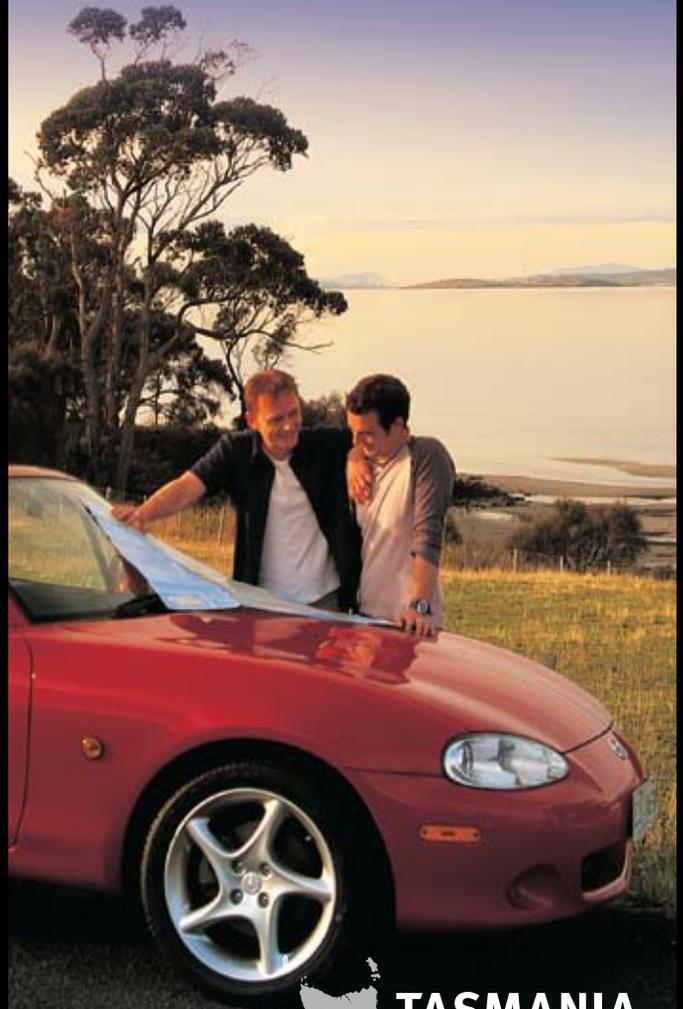


Discover Tasmania
Your Gay & Lesbian
Visitor's Guide



 **Tasmania**
Explore the possibilities

 **TASMANIA**
Island of Inspiration
discovertasmania.com



Tasmania is the heart-shaped island at the bottom of the world, a place you have to stoop to see on a desk globe. It is one of Australia's six States, but thanks to its beauty, fertility and history it is another country.

In the words of Oxford Professor Peter Conrad, writing of the land of his childhood, *'Tasmania is Janus-faced. On the sunlit east coast you can feel you're the first man on earth, greeting it in wonder; on the west's storm-swept beaches, you're the last of your race.'*

The truth here is that Tasmania is a land of incongruous contrasts: sleepy towns with world-renowned cultural festivals; hedge-rowed English farmlands enclosed by the ethereal rainforests dinosaurs trod; stately Georgian mansions amidst barbarous nineteenth-century penal camps; winter drought and snow storms in summer.

People come from around the world to enjoy these many different faces of Tasmania.

Lovers of wilderness, adventure, culture, and food and wine flock to the island in search of the unspoilt places, beautiful views, exciting challenges and exquisite tastes. But they also find, emerging from Tasmania's contrasts and contradictions, something much more.

They find an island whose natural beauty and ecological diversity stands witness to the depth of humanity's interconnectedness with all living things. They find a society whose past is a tangle of stories which are in equal measure brutal and tragic, uplifting and inspiring, and which expose the hidden springs of modern Australian and global history.

They find a people to whom sincerity and a real connection to others is dear and precious. In short, they find themselves.

My hope is that you will too.

Rodney Croome, Tasmanian author and gay human rights advocate

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Wherever you are in the world, a holiday in Tasmania is easy to book.

Visit your local travel agent or visit www.discovertasmania.com

Gay and Lesbian History



Port Arthur Historic Site

Tasmania's gay and lesbian history is rich and dramatic. Historic extremes of repression and freedom have culminated in recent world-class social reforms.

Despite significant contact between Aborigines and Europeans before and after first settlement in 1803, we know nothing about the place of same-sex relationships in traditional indigenous Tasmanian culture.

Early explorers

Tasmania's 'gay history' began when Europeans first encountered the island. Matthew Flinders, together with George Bass, proved Tasmania an island by circumnavigating it in 1798-99.

Flinders wrote of Bass: *'there was a time when I was so completely wrapped up in you, that no conversation but yours could give me pleasure; your footsteps upon the quarterdeck over my head took me from my book and brought me upon the deck to walk with you.'*

Partly thanks to Bass and Flinders' discovery, colonial

outposts were soon established in Tasmania as dumping grounds for England's overflowing gaols.

In the 50 years to 1853 70,000 convicts were transported to Tasmania, many for sexual offences including sodomy.

Convict love

In the island's gaols coercive and power-based homosexuality was common. But so were love bonds between men and between women, as shown by this letter written in the mid-1840s by a convict sentenced to hang for mutiny: *'I hope you won't forget me when I am far away and all my bones is moldered away I have not closed an eye since I lost sight of you your precious sight was always a welcome and loving charming spectacle. Dear Jack I value Death nothing but it is in leaving you my dear behind and*

no one to look after you ... The only thing that grieves me love is when I think of the pleasant nights we have had together. I hope you won't fall in love with no other man when I am dead and I remain your True and loving affectionate Lover.'

'Pseudo-males'

Women discovered in same-sex relationships in places like the Hobart and Ross **Female Factories** were labelled 'pseudo-males' and assigned as servants to farmers in distant corners of the island. Some misbehaved so they would be returned to gaol and their lover's arms.

Separation was also used to punish men. As concern about male homosexuality rose, prisons dorms were re-designed to keep inmates separate and under constant surveillance. Eventually the hated Separate Prison was built at **Port Arthur** as the final solution to convict homosexuality (pages 25 and 26 for more on convict homosexuality).

Reformation

Reformers like Rev John West thought a better solution was the end of convict transportation altogether. In 1846, West published this poem as a part of his campaign to discredit the convict system by associating it with sodomy:

'Shall Tasman's Isle so famed, so lovely and so fair, from other nations be estranged, the Name of Sodom bear?'

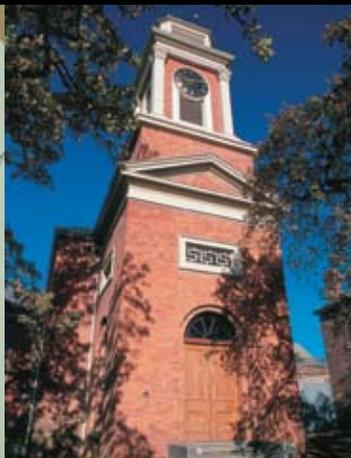
It worked. The transportation of convicts ceased soon after. The new Australian national identity that the anti-transportation movement gave birth to, was tainted by profound homophobia well into the twentieth century.

Imprisoned

Repression of homosexuality remained a feature of Tasmanian life. The last hanging for sodomy in the British Empire was in Tasmania in 1867 at the **Penitentiary Chapel Historic Site**. In the subsequent 100 years Tasmania had the highest



¹Matthew Flinders



Penitentiary Chapel Historic Site, Hobart



Confrontation at Salamanca Market, 1988

rate of imprisonment for private consenting male sex anywhere in Australia. One of the men imprisoned was Bert, quoted here in a 1976 article titled 'Why Noel Shot Himself and Bert Went to Gaol':

'If there had been reform in 1958 I would have been saved from the worst period of my life. I was 21 and living in Launceston with another man of the same age. The police came to the house and asked who lived there. When we said we did, they asked where we slept and we pointed to the only bed in the house. We were taken to the police station, interviewed and charged with gross indecency. In the Supreme Court I pleaded guilty. I had no legal representation. The case was over in 10 minutes. I got three years.'

Unexpected freedom

Ironically, there was also greater freedom in Tasmania than elsewhere. The first photos of same-sex couples in Australia were taken of young loving

male couples in the secluded mountain-side Hobart suburb of Ferntree in the 1890s. Painter Isobel Oldham and writer Marie Bjelke-Petersen lived openly with their same-sex companions. By the 1960s Hobart's cruising areas had become social spaces with car bonnets spread for picnic lunches. Men were spotted across the city wearing black armbands the day a popular beat was closed.

With this legacy full of contradictions and extremes, it's no surprise that the history of Tasmania's modern gay and lesbian movement is also dramatic.

Civil disobedience

Inspired by the globally significant Tasmanian environmental campaigns of the 1980s, including the successful campaign to save the Franklin River, the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group formed in 1988. Within months the Group's stall at **Salamanca Market** was closed down by the Hobart City Council and its

supporters arrested by police.

After two months of protests the stall was allowed but not before 130 people had been arrested in Australia's largest ever act of gay rights civil disobedience.

Times of change

The Salamanca arrests sparked a nine-year debate over the decriminalisation of homosexuality, which saw the issue become the defining social reform of the 1990s and Tasmania dubbed 'Bigot's Island' by the world's press. The campaign for and against change mobilised thousands of people across the State.

Reform proponents enlisted the support of Amnesty International, the UN Human Rights Committee and the Federal Government.

Incessant public discussion saw support for gay and lesbian rights rise from 15% below the national average in 1988 to 15% above when reform finally occurred in 1997.

Public support

Tasmania was the last Australian State to decriminalise homosexuality.

A few short years later it has the best school anti-homophobia programs, Anti-discrimination Act and same-sex relationship laws in the country, all with public support.

In 2004 Tasmania became the first Australian State to establish a civil union scheme for same-sex and other couples.

Tasmanian history reminds us that the potential for great repression and great freedom can exist in the one society.

It also shows that which prevails depends in large part on the courage and determination of ordinary people.



Language and People



Wineglass Bay, Freycinet National Park



At Salamanca Market, Hobart



Playful dolphins

Tasmania's half a million people have a distinct outlook and character which charms visitors if acknowledged and respected. Sincerity is the key.

In equal measure reserved and friendly, Tasmanians are hospitable to outsiders but also sensitive to how they are seen by others. Don't be deceived by the politeness with which Tasmanian jokes will be received. It masks the kind of resentment that erects social barriers. Attempts to impress also fall flat. Sincerity is the key to making friends.

Story-telling

Tasmanians sometimes mumble, and speak so quickly whole words can disappear. It is fine to ask for repetition. It's not fine to show impatience during story-telling. Long stories with frequent elaborate digressions and reflective silences characterise conversations in rural Tasmania. The compelling images and messages in these stories are worth waiting for.

It's also impolite to disregard distinctions between Tasmania's regions. What the island lacks in ethnic diversity it makes up for in geographic diversity.

Acknowledging this diversity will help you make friends, particularly outside Hobart.

Real connections

Opinion polls show Tasmanians are as accepting of gay and lesbian people as are other Australians. But the type and depth of acceptance varies considerably across the island. It is not unusual to see same-sex couples holding hands in central Hobart.

Hobart and Launceston's gay venues are considered friendly and welcoming to outsiders. Don't be afraid to start a conversation with a gay Tasmanian. The close-knit nature of Tasmania means you will very

quickly find yourself introduced to a very large number of people.

Thanks to anti cross-dressing laws, only repealed in 2000, drag is less common in Tasmania than elsewhere in Australia. Although Tasmanians are known for unaffected good looks, there are no commercial sex venues.

One of the joys of Tasmania is that it is so easy and rewarding to make a real and lasting connection with other people. When you travel to Tasmania take the opportunity to do just that.

Pink eyes rule

Tasmanian English is dotted with unusual words. They come from Aboriginal languages (*Palawa*: people, *quoib*: wombat), convict argot (*rummin*: a fool, *chain-gang*: a hard task), old English dialects (*yaffler*: a garrulous person, *nointer*: a naughty child), whaling (*greasy luck*: good luck), geography (*the other side*: the mainland), and local brand names (*Jimmy*: a glass of beer).

Watch out for jack-jumpers and inchmen (biting ants), triantulas (huntsmen spiders), and Tasmanian champagne (a potent mix of brandy and cider).

Potatoes have traditionally been important to the Tasmanian economy and there is fierce local loyalty to different varieties.

Pink eyes are so highly valued in the north west that some parents refer to their children as '*little pink eyes*' and sweethearts are labelled '*my favourite pink eye*.'

Geeveston Fanny

What sounds sexual is probably not. A Geeveston Fanny is an apple, and to be called '*cock*' is simply a casual, friendly form of address. Amongst older and rural Tasmanians, the phrase '*I'm feeling a bit queer*' means the speaker has a cold.

The Queer View



François Peron



Marie Bjelke-Petersen²

From the earliest days of white exploration, same-sex attracted people have reflected on Tasmania's natural and often melancholic beauty, using it as a vehicle to express their hopes and fears.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, two French explorers and possibly lovers François Peron and Charles Lesueur saw in Tasmania a paradise untouched by the superstitions and affectations of modern life. It confirmed their Enlightenment belief that nature is benign, and man, in his natural state, rational and happy.

A generation later, the first white man to climb Cradle Mountain, surveyor Henry Hellyer, described and drew the mighty wilderness of North West Tasmania with a nod to the new fashion of Romanticism. His bosses at the Van Dieman's Land Company were not impressed by aesthetic appreciation of lands they saw only as future sheep runs. Soon after, Hellyer took his own life, as gossip spread about his alleged relationship with a male convict.

Life-long companions

At the end of a literary era whose first rush had affected Hellyer, early twentieth century Tasmanian novelist Marie Bjelke-Petersen (aunt of former Queensland Premier Sir Joh) set many of her romantic classics in the island's West.

'How appropriate that they should have met in this romantic island,' she wrote in The Captive Singer, 'with its great wild beauty of dense tangled bush, lofty mountains lifting bold undaunted crags, its immense solitude, its deep melancholy, its riotous, exuberant sunshine: Tasmania with its flaming sunsets and pearly dawns, some days tender, exquisitely yielding; on others convulsed with passion, impetuous, ungoverned.' Bjelke-Petersen believed that, compared to the artificiality of Sydney or

Melbourne, beautiful, unaffected Tasmania was the obvious place to discover true love, something which she found with her life long companion, Sylvia Mills.

Sexual ambiguity

An extra in the 1926 film version of Bjelke-Petersen's sexually ambiguous novel *Jewelled Nights* was Marelle Flynn, mother of film legend Errol.

'Stop acting like a goddam faggot, you no-good Tasmanian, bum, son-of-a-bitch.' In this on-set outburst, Michael Curtiz, director of Flynn's first Hollywood hit, *Captain Blood*, summed up two major themes of Errol's life: his Tasmanian origins and his reputed bisexuality.

In his autobiography, Flynn reflected happily on trips into the wilderness with his biologist father, Theodore, trapping native animals like the now extinct Tasmanian tiger.

Key Hobart sites associated with Flynn include the Theatre Royal where he learnt to dance, and the Palace Theatre (at Elizabeth Street, opposite the GPO), where he watched the latest Hollywood films.

Errol Flynn³



Dr Bob Brown

Deathly beauty

In the 1960s, young gay men like influential academic Dennis Altman, experienced Tasmania very differentially.

In Altman's *The Comfort of Men*, 'the dark mass' of Mt Wellington is 'everywhere, looming above the city like a threatening step-mother.'

It's 'an omnipresent granite-purple shadow behind every view ... so beautiful, but it's the beauty of death.'

Green advocate

Not long after Altman left Tasmania, the world's appreciation of its natural beauty was to change again, thanks to another gay Tasmanian, prominent environmentalist Dr Bob Brown.

The movement Brown has led for almost 30 years has not only helped save much of Tasmania's beauty from destruction but it has also given us a greater appreciation than ever before of the value of Tasmania's wild places.

Wilderness and Wildlife



Exploring Mt Wellington, Hobart

'If we can accept the view that man and nature are inseparable parts of the unified whole, then Tasmania can be a shining beacon in a dull, uniform and largely artificial world.'

These words from one of Tasmania's greatest wilderness photographers, Olegas Truchanas, sum up the importance of Tasmania's wild places. Not only is natural Tasmania breathtaking in its beauty and diversity but it's also unique, accessible, soul-enriching, considered of global significance, and, for the most part, protected.

Many Tasmanias

What strikes visitors first is the range of different natural environments.

The creamy sands of the east coast's Friendly Beaches are a world away from the endless north-eastern forests, southern sea-cliffs battered by Antarctic gales and alpine lakes wrapped in the swirling mists that roll in from Argentina.

The greatest contrast is between the dry forests and open grasslands of the east, filled with birdsong and the rhythmic hollow thump of bounding kangaroos, and the mountain ranges, temperate rain-forest and buttongrass plains of Tasmania's west.

Silent and serene

Tasmania's alpine and rainforest areas are delicate and fragile. The silence and serenity are of another world. But the weather can be unpredictable and harsh. Be prepared for rain, snow and burning sun any time of the year and sometimes all on the same day.

Visitors also enjoy the seasonal variation in Tasmania's wilderness. Spring wildflowers dot alpine tundra. Deciduous beech gilds the rainforest in autumn. Winter snow



Wombat strikes a pose

transforms a forest into a fairytale.

If Tasmania is divided by its scenery, it is united by an abundance of wildlife.

Thanks to its isolation, the island is blessed by many unique species of plants and animals. Examples include the wedge-tailed eagle, Cape Barren goose, orange-bellied parrot, moss froglet, snow skink, rainforest species like myrtle and sassafras, the swamp gum (which at up to 110 metres is the world's tallest flowering plant), and one of the world's longest-living organisms, the Huon pine, which can flourish for 3000 years.

Tasmania is also refuge for many mammals and birds that have been harassed to near extinction elsewhere – bandicoots, bettongs, pademelons, potoroos, quolls, white goshawks, hooded plovers and fairy penguins.

Ark Tasmania

Animals commonly found in other parts of Australia – such

as the platypus, echidnas, wombats, possums, wallabies, whales and fur seals – can be easier to see in Tasmania.

The best places to see Tasmania's animals are at the 'marsupial Serengetis' of **Narawntapu, Mt William and Maria Island National Parks.**

You can be hopeful of a platypus sighting on the Henty River near Zeehan, the Mersey River near Latrobe, Hastings Caves and at Lake St Clair and Mt Field National Parks.

The mascot of Ark Tasmania is the Tasmanian devil. Smaller but just as noisy as their cartoon namesake, devils can be seen at most wildlife parks.

As bright as coral

Tasmania's marine parks draw many visitors. Southern and western kelp forests hide some of the most outlandish seahorses in the world. The sponges that grow in groves along the east coast attract attention with colours as bright and varied as coral.

The Adventure Island



Coastal cycling, near the Hazards, Freycinet National Park

Lonely Planet wasn't exaggerating when it dubbed Tasmania 'Adventure Island.' There are walking, surfing, kayaking and diving experiences to suit every taste.

The island is rightly famous as the world's best bushwalking destination. As well as long walks like the five-day Overland Track, there's a wide range of short walks that take in mountains, beaches, waterfalls and historic sites.

Guided walks

Guided walks are increasingly popular with visitors looking for the personal touch of guides who know the land and its stories. The companies which run guided walks in Cradle Mountain, Freycinet and Maria Island National Parks are all gay-friendly.

Waves and caves

Expert surfers can be found riding the world's largest breakers off Tasmania's rugged south coast. For the less intrepid, Clifton Beach east of Hobart and Marawah in the far north west are renowned for consistently

great waves. Wet or dry suits are recommended all year round.

Enchanting limestone and dolomite karst systems make Tasmania a caver's delight.

A good place to start, for beginners and hard-core cavers alike, is Hastings Caves south of Hobart. Follow this up with a visit to the renowned Mole Creek Karst National Park west of Launceston.

Divers paradise

Divers come from around the world to enjoy Tasmania's clear water and diverse marine habitats. The kelp forests of the Forestier and Tasman Peninsula are the most accessible. King Island is a diver's paradise with over 200 ships wrecked off its rugged shores.

The dolerite columns that give Tasmania's mountains and southern sea coasts the look of ancient ruined fortresses are a magnet for climbers, while



Rafting the Franklin River

numerous bays and off-shore islands, particularly in the south east, make Tasmania a yachting and sea kayaking mecca. It's not uncommon to spot families of southern right whales and pods of dolphins when you're out on the water.

White water

Rivers abound in Tasmania, so rafters and jet boaters do too. Australia's last wild river, the Franklin, is famous with rafters. But there is also exciting white water on the Picton, the Mersey and the North Esk.

Jet boat companies run tours on the lower stretches of the Derwent, Huon and King Rivers.

Scenic routes

For some more relaxed recreation try angling, golfing or cycling.

In the silence of a misty alpine dawn anglers can sometimes be seen beneath the gnarled limbs of an ancient pencil pine hauling in rainbow-flecked trout. Sea and game fishing is also popular, particularly on the east coast.



Underwater adventure

Cyclists enjoy scenic routes like the Fingal and Upper Derwent Valleys, while golfers have a choice of around 80 courses, including **Ratho** at Bothwell, the world's oldest golf course outside Scotland.

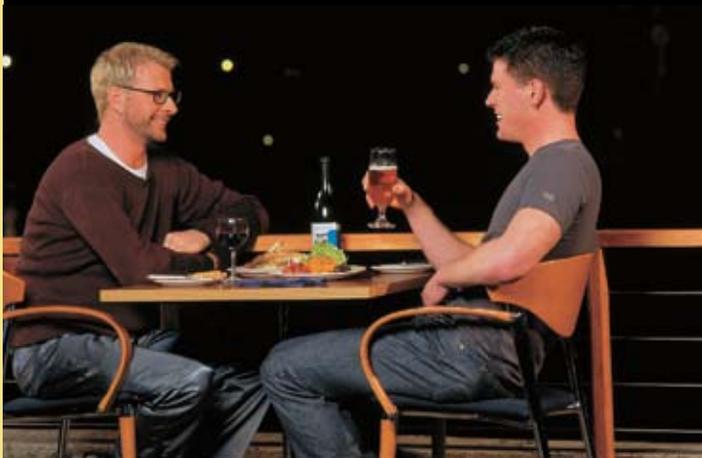
Tasmania's beaches are good for strolling and sunbathing. If you're keen for a swim follow locals to the most sheltered beaches with the warmest water (water temperature can vary remarkably between beaches).

Historic gardens

Tasmania's historic gardens include the **Woolmers National Rose Garden** and Hobart's **Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens**, with its early nineteenth century 'tropical wall' riddled with heat ducts, and the garden of celebrity green thumb Peter Cundall.

When touring, take it easy on the island's many narrow, winding roads, and travel slower at night to avoid hitting animals. For more on adventure see pages 28 and 29.

Wine and Food



Relaxed dining

Lovers of Tasmania's wine and food have two simple explanations for why the island's produce is highly prized as some of the freshest and tastiest in the world.

The first is Tasmania's fertility. It provides the nation with most of its vegetables and much of the gourmet dairy goods and seafood found on tables in Singapore and Tokyo. The second is a cool, temperate climate in which it takes fruit longer to ripen, making it sweeter and juicier.

Tasting Tasmania

There are several ways to taste Tasmania. Tasmanian food and wine are featured in restaurants and cafés in major centres and many smaller towns.

Restaurants such as **Peppermint Bay** at Woodbridge, **Lebrina** and **Marque IV** in Hobart, and **Stillwater** in Launceston, are setting new standards, while coffee culture thrives at cafés like **Jackman & McRoss**, and **Retro** in Hobart. For friendly fare while you're touring, check out the **Red Velvet Lounge** in Cygnet or **The Groovy Penguin** in Penguin.

Wine trails

A short drive out of Hobart and Launceston into the Huon, Coal, Derwent and Tamar River Valleys, visitors can find numerous wineries, many with top-end restaurants that also feature Tasmanian fare.

Derwent Valley merlots go well with a bite of Tasmanian chocolate fudge. Huon Valley pinot gris is best accompanied by a stunning view of the Wellington Range.

Straight to the source

In Tasmania there is ample opportunity for gourmands to go straight to the source of their favourite food. Chocoholics can sample their childhood favourites at **Cadbury's** in Hobart or go up-market at Latrobe's **House of Anvers** for D'Anvers truffles and fudges, or the **Bruny Island Fudge Company**. Cheese-makers



Superb Tasmanian wine and food

like **Ashgrove Cheese** and **Grandvee Cheeses** bring all their produce together in single farm outlets, while most of Tasmania's river valleys are dotted with road-side fruit, flower, jam and native honey stalls. Ichigo strawberries and leatherwood honey are Tasmanian specialties you must try.

Prized Tasmanian fish varieties like blue eye trevalla, and the island's larger-than-average mussels, oysters, abalone and crayfish, are available from specialist sea-food restaurants like **Blue Skies** and **Mures**, and dockside fish punts.

Food fests

It all comes together at Tasmania's popular **food festivals** – the Taste of Tasmania in Hobart, Launceston's **Festivale**, the Taste of the Huon, Devonport's Taste of the Harvest and Tastings at the Top at Cradle Mountain.

At these festivals Tasmania's food-makers, wine-growers and chefs gather to share their gourmet achievements.



East Coast berries

Swansea delights

Swansea is a traveller and gourmand's delight.

The seaside village is the perfect base from which to explore Freycinet National Park. Gay-owned accommodation choices include colonial **Meredith House** or cliff-top **Kabuki-by-the-Sea** which also features a much-loved Japanese restaurant.

At the Paris end of town is **The Banc** restaurant, famed for its fresh seafood, and one of the few eateries outside Hobart or Launceston to be listed in the *Australian Gourmet Traveller's* restaurant guide.

Swansea also boasts **Kate's Berry Farm**, where the sweetest berries are magically transformed into everything from ice cream and jam to wine.

Arts and Crafts



Tasmanian Wood Design Centre



At Salamanca Market



The Wilderness Gallery, Cradle Mountain

Poet Gwen Harwood and painter Lloyd Rees both declared Tasmania's light unique in the world, and an inspiration for their greatest achievements.

For Tasmania's world-class furniture makers, wooden boat builders and art-jewellers, it is something more solid – the island's many unique timbers and rare metals. In Tasmania's unique Aboriginal artefacts like shell necklaces, and in its tradition of wilderness photography, light and earth are blended into a translucent whole.

Artists, designers, writers and their admirers are drawn to Tasmania by the way its precious beauty is reflected in a rich and vibrant culture.

Just as it was a magnet for colonial artists, so Tasmania continues to produce compelling contemporary art informed by place. Colonial art is a feature of the **Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery**, while the best contemporary art is on display at the **Plimsoll** and **Carnegie Galleries**, at galleries

and studios in Salamanca Place and at **The Henry Jones Art Hotel**, all in Hobart.

Wooden boats

Having produced more than its fair share of writers, Tasmania is now also producing a distinctive literature that is celebrated at events such as the Salamanca Writers Festival. The largest range of Tasmanian books is to be found at **Hobart, Astrolabe** and **Fullers Bookshops**.

The latest in furniture design can be found at the **Tasmanian Wood Design Centre** in Launceston. Wooden boat building is a thriving industry in Franklin. Art-jewellery, ceramics and sculpture are on show in Hobart's Salamanca Place studios, Launceston's Inveresk Cultural Precinct and smaller centres like Deloraine.

Wilderness art

Launceston's **Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery** houses Tasmania's largest collection of traditional Aboriginal artefacts, while contemporary indigenous art is on display at **Art Mob** in Hobart and **Tiagarra** in Devonport.

Wilderness photography is available from many outlets, including Wilderness Shops. But the best place to see how this genre has evolved in response to both artistic and political influences is at **Cradle Mountain's Wilderness Gallery**.

Stone phalluses

Tasmania is renowned for its historic homes and specialist museums. Homes like **Clarendon** and **Entally** near Launceston are windows into life on Tasmania's semi-feudal nineteenth century estates. The Port Arthur museum is Australia's best for convict history. On the west coast, the quirky, old-style jumble of Zeehan and Queenstown's

museums make them a must-see, while the Strahan Visitor Centre has won numerous awards for its compelling perspectives on west coast history. The museum at Hobart's **Moorilla Estate** winery, due to reopen in 2009 after extensive renovations, has the largest collections of Roman mosaics, meso-American art and ancient stone phalluses in Australia.

Tasmania is a treasure trove for antique hunters and serious collectors snap up bargains from small-town and city dealers.

Culture fests

All Tasmania's cultural achievements are brought together in festivals like the Tasmanian Craft Fair (the largest in Australia) and the world-class Ten Days on the Island.

Established over a decade ago as a celebration of the diversity of island cultures, the Ten Days on the Island biennial features cutting-edge art, writing, drama, opera and dance from around the world.

Hobart and Surrounds



Hobart docks, city and Mt Wellington



Tahune AirWalk

'Hobart is the only place someone without a lot of money can live a civilised life.' Writer and broadcaster Robert Dessaix is only one of the many gay and lesbian people who have been seduced by the beauty, friendliness and sophistication of Hobart.

Hobart combines many big city amenities and attractions with the charm and friendliness of a large country town. Bracketing this attractive mix are the grandeur and ever-shifting moods of Mt Wellington and the Derwent estuary.

City life

Features of Hobart include **Salamanca Market** every Saturday morning, Australia's largest Georgian precinct, Battery Point, the restaurant strips of Sullivans Cove and North Hobart, tours of historic sites like the convict women's prison in South Hobart and the city penitentiary, and views from the top of Mt Wellington.

Enjoy coffee at gay-friendly **Machine** and **Kaos Cafés**, or something more substantial at **Restaurant 373**, North Hobart.

Hobart's gay clubs are small but fun. Check the Listings for more information.

For a restful night in, you can't go past **The Henry Jones Art Hotel** or gay-owned and operated **Corinda Cottages**.

Huon Valley

Several touring routes start in Hobart.

Driving south will take you through the rolling farmland of the Huon Valley, the great southern forests and spectacular Bruny Island to Australia's southern-most town, Cockle Creek (population 4).

Features include wineries near Huonville, craft studios in Franklin, the landing sites of many early explorers, **Hastings Caves** and hot springs, the **Tahune AirWalk** and the superb scenery of the Hartz

Mountains and Recherche Bay. Less well known beauty spots include Snug and Pelverata Falls west of Snug, and Fluted Cape and Cloudy Bay on Bruny Island.

You'll enjoy a stay at **Hiba**, **Huon Bush Retreats** or **Riseley Cottage**, all gay-owned and operated.

Convict town

Travelling east takes you through the Georgian village of Richmond, home to Australia's oldest bridge and catholic church, and on to the Tasman Peninsula, a former open air prison camp centred on the convict town of Port Arthur.

No tour of Port Arthur is complete without a visit to the Isle of the Dead and the Boy's Prison at Point Puer. If you have time, visit some of Port Arthur's out-stations like Koonya, Saltwater River and the Coal Mines, or test your nerves on one of Port Arthur's famed ghost tours.

Visitors to the Tasman Peninsula should make time for the area's geological wonders

including the Tessellated Pavement, Tasman's Arch, Remarkable Cave and the Devil's Kitchen.

Alpine beaches

Driving north west from Hobart will take you past hop fields and oast houses through to the magnificent Styx Valley and Mt Field National Park.

This route follows the picturesque Derwent River up to Lake St Clair, Australia's deepest lake. Encircled by mountains and rainforest, and lined by alpine beaches, Lake St Clair is one of Tasmania's best kept secrets.

Heritage highway

Finally, the highway winding its way due north from the city, takes you through Georgian villages like Oatlands and Ross (see p26 – 29 for more on Ross). This route passes by some of Tasmania's grandest colonial houses, and some of its best antique shops. Be sure to visit the **Bonorong Wildlife Conservation Centre**.



A Tamar Valley vineyard



On Maria Island, East Coast

Launceston, the Tamar and the North of Tasmania offer a heady feast of flavours and tantalising treats, while the East Coast beckons with breathtaking, uncrowded beaches and long, languid days.

Although founded only a year after Hobart, in 1804, Launceston was rebuilt in the mid-nineteenth century with money its merchants made from provisioning Victoria's gold rush.

Like Melbourne, Launceston is built around carefully laid out and ornately adorned parks typical of the Victorian period.

Summer strolls

A must-see in Launceston is Cataract Gorge. After winding its way slowly through many of the convict-era villages that surround Launceston, the South Esk River tumbles dramatically into the city through steep gorges and deep basins that are the perfect back-drop to a romantic summer evening stroll.

Tamar Valley

Launceston is the start of several scenic touring routes. You can follow the Tamar River north

through some of Tasmania's best wine country. On your way take some time out from wine tasting to visit the gold mining town of Beaconsfield and **Seahorse World** at Beauty Point. Greens Beach at the Tamar's mouth is Launceston's favourite place to fish, swim and relax.

Travelling west, the Great Western Tiers Tourist Route takes you through picturesque villages like Carrick and Westbury to magnificent forests, waterfalls and caves. After you've visited Liffey Falls and enjoyed the glow worms in Marakooa Cave sample the delights of the **Christmas Hill Raspberry Farm**.

Deserted beaches

Touring through Tasmania's north east provides visitors with a relaxing blend of history and natural beauty. The former tin

mining town of Derby, the site of Australia's first national lesbian conference in 1975, features gay-friendly cafés and the remnants of a once-thriving Chinese community. St Columba and Ralphs Falls are worth a visit, as are the long, deserted beaches of Mt William National Park and the beauty of the Bay of Fires.

Wineglass Bay

Follow the 'Tasmanian Riviera' south along some of Australia's most beautiful coastline to Freycinet National Park where a visit to Wineglass Bay, voted one of the world's top 10 beaches, is a must, as is a dip in the limpid pools of the Apsley River. Next stop, Swansea for lunch (see pages 12 and 13 for more).

Top-grade gay-owned and operated accommodation on the East Coast includes **Mt Paul on Freycinet** near Coles Bay and **Rainbow Retreat** at St Marys where the pizzas are unsurpassed.

Maria Island

Then it's on to another of Tasmania's well-kept secrets –

Maria Island. Originally set aside as a refuge for endangered species, Maria is free of private cars and homes, and is almost supernaturally serene. It is a camper's delight.

Not even Britain's early nineteenth-century prison guards could darken Maria in the eyes of the convicts transported there. The Irish political prisoner William Smith O'Brien wondered how he could fulfil his destiny as a martyr in '*one of the loveliest spots formed by the hand of nature.*'

Modern visitors respond to Maria Island in much the same way. Its beaches, forests and cloud-wrapped peaks suggest the sublime abode of old and gentle gods.

From Launceston you can fly to Flinders Island where a climb to the summit of Mt Strzelecki offers stunning views, and Wybalenna historic site tells the story of the poignant history of Aboriginal Tasmanians.

The North West Coast and King Island



The Nut near Stanley

When colonial Governor George Arthur gave permission for the first white settlement in North West Tasmania in the mid 1820s his phrase '*beyond the ramparts of the unknown*' summed up the mystery, promise and threat with which many colonial Tasmanians invested the western districts.

The south west was an even more impenetrable mystery for many early white Tasmanians, at one time being officially tagged 'Transylvania.'

Old-time stories

The beauty, strangeness and severity of Tasmania's west has inspired many artists and writers, including, most recently, Richard Flanagan. His novels draw on the tales of old-timers whose stories hold Tasmania's west together like the ancient, tangled roots which bind its sodden soil.

Surfing platypus

In western Tasmania you'll hear of families of platypus riding the waves at river mouths, bills agape catching whitebait; of locals discovering the skulls of runaway convicts half way up the trees that have grown

through them; of off-roaders swallowed whole and lost forever in the quick sands of endless western beaches.

Skulls up trees, body surfing platypus: the west may seem a world apart, but it is where many of the rips of our history and identity meet in one magnificent swell.

Volcanic core

One of Tasmania's most breathtaking touring routes follows Bass Strait past Devonport and Burnie and on to Tasmania's rugged north west tip. The simultaneous views of mountain and ocean are matchless. So are the views from the Nut, a volcanic core overlooking historic Stanley. While in Stanley visit the birthplace of Australia's only Tasmanian-born Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, check out elegant

The Western Wilderness



Cradle Mountain

Highfield House, designed by Henry Hellyer, and stay at gay-owned and operated @VDL.

Further west is the surfing mecca of Marrawah, and Woolnorth, where special hides allow visitors to view Tasmanian devils in the wild.

Cradle country

The Cradle Country Touring Route winds south from Devonport through the rolling green hills beneath Mt Roland to stunning Cradle Mountain. Pay a visit to Trowunna Wildlife Park at Mole Creek or take in the murals depicting Sheffield's history and personalities.

When you reach Cradle Mountain make sure you have at least enough time to walk the Dove Lake Circuit and take in the beauty that inspired conservation pioneer Gustav Weindorfer to devote himself to Cradle Mountain's preservation.

From Cradle the road west takes you through the thick western forests to the mining towns of Rosebery and Zeehan.

Compelling perspective

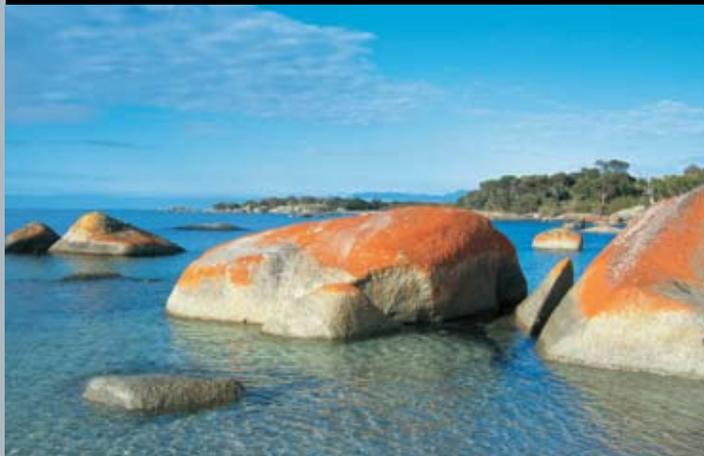
Your destination, Strahan, is an excellent base for exploring Macquarie Harbour, wild rivers like the Gordon, and the west coast's beaches. Visit the award-winning Strahan Visitor Centre for informative displays on Aboriginal history, Huon piners and the modern environment and gay rights movements.

Tragic reminder

The reconstructed West Coast Wilderness Railway is a must for fans of steam and allows travellers a chance to explore the mining town of Queenstown. Queenstown: a reminder of the impact of former mining practices on the environment and of the incongruities which make Tasmania so fascinating.

From Burnie you can fly to King Island, home of some of Australia's most renowned gourmet foods, including King Island Dairy's triple cream brie and Bass Strait blue.

Special Things to See and Do



Flinders Island's clear, sparkling bays

Tasmania is an inexhaustible source of delight and wonder. Here are some more special things to see and do while visiting the island. They are uniquely Tasmanian.

Muttonbirds

An experience enjoyed by many Tasmanian wildlife enthusiasts is a visit to a muttonbird rookery.

Tasmania is a haven for muttonbirds, or shearwaters. They spend the summer breeding season here (November to April) before migrating to the shores of Alaska and Siberia.

Muttonbirds gather food far out at sea during the day. The best time to see them is when they return at dusk to giant rookeries to feed their chicks.

It is awe-inspiring to watch thousands of these agile birds wheel and dive as the moon rises behind them. Aboriginal people call them 'moonbirds.'

Muttonbirds are protected, but traditional harvesting by Aborigines is allowed. The dark, greasy muttonbird meat is an acquired taste.



Tasmanian devil

which has drastically reduced devil numbers (for more, visit tassiedevil.com.au).

Normally shy of humans, devils can be seen close up at Tasmania's wildlife parks and at special purpose-built hides at different locations around the island.

Flash Mob

All Tasmania's convict historic sites have a homosexual history, but few provide any insight into it.

The Strahan Visitor Centre is unique in examining convict homosexuality at early punishment stations like Sarah Island near Strahan, Maria Island and the convict Coal Mines south of Hobart, as well as drawing links between homophobia in nineteenth and twentieth century Tasmania.

Closed in 1848, partly because of official concern about uncontrollable sodomy in the mine's depths, the Coal Mines is now an evocative site well worth visiting. So are the



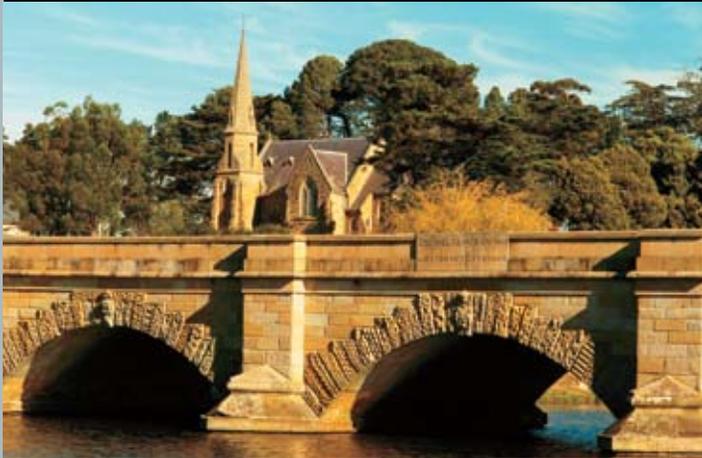
At Moorilla Estate

lonely convict ruins on Maria Island. When Maria's convict Superintendent wrote that he had walked in on eight men who had pushed their beds together and lay sleeping in each other's embrace, his words echoed all the way to London.

Not long after, at Tasmania's largest convict station, Port Arthur, penitentiary dorms were re-designed to keep inmates separate and under constant surveillance.

Separation and surveillance were even more strictly enforced in the Separate Prison, which was built at Port Arthur partly to allow men convicted of sodomy to reflect on their 'unnatural vice' and repent. This prison remained in use to punish non-convict homosexuals well after the penology behind it had been discredited elsewhere. The story of Leonard Hand, a young man convicted of sodomy who was driven mad by its rigour, is told in the prison.

Hobart's convict women's prison was the site of 'much



The convict-built sandstone bridge at Ross

'unnatural intercourse' according to its superintendents. An inquiry into the infamous group of incorrigibles known as the 'Flash Mob' heard of *'prisoners dancing perfectly naked and making obscene attitudes towards each other.'* Worse still the investigators were told that *'two women had recently been detected in the very act of exciting each other's passions – on the Lord's Day in the House of God – and at the very time divine service was performing.'*

Bridges

In an island society familiar with contrasts, contradictions and sometimes deep division, bridges have a special symbolic importance.

At Richmond, east of Hobart, Australia's oldest bridge is still in use. So is the bridge at Ross, half way between Hobart and Launceston.

Ross Bridge features the faces of colonial Tasmanians and figures from Celtic mythology carved by convict masons into

its stones 170 years ago. One of the faces belongs to Jorgen Jorgensen, who, in between helping first settle Tasmania and returning to it a generation later as a convict, was briefly King of Iceland. The carvings are wearing with age but they still speak of how the Tasmanian past blurs mythology and history in larger-than-life figures like Jorgensen.

Another remarkable convict-built bridge is the Spiky Bridge south of Swansea. Built without mortar and with a spiked parapet, supposedly to stop cows falling off, Spiky Bridge is a source of great bafflement to many visitors.

Rare wooden industrial-age bridges like the Bird River bridge, and the reconstructed bridges on the West Coast Wilderness Railway, both near Strahan, testify to engineering genius and a desire to tame Tasmania's wilderness. Hobart's mid-nineteenth century aquaducts show the same historical period in a gentler mood.



West Coast Wilderness Railway

Architectural merit can also be found in modern bridges like the Batman north of Launceston and Hobart's Tasman Bridge. When the latter was ripped in half by an off-course freighter in 1975, 12 people died. A march for Aboriginal reconciliation across the re-built bridge in 2000 was proportionally the largest of its kind in Australia.

Sacred places

Tasmania's indigenous people have a rich, vibrant culture stretching back 40,000 years.

Pre-historic sites are common, although most are remote or invisible to the untrained eye. This is a blessing given their immense significance and fragility.

Aboriginal middens (refuse piles) can be found in most coastal areas. There are also many stone tool quarries, ochre quarries, fish traps and hut trenches.

Tasmanian Aboriginal hand stencils found in caves in the south west are some of the oldest human art.

The most accessible and well-interpreted pre-historic sites include the caves at Bedlam Walls near Hobart, and the rock carvings on Mersey Bluff in Devonport.

Historic places of profound significance to Aboriginal people include the original site of Hobart, at Risdon Cove, Wybalenna on Flinders Island and Oyster Cove south of Hobart.

The latter two were camps to which many Aboriginal people were exiled after their guerrilla war to stop white encroachment ended in Australia's only European/Aboriginal treaty in the 1830s. That treaty remains unhonoured.

Larmairremener Tabetli

Insight into the continuity of Aboriginal culture and its link to the land can be found at the Aboriginal culture walk, or Larmairremener Tabetli, at Lake St Clair National Park.

When visiting Aboriginal sites, please recognise that the sites are part of a living culture and pay them the respect they deserve.

Listings

Community Contacts

Gay Info Line Ph: (03) 6234 8179
(for info on commercial venues)

Gay & Lesbian Community Centre www.glctas.org
(for info on community events)

Hobart Women's Health Centre Ph: (03) 6231 3212
(for lesbian health needs)

Relationship registry & ceremonies www.relationshipstasmania.org.au

Tasmanian Council on AIDS & Related Diseases Ph: (03) 6234 1242

Tasmanian Gay & Lesbian Rights Group Ph: (03) 6224 3556

Working It Out Hobart Ph: (03) 6231 1200
(for counselling and personal support) Launceston Ph: (03) 6334 4013
Burnie Ph: (03) 6432 3643

General

Adventure Information www.discovertasmania.com

Diving Information www.divetasmania.com

Events and Festival Information www.discovertasmania.com/events

Fishing Information www.troutguidestasmania.com.au

Gay-owned and operated accommodation www.samesextravel.com/tas.html

National Parks www.parks.tas.gov.au

Pride Festival www.glctas.org/events.html

Touring Itineraries www.tastravel.com.au

 The **i** signs indicate a staffed visitors information centre

Attractions

Bonorong Wildlife Conservation Centre Brighton www.bonorong.com.au

Cascades Female Factory Historic Site www.femalefactory.com.au
Ross Ph: (03) 6381 5466

Clarendon Evandale www.nationaltrusttas.org.au

Coal Mines Saltwater River www.portarthur.org.au

Entally House Hadspen www.entally.com.au

Hastings Caves near Southport www.parks.tas.gov.au /reserves/hastings

Highfield House Stanley www.historic-highfield.com.au

Penitentiary Chapel Historic Site Hobart www.penitentiarychapel.com

Port Arthur Historic Site Port Arthur www.portarthur.org.au

Ratho Golf Course Bothwell www.rathogolf.com

Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Hobart www.rtbg.tas.gov.au

Salamanca Market, Hobart Every Saturday from 8.30am-3.00pm
(except Christmas Day and Anzac Day)

Seahorse World Beauty Point www.seahorseworld.com.au

Tahune AirWalk Geeveston www.forestrytas.com.au

Trowunna Wildlife Park Mole Creek www.trowunna.com.au

West Coast Wilderness Railway Strahan www.puretasmania.com.au

Woolmers Estate & National Rose Garden Longford
www.woolmers.com.au

Woolnorth Tours - Devil Viewing near Stanley
www.woolnorthtours.com.au

Bookshops

Astrolabe Bookshop Hobart www.astrolabebooks.com.au

Fullers Bookshop www.fullersbookshop.com.au
Hobart Ph: (03) 6224 2488
Launceston Ph: (03) 6334 8499

Hobart Bookshop Hobart www.hobartbookshop.com.au

Tours

Launceston Ghost Tour www.launcestoncityghosttours.com

Maria Island Walks www.mariaislandwalk.com.au

Shake a Leg Guided Eco Walking Tours Bicheno Ph: (03) 6375 1478

Accommodation

Corinda's Cottages Hobart www.corindascottages.com.au

Hiba Bruny Island www.hiba.com.au

Huon Bush Retreats Huonville www.huonbushretreats.com

Kabuki-by-the-Sea near Swansea www.kabukibythesea.com.au

Meredith House Swansea www.meredith-house.com.au

Mt Paul on Freycinet Coles Bay www.mtpaul.com

Rainbow Retreat St Marys www.rainbowretreat.com.au

Riseley Cottage near Dover www.riseleycottage.com

The Henry Jones Art Hotel Hobart www.thehenryjones.com

@VDL Stanley www.atvdlstanley.com.au

Art and crafts

Art Mob Hobart www.artmob.com.au

Carnegie Gallery Hobart Ph: (03) 6238 2100

Cradle Mountain Chateau Wilderness Gallery Ph: (03) 6492 1404

Plimsoll Gallery Hobart Ph: (03) 6226 4309

Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery Launceston www.qvmag.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery Hobart www.tmag.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Wood Design Centre Launceston Ph: (03) 6331 5506

Tiagarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre Devonport Ph: (03) 6424 8250

Wine and food

Ashgrove Cheese Elizabeth Town	www.ashgrovecheese.com.au
Blue Skies Restaurant & Bar Hobart	www.blueskiesdining.com
Bruny Island Fudge Company Bruny Island	www.hiba.com.au
Cadburys Chocolate Factory Hobart	www.cadbury.com.au
Christmas Hill Raspberry Farm Elizabeth Town	Ph: (03) 6362 2186
Grandvewe Cheeses Woodbridge	www.grandvewe.com.au
House of Anvers Latrobe	www.anvers-chocolate.com.au
Jackman & McRoss Hobart	Ph: (03) 6223 3186
Kaos Café & Soak Bar	www.kaoscafe.com.au
Kate's Berry Farm Swansea	Ph: (03) 6257 8928
King Island Dairy	www.kidairy.com.au
Lebrina Hobart	Ph: (03) 6228 7775
Machine Café Hobart	Ph: (03) 6224 9922
Marque IV Hobart	Ph: (03) 6224 4428
Moorilla Estate Hobart	www.moorilla.com.au
Mures Seafood Restaurant Hobart	www.mures.com.au
Peppermint Bay Restaurant Woodbridge	www.peppermintbay.com.au
Red Velvet Lounge Cygnet	Ph: (03) 6295 0466
Restaurant 373 Hobart	www.restaurant373.com.au
Retro Café Hobart	Ph: (03) 6223 3073
Stillwater Launceston	www.stillwater.net.au
The Banc Swansea	Ph: (03) 6257 8896
The Groovy Penguin Café Penguin	www.groovypenguin.com.au
Wine Routes	www.discovertasmania.com



For more information on gay friendly accommodation
look for this symbol on www.discovertasmania.com

¹McCrae, George Gordon, 1833-1927. Matthew Flinders, Capt. R.N. 1809, author of Trim [picture] [186-?] 1 drawing: pen and ink; 15.8 x 10.9cm. Part of Album of drawings [picture] [1839-1903] nla.pic-an6325371 National Library of Australia
²Moore, May, 1881-1931. Portrait of Marie Bjelke Petersen [picture] 1927. 1 photograph; sepia toned 20.3 x 15.3cm nla.pic-an3084968 National Library of Australia
³PIC P1856 LOC Portraits drawer F. Portrait of Errol Flynn [picture]. [194?] 1 photograph: kodak col.; 26 x 21cm. nla.pic-an13384126 National Library of Australia

At Russell Falls, Mt Field National Park

