



# North East Trail

Discover the natural beauty and pioneering spirit of the North East Trail. Lush vineyards and rich farming areas contrast with amazing forests and stretches of beautiful unspoilt beaches. See abundant wildlife in their natural surrounds and let the locals welcome you into their communities. You'll need more than a few days to discover what makes this region one of Tasmania's better kept secrets.

## SUGGESTED ITINERARY

### DAY 1

Leaving Launceston, about 20 minutes into your journey you'll arrive at the farming hamlet of Lilydale. Look out for the distinctive painted electricity poles that line the streets of the town. The north east has its own garden-lovers trail – details are available from the Scottsdale Visitor Information Centre.

For part of your journey along the North East Trail you are also travelling along the Tamar Valley Wine Route. After Lilydale, the distinctive yellow and blue 'grape' signs point the way to the vineyards of the Pipers River Region. Providence – Tasmania's oldest vineyard – and Clover Hill – makers of premium sparkling wine – are both directly on the Trail and their cellar doors are open to the public. A 20 minute drive off the Trail along Pipers Brook Rd will also allow you to sample the still and sparkling wines of Pipers Brook Vineyard and the Jansz Wine Room and Interpretative Centre. On the way, stop in at Brook Eden Vineyard, just a few minutes along Pipers Brook Rd.

Back on the Trail, soak up the wonderful ambience and scents of Bridestowe Lavender Farm, the



Bridestowe Estate Lavender Farm

largest commercial Lavender Farm in the southern hemisphere. At any time of the year, the Farm is a spectacular sight – fresh green in spring, a shimmer of purple in summer, silvery-grey in winter. Have a coffee or lunch in Bridestowe's café, then take a tour (December and January) to see how Lavender is harvested and processed for its fragrant oils. Alternatively, picnic under the century old oak trees, stroll through the fields, and browse for gifts in the shop.

Fifteen minutes on from Bridestowe is Scottsdale, the major service town for the north east. Here you can discover the secrets of the region's forest heritage at the contemporary Forest EcoCentre. The award-winning 'building within a building'

showcases Tasmania's fine timbers and forest ecology through innovative architecture, design and interactive displays. The EcoCentre also houses the Scottsdale Visitor Information Centre where you can book accommodation and tours and find out all there is to see and do along the Trail.

Stay overnight in Scottsdale or drive 20 mins north to the coastal village of Bridport. The town itself is situated on a hillside, taking on the shape of an amphitheatre looking out over Anderson Bay to Barnbougle Beach and the Furneaux group of islands. Bridport is a thriving township all through the year, but especially in summer, as it offers a number of safe, picturesque and warm swimming beaches. It is also a favourite for salt water fishing and equipment can be hired in town if you don't have your own.

Just east of Bridport is Barnbougle Dunes Golf Links – one of the top links courses in Australia, meandering through towering dunes and along

Barnbougle Beach with Bass Strait as a backdrop. Barnbougle Dunes also has a Club House with dining and bar facilities and accommodation.



North East Coast Wildlife

## DAY 2

After a hearty breakfast in Bridport or Scottsdale, enjoy one of the Bridport's several coastal walks. The walk through the Wildflower Reserve is particularly pleasant with views out over Anderson Bay,

and is spectacular in spring as you walk through a mass of wildflowers to Adams Beach. From the centre of Bridport, a pleasant 1km foreshore walk takes you along a series of small beaches to the popular Old Pier swimming beach.

Driving back through Scottsdale, the next town on your journey is Branxholm in the Ringarooma Valley. But before reaching Branxholm, take the turn off to Ringarooma and follow the signs to the impressive Ralphs Falls in the Mt Victoria Forest Reserve. The walk is one of Tasmania's 60 great

Bay of Fires, just north of Binalong Bay





Eddystone Point Lighthouse

short walks. A ribbon of water and sweeping views across picturesque farmland will greet you after an easy 10 minute walk through myrtle rainforest.

At Branxholm pause at the Red Bridge – a celebration of the significant Chinese mining heritage of the area. Shortly afterwards you'll arrive at Derby, once a thriving mining town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and today a pretty place to stop on your journey. Learn about the history of the area at the Tin Mine Centre and Shanty Town and then stay for a pleasant lunch in what was once an old school house. Then stroll over the road and spend time at the cafes, craft shops and galleries.

Derby is a good base from which to explore other features of the area. Stay the night in one of the town's original pubs or in a bed and breakfast.

### DAY 3

Leaving Derby, the Trail takes you through more fertile farming and bushland areas.

Nature lovers will enjoy a side trip to Mt William

National Park which offers stunning coastline with pristine white beaches, turquoise ocean and brightly coloured rock formations. Wildlife is everywhere and close encounters with local wallabies, wombats and Forester kangaroos are frequent. Visit Eddystone Point Lighthouse (c 1889) at the southern end of the park. The three houses at the lighthouse station are the oldest surviving lighthouse keepers quarters in Tasmania. Mt William National Park is reached via Herrick and Gladstone and is worth extending your stay for.

Back on the North East Trail, continue on through to Weldborough and the Weldborough Pass Scenic Reserve – just off this road is an enchanting 10 minute Rainforest Walk where you stroll beneath tall Myrtles and learn more about these ancient trees.

About 10 minutes after Weldborough, is the turn-off

Wombat, Mt William National Park





St Columba Falls, Pyengana

to the Blue Tier Nature Recreational Area where you can choose from a range of walks of 15 mins to five hours duration. The 2.5 kms road to the walking tracks is unsealed, but is well worth the drive. The Big Tree Walk (one hr return or 90 mins loop walk) takes you through a stunning sassafras and fern glade, descending through huge eucalypts, musk, myrtle, mosses and ferns to the Blue Tier Giant tree with its massive 19.4 metre girth.

The Reserve also bears further evidence of the region's tin mining legacy. On Australia Hill see the remains of boilers and jockey wheels and wander among the ruins of what was once a mountain mining village.

Back on the Trail, the settlement of Pyengana boasts the Pyengana Cheese Factory and Holy Cow Café, the factory well known in Tasmania for its full-flavoured clothbound cheddars. To get there, turn down the St Columba Falls Rd at Pyengana.

After you've enjoyed a snack or a hearty ploughman's lunch and purchased some produce to sample later, continue on to St Columba Falls State Reserve and see the magnificent 90 metre St Columba Falls. The walk to the Falls is another of Tasmania's 60 great short walks.

Feeling thirsty? On the way back, stop in at the famous Pub in the Paddock which served its first beer over 100 years ago.

The North East Trail then takes you on to St Helens, the picturesque fishing port on the shores of Georges Bay and the starting point for the East Coast Escape Touring Route.