

Perfectly positioned for extensive views over the bay

Tasmania's Sports Fishing Capital - St Helens

by Damien Thomas

Surrounded by verdant green pastures of the lush valley, the St Columba Falls Hotel is more commonly known by its much more evocative name 'The Pub in the Paddock'. Located in Pyengana, this is a must-do destination on one of your days staying in the beautiful north-east of Tasmania.

If you want to meet Priscilla, you will need to tear yourself away from the Pyengana Dairy Company further along the same road. The Dairy has the most sensational handmade cheddar cheese matured in a 1,000-metre-long underground tunnel, and the best milk and kefir in Australia.

The pub menu is extensive and like many places in Tasmania, the food shines due to the quality of the local produce. The food is a big attraction, but Priscilla is an even bigger attraction. Priscilla is a pig, but not just any pig. Priscilla is famous for guzzling beer. It is actually very watered-down beer, but don't tell Priscilla that. Buy one for her

special beers and you, and the kids, will marvel at how fast she can gulp it down. Do it while you are there, as it is not likely you will get another chance anywhere else.



Home of Priscilla - the famous beer drinking pig



Charcuterie platters to die for - enjoy one on the deck

St Columba Falls Road takes you to a spectacular 90-metre waterfall and then further along, you will arrive at St Helens, where your three-bedroom holiday home, with extensive views over the bay, awaits you.

While on holiday - spoil yourself! Take a trip to the East Coast Village Providore in St Helens and come home with everything you need for a sensational charcuterie platter accompanied by the best local wines, cheese from Pyengana (of course) or Fowler's cheese if you want some of the soft variety. Ham off the bone and local cold meats. Sit on the balcony, enjoying the vista over St Georges Bay with your platter, while sipping one of the craft beers, award-winning whiskeys, alcoholic ginger beers or Tasmanian ciders all conveniently available from the same shop. What a life!

The next day, head up to Binalong Bay, pausing at the 'Priory' (Priory Ridge Wines) to reacquaint yourself with an award-winning Pinot or some of their other delicious varieties. Arriving at Binalong Bay, drive around to the Skeleton Bay car park. Take your camera and snorkelling gear, as the water is crystal clear. The boulders surrounding the beaches are covered in the fiery orange lichen and offset against the peroxide white sand and startling blue water, they are the setting for fabulous pictures. This is part of the Bay of Fires. The name does not come from the colour

of the boulders but from Captain Furneaux when he saw aboriginal fires while sailing past the area, as one of the first Europeans to visit the area.

Feeling energetic? Take a walk out to Skeleton Point or to Elephant Rock. Beautiful views give way to stunning scenery.

On your return trip take the alternative route so you can stop in at Lease 65 for those enormous, buttery oysters, fresh from the bay.

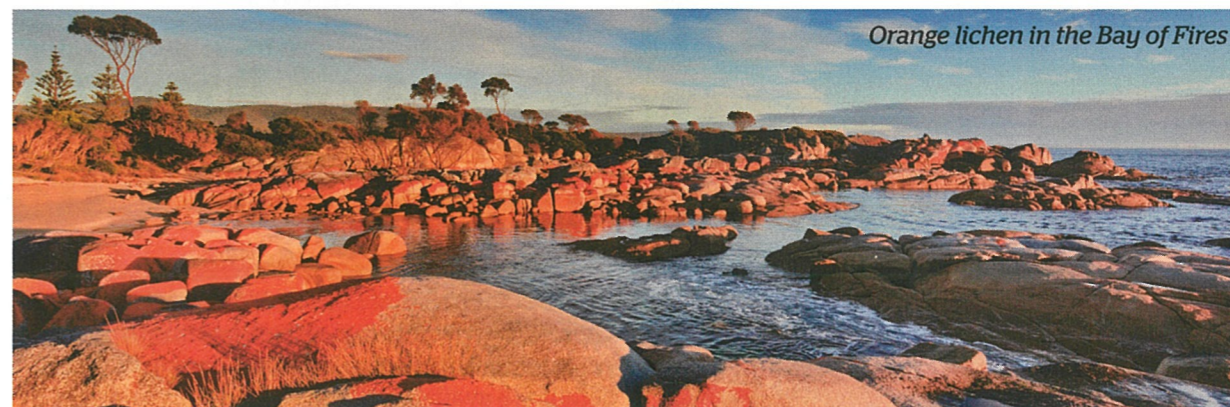
Call in to St Helens and pick from one of the many restaurants. The Naturaliste serves such a taste bomb of tacos with fried chicken, jalapenos and pickled red onion slaw. It was so good that we went back one morning for breakfast of buckwheat and vanilla bean coconut porridge with rhubarb and pistachio - who thinks up these delicious combinations? St Helens is a foodie's paradise, so indulge yourself. You only live once.



Breakfast of buckwheat & vanilla bean coconut porridge with rhubarb and pistachio at the Naturaliste

Later in the evening. Hot chocolate steaming in your mug (made from that exceptional Pyengana Dairy milk of course), relax in the lounge room and enjoy the twinkling lights as darkness descends.

API's three-bedroom, comfortable cottage is in the best location, and API member rates are simply unbeatable. Think about that charcuterie platter, and the views you will enjoy, then pick up the phone or jump online and book your API holiday, before someone else does! **API**



Orange lichen in the Bay of Fires

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