

Best location to explore Tasmania's east coast



by Damien Thomas

Coles Bay

I frequently get asked where the best place is to stay in Tasmania. While most people assume I will say either **Hobart** or **Launceston**, **Swansea** may be the answer. Swansea is central to the east coast. It is just 90 minutes' drive from both Hobart and Launceston, i.e., you can easily visit either on a day trip.

On your travels to or from Launceston, along the B34 to Campbell Town, **Lake Leake** presents an interesting refreshment stop. The **Lake Leake hotel** has open fires and good pub-grub. The lake itself is stocked with brown trout, so if you enjoy flyfishing or lures, plan to spend a full day here. The fishing season is longer as the altitude is lower, the lake is warmer and sheltered.

Who doesn't like a waterfall? At Lake Leake, take the turn off onto McKay's Road and in 10km you arrive at the spectacular **Meetus Falls**. It is only 15 minutes return to the lookout, but if you have sandwiches with you, consider walking to the **Cygnnet River lookout**. It's an unsealed road so make sure your vehicle is suitable as it is steep in places.



Meetus Falls

Local Tasmanian members know how good the beaches are in Swansea, and how good the boat launching facilities are - making some mainlanders quite envious. Fresh sea food is in abundance, and being located in **Great Oyster Bay**, it is only natural to want to indulge in the oyster experience available at **Melshell Oyster Shack** or the **Freycinet Marine Farm**.



Melshell Oysters - yum!

The other question I get asked is “how many days will I need to explore the area?” The answer depends on whether you want to be like Alice or the Hare in Alice in Wonderland. There is plenty to occupy you for a couple of weeks. The more you scratch the surface, the more you will find and fall in love with the east coast. When you have visited the **Spiky Bridge** and strolled through town on the historic walk and visited **Bark Mill Tavern** to see the old machinery (not to mention the refreshments available), taken a tour out to **Shouten Island**, and driven to **Coles Bay** and the **Freycinet Peninsula**, watched the **Fairy Penguins** return in the evening at **Bicheno**, driven down to **Port Arthur**, and taken a tour to **Maria Island**, you will probably need a little R & R.



Cold climate wines at their best.

Gala Estate Vineyard is a great place to start your R & R. The cold climate wines are some of the best you will find. Yes, there is a tasting fee which is not charged at some other wineries, but it is credited back when (note I did not say “if”) you purchase a bottle or two of something delicious to enjoy back at the **API holiday home**, conveniently located in walking distance to everything in Swansea.

“ Swansea is central to the East Coast of Tas. ”

I am a sucker for pastries, which brings me to suggest your R & R takes you to the **Freycinet Coast Patisserie** for delicious cakes and pastries. There is a High Tea available on Sundays if you really want to indulge. As it is part of the **Craigie Knowe Vineyard**, you may as well sample a few more cold climate wines (just to make sure your palate gets a thorough education!).



API's comfortable home in Swansea

If you did not get enough cake, perhaps a visit to Felicity's in Swansea is called for. Right beside the beach, **Felicity's Antiques Vintage and Tea Rooms** also offers all day breakfast, home-made soup, scones and cakes to be consumed with a view over the bay to die for.

I wish I could tell you more about **Kate's Berry Farm** and all the delicious cakes, preserves etc, but there is so much to see, do and experience in Swansea that I simply cannot do it all justice in just one article. Isn't it time you experience it for yourself? **API**

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