

The Chazan's Queensland Adventure

How a Victorian family of four, packed up their 4.9 m Markham Whaler, the tents and fishing gear, and left to spend their long service leave in Far North Queensland. Inspired by F&B's reports about this extraordinary part of Australia, the Chazan family travelled inland from Colac, VIC 2,500 km to Hinchinbrook FNQ, and enjoyed every second of what proved to be a defining period for the whole family. Their trip, the highlights and their many experiences on the road, are an inspiration for those who have the courage to follow in their tracks.



I've seen all the National Lampoon Vacation series but I never thought I'd actually participate in one of my own. My family and I took Long Service Leave from June to October this year and headed for Far North Queensland, which, from our home in Colac, South Western Victoria meant a jaunt of no less than 3500 kilometres.

To really prove we were alive and kicking, we crammed our 4.9 metre Markham Whaler with everything under the sun, (a 'no-no' in itself by most accounts). This included our camping paraphernalia, copious fishing gear, a bar fridge, snorkeling and swimming needs, spare fuel tanks, spare boat and car parts, medical supplies, food, tool box, clothes,

children's odds and sods, fish boxes and eskies!

Now my wife, Sonia, (a veteran traveler in her own right), and our two children Adele and Andrew, aged 11 and 8, are used to the twelve hour stretch cooped up in the Nissan 4x4 diesel on our annual pilgrimage to Bermagui. However this time we would be driving for four straight days, averaging twelve hours a day. But thanks to Gameboy, the odd good novel and comic, the walkman, plenty of lollies and the occasional game of I Spy, we made it through to Airlie Beach at about 4 pm of the fourth day of travelling.

We left Colac at about 6 pm Monday and bought fuel at Ballarat about one hour later. Problem is I put

75 litres of unleaded in the DX! I realized the mistake as I returned the nozzle to the side of the pump, and my heart just sank. I communicated my deep anxiety with a furious kick to the rear right tyre, causing Sonia to enquire about the cause of my suddenly reddened face. It was not just the fuel error, I explained, but my probably broken big toe . . . About an hour later I'd drained the entire tank and was back at the bowser loading up on the right fuel.

We then made it to Shepparton on the first night. A few hour's sleep in the car and off again. Incident free, we reached our second night stop in the early hours of the morning, setting up our three man tent by the side of the road just near Moonie.