

SUMMER 2021/22

OUT & ABOUT

with kids

BEST OF THE BEST!

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LIBBY TRICKETT'S FAMILY TRAVEL TRICKS

2022 HOLIDAY TRENDS

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MANLY • PORT STEPHENS • SINGAPORE • TWEED • WHITSUNDAYS

FARMING & SEAFARING

MEG LAW and her family explore Victoria's Gippsland region in their 1973 kombi

"Ship ahoy!" The wind fills our giant white sails as we charge through the water, the waves lapping in fury as they try to keep up with the white gulls circling above. The sunshine warms my feet as I sprawl lazily out on the hot fibreglass deck, the taste of salt on my lips and the wind lashing my damp hair across my cheeks.

I glance behind at my husband busy tacking away, pulling the jib and hoisting the mainsail. He is happily playing skipper for the next few days as we charter our own yacht, his face tanned, a big grin, and floppy blonde hair falling over his eyes – quite possibly the most relaxed version of him that I have seen, since pre-kids at least! The water splashes across the bow of the boat spraying the kids, and they squeal and giggle in unison, both aptly decked out in their bright yellow and red 'buoyancy' vests — certainly a fitting word for their current disposition.

SAILING A YACHT ON GIPPSLAND LAKES FROM METUNG

Blue sky, sunshine, aqua coloured water and a 32-foot yacht, Catalina 320. Does life get much better?

Learning my sea terms, I quickly test myself. Helm, port, stern, jib, bow. Our Gippsland adventure has begun, sailing our own vessel on the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria – sleeping onboard for the week, navigating the waters on our own and being our very own skippers.

Seeing this immaculate, shiny white vessel with navy blue trimming tied up to the jetty at Metung, suitable for an A-list celebrity and their entourage, I could not believe we were allowed to charter this on our own for a few days. Surely you need a licence to drive something as big as this? But after a comprehensive safety briefing and a few ▶



Daisy and Jasper
enjoying the
sailing life





Dad and Daisy
aboard Pennicott
Wilderness
Journeys

reassuring glances from my husband, all my doubts were squashed... we have totally got this!

Loading our bags onboard it was clearly apparent that we had yet again overpacked and underestimated the amount of 'stuff' we had with us. So, here's a tip for those of you heading on a private chartered yacht – space means everything!

The sleeping arrangements provided many a giggle. "Look at our cubby house, we even have peep holes!" our excited four-year-old said as he and his elder sister clambered into their tiny berth, opening every compartment with curiosity and pure glee.

Surrounded by nothing but national parks and farmland, each day onboard rolled into the next as we explored different bays and inlets, deserted white sandy beaches and peaceful coves, fished off the jetty (with our youngest catching his first fish!), built sandcastles, swam and laid on the deck eating freshly grilled flathead and watching bright orange hued sunsets together.

Sailing is a hands-on activity that the whole family can join in, and our two kids loved helping us steer the yacht and drop anchor at all our favourite mooring spots, including Bancroft Bay, Duck Arm and Barrier Landing. We were even lucky to catch a glimpse of some amazing wildlife along the way, including dolphins, kangaroos, marine and birdlife.

Falling asleep each night to the gentle rhythmic sway of the yacht and peeping out the cabin porthole to the stars above certainly made for a memorable family adventure.

EIGHT ACRES FARMSTAY AT LAKES ENTRANCE

After reaching dry land again and exploring the nearby towns of Metung, Lake Tyers and Lakes Entrance, it was time for a farmstay with a twist. Run by an entrepreneurial young couple, Ellis Klok and Pete Jenkins, and their two cute little farmhands, Eight Acres offers different styles of accommodation including family cottages and large glamping tents, creating a unique experience that has a coastal, boho vibe with a relaxed and rustic edge.

Only a short drive to the pristine Ninety



Daisy and Jasper
in their sleeping
quarters below deck

“Ship ahoy!”

Farm life at Eight Acres



Mile Beach and situated in a stunning bush setting with plenty of space to roam, this East Gippsland venue makes for a laidback location for a few nights.

As our 1973 white kombi van made its way loudly along the winding gravel driveway to this hidden oasis, with towering eucalypts, we caught glimpses of cute white bell tents dotted on the green lawn, palm trees swaying over the outdoor pool and native bushland as far as the eye could see. It was hard to believe we were only five minutes from a major town – it felt like we had escaped to a property miles off the grid.

On arrival, Pete and Ellis greeted us with a warm welcome and made sure the kids

found the farm animals, introducing each of the chickens by name.

Eight Acres combines the fun of a farmstay with the modern and luxe trimmings of a coastal getaway. We stayed in a two-bedroom cottage, complete with our own firepit to toast marshmallows on each night, with twinkling fairy lights overhanging the front porch and the smell of the salty ocean air, overlooking acres of natural, quiet bushland.

Each morning the kids would wake at dawn, jump on their bikes and rush down in their gumboots and overalls to help feed the farm animals and collect eggs. They just needed a straw hat and checked shirts to ►



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
A family paddle on the Gippsland Lake, Jasper loved the yacht life, Daisy at Sandy Point, Gippsland, Jasper meeting the birdlife at Eight Acres



complete the picture!

We would fill each day with a visit to the 'Giant Games Garden' onsite for some competitive family bocce, or sit in one of the sun lounges beside the pool house, tastefully decorated with its fresh white tropical chic vibes, while the kids ran amok with their newfound farm animal friends.

And of course, you can't stay near Lakes Entrance, home of quality Australian seafood, without buying a kilo of fresh prawns from one of the many colourful fishing boats which sell the day's catch from the jetties.

KAYAKING FROM PAYNESVILLE TO RAYMOND ISLAND

The next stop on our Gippsland adventure was Paynesville, a hotspot for yachties, fishermen, sailors and seadogs. It's a relaxed village on the edge of the Gippsland waterways with canals and inlets providing plenty of space for large fishing boats, yachts and, in our case, kayaks and SUPs.

Decked out in his life vest, boardies and hat, our youngest excitedly ran along the jetty itching to paddle for the day and show off his newfound knowledge of the Gippsland Lakes, which is ten times the size of Sydney Harbour!

Setting off from our own private jetty at our waterfront apartment at Captains Cove, we spent the day weaving in and out of the largest network of inland waterways in Australia, paddling our hearts out in our kayaks and on SUPs, waving to pelicans and ducking for cover when the horns bellowed from a passing ferry.

Pulling up at a public jetty in the main street of Paynesville, we rested our weary arms and demolished some fresh fish and chips on the shoreline before paddling over to the much-anticipated Raymond Island, known as one of the best places for spotting koalas in Victoria. The kids loved looking through the binoculars as we paddled the kayaks and SUP around the outskirts of the island searching for grey furry Blinky Bills hidden in the eucalypts. 

The writer was a guest of Riviera Nautic, Captains Cove and Eight Acres

Wilson's Prom
frisbee time



Captains Cove,
Paynesville

STAYING THERE

Eight Acres Farmstay at Lakes Entrance offers accommodation in glamping bell tents and cottages eightacreslakesentrance.com

Captains Cove at Paynesville offers waterfront apartments with their own private jetty captainscove.com.au

SAILING THERE

Based in Metung at the eastern end of the Gippsland Lakes, a 3.5-hour drive from Melbourne, Riviera Nautic offers a range of yachts and motor cruisers rivieranautic.com.au

MORE INFORMATION

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