

Tasminiacs

Words and photos by Christine Vernon.



Thunder, Rocky, Rover, Angus, Charlie and Alice take a break at Dove Lake, at the foot of Tasmania's iconic Cradle Mountain.

Six Minis and eleven Miniacs from WA, had the road-trip of a lifetime - to Tasmania.

Our group of eleven Tasminiacs assembled, bleary eyed, at Perth Airport at 5.20am on October 5 to board a flight to Adelaide. Vicki and Trevor Lovegrove were once again in high spirits. Their Mini, Alice, had suffered significant damage after a 4WD reversed into it at a set of traffic lights, just days before the Minis were due to board the train to Adelaide. Emergency repairs and a little cosmetic surgery later, and Alice was back on track, so to speak, and left on time.

Upon arrival in Adelaide we took a convoy of three taxis out to the TNT Depot to pick up our six Minis, which had arrived by train a couple of nights earlier. Each owner inspected their baby, concluded that all was well (with the Minis suffering no more than a coating of dust on their trip East), and loaded the luggage. Then off we went to a caravan park, where our overnight accommodation and a friendly pub awaited.

The next two days provided a leisurely drive to Melbourne, with an overnight stop at Ararat, and lunch stops on a Murray River houseboat, and at Sovereign Hill in Ballarat.

Crossing the West Gate Bridge, we were

amazed by the views of Melbourne and the boats in the bay. A slight case of anxiety as we navigated through Melbourne's traffic was relieved by Selwyn's ability with a GPS and a laptop computer, sitting on the seat next to him as he drove. We felt a great sense of achievement and relief as we parked the four Minis, with the Spirit of Tasmania ferry in our sights.

Kevin & Marie had gone off earlier in their red Mini, Charlie, visiting relatives in Melbourne, while Joy & Jon (our Tasmanian guides) had detoured to Glenrowan (Ned Kelly country) in their Clubman, Thunder, to visit their relatives. After a few phone calls we all regrouped in time at the dock.

The ten-hour crossing was rather rough compared to the Rottne Island ferry, but we were assured it was calm by local standards. Ginger tablets were the sea-sickness medication of choice and proved effective. The ship banged and clanged the night away, and next morning we awoke with about twenty minutes to dress, pack, and find a cup of coffee, before driving off into the Tasmanian sunshine.

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Enjoying the forest at St Columba Falls, near Pyengana (about 25km from St Helens)