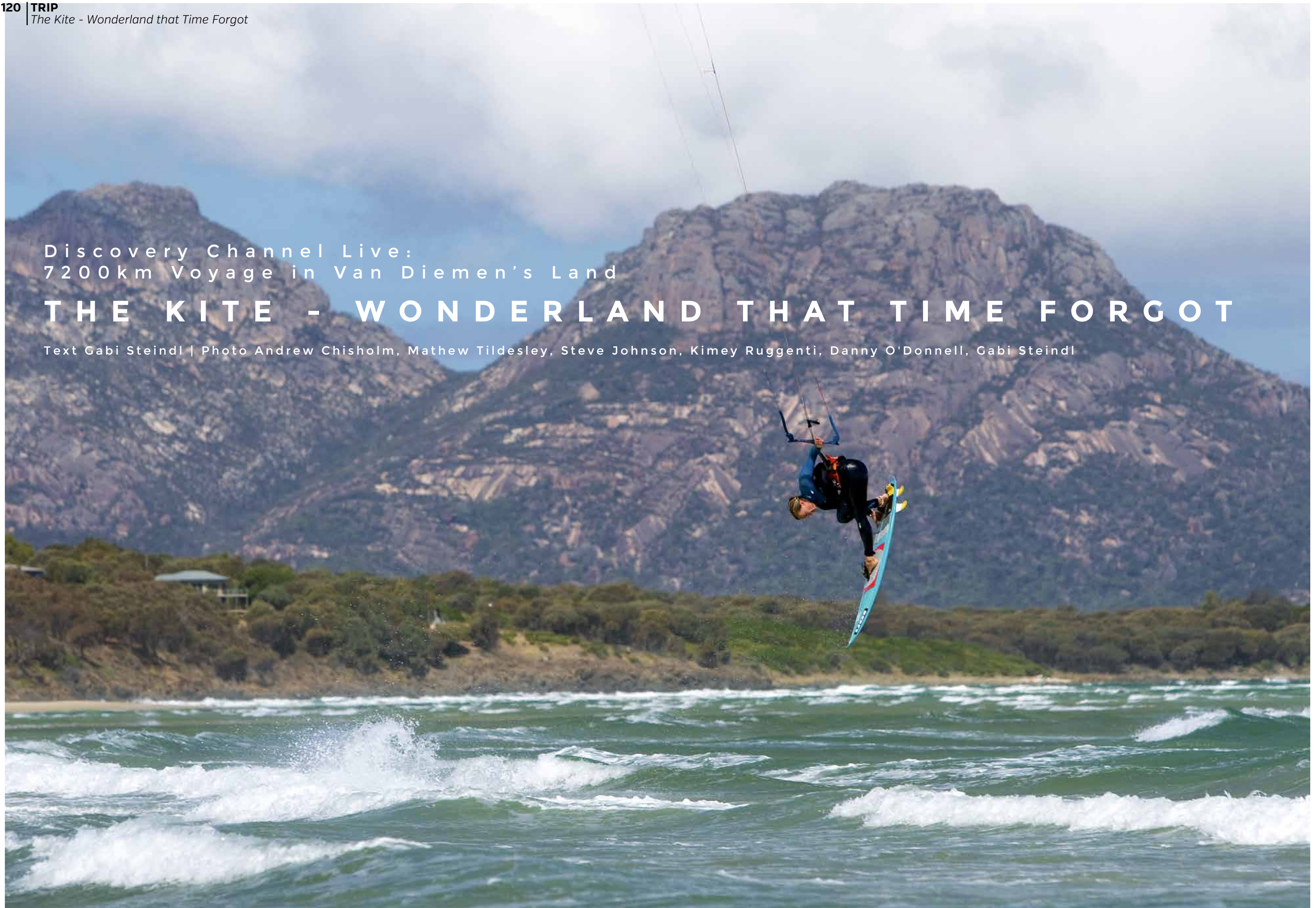


Discovery Channel Live:
7200km Voyage in Van Diemen's Land

THE KITE - WONDERLAND THAT TIME FORGOT

Text Gabi Steindl | Photo Andrew Chisholm, Mathew Tildesley, Steve Johnson, Kimey Ruggenti, Danny O'Donnell, Gabi Steindl



When the black tiger snake dropped out of the tree, only missing landing on my right shoulder by less than 10 centimetres, and fell to the ground just beside my right foot, for a split of a second I thought “that’s it”. I took a massive leap backwards. The dark reptile lay there and looked at me. I did not dare to move. The last thing I wanted was to scare it, that’s how bite-incidents happen. Inside me, all I wanted to do was to run away screaming, my heart beat was beating so hard I could hear it. Somehow I managed to keep calm and just stood there looking at this highly poisonous, yet truly fascinating creature. It was only the two of us in dense rainforest, no other soul around. And all of a sudden, the tiger snake turned around and vanished into the bushes. Thoughts ran through my head at lightning speed, trembling, I was still processing what just had happened. I was 45 minutes into the 5 hour return hike to the most southern tip of this remote paradise at the end of the world, where the next land mass across was Antarctica some 3444 km or 2140 miles away. For a moment I considered turning around and flagging this hike. The guide book was right about this World Heritage Area “For those who seek the wonder of the wilderness”. It all felt like Discovery Channel but live and I was curious for more!





Reaching South Cape Bay and gazing out over the expanse of the Southern Ocean imagining the distance between myself and Antarctica, I was wondering how the Dutch Explorer Abel Tasman, the first European to set foot here in 1642, must have felt when he discovered this island. Commissioned by Governor-General Anthony Van Diemen, in 1856 it was officially renamed Tasmania in honour of his pioneering-spirit and it became a state of Australia in 1901.

Located directly in the Roaring Forties and fully exposed the brunt of the Southern Ocean swells Van Diemen's Land has been on my radar for a fair while already. I followed the great pioneers in their explorer-spirit and my discovery voyage took me 7200km back and forth crisscrossing around the entire island. I scoped out 'quite a few'

places here and changed my return ticket twice as I simply could not get enough of it. I had found kite-wonderland!

The wind is almost always blowing and no matter where you are on the island, you're never more than an hour away from the ocean. There's kiting all around and you can easily whizz from one side to the other. The number of spots (wave, free-style, speed) is sheer endless with some of the cleanest air and water in the world. It would be absolutely foolish to even only attempt packing all my experiences into a few pages. Thus I will concentrate on some of the highlights.

My adventure starts in Hobart in late January where I am warmly welcomed by Joanna and Rob, owners of Tassie Motor Shacks - [HYPER-LINK "http://www.tassiemotorshacks.com.au"](http://www.tassiemotorshacks.com.au)

www.tassiemotorshacks.com.au - whom I've been in touch with for several months. Both great ocean-lovers themselves (Joanna a keen sailor and Rob a professional abalone diver), they were incredibly supportive of my mission to chase the conditions all around the island. Their company slogan "Life's a Beach in a Tassie Motor Shack" certainly does their operation full justice. My set of wheels, a flash 4 people van, with a super cosy sleeping compartment on top (my "penthouse"), was my castle and the most perfect mobile home I could only have wished for. I named it "Zeehaen" in memory of Abel Tasman's ship. Looking at my huge mountain of gear (80kgs: 2 surfboards, 3 kiteboards, 4 kites, accessories & spareparts), Rob immediately got the drill out and I had an additional 'hanging-boardrack' in no-time that

would make my life in the van a lot more comfortable. Before hitting the road myself, Dusty, Joanna's son, himself a passionate surfer, showed me all the main breaks of South Arm, the playgrounds for Hobart's ocean-lovers, all really pretty beaches with only a few surfers in the line-up. "Mainly during winter, when massive swell hits the coast, the points work for miles. That's really the only time the breaks around here get busy. For us here, we consider a break with more than 6 people as crowded", "Are you serious?? Half a dozen people, that's basically heaven!" I glanced at him with a big grin of anticipation. Pulling out of the camper van depot and turning into the main street, that had the name "Surf Road", that grin turned into a massive smile.



I set Zeehaen's wheels for the Tasman Peninsula, in the south-east corner, home to the country's most important convict heritage sites (with Port Arthur settlement being the jewel in the crown) and Ship Stern Bluff, one of the most infamous and heaviest big-wave spots on the planet. Although there was not any swell that day, I simply had to check it out myself. Only accessible by jet-ski, boat or foot, it's a good 4 hours return hike to get to the wave. That's "Tassie" as it's also affectionately known as, a remote surfing wilderness. It was an absolutely gorgeous day with blue skies and temperatures in the high twenties and I decided to walk in my flip flops. It would be my first and last hike without shoes. Already the views from the look-out, about 45 minutes into the walk, that span across Ship Stern and nearby capes was stunning. The track was rugged and descended several hundred metres. I was only praying for my flip flops not to break. The real magnitude of scale of the bluff once I was at the bottom was utterly awe inspiring. It was magic

to look up the almost 200m high face of the bluff and walk around some massive boulders on the huge, flat reef shelf that sticks out on low tide. Mother Nature explodes with energy here and so do the waves that hit the reef. Imagining a big swell was a rather daunting thought. I meditated for a fair while before hitting the rather steep climb back. Meeting a group of hikers, all of them in the proper-outfit, I learned that walking with flip flops bears another risk other than 'only' having to walk back bare feet. One should always put on proper foot-wear as protection for the snakes. After my first surf in the Tasman Sea at Roaring Beach the next morning, and very positively surprised about the water temperature, I hit the road to Marrawah (meaning "One" in the local Aboriginal language) in the far north-west corner. I decided to take the scenic route there and drove via the Central Highlands. During the drive I could see why my rental-van angels Jo and Rob had briefed me to "always fuel up when you get a chance, towns are tiny and petrol stations, just





like people in Tassie are scarce". There was hardly anybody on the roads, or any people to be seen. Precisely that remoteness, vastness and small population is one of the beauties of this place and makes Tasmania absolutely unique. Modern life has only really reached the biggest cities of the island and travelling through the countryside you will often feel set back 30 years in time (and I only mean that in the nicest way!). The people are genuine and incredibly lovely, to whom kindness is an instinct. A large proportion of the towns only have a 2-digit population, many only 1-digit. The "Shack-Culture"- often eccentric and at times bizarre - of Tasmania's typical building, is another absolutely unique attribute about this magic paradise. Large parts of the coast and its towns could easily serve as set for an 80's surf movie; absolutely lovely!

For those chasing wind and waves, Marrawah [population 400] is Tasmania's premier location. A super remote and rugged corner, this stretch of coast is also known as the "Wild West". Waves roll interrupted for almost 17,000 kilometres, energized by prevailing south-westerly winds. Conditions can get very extreme here. The Red Bull Storm Chase last year was held in absolute mad conditions at one of the top spots up here "Back of Lighthouse" [BOL], a fickle place that needs 6 metre swell+ to work. Yep, things in the Wild West can get pretty hardcore but not exclusively and depending on weather conditions, locations also suit less experienced riders.

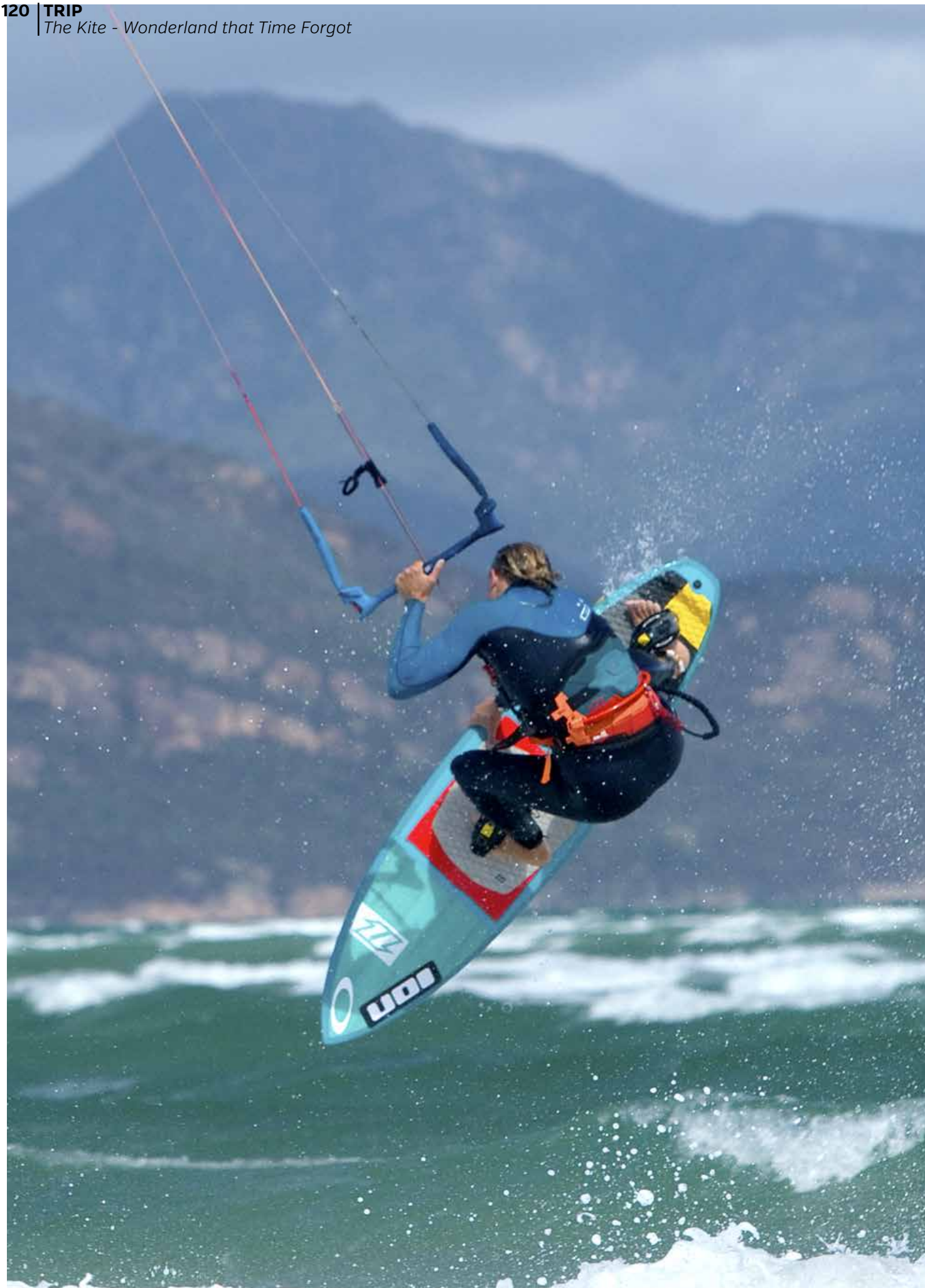
Arriving in the late afternoon, the wind was blowing and I managed to stretch out my legs in a great little kite-session just before sunset at Bluff Beach, a long sandy beach with some good banks. The next two days the wind turned offshore and I could have headed to the east coast for good kiting there. However, I decided to chill out in the west instead and had a fantastic time exploring the surroundings and surfing. Most breaks are beachies. Lighthouse and Kelpies became my favourite spots. Crowds simply don't exist and I enjoyed a fair amount of surfs completely on my own. Funny, normally in surfing one always wishes for the crowd to leave, but here, on days when the surf got more serious, I was actually hoping for at least one other person to show up! The water may be a bit chilly but the waves are hot! The offshores are normally rather strong in this corner of the world and I adored the comment of a local surfer one morning in respond to my facial expression, when I rocked up at my new favourite break and finding it with massive rooster-tails from howling 35 knots+ offshore "C'mon mate, that's only a light Tassie breeze". Something else that took me a little to get used to was the Kelp. Kelp in Tasmania is not like anywhere else. Here it's absolutely giant and can be a bit scary at first, resembling a massive sea-monster. After a while I got used to it and even found something good about it: As it mainly grows on reef, it can serve as cushion when things go a bit wrong in the surf. Cruising with Zeehaen south, about 15 km from Marrawah I found Arthur River (population 50), a truly picturesque little township. The coast south of here is called The Edge of the World. And it's pretty obvious why. The sea to the west is the longest uninterrupted expanse of ocean on the globe. From Argentina the currents sweep unim-



peded more than halfway around the planet. Regularly lashed by the gales of the Roaring Forties and consequent Southern Ocean swells of 50ft+ (some of the biggest waves ever were recorded here), there was driftwood along the seemingly endless beach as far as I could see. But not just some logs, it was entire trees, hundreds and hundreds of them; a truly impressive site.

During those days in Marrawah I got to meet "Tappo", a local windsurfer in his 50's, who's kind of a legend up there. Knowing the area and wind conditions like the back of his own hand, he became my weather oracle and above all a dear friend. I spent many evenings with him and his wife Hazel in their house that overlooks Greens Beach and Mount Cameron, an Aboriginal Heritage Site, where one can find engravings and stencil paintings on soft sandstone. Working at Port Arthur's Ranger-Station Hazel knows everything about the local wildlife and was happy to answer my questions about mysterious "Taz". Marrawah is the place in Tasmania with the highest number of Tasmanian Devils. However, this poor animal has drawn a tough lot: Extinct on the mainland with the spread of the dingo, devils are limited to Tasmania today. Mostly nocturnal they are often spotted at night scavenging on animals hit by cars. In recent years they have come under threat from an outbreak of a disease that causes disfiguring facial tumours and premature death. Scientists are studying the cause in the hope that another unique creature will not be pushed to the edge of extinction.

Tasmania in general and Marrawah in particular is incredibly rich in wildlife. 40% of the island has been set aside as national parks. With some of the world's largest tracts of World Heritage wilderness, it's a true gift of Mother Nature and



something really special to be able to observe so many different animals in their natural habitat: Wallabies, wombats, quolls,... with a number of unique little creatures that only exist here. One day Tappo borrowed a 4x4 off a mate and took me on an off-road mission into the deep South. The infamous Balfour Track is Tassie's most hardcore 4 wheel drive track and a considerable number of cars are lost here each year to quick sand or getting bogged on the beach too close to the water with incoming tide. I had all my gear at the back of the pick-up and we checked out a couple of little fishing towns and breaks along the way, such as Temma and Jack Smith Harbour. However, howling 40 knots offshore were not quite the right conditions to venture out in. So we continued driving further into the vast, remote wilderness. We did not meet another single soul

different spots on both tacks. There are about 20 kick-ass wave-spots in the area and although the waves were rather unorganized due to predominantly onshore winds, I had an absolute blast! If you're into freestyle or speed kiting, check the tides and head to Port Sorell, where low tide reveals an extensive sandbar creating a long stretch of flat water. The area around Stanley, about 50km North of Marrawah with its icon landmark "The Nut" an old volcanic plug that rises to 143metres, and a huge inlet boasts great flat-water kiting as well as several really joy wave-spots. Although I had fallen in love with the solitude of the Wild West and its surf, I decided it was time to check out some other corners of the "Apple Isle" as Tassie is also known for, too. The east coast was up next: Waking up at a car-park at Binalong Bay [population 200] that I had



all day. Sandy Cape, a seemingly endless beach attributed with having the largest sand dunes in the southern hemisphere is where we got the car bogged in a rather dangerous position. Luckily we managed to get it out before it turned into another statistic, a victim of the Southern Ocean. The following days were blessed with a little bit of swell, beautiful sunshine and wind in pleasant mid-20's [knots]. In Marrawah NE-ly patterns switch with SW and SE'lies. Wind conditions are mainly frontal but on hot days in summer also the seabreeze takes effect. I got to kite a number of

pulled into in the pitch dark the night before, my little eyes nearly popped out of my head when I stepped outside my van. I looked onto a snow white beach with the most turquoise, crystal clear water. With my coffee mug in my hand I went down for a little walk. The sand was so fine, it squeaked underneath my feet! I wandered in awe along the shore. The water was a sheet of glass. At either end of the beach granite boulders in the most amazing orange colour caught my attention. Binalong Bay counts as the southern end of the Bay of Fires [extending to Eddystone

Point in the North]. The bay was given its name in 1773 by Captain Tobias Furneaux, who saw the fires of Aboriginal people on the beaches and today is famous for its stunning coastline and the orange granite [which is actually produced by lichen growing on the rocks].

The central east coast is much more developed than the west with a number of lovely little tourist towns all along the coast, such as St.Helens, Scamander, Bicheno... all of them boasting a considerable number of surf breaks and guaranteeing heaps of fun to be had on a kite. Waves are generally much smaller than in the west and a rather large swell is needed to push down from mainland Australia in order to get the east coast breaks firing over 3ft, which only very rarely happens in summer. Just out of St.Helens I ate my first Tassie Oysters. The oyster industry is a vibrant marine farming sector here and the yum-my delicacy is grown all around the Apple Isle. I personally l o v e the slimy, tasty little mollusc and found myself in heaven being able to buy them super fresh directly from the farms in dozens [simply in a plastic bag or take away container] for about AUD 9. Needless to say, I ate more oysters in my time in Tassie than in my entire life combined! In general Tasmania's seafood is absolutely delicious. Abalone is another main delicacy and just like so many other things in Tassie, they come in "XL" here.

One highlight of the east coast was Coles Bay in the Freycinet National Park. "The Hazards" a rugged, yet incredibly stunning granite mountain chain that shine in light pink due a particular feldspar and "Wineglass Bay", a perfectly shaped bay with snow white sand are all part of Tasmania's



top attractions. I will never forget kiting in front of the Hazards on a beautiful, absolutely perfect day and pulling some freestyle-moves in the flatwater-playground of close-by Swanwick river mouth. Riding in the deep blue waves of the Tasman Sea at Friendly Beaches, only about 15kms north of Coles Bay, later in the afternoon and watching the full moon rise out of the Tasman sea storing away my kiting-gear in Zeehaen's boot, will also stay in my kiter-heart forever.

A swell-alert for the following day prompted me to race back to Marrawah. I had a few hours spare on the way there and so I checked out Ben Lomond, second highest point and Tasmania's premier ski-resort in winter. Crawling up in first gear the infamous Jacobs Ladder [no side-rails!] that curls its way up along the imposing, precipitous

cliffs, leading up to the Alpine Village, a deserted little ghost-ski-town in summer, was without a doubt the most scary road I have ever been driving in my life. "Hehehe, hardcore Tassie", I thought to myself. There would be no way this road would be publicly accessible in Europe.

Another one of those "hardcore Tassie-experiences" already awaited me in Marrawah, when my anticipation for an epic kiting day in big waves was trashed by the fact the wind was blowing with such gale force, I could only watch nature's spectacle through the windows of my loyal van Zeehaen. Parked up at my favourite spot "Lighthouse" looking out into the madness, it felt like my camper would be blown over any moment. Wanting to step out to empty my bladder, I could not open the sliding door at one point. The wind

had changed angle and was blowing so hard against the side panel, I had to climb to the front into the driver's seat, re-park Zeehaen, step out from the front and walk around in order to open the side door. Kiting would have been suicidal so I navigated to the "Edge of the World" wanting to see Mother Nature going wild there. I nearly crawled on all four out to the viewing-platform and did not even last a minute. Never in my life was I that close of becoming airborne [without my kite]!

The next day the wind was more manageable and I went kiting at Lighthouse. I normally enjoy riding larger waves, however, cannot deny it's a completely different story to be taking on a pumping reef break at one of the spots back home in WA to a Southern Ocean beach break in the Wild West





of Tassie. Around Marrawah, once it gets pretty big, the banks turn into heavy washing machines. Westerly swells are often huge and completely out of control. To consistently score perfection here is in a way nearly as elusive as finding the Thylacine [Tasmanian Tiger – which despite its official classification as extinct, sightings are still reported]. But that’s all part of the Tassie-experience and you won’t forget the magic of the Wild West regardless! For those who seek and with a little bit of luck, all the elements will line up and that’s the beauty of Mother Nature. I truly enjoyed the challenge tackling the conditions and riding out here as the only soul in the water for miles and miles and miles. I scored another truly memorable session that same day in the evening in the turquoise waters of Greens Beach at the foot of Mount Cameron. What was funny on the way there was when Zeehaen and I got stopped by a huge herd of cows crossing the road in slow-mo. Stoked and utterly exhausted I closed my little eyes in my penthouse that night.

Trial Harbour on the central west coast was my absolute favourite place in Tassie, not only due to the fantastic surf there. With only 14 permanent residents, surrounded by steep, green mountains and an idyllic little camp ground right at the water’s edge, it was incredibly hard to leave this magic little shack town after a few unforgettable days here. Visiting Bruny Island and getting to surf Cloudy Bay, one of Tassie’s premier surf-breaks marked another unforgettable experience.

So did a walk up to the top of nearly 300m high cliffs that surround Adventure bay, Captain Cooks landing place. Coming back from that walk, I got to see the “most famous local” of lovely little Bruny island: The White Wallaby. I spotted it sitting at a little creek, drinking water. When it turned around and looked at me with its cute white eyelashes, I melted away.

Shortly before my scheduled departure from the Apple Isle I receive a phone call from Tappo: “Gabi, Back of Lighthouse (BOL) might be working on Thursday. You should come up and bring the best photographer you can get”. It didn’t take much to convince me. The issue was having to convince one of the top local surf photographers to take the strenuous 6 hour drive from Hobart with me. I succeeded with Andrew Chisholm aka “Chiza”, photographer of multiple winner-photos of the Big Wave Awards. I also managed to organize two jet-skis for the days-in-prospect, which would secure different angles from the water and safety in case something went wrong. The waters around BOL are not kind and with strong rips extremely dangerous. The night before the swell was meant to arrive, Chiza and I set Zeehaen’s course for the Wild West. When we woke up the next morning, the weather had hit. The swell buoy of the Bureau of Meteorology read 8-12 metres. However, looking out the window and staring into the heaviest rain I have seen in all my time here, was absolutely devastating. It did not get any better throughout the day either. In fact, it got worse. The rain increased, the wind increased, reading over 50 knots on the government’s website and topping it all off with some hale. I was down to say the least. To brighten the mood, Tappo, Chiza and I



went to the Marrawah Tavern for a beer. It was Thursday and thus “Farmers Night”, which was an experience in itself, in particular as I was the only girl there.

The next morning was not greeting us with much better news. It was still raining, one of Zeehaen’s shoes was punctured and the swell that was meant to hang around had already disappeared. Well, Tassie’s weather often is unpredictable, even for the most knowledgeable locals and often proves totally contrary to the actual forecast. The skies cleared up in the afternoon. The next two days Chiza and I enjoyed some incredibly fun ses-

sions at a number of spots in beautiful sunshine and consistent wind. Then it was time to leave, another “appointment with Mother Nature” came up and I had to say “Good Bye” to Marrawah for the final time. Chiza received a phone call by Tassie’s big wave posse: The chances for Ship Stern Bluff to break big for the first time in nearly one year were very high. They needed him to shoot. This time the forecast came through perfectly. Sitting on the big boulders and watching one of the best Big Wave Surfing-Shows of my entire life was the perfect ending to my time here. All the local big wave chargers were there amongst

them: Marti Paradisi, the infamous brothers Tyler and James Hollmer-Cross (Tyler won the Big Wave Awards in 2013 and several times already before), Danny Griffith, James Mc Kean etc. Seeing them tow this evil, mutant beast Ship Stern and flying over its gnarly steps before pulling into the heaviest barrels was a privilege.

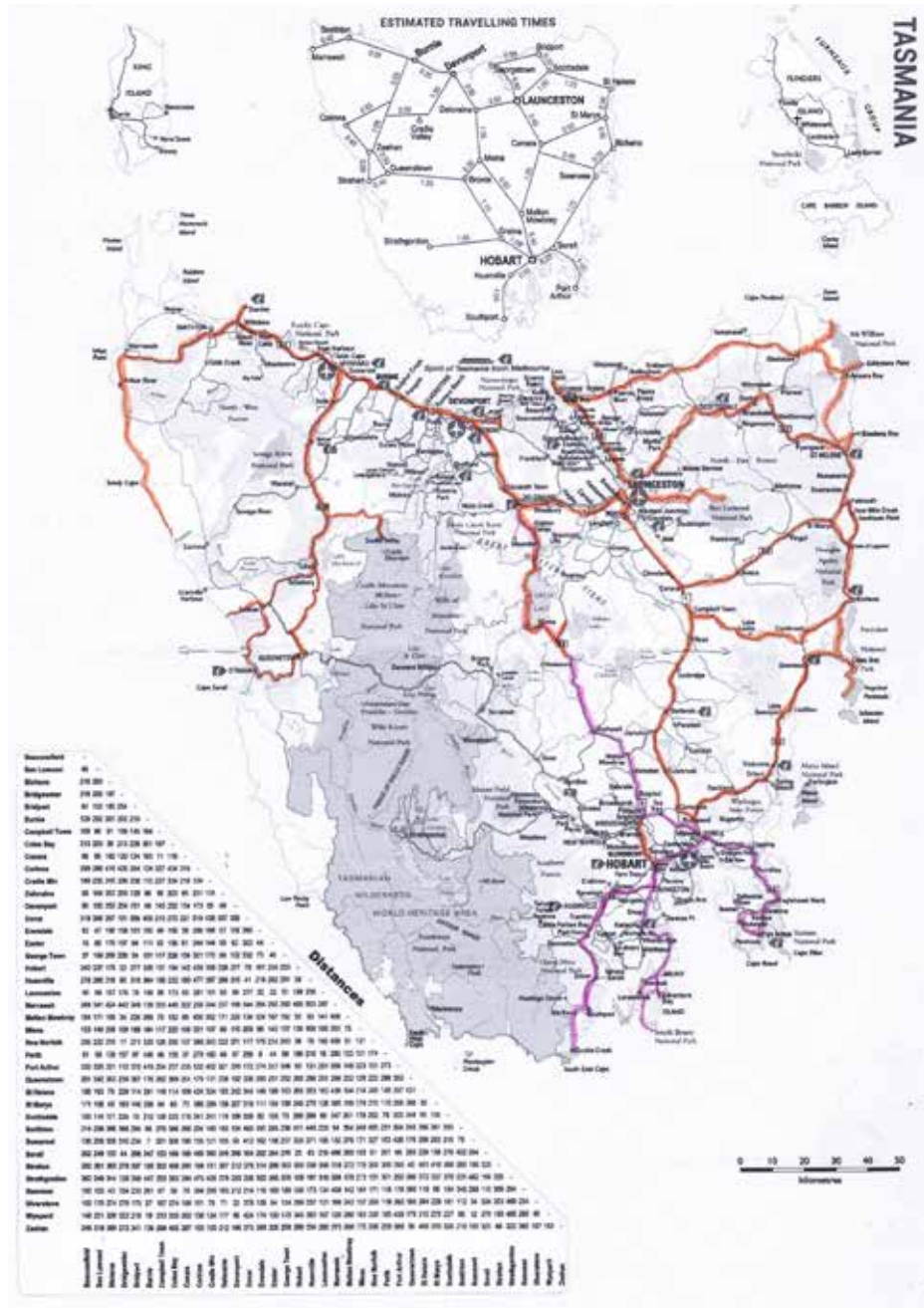
Driving Zeehaen until the end of Australia’s southernmost road, to Cockle Creek (population 3) for our two last nights, was the final little present that I took away with me from my adventure in Van Diemen’s Land. Set on the edge of Tasmania’s World Heritage Area it is an absolutely gorgeous bay in the most tranquil and peaceful setting I celebrated this trip of a lifetime in pure Tassie-style with a bon fire and some fresh pacific oysters that I collected out of the creek, which were nearly the size of my feet!

I fell in love with this truly unique kite-paradise-island and can’t deny that Tassie has totally gotten me under its spell. The memory of its natural beauty and empty waves will live with me forever! There are plenty of virgin surfing and kiting spots awaiting discovery by generations of adventurers to come.

Now it’s up to you to make it your turn.

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USEFUL FACTS & INFORMATION

Tasmania is pure, untouched, remote and is one of the world's last great temperate wilderness, where you'll discover wildlife, scenery and vegetation unlike anywhere else on earth. An action-sport paradise and

the 26th largest island in the world that welcomes ocean-adicts with plenty of coastline to choose from and the remotest breaks in the world.



GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are no direct international flights to/from Tasmania. Regular flights run from all mayor cities via Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Alternatively many visitors travel to Tasmania from Melbourne by sea on the Spirit of Tasmania.

VISA & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Travellers entering Australia on a foreign passport will need a visa regardless of the purpose or duration of their stay.



GETTING AROUND

Travelling in a campervan is the way to go in Tasmania. Tassie Motor Shacks, operated by two absolute angels Jo & Rob, who will pick you up at the airport and with a fleet of 60 vans to suit all travellers and budgets, conveniently located only 7km from Hobart Airport along beautiful 7-Mile Beach, this is the place to hire a van when coming to the Apple Isle: [HYPERLINK "http://www.tassiemotorshacks.com.au"](http://www.tassiemotorshacks.com.au) www.tassiemotorshacks.com.au. Tasmania has many gravel road sections and sections but the majority of them are ok for normal cars and don't require a 4WD. Tassie roads, however, are narrow and leave very little room for error. The abundant wildlife is a potential hazard too. The amount of road-kill is

testimony to the folly of driving at night but caution is advised even during the day. I highly recommend taking out travel insurance before you come here to cover any excess in case of an accident. Keep an eye on fuel levels as service stations [often no more than a browser outside the general store] can be non-existent or closed in country areas. Also be aware that outside the major centres, shops can be few and far between, with limited supplies.



WHERE TO STAY & PARKS PASS

No doubt camping is one of the best ways to experience Tassie!! Most National Parks have campgrounds (free or nominal fee – in any case you will need a Parks Pass). And there are many free camping areas outside parks as well. Entry to Tasmania's 19 National Parks requires a park pass that you can buy at any visitor & travel information centre or online: [HYPERLINK "http://www.parks.tas.gov.au"](http://www.parks.tas.gov.au) www.parks.tas.gov.au



FOOD

Tassie is a foodie's paradise. Atlantic salmon, abalone, scallops, octopus, wild trout and rock lobster from Tasmania are served in the best eateries around the world. Here you can get those delicacies as fresh as nowhere else. Prime cheeses, cool-climate wines and some of Australia's leading boutique beers and whiskies are produced here. Specialist delicatessens selling locally grown goodies can be found in abundance. Indulge in as much local produce as you can!



CLIMATE

Due to its location in the Roaring Forties, the weather in Tasmania can change several times a day at any time of the year. There's a saying here on the island "If you don't like the weather, come back in half an

hour”. Thus, it’s a good idea to bring many layers of clothing, some warm thermal underwear, gloves, hoodie and a rain jacket. Temperatures range from about 15-30 °C in summer (Dec-Feb) and 4-12 °C in winter (June-August).The best time to visit is summer with Jan and February the most reliable months in terms of wind (any wind strength possible! I was riding my 10m2 at least as often as my 5m2). Winter tends to be rotten - stormy and wet and most of the time overcast – avoid this time of year! Spring (Sept-Nov) is stormy, unreliable and often very windy with most rainfall. Water temperatures peak around 18-20°C in summer and are in the range of a head numbing 10-13°C in winter. I’m generally a “coldie” but was perfectly fine with my 3/2mm and 4/3mm respectively.



SNAKES

Tasmania is home to three breeds of snake, the Tiger Snake, Copperhead and White-lipped Whip Snake, all of which are venomous. The good news for those of a nervous disposition is that snakes are just as wary of you as you are of them. With a little bit of knowledge and care the chances of being bitten by a snake in Tasmania are very low. They will usually slither away before you come near if you tramp heavily. Solid footwear and long, thick trousers (Jeans) are always a good idea. The last person to die from a snake bite in Tasmania was a snake handler in 1977 and the last person in the bush was 1966, so the risks are pretty low. The best thing to do if you spot a snake is to avoid them and let them go their own way. Only if a snake feels trapped or threatened they will na-

turally become aggressive. Unfortunately, many people are overly fearful of snakes. Obviously venomous snakes deserve respect, but statistically you are far more likely to die from bee stings or spouses!



LAST BUT NOT LEAST:

MONA, the \$75 million Museum of Old and New Art opened in Hobart in January 2011 to global acclaim, is an absolute MUST-SEE! Based around nudity, art, sex, and death it’s an outstandingly innovative institution. Described by its eccentric philanthropist owner David Walsh, as a ‘subversive adult Disneyland’, three levels of spectacular underground galleries showcase more than 400 often challenging and controversial works of art, never short of shock value.