

## Discover Tasmania

# From the Blue Tier to the Purple Possum

**Greg Clarke** is a man in search of good food, good views and goblins in Tasmania's northeast.

A DANISH cyclist who has ridden from Perth across the Nullarbor Plain to Weldborough is vacuuming up a bowl of pasta and a beer in the Weldborough Hotel. Not both items at once, though you could excuse him if he managed to pull it off.

It's just the cyclist, Poul Lykke and I in the pub. Two men. Not wanting to seem too eager for a companion, I sit at a table across from Poul. Somewhat strategically, I am far enough away so I can run if he's not my type (of conversationalist).

Marty and Sue, a couple of thirty-somethings, have been running the hotel just four months. Sue might be almost as well travelled as the Dane. She was born in Newfoundland, worked in Doha and now calls Weldborough home.

She takes my order, a fillet steak with a blue cheese sauce, then Poul and I continue to get to know each other by talking about other people; specifically our hosts.

Sue and Marty run the bar, the kitchen and the accommodation. Even with just the two of us here, they're busy.

Sue is a baker, in the sense that she loves to bake rather than claims it as her profession. She makes scones and cakes and was kneading dough in the kitchen when I first arrived.

"I especially like that it is a young couple that has moved in and they seem extremely enthusiastic," Poul offers. "I like that. I just felt extremely welcome when I came in."

On the basis of this remark I decide the cyclist, given his noticeable lack of lycra, is a decent bloke. I think about asking him if I might shuffle across the timber floor and join him at his table.

But then, as late afternoon hints at night, other cyclists and a group of young guys come in search of victuals.



Country fare: Weldborough Hotel manager Marty Campbell preparing pasta. Picture: Greg Clarke

My date jumps tables to be with pedalling pals while publican Marty sends out an SOS for a local to lend a hand in the kitchen.

I carve up my meal alone. The steak – served with chips, local vegies and a delicious pool of blue cheese sauce – costs \$25, comes from a butcher in Ringarooma and is the most tender piece of meat I've eaten for a long while.

According to Marty, the pub was built by a tin-mining company in 1886. During the mining boom, the pub slaked plenty of thirsts. Today Marty and Sue share it with about 30 locals including three or four familiar faces that pop in a couple of times a week.

Marty's parents recently bought the hotel and Marty and Sue hope to position the pub as one of the gateways to the Blue Tier, a mountain plateau criss-crossed with rivers and walking trails.

Even if they don't re-create the custom of the 1880s, when the pub was called the All Nations, they might already be on to something.

### The Blue Tier

The Blue Tier is part of the northeast highlands. Its Goblin Forest Walk is a new addition to the latest *Tasmania's Great Short Walks* brochure.

I want to walk it for the name alone; meet some goblins, ask if they know any of the fairies who are friends of my daughters.

The walk, a short loop from the Poimena carpark, takes visitors through rainforest that suffered some sustained beatings during the tin-mining era but managed to pick itself up off the canvas and fight back, regenerating naturally.



The Goblin walk is the shortest and easiest of a series on the Blue Tier and is easily accessed by those in wheelchairs.

It takes just 20 minutes to get a taste of the forest and complete the circuit.

There don't appear to be goblins but there are picnic and barbecue facilities.

There are three other Great Short Walks in the vicinity. Two of them, Ralph Falls and Evercreech – its white gums are said to be the tallest in Australia – are near Ringarooma. (It might be a good opportunity to load up on some meat from Marty and Sue's butcher.)

A Blue Tier discovery trail brochure is available from the St Helens Visitor Information Centre, a 45-minute drive from Weldborough (ph (03) 6376 1744).

The Blue Dragon Challenge, a mountain bike event combining the beautiful scenery with the rich history of the region's tin-mining past, will be held on Friday and Saturday. Visit [www.trailofthetindragon.com](http://www.trailofthetindragon.com) for more information.

### Pyengana Valley

It's a short drive from Weldborough to the captivating Pyengana Valley. The views of the valley alone – even those that come effortlessly while

**Sea Eagle 5** COMFORTABLE 15m SAILING CATAMARAN

Cruise Norfolk Bay & visit the Convict Coal Mines. Day sails on the Bay. Departing Taranna jetty to cruise the calm waters of Norfolk Bay. Lunch, with complimentary wine or beer, plus morning & afternoon tea included.

\$160 per adult, \$112 child 6-12. Starting January 6th. Bookings essential.

Also available for half day cruises and private charter.

Gift vouchers available

Bookings and enquiries call 0407 401 865

The Eltham Family welcome you to the

**Spring Bay Hotel** Triabunna

2009 AHA National Award Winner  
2007 AHA Best Country Hotel

GREAT NEW TASSIE WINE LIST  
HOME-STYLE COOKING, EVENING MEALS MON-SAT

- Clean & Cosy Accommodation
- Doorstep to Maria Island Ferry Service
- Family owned and operated for 20 years

"Old fun pubs still exist"

ph (03) 6257 3115 fax (03) 6257 3304



driving – make it worth the trip. Then there is the Pyengana Dairy Company's cheesery and the Pub in the Paddock at Pyengana to call in on.  
The fetching St Columba Falls neighbours both.

**Where to Stay**

Weldborough Hotel has camp sites from \$7.50 a person and backpacker accommodation from \$15 a person. Double and twin rooms at the rear of the pub, with a bathroom down the hall, start at \$70 a

couple a night. My room was clean and quiet. The bed was magnificently comfortable and the price included a cereal and toast breakfast.  
Ph (03) 6354 2223  
[www.weldborough.com.au](http://www.weldborough.com.au)

**Where to eat**

One of my favourite places to fuel up is the Purple Possum Cafe in St Marys. Recently I had to drive from Friendly Beaches to Launceston and could have gone via Campbell Town or St Marys. Elaine Sullivan's Purple Possum again drew me to St Marys.  
This place seems to keep getting better. A garden with outdoor tables has recently been added at the rear of the cafe. The beautiful photos for sale on the walls are new as well. George Keri, a local born in Budapest in 1939, photographed the landscapes I overheard one of the locals describe

as having "captured the spirit" of St Marys.  
I've never in my life knowingly ordered anything with tofu in it before but the \$6.50 vego wrap (with cucumber, capsicum, tomato, carrot, zucchini, spinach, cheese, relish and spicy tofu) proved to be

almost as good as the homemade sweet things (cakes and slices) tantalisingly spread across the main counter.  
Ph (03) 6372 2655  
[www.purplepossum.com.au](http://www.purplepossum.com.au)

**Historic Hotel Weldborough**

- ◆ Housemade cakes, sweets & meals
- ◆ Crisp cold cider on tap ◆ Beer garden

"Gateway to the Blue Tier"

[www.weldborough.com.au](http://www.weldborough.com.au)

**WEEKLY STAYS FROM \$110 PER NIGHT**

Childhood memories are filled with days spent at the beach. So this summer take the time to make memories with your family. With week long stays available from as little as \$ 110 a night. Isn't time you enjoyed a summer holiday? Bring the boat or the surfboard and come enjoy the best fishing and surfing the east coast has to offer. Or simply throw the kids bikes in the back and get yourselves to white sands oceanview self contained villas for a relaxing, stress free and affordable holiday.

*Relax, soak up the environment, enjoy the best of Tasmanian's cuisine, wines and our own views*

**White Sands Estate**  
IRONHOUSE POINT - TASMANIA

21554 Tasman Highway  
Iron House Point  
(9km South of Falmouth)  
P: 03 6372 2228  
F: 03 6372 2226  
E: [admin@white-sands.com.au](mailto:admin@white-sands.com.au)  
[www.white-sands.com.au](http://www.white-sands.com.au)  
[www.ironhouse.com.au](http://www.ironhouse.com.au)

★★★★