

Mallacoota Interlude

Heading eastward again, our destination is Eden on the Sapphire Coast of NSW. We have planned stop-overs at Bacchus Marsh and Lakes Entrance (it's too far from our home base in Adelaide to tackle in one hit) and have also decided to make Mallacoota Inlet an interlude.

Many, many years back (in my twenties) I spent a wonderful week camping on the foreshore at Mallacoota. One vivid memory is an evening spent sitting out on one of the many boat jetties and watching the king prawns swim in with the tidal flow. I sat there with a torch totally bemused by the influx of these bright eyed crustaceans.

We are probably a little late in the year to witness the prawn run, but the lake system is quite picturesque and also offers some good fishing. We figured it was worth some exploration time whilst also affording us a break from highway driving.

We turn off the A1 onto the Genoa -

Report by Di Ross Pics By John Batty

Mallacoota Road, 11km shy of the NSW border. It is all good sealed bitumen and tracks along the Genoa River down to Gipsy Point where we stop off for a quick reconnoitre. This quaint little retreat wasn't named after the nomads, but after the schooner called "Gipsy" once moored there.

Apart from the boat ramp, there is a landing, a pub, a lodge and about 20 cottages. The entire community being surrounded by lush forest growing right down to the water's edge. It has an air of peace and tranquillity - even the kangaroos were lazing about the township. A few more km and we arrive at Mallacoota to check into a cabin at the Beachcomber Caravan Park, situated within easy walking distance of the main street. Our arrival was greeted by a people-friendly kookaburra who perched himself on the veranda railing to watch us get

settled in, amid posing for the camera. We were astounded as to how lush the countryside was around this eastern section of Gippsland. Perhaps it stands out because we had driven through some extremely dry landscape from SA and the Victorian Wimmera.

With a population of around 1,200, Mallacoota is 521 km east of Melbourne. The name is a derivative of an Aboriginal word "mallagootha" with several meanings - 'the place of many waters', 'place of meeting' or 'good water'. Indeed, initial impressions would confirm all translations to be appropriate. The locals have affectionately and in typical Aussie fashion, shortened the name to 'Coota'.

The township actually sits in a section of submerged coastline where the mouth of the Genoa River and surrounding valleys were flooded by rising sea levels toward the end of the Ice Age.

The inlet consists of two bodies of water referred to as the Top Lake and

Two of F&B's favourite contributors, writer Di Ross and photographer/partner John "JB" Batty, hitch up their Haines Signature 530 behind the Troopie, for a foray from their home base in Adelaide, to the far sou'east coast of Victoria - and next month, New South Wales.

In this first leg of their new three part Series, they visit the reknown abalone centre of Australia, and discover a peaceful, beautiful family holiday environment

