

Cruise to Tasmania on the Pacific Aria.

28 February to 6 March 2020

After a week visiting the family in Melbourne we took a cruise on the Pacific Aria visiting Kangaroo Island and Tasmania. We have cruised on the Pacific Aria before (visiting Papua New Guinea - one of our very best cruises).

28 February. Depart Melbourne.

We embarked smoothly and soon found our way to cabin 6163, an oceanview cabin overlooking Deck 6. (We had booked a guaranteed porthole or better). The cabin is comfortable and spacious and the smokers on the deck outside can't see in. We had dinner at the Waterfront (not impressed) then watched the Welcome Aboard show (impressed).

29 February. At sea.

A lovely relaxed day! After breakfast we went to a destinations presentation, had a long walk around the deck, then watched a wonderful jazz quartet. After lunch we went to a trivia and a 'liar, liar' quiz; entered a putting competition (Ross won), and had a read. Surprisingly it was quite cold so no swimming or lazing outside. After a nice dinner at Angelo's (Italian) we saw the excellent show 'Sideshow Alley'.

1 March. Kangaroo Island.

Kangaroo Island is just 15 km off mainland South Australia near Adelaide. It is a large island (around 4,500 square km) with a population of about 5000. Kangaroo Island is known for its wildlife, especially the deep brown coloured kangaroos. Sadly the island was hit by fires recently. Millions of animals died and lots of bush and property was destroyed. We took a tender in to the township of Penneshaw where we went on a 'Sculpture trail' and saw the town market and picturesque Christmas Bay. We then took the ship's "Kangaroo Island Sights" tour which kept to parts of the island not affected by the fires. First we visited Reeves Point (the first European settlement in South Australia -1836), and the main town of Kingscote - population 1800. On the way back to the ship we stopped at a honey shop and learnt how they have had to re-populate the bees as so many were destroyed in the fires. We then visited American River discovered by Matthew Flinders in 1802, and Pennington Bay which has an impressive rugged surfing beach and coastline. The weather had deteriorated and the tender back to the ship was pretty bumpy! In the evening we had a wonderful set meal at the Dragon Lady and then watched 'Follies Fantastique' - an excellent puppet show.



2 March. At sea (pretty rough).

In the morning we went to a culinary demonstration followed by a walk through the galley. We then had our AGM. After lunch we went to a trivia quiz, went to the gym and had dinner at the buffet. The show "Twice upon a time" was cancelled as the sea was too rough. We weren't going to go as we had seen it twice before and didn't enjoy it. The show was replaced with 'Songs from the movies'.

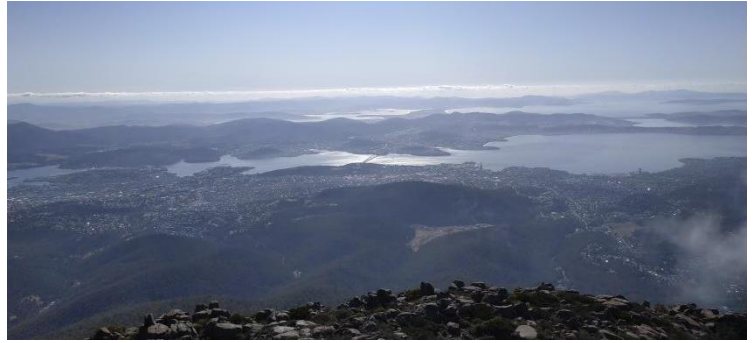
3 March Hobart, Tasmania.

We arrived in Hobart at midday. Hobart is Tasmania's capital with a population of about 250,000 people. It was established in 1803 when soldiers and convicts were sent from Sydney to form Australia's second European settlement. After lunch we wandered around the city centre seeing Salamanca Place (based on warehouses from the colonial era); Battery Point (with old cottages dating back to the early 1800s) and Constitution Dock where the Sydney to Hobart yacht race finishes. Hobart is situated under Mount Wellington on the shore of the Derwent River (which is over 230km long). We took the 'Spirit of Hobart' ferry for a cruise on the Derwent and saw downtown; the casino; Kangaroo Bay, Government House and Macquarie Point. We passed under the Tasman Bridge which in 1975 was hit by the Lake Illawarra. 100 metres of the bridge fell on the Lake Illawarra causing it to sink, and a number of cars to fall into the river. After dinner at Angelo's we walked back in to the city centre and found it to be pretty quiet.



4 March. Hobart.

We met with Helen Barker and she took us up to the top of Mt Wellington to see the lovely sights over the Derwent Valley and the city of Hobart. Quite spectacular, especially when you consider the rocks have all been pushed up from deep within the earth. On the way down we stopped to walk in the bush and saw the 'Octopus tree'. After coffee in Battery Point we looked around Helen's BnB and then re-boarded the ship. We sure had a great time in Hobart, and the weather was perfect (especially at the top of Mt Wellington which is apparently unusual). We had a quiet afternoon, dinner at the Waterfront and then watched the outstanding show "Let's misbehave" - songs from the 1930's. The singing and dancing by the show cast is exceptional.



5 March, Burnie, Tasmania.

Burnie is one of Australia's busiest ports and we planned to have a walk round and explore the town centre. Sadly it was raining and the wind was too great to get in to the port so the Captain aborted our visit. Instead, we explored the unique display of towel animals throughout the ship, went to the gym, and had a final lovely dinner at the Dragon Lady. The final show was "Seven" and was, once again, excellent.



6 March. Melbourne.

We returned to Melbourne after another pleasant cruise.

- ✓ The Pacific Aria is a comfortable, unpretentious ship which does everything well: comfortable cabins, excellent shows, lots of great music, good range of simple activities and lovely food, especially in Angelos and the Dragon Lady (included specialty restaurants).
- ✓ It was great to visit Kangaroo Island and Hobart, but sad that we missed out on Burnie.
- ✓ The weather was lovely in Hobart but cold with choppy seas for much of the cruise, and rainy in Burnie.
- ✓ Buying a cheap “guarantee” cabin meant we were upgraded from a porthole to an oceanview that looked out over the deck with many smokers outside. Fortunately they couldn’t see in to the cabin.
- ✓ The Pacific Aria will be sold next year. We enjoyed both of our cruises on board her.

