

EDITION 2

2023

DERWENT VALLEY GUIDE



YOUR GUIDE TO EXPLORING EVERYTHING BIGGER, DEEPER,
WILDER AND WEIRDER IN THE DERWENT VALLEY.

Bigger, deeper, wilder, weirder — that's just the way it is in the Derwent Valley. We were told it wouldn't be wise to open a guide with a warning, but, here it is: warning! The region you've just set foot in is pretty, well, different. Although we're only 40 minutes outside of Hobart, it feels like a world away from everywhere. The trees are taller, the caves are deeper, the UFOs are buzzier, the platypus are flockier, the trout are plumper, the produce is tastier, the people are kinder — it's almost too unbelievable to be true... But, true it is (well, true-ish).

But, let's not spoil it for you. Over the following pages, you will be offered a brief glimpse into the regions and activities that have turned The Valley into legend. However, we encourage you to dig a little deeper and explore the backroads, and, whenever possible, chat with a local — they'll be good for a yarn or two.

Welcome to the Derwent Valley.



NEW NORFOLK

Welcome to New Norfolk, capital of the Derwent Valley. In true Valley fashion, New Norfolk isn't that new at all. In fact, New Norfolk is old... home-to-the-Leenowwenne-people-of-the-Big-River-Nation-and-then-established-by-European-settlers-in-1807 kind of old. The town serves as the agricultural, tourism and commercial hub for the region, and is home to heritage buildings, markets, events, retail, and dining.

FOOD · CULTURE

1

New Norfolk Market

The New Norfolk Market is a weekly legend in these parts. Speak its name, the state over, and you will meet many who travel from far and wide to savour the finest local fresh produce, arts and crafts, collectibles, vintage, food vendors and live music.

High St, Saturdays 8am - 2pm.
newnorfolkmarket.com.au

SHOP

2

Antiques Trail

New Norfolk is widely regarded as the 'Antiques Capital of Tasmania'. With numerous vintage, collectibles and antiques stores in town, including regular markets and fairs, old will always be the new new on the New Norfolk Antiques Trail.

Stephen St to Ring Rd via
High St and The Avenue

HISTORY

3

Willow Court

Built in 1827, and serving as the longest running asylum in the Southern Hemisphere, the historical Willow Court Asylum and Barracks has had a dark and controversial past. It is now home to The Valley's only hatted restaurant, a rum distillery, arts precinct, as well as regular ghost and history tours.

Willow Court tenants, tours & info:
derwentvalley.tas.gov.au/willow-court

Want more
Derwent Valley history?

Scan the QR code for
a Walking Through Time
podcast.



Image: Tourism Tasmania & Nick Osborne

OUTDOORS

4

Tynwald Park & The Esplanade

Set against the picturesque Derwent River, these connected parklands form the activities centre of The Valley. The precinct is home to sporting ovals, outdoor fitness equipment, playgrounds, a swimming pool, BBQ amenities and family areas, as well as water-based activities such as paddle boarding, hydro-biking, swimming, fishing, and the occasional dragon boat race.

Tynwald Park, Hobart Road
New Norfolk Esplanade





MOUNT FIELD NATIONAL PARK



Tarn Shelf, Mount Field

The oldest national park in Tasmania, and part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Mount Field is about as Derwent Valley as it gets. Home to the world's tallest flowering plant, the Eucalyptus regnans, the fagus, ski fields, alien landscapes, charming waterfalls, and, as locals will have you believe, the odd thylacine or two.

OUTDOORS

5

Russell Falls

The most picturesque waterfall in Tasmania (and, subsequently, the most photographed), the three-tiered Russell Falls has become something of a local legend. In fact, there are some who say its waters are magical - the fountain of youth. All we know is that it's one photogenic waterfall.

Mount Field National Park
parks.tas.gov.au

OUTDOORS

6

Tarn Shelf Walk

One of the great walks in Tasmania, Tarn Shelf Walk leads trampers across the Tarn Shelf and past a series of glacial lakes, with views out over the Rodway Range. Along the route, take a break at the historical Twilight Tarn Hut. In Autumn months, the hills are ablaze with the 'turning of the fagus'.

Mount Field National Park
parks.tas.gov.au

OUTDOORS

7

Tall Trees Walk

Before you set foot on the Tall Trees Walk, we strongly suggest you speak to a chiropractor first — as your neck's in for some punishment. The trees here — it may not surprise you — they're tall. Maybe too tall... And if that's not neck-hinging enough, it's said thylacine still roam these parts... So, best keep your wits about you.

Mount Field National Park
parks.tas.gov.au



WHERE MYTH IS LEGEND AND LEGEND IS FACT

Derwent Valley Truths #10

The Irish composer, William Vincent Wallace, visited the Derwent Valley in 1838 during a serious bout of songwriter's block. Legend has it, as he gazed out over The Valley and at the black swans below, he was inspired to write his masterpiece 'Scenes That Are Brightest'. Only in the Derwent Valley can a swan inspire an opera.



STRATHGORDON & SURROUNDS



Some say Strathgordon has the clearest skies in Tasmania. Although we can't say for sure... But, on a cloudless night, as the dark skies are aflame with the Aurora Australis, it's hard to argue otherwise. As well as being a proposed Dark Sky Sanctuary, it is a sanctuary for nature-lovers, trout-whisperers, thrillseekers and platypus-spotters.

OUTDOORS

8

Lake Pedder

Lake Pedder is Australia's largest freshwater lake and catchment system, and, along with Lake Gordon, comprise the largest inland freshwater system in Australia, covering more than 500km² and holding 37 times the volume of Sydney Harbour. A key part of Tasmania's hydroelectric scheme, its fabled waters are coveted by trout fishermen, kayakers, swimmers, picnickers and the odd naturist or two.

Gordon River Road, Strathgordon
pedderwildernesslodge.com.au

OUTDOORS

9

Gordon River Dam

The Gordon River Dam has always been a talking point. Controversial in its construction, the 140 metre high dam wall not only provides 13% of Tasmania's energy needs, but is also the setting for the tallest commercial abseiling experience in the world. Lose your lunch as you plunge off the wall, through the mist, towards the freezing waters below, before winching back towards the heavens. It's great.

Gordon River Road, Strathgordon
pedderwildernesslodge.com.au

PLENTY, BUSHY PARK, WESTERWAY, MAYDENA

The largest hops garden in the Southern Hemisphere; the birthplace of Australian brewing; the oldest trout hatchery in the Southern Hemisphere; the deepest cave system in the Southern Hemisphere; the highest vertical mountain bike drop in Australia... the most superlatives ever used in a guide book (in the Southern Hemisphere)?
Yep, only in the Derwent Valley.

FOOD · OUTDOORS

10

The Salmon Ponds

Salmon Ponds, naturally, is home to the oldest trout hatchery in the Southern Hemisphere — it's a long story (ask around or visit the on-site museum). The hatchery introduces over 1 million trout into the local waters each year and is home to a museum, some splendid gardens, a crêperie and a resident platypus.

70 Salmon Ponds Road, Plenty
salmonponds.com.au

HISTORY

12

Bushy Parks Hops Museum & Market

Bushy Park is often regarded as the home of Australian brewing. Founded by the excellently-named Ebenezer Shoobridge, Bushy Park is home to the oldest continuously operating hop garden in the world, as well as the Bushy Park Hops Museum and Community Market.

Gordon River Road,
Bushy Park

OUTDOORS

11

Maydena Bike Park

A gravity-focussed mountain bike park featuring just a casual 73+ gravity trails (for all levels), including a top to bottom family-friendly ride and the highest vertical drop trail in the Southern Hemisphere — 820m+ of white-knuckled mayhem through spectacular old-growth forest.

34 Kallista Rd, Maydena
maydenabikepark.com

OUTDOORS

13

Styx Big Tree Reserve

Deep within the ominous sounding Styx Forest, is the also ominous sounding Styx Big Tree Reserve. But, all is well, as the only thing shadowy in these forests are those cast by the gigantic Eucalyptus regnans, the second tallest trees in the world.

Styx Road, Maydena
parks.tas.gov.au



Stu Gleason

OUTDOORS

14

Junee Cave & Walking Track

The Junee Cave system is the deepest cave tract in the Southern Hemisphere (perhaps even the world — as we're yet to find the end of it). With over 30km of cave networks and some 295 caves, it can be accessed via a gentle 1km walk through picturesque rainforest.

Junee Road, Maydena
parks.tas.gov.au

If it's going to grow anywhere, chances are the Derwent Valley is the place for it. Whether it's the microclimate, the remoteness, the pure waters, or just our care and attention, it's in our nature to take it to the extreme. That's probably why our trees are the tallest in the Southern Hemisphere, our hops the most flavoursome, and our cherries counterfeited and sold on the black market. And, as home to one of the most awarded restaurants in Tasmania, a swarm of microbreweries, distilleries, cooking schools, bars and markets, you're bound to catch your fill.

UNBELIEVABLE IS IN OUR NATURE



FOOD & CRAFT

PRODUCE

There's something in the soil here that makes our produce... unnatural. There are the perfect **Reid Farm** cherries that sell for over \$100/kg; the **Westerway Raspberry Farm** berries prized by restaurants and Country Women's Association jam-makers everywhere; truffles so earthy you can taste the Proterozoic; and stone fruits so sweet that spitting out the pits may cost you your fortune.

CRAFTS

When you're surrounded by woodlands, quarries, paper mills, kilns, and isolated from the world (we are 40 minutes away from Hobart after all), you can't help but be a little crafty. Woodworking at the **Derwent Valley School of Creative Woodwork**; take a pottery workshop at the **Leap & Wander Studio**; learn letterpress printing at **Flywheel** or pick up a craft kit from **The Arthouse New Norfolk** — all makes for a very hands-on Derwent Valley experience.

Image: Peter Hamson



CAFES & RESTAURANTS

We're the first to admit it, Derwent Valley's food scene has come a long way from the quaint old teahouses and B&Bs of yore. We still have those, plenty of them, but now the word's finally out - we also have **The Agrarian Kitchen Eatery**, one of Tassie's most awarded restaurants, and **Glen Derwent Tea Rooms** serving up delectable devonshire and high teas to squeals of delight. We also have great coffee shops, bakeries, pubs, and the only platypus-friendly crêperie in the world (well, that we know of).

COOKING SCHOOLS

It's been said that **The Agrarian Kitchen Cooking School** is "by far the best cooking school in Australia". And, that very well may be true. But whether it's paddock-to-plate or paddock-to-preserving-jar, our sustainable farming practices and culinary traditions make all our schools a deeply flavourful experience.



Image: Stu Gibson

WINE & FERMENTS



DISTILLERIES

This is a region of biggest, deepest, wildest and weirdest, so it doesn't surprise when some of our microest things are making some of the loudest noises. Like the **New Norfolk Rum Distillery**: a contemporary micro-distillery based in the historic Willow Court precinct, whose range of rums and liqueurs are beloved by locals — and awarded by critics.

VINEYARDS & CELLAR DOORS

It's only expected that our vineyards have their own stories to tell. Legend has it, **Derwent Estate** vines are planted on fossilised dinosaur bones (some kind of giant wombat, or so we're told). **Stefano Lubiana** has been growing biodynamic, natural wines before natural wines were a thing. Add a host of up-and-coming wineries all cultivating vines in the most inhospitable of regions, and you've got some of the most exciting wines in Australia. If wine isn't your vibe, drop past **Plenty Cider** cellar door for a tasting paddle, or try some small batch, limited release ciders.



PUBS & BARS

When was the last time you cheered a ghost? Or spotted UFOs from a beer garden? And, no, that's not the beer talking. Besides being the oldest continually licensed pub in Australia (since 1815 to be precise), **The Bush Inn** has long been famous for its less visible locals. And, at **The National Park Hotel**, Tasmania's UFO spotting capital (for a brief period in the 70s), you can grab a tenner and stare at the sky... waiting...

BREWERIES

Seven out of 10 Australian beers are brewed using our Bushy Park's hops (apparently). So, naturally, we've mastered this hoppy elixir. **Two Metre Tall** has long been a world trailblazer for wild ferment beers. **Eleventh Order Brewery** has created a Tasmanian Pale Ale using only local ingredients. And **Welcome Swallow Brewery** uses their own hops to brew bombastic special releases.



ADVENTURE & NATURE



TRAILS

In the Derwent Valley, it's hard to know where one walking trail ends and another begins. Whether you're touring glacial peaks on the **Tarn Shelf Walk**, plunging into rainforests on the **Juneë Cave Walking Track**, spotting fungi on the way to the **Growling Swallet** where the Juneë River plunges into darkness, wandering amongst the giants in **Mount Field National Park**, soaking up the waterfalls on **The Three Falls Circuit**, or just creating a track of your very own, there's a trail connecting everybody and every ability.

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Where there's a hill, there's a way. Throughout The Valley, mountain bike trails weave and dip throughout the landscape like scripture on a big, deep, wild, weird parchment. From the many world-class tracks at **Maydena Bike Park**, to the unofficial tracks that may or may not exist just out of view, there always seems to be a trail ready for exploration.



FISHING

If you can't catch a trout in the Derwent Valley, then you may as well just give up on fishing altogether. Rainbow trout, brown trout, the waters here are jammed with them. Simply cast a line in the **River Derwent**, **Lake Pedder**, **Lake Gordon** or the **Tyenna River**, and do your best to reel them in — or, speak to a local, and discover one of their many favourite secrets spots.

Download the InFish App from ifs.tas.gov.au

WATER SPORTS

Kayaking with **Tassie Bound Adventure Tours**; stand-up paddle boarding with the **Derwent Valley SUP School**; hydro-biking with **Pedalmore**, boating and skiing on Lake Pedder; white-water rafting with **Aardvark Adventures**; wading into the water and scooping up fish; even just good old-fashioned swimming, we have enough water activities to keep you happily sodden for weeks.



Image: Adam Gibson



1 New Norfolk Market

2 Antiques Trail

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PRODUCED BY

Derwent Valley
COUNCIL

*Scan QR code for more places
to explore, taste and rest.*