 minutes) south through Edith Creek, along C219 towards Nabageena, which then traverses gravel back roads through Lileah, Alcomie, Mengha, South Forest and Forest. The view of the Nut as you approach Stanley is unforgettable.

Preminghana (around three hours return). For details of the indigenous significance of these areas, see opposite.

FISHING

In winter you can catch Australian salmon at Nettley Bay or off the rocks at West Point, while in summer you can catch black-backed salmon off the beach at the mouth of the Arthur River, or catch estuary perch in the river itself.

Tours

King's Run Wildlife Tours (☎ 6457 1191; www.kingsrun.com.au; per person \$75) Geoff King is a local character who has become (deservedly) famous for his devil-spotting tours. He takes visitors on evening trips to an atmospheric old fishing shack in a remote spot on his 300-hectare property to watch devils tuck voraciously into a buffet dinner of road kill.

Sleeping & Eating

Camping is possible for free at beautiful Green Point, where there are toilets, water and an outdoor cold shower. You must pitch your tent by the toilets back from the beach, not on the foreshore.

Glendonald Cottage (☎ 6457 1191; www.kingsrun.com.au; 79 Arthur River Rd; d from \$95) Just down C214 towards Arthur River, this is a spacious self-contained two-bedroom rural place with plenty of reading material on Aboriginal history and the ecology of the area.

our pick **Marrowah Beach House** (☎ 6457 1285; 19 Beach Rd, Green Point; d from \$120, extra person \$20) This

must be close to the ultimate beach house! It's secluded, view-filled and brightly decorated with plenty of starfish and seashells, and the friendly owners set it up with treats like fresh flowers and local honey before you arrive. The beach house can sleep up to five people. Ring ahead, as the managers live elsewhere.

Ann Bay Cabins (☎/fax 6457 1358; www.annbaycabins.com.au; Green Point Rd; d \$120-140) These two superb, soporific wooden cabins are just the place to hang out and get away from it all. You can sit out on the deck and admire the views, or luxuriate in the deep spa bath, with bathing essentials and choccies supplied. Continental breakfast is provided.

You can get a good meal and a drink at **Marrowah Tavern** (☎ 6457 1102; Comeback Rd; mains \$10-25; 🕒 lunch & dinner). Choices include steak sandwiches, prawns, roasts, beef 'n' reef, and whole local flounders.

ARTHUR RIVER

☎ 03 / pop 110

There are only a few hardy souls who call Arthur River their full-time home – the rest of the population is made up of committed 'shackies', and fishers who love the wild remoteness of the country around here. There's a **Parks & Wildlife Service ranger station** (PWS; ☎ 6457 1225) on the northern side of the river, where you can get camping information and permits for off-road vehicles.

Gardiner Point, signposted off the main road on the southern side of the old, timber Arthur River bridge, is Tasmania's official **Edge of the**

World: the sea here stretches uninterrupted all the way to Argentina. There's a plaque at the point – a great place to take those leaning-into-the-wind, world's-end photos.

Activities**CANOING**

You can explore the amazing river and rainforest with watercraft from **Arthur River Canoe & Boat Hire** (☎ 6457 1312). This place offers information on river conditions and storage for your gear, and hires single and double Canadian canoes for \$12 to \$16 per hour and \$50 to \$70 per day. They also rent out aluminium dinghies with outboards for \$25 an hour or \$130 per day. Even better, they'll help you organise a down-river expedition from either Kanunnah Bridge (two-day trip) or the Tayatea Bridge site (four-day trip). They'll meet you at the launching site with the boats and drive your car back to Arthur River for you.

CRUISES

The reflections on the Arthur River have to be seen to be believed, and you can get out among them on board the MV *George Robinson*, operated by **Arthur River Cruises** (☎ 6457 1158; www.arthurrivercruises.com). Cruises depart daily at 10am from September to May (adult/child \$74/30). You'll see sea eagles and kingfishers, stroll in the rainforest and enjoy a BBQ lunch.

TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL SITES

The Marawah area, with its isolated beaches and cliffs, has seen minimal disturbance from European development, in direct contrast to the maximal disturbances visited by Europeans upon the area's former Aboriginal inhabitants – these include the massacre of an estimated 30 Aborigines in 1827 at euphemistically named Suicide Bay to the north. Some areas have now been proclaimed reserves to protect rock carvings, middens, hut depressions and seal hides.

There's a significant Aboriginal site along the road to Arthur River at West Point. Beyond the township at Sundown Point is a site containing several dozen mudstone slabs engraved with mainly circular motifs. The Arthur Pieman Conservation Area, further south, has been called one of the world's most important archaeological complexes, in particular because of its dense concentration of middens. There are also several important cave sites at Rocky Cape National Park.

Arguably the most significant site on the West Coast is 7km north of Marawah at Preminghana (formerly known as Mt Cameron West). At the northern end of the beach are low-lying slabs of rock with geometric rock carvings dating back at least two millennia. Also in this area are remnants of stone tools, tool quarries and middens. There are also natural links with Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, such as boobialla, honeysuckle and tea-tree clusters – plants used to prepare food and traditional medicines.

Preminghana was returned to the Aboriginal people in 1995 – you can't visit the area independently. If you'd like to be authoritatively guided around this and other significant Aboriginal sites, contact the **Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council** (TALSC; ☎ 6231 0288; fax 6231 0298; 4 Lefroy St, North Hobart), which keeps a list of heritage officers who can accompany you to the sites.

An alternative cruise is offered by **ARReflections River Cruises** (☎/fax 6457 1288; www.arthurriver.com.au; 4 Gardiner St). Its attractive MV *Reflections* departs at 10.15am daily for a 5½-hour return trip to Warra Landing, where you also get a guided rainforest walk and gourmet lunch (adult/child \$77/44).

Sleeping & Eating

Camping grounds (unpowered sites per adult/pensioner/family \$5/4.50/15, per week \$20/18/60) in the area include Manuka, Peppermint and Prickly Wattle, the latter on the road to Couta Rocks. They have taps, cold showers and toilets, but no bins – take your rubbish out with you. Self-register at the PWS office. There's also basic camping in Arthur River opposite the kiosk.

Arthur River Holiday Units (☎/fax 6457 1288; 2 Gardiner St; s from \$88, d \$95-110) These comfortable, self-contained units may not have the most stylish decoration you've even seen, but they're great for families and perfect for people less nimble on their feet, as they have level access. Accommodation and river-cruise packages are available.

Ocean View Holiday Cottage (☎ 6457 1100, 0419-537 500; Lot 80 Gardiner St; d \$100, extra person \$20) This is a pleasant three-bedroom house sleeping up to six people, with views of the river mouth. It also offers a cosy wood fire, electric blankets and satellite TV. Inquire at the house opposite.

Sunset Holiday Villas (☎ /fax 6457 1212; 23 Gardiner St; d \$100-120, extra person adult/child \$25/15) There are two self-contained two-bedroom units here sleeping six people comfortably. They share a balcony and views of the beach, which can be stunning at sunset.

The town has a kiosk with limited supplies, and there are also **fresh crayfish** (☎ 6457 1212) available.

THE TARKINE WILDERNESS

The Tarkine is a 3500-sq-km stretch of wild, natural country between the Arthur River in the north and the Pieman River in the south. It encompasses the largest intact tract of temperate rainforest in the Southern Hemisphere, as well as tall eucalypt forests, endless horizons of buttongrass plains, savage ocean beaches, sand dunes and extensive coastal heathland. Because of its remoteness, ferocious weather and isolation, the Tarkine survived almost untouched well into the 20th century.

The area first entered the national psyche through the controversy over the building of the so-called Road To Nowhere in 1995 (see opposite), and conservation groups have been seeking full protection for it ever since. Part of the Tarkine was partly protected in the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area, but until 2005 its ancient myrtle rainforest was without protection. In 2003, the Tasmanian government gave the go-ahead to 'selectively log' the Tarkine's giant myrtle trees, sparking a campaign to save them. In May 2005, after an election in which Tasmania's forests became a national issue, the federal government declared 73,000 further hectares of the Tarkine rainforest safe from logging. Some conservation groups still call for a Tarkine National Park, to be added to the remote Savage River National Park (opposite), as unprotected parts of the Tarkine remain vulnerable to logging, mining, uncontrolled off-road driving and, unfortunately, arson.

You can get into the heart of the Tarkine with route notes from the **Tarkine National Coalition** (☎ 6431 2373; www.tarkine.org), the conservation group that's led the campaign to protect the area. Download a range of driving and walking brochures on its website (under 'guides').

The folks at **Tarkine Trails** (☎ 6223 5320, 0427-397 815; www.tarkinetrails.com.au) are busy proving that the Tarkine is worth much more protected, as a natural playground, than it would be reduced to woodchips. They can take you on guided

six-day rainforest walking adventures (\$1549), five-day boat and beachwalking tours, with 4WD connections (\$1549) and six-day vehicle-based Tarkine explorations (\$2499).

For some ethereally beautiful photography from this region, buy *Tarkine*, put together by the World Wildlife Fund.

WESTERN EXPLORER (C249) & ARTHUR PIEMAN CONSERVATION AREA

The Western Explorer is probably Tasmania's most excitingly remote road journey. It delves deep into the buttongrass wilderness of the **Arthur Pieman Conservation Area** of the western Tarkine. It was controversially upgraded from a barely there 4WD track into a wide gravel road in 1995, to the cries of conservationists who saw it as further opening up this great western wilderness to damage and exploitation. It was dubbed The Road To Nowhere, and predictions about its damaging effects have unfortunately come true: mostly in the form of frequent fires, set both unintentionally and on purpose. The increased visitor traffic means that such fires are now able to strike deep into this area. A 2008 fire – started by a car accident – burnt out 17,000 hectares of the Tarkine's heart.

Now the road is there it's a wonderful means of traversing an incredibly rugged, remote part of Tasmania. Thanks to the barge over the Pieman River at Corinna (see opposite) you can travel from Arthur River right down the west coast to Zeehan and Strahan.

The road condition varies from season to season. Although it's regularly negotiated by vehicles without 4WD and is promoted as a tourist route, it's remote, unsealed and at times rough, rocky and steep, all of which justifies the 50km/h speed limit. Don't drive the road at night or in bad weather. For an up-to-date assessment on track conditions ask at the **Arthur River ranger station** (PWS; ☎ 6457 1225).

Fill up your car at Marrawah if you're travelling south or at Zeehan, Tullah or Waratah if heading north: there's no petrol in between.

The 1000-sq-km Arthur Pieman Conservation Area takes in features including the remote fishing settlement of **Temma**, the mining ghost town of **Balfour**, magnificent wild beaches like **Sandy Cape Beach**, the rugged **Norfolk Range**, the **Thornton** and **Interview Rivers** and savage **Pieman Heads**. Because it doesn't have national park status, this fragile environ-

ment is still threatened by indiscriminate off-road vehicle use, grazing, malicious damage to Aboriginal sites and fire. The wild beaches here are feared for their vehicle-swallowing quicksand.

CORINNA & THE PIEMAN RIVER

☎ 03

In rip-roaring gold-rush days Corinna was a humming town with two hotels, a post office, plenty of shops and a population in and around town that numbered 2500 souls. That's hard to believe now when you pull up on the forested edge of the Pieman, turn off your car's engine and absorb the unbelievable forest peace.

A wise bunch of tourism experts took over the remains of Corinna a few years ago, and have turned it, with utmost care, into a really pleasant little place to stop and stay, while retaining the deep-forest feel. There's no mobile phone reception, there are no TVs, and the most prevalent sound is birdsong.

While in Corinna you can't miss the **Pieman River Cruise** (☎ 6446 1170). You'll be awe-filled by the reflections and may appreciate this more rustic alternative to the crowded Gordon River cruises out of Strahan. Costing \$79/39 per adult/child, the tour on the MV *Arcadia II* departs at 10am and returns at 2.30pm daily. Book well ahead.

Also on offer are canoe and kayak paddles on the Pieman, fishing trips, and boat trips to Lovers' Falls, where you can be dropped with a picnic hamper and sigh at the beauty of it all.

Bushwalking around here includes nearby Mt Donaldson (four hours return) and Philosopher's Falls (four hours return). The shorter Huon Pine Trail on the banks of the Pieman has some sections that are accessible by wheelchair. For details on all these activities, ask at the reception of Corinna Wilderness Experience (below).

Sleeping & Eating

Corinna Wilderness Experience (☎ 6446 1170; www.corinna.com.au; s \$50, cottages d \$175, houses d \$150-200; extra person \$25) Has a collection of newly built but suitably rustic looking self-contained timber cottages, with interiors all kitted out in contemporary style. There are three older-style houses, also comfortably self-contained, and the old pub, which houses really decent backpackers rooms. There are also all the

usual shared backpackers facilities. One of the cottages is wheelchair accessible. Outside, there's also (unpowered) camping with toilets and showers for \$15 per vehicle.

You can satisfy your hunger in the **pub-restaurant** which serves hearty homemade meals for lunch and dinner (mains \$12 to \$35) including gourmet pizzas, focaccias and delectable wallaby shank pies. Picnic hampers are also available for order.

The complex's reception area has a store selling basic produce, and also has a small deli section.

Getting There & Away

From the south, it's approximately a 45-minute drive from Zeehan and a 1½-hour drive from Strahan, while from the north it's a two- to three-hour drive from Arthur River. See opposite for more details.

The **Fatman ferry** (☎ 6446 1170; motorcycles & bicycles/standard vehicle/caravan \$10/20/25; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Sep, to 7pm Oct-Mar) slides across the Pieman on demand. Note there's a 9m-length limit on vehicles with caravans.

SAVAGE RIVER NATIONAL PARK

A remote area of 180 sq km, this park sits in Australia's largest area of cool-temperate rainforest and contains a swathe of buttongrass on its central Baretop Ridge. Savage River was initially worked over for its alluvial gold, and there is still the large Savage River opencut iron ore mine close by. There are no roads into the national park, so it can't be visited – but it's good to know its there.

HELLYER GORGE

You can also approach Corinna from Somerset, just west of Burnie – a route that will take you on the Murchison Hwy through magnificent Hellyer Gorge. The picnic area by the Hellyer River makes for a pleasant roadside repose.

Parallel to the Murchison Hwy is the B18 from Burnie, an alternative road that's faster but less scenic. About 70km south of Burnie is the C132 turn-off to Cradle Mountain.

WARATAH

☎ 03 / pop 230

Waratah has two claims to fame. It's nearby tin mine at Mt Bischoff was once the world's richest, and the last verifiably breathing Tasmanian tiger was trapped here in 1936.

This is a pretty lakeside town sliced through by Happy Valley gorge and its cascading waterfall, and surrounded by wild hillsides. To get an impression of early days, visit the local **museum** (☎ 6439 1252; Smith St; 🕒 10am-4pm Oct-May, noon-3pm Mon-Fri Jun-Sep). Next door is **Philosopher Smith's Hut**, a reconstruction of the abode of one James Smith, the prospector who discovered tin in them-there hills. Also of interest is the historic **stamper mill**, once used to break up tin ore and now restored to its former glory. It's close to the town hall. You can watch things rattle and whirr at the touch of a button.

Behind the post office, **Waratah Camping & Caravan Park** (☎ 6439 7100; Smith St; unpowered/powerd d \$15/20) has lakeside caravan and camping sites. Keys to the amenities block are available at the post office or the roadhouse/general store. **Bischoff Hotel** (☎ 6439 1188; Main St; s/d \$44/88, d without bathroom \$66) offers rooms and counter meals for lunch and dinner (mains \$10 to \$18). There's also the attractive **O'Connor Hall Guesthouse** (☎ 6439 1472; 2 Smith St; d \$110-160) with wrought-iron tracery and four-poster beds. Be sure to book ahead for accommodation – the Mt Bischoff mine has reopened for business, on the back of the metals boom.