



SEPTEMBER 2002

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ESCAPE TODAY. ENJOY TOMMORROW.

The Victoria's Great Escapes campaign is scheduled to launch in mid September, which provides visitors with a fantastic range of accommodation packages to help them on their way to a well deserved break.

Visitors are encouraged to escape the everyday and head to regional Victoria. There's a great range of participating properties, from romantic hideaways to luxury hotels.

There are 38 Victorian properties participating in the campaign, all offering fantastic three-day mid-week and weekend packages.

Imagine cruising along the Murray in a paddlesteamer then staying at the Mildura Grand Hotel from just \$125. Or strolling along the beach then heading back to luxury accommodation at Erskine on the Beach from just \$190.

Boutique hotels like the Lake House in Daylesford and Chateau Yering in Victoria's Yarra Valley are attractively priced from \$304 and \$487 respectively.

Victoria offers so many wonderful places to escape, relax and totally unwind, and now that the Victoria's Great Escapes packages are on offer, there's never been a better time to get away.

Free brochures on Victoria's Great Escapes are available by calling 132 842 (available from mid September). All prices listed are for three nights and include GST.

Media inquiries: Zoe Scarlett, Media officer, Tourism Victoria on 03 9653 9773 or email zoe.scarlett@tourism.vic.gov.au

WALKABOUT WITH OUR NATIVE ANIMALS

Melbourne is a fantastic place to come and enjoy the finer things in life like shopping, delicious food, great cafes and bars, but it is also the gateway to some fantastic wildlife destinations.

To find out first hand, visitors can hop on board a Savannah Walkabout tour run by Echidna Walkabout and, within an hour, see huge mobs of wild kangaroos and some koalas in their natural habitat. There are not many other cities in the world where visitors can enjoy this kind of experience so close to the city centre.

The naturalist guided ecotour takes visitors west of Melbourne to the Western Plains. The first stop is Serendip Open Range Sanctuary, originally set up to breed various species of endangered birds. The sanctuary has attracted huge numbers of kangaroos from the You Yangs and they now call Serendip home. Emus and wallabies are also spotted regularly on the tour.

Enjoy a delicious bush lunch at Serendip Sanctuary before moving on to the next stop - Brisbane Ranges National Park. The area is home to a number of koalas and visitors can watch them dozing in the gum trees.

The tours depart Melbourne at approximately 9am daily and return at approximately 6pm. Bookings are essential.

The tour costs \$145 per adult and \$110 per child (up to 13 years).

Bookings and inquiries: Echidna Walkabout on 03 9646 8249, email ekidna@netcore.com.au or The Adventure Company Australia on 07 4051 4777, email adventures@adventures.com
Media inquiries: Janine Duffy or Roger Smith on 03 9646 8249

FLY AWAY WITH AUSTRALIAN JET ADVENTURES

Imagine yourself soaring high in the sky above Ballarat, Creswick or The Grampians, enjoying the view but also experiencing the sheer rush of aerial aerobatics.

Tourists can now experience the thrill of a flight in a real ex-military aircraft over Victoria's picturesque coastlines with Australian Jet Adventures.

The Ballarat owned and operated company is one of the few tour operators in the world to accommodate this unique style of adventure flying which was previously only available to military pilots or by travelling to Russia or the Ukraine.

Participants will feel like Top Gun's about to embark on their very first mission as they don their flight suits, parachutes and fighter pilot helmets.

They are then strapped into position right next to the pilot as they embark on the ride of a lifetime. The aircraft climbs up to 10,000 feet in under two minutes at speeds of up to 800 kilometres per hour. Offering pure excitement from take off to landing, this is not an experience for the faint hearted!

There are a number of packages to choose from, ranging from \$1450 to \$3050 per person.

All packages include a full pre-flight mission brief, loan of full fighter pilot suit, a CD of personalised digital images taken of the flight, a post-flight debrief, a personalised web page dedicated to the flight and a package of promotional goods to the value of \$130.

Bookings and inquiries: 03 5339 2769, email csegaert@austjetadv.com or visit www.austjetadv.com
Media inquiries: Christine Segart at Australian Jet Adventures on 03 5339 2769, 0417 142 227 or email csegaert@austjetadv.com

GROVEDALE COTTAGE – A ROMANTIC GETAWAY

Grovedale Cottage, nestled amongst the bushland and rolling hills of Kangaroo Ground, in Victoria's Yarra Valley, is the perfect place for a romantic weekend away.

Grovedale Cottage offers luxury accommodation in a private and tranquil environment and features a spacious bathroom with a deep spa, wood fire, air-conditioning, fully equipped kitchen, television, video and a stereo system.

Guests can take advantage of 50 acres of surrounding countryside, stroll through the nearby bushland and gullies where kangaroos and wombats roam or stroll through the lovely olive grove. Just a few minutes walk up the hill from Grovedale visitors can enjoy spectacular 180 degree views of the Great Divide.

Grovedale Cottage also boasts a private pool and tennis court for guests to enjoy and optional extras like dinner packages, art tours and massages can also be arranged.

For a truly relaxing afternoon, guests can play a game of petanque on the lawn or sit and unwind with a bottle of wine on the jetty.

Grovedale Cottage is priced at \$240 per night, which includes a complimentary bottle of Yarra Valley wine, fresh flowers, gourmet breakfast provisions and a newspaper. A minimum two night stay is required for weekends.

General and media inquiries: Vonnie Frazer on 03 9712 0089, email bookings@grovedalecottage.com.au or visit www.grovedalecottage.com.au

TODAY'S TASTE OF YESTERDAY

Honey's Bear Shed museum, a popular new tourist attraction recently opened in Maryborough, about two hour's drive from Melbourne in Victoria's Goldfields region.

Visitors will take a step back in time as they get lost in the vast collection of memorabilia. The three sheds at Honey's Bear Shed are a tribute to days gone by.

Memories of the sweet sounds of artists like Rosemary Clooney, Al Jolson, Bing Crosby and Glenn Miller and his orchestra will come flooding back as visitors pour through the extensive collection of old records, gramophones, phonographs and radios.

Perhaps setting a new world record is the wonderful collection of over 1,500 teddy bears in all shapes and sizes, including one that stands almost seven feet tall!

There are trikes, scooters and pedal cars, aircraft and airline memorabilia, model trains and trucks, dolls prams and pushers – the list just goes on!

Honey's Bear Shed museum is open from 11am to 5pm on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays and at other times by appointment. Entry is \$4 for adults, \$2.50 for children and pensioners and \$8 for a family pass (two adults and up to four children).

General and media inquiries: Alan and Anne Comley 03 5461 3051

GREAT DEALS ON OFFER AT LINDENWARRAH

LindenWarrah at Milawa is an elegant country house hotel and restaurant nestled in the heart of Milawa, a delicious gourmet region near Rutherglen, approximately two and a half hours drive from Melbourne.

Guests can snuggle up and enjoy the last weeks of winter in front of the cosy open fires in stylish lounges or soak up a bit of the midday sun in the courtyard. With five star rooms and a menu and wine lists that showcases the regions finest produce, LindenWarrah is a great place to visit with family and friends.

As spring approaches, visitors who like getting out and about will delight in the great range of outdoor activities available close by. Spring flowers are about to bloom, so it's a great time for some hiking in the High Country, or for the more adventurous, there's fly fishing, gliding and cycling. At the end of the day, guests can relax and unwind with a glass of their favourite wine.

For a limited time, LindenWarrah at Milawa is offering a very special deal. Book five rooms or more for family and friends in September and October and LindenWarrah will include an extra night free of charge. The package includes two nights accommodation, two fully cooked breakfasts and one three course a-la-carte dinner.

The total cost of this two night package is \$220 per person twin share, which is a saving of over \$120.

Bookings and inquiries: 03 5720 5777 or email info@lindenwarrah.com.au
Media inquiries: Kate Riddell-Clark on 0414 690 410

ENJOY NEDLANDS LAVENDER FARM

Spring is here and it's the perfect time to get out and enjoy the crisp air and smell the flowers. Set in picturesque Tuerong, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, Nedlands Lavender Farm is the perfect place to go. The farm has been closed for the winter and is reopening on September 4.

Set on 100 acres of undulating countryside, the farm was established in 1850 and is now run by Sue and Brian McCarthy. Nedlands is a working Australian farm that gives visitors an insight into life on a farm. As well as fields of fragrant lavender the farm is home to an abundance of wildlife including kangaroos and koalas.

Individual and group tours of the farm are available which take visitors to the Old Barn processing centre where the lavender is dried and stripped, or distilled for essential oil. A video clip shows the distillation process and visitors are free to stroll through the lavender display gardens where there are more than 40 varieties of lavender on show.

Fragrant Nedlands lavender products are available for purchase and include hand cream, moisturisers, hand made soaps and bath products. There is also a tasty range of preserves and relishes, cheeses, tea and biscuits to enjoy.

Guided tours start from \$5.50 per person or can be packaged with morning tea, afternoon tea or lunch for an additional cost.

Bookings and inquiries: 03 95974 4160, email nedlands@alphalink.com.au or visit www.vtoa.asn.au/nedlands

Media inquiries: Sue and Brian McCarthy on 03 5974 4160 or email nedlands@alphalink.com.au

SWAN HILL'S PIONEER SETTLEMENT MUSEUM

Located in Swan Hill, in Victoria's Murray-Mallee area, the Pioneer Settlement Museum provides visitors with a first hand experience of our pioneering past as they step inside a re-enactment of a Mallee Township, native bushland and farming enterprise.

Through activated and static displays, the Pioneer Settlement Museum recreates life in the Murray-Mallee area from 1830-1930. Over fifty historic buildings and other major exhibits have been saved and faithfully restored to create a unique experience that will fascinate and entertain visitors of all ages.

A special feature that has recently been revamped, is the Sound and Light Tour, *Pioneers in Sound and Light*, which sets off each night after dusk. A special carriage transports visitors back through 150 years of history. The 45-minute journey uses special sound and light effects to tell the stories of the pioneers.

Entry to the Sound and Light Tour is \$10 for adults, \$8 for pensioners, \$6 for children and \$26 for a family ticket. Combined tickets for the Pioneer Settlement, Sound and Light Tour and the P.S. Pyap River Boat Cruise are also available.

General inquiries: 03 5036 2410, email pioneersett@swanhill.vic.gov.au or visit www.pioneersettlement.com.au

Media inquiries: John Watson at the Pioneer Settlement on 03 5036 2416 or email pioneersett@swanhill.vic.gov.au

BED & STABLE ACCOMMODATION IN GIPPSLAND

We've all heard of Bed & Breakfast accommodation but have we ever heard of Bed & Stable? Shalimar Rose Lodge, set to open on September 17, presents a brand new style of accommodation, to cater to the needs of both human guests and their equine companions.

Situated in the Gippsland town of Longwarry, just an hour's drive from Melbourne, Shalimar Rose Lodge offers fully self-contained cottage style accommodation for humans and quality stables for horses.

Set up to appeal to horse lovers, the property is situated in a part of Victoria that boasts breathtaking scenery and great trail riding tracks.

Facilities in the cottage include a wood fire, claw foot bath, two bedrooms (plus sofa bed), TV, VCR and CD player, games room and an outdoor BBQ area. There are four stables and paddocks as well as float access and parking.

Overnight accommodation at Shalimar Rose Lodge is between \$95 - \$135 per double room and \$75 - \$110 per single room. Breakfast provisions are available at a cost of \$10 per person and grocery shopping can be organised upon request.

For those who wish to bring their horses, stables are available at a cost of \$15 per horse per night, which includes a bag of hay and a bag of welcome carrots to make your four legged companion feel right at home. Paddocks are also available for \$10 per horse per night. Dogs are also very welcome at Shalimar Rose.

Bookings and inquiries: 03 9704 5900, email shalimarroselodge@bigpond.com.au or visit www.bednstablegetaways.com

Media inquiries: Michelle Gross on 03 9704 5900 or email shalimarroselodge@bigpond.com.au

MELBOURNE OFFERS AN ACTION PACKED SPRING CALENDAR

Melbourne will be racing with excitement and glamour this spring with a celebration of events, fashion, culture, sport and entertainment.

Regular hits on the calendar like the Melbourne Festival (17 Oct – 2 Nov), the Spring Racing Carnival (9 Oct – 21 Nov) and the SKYY Vodka Motorcycle Grand Prix (18 – 20 Oct) are not to be missed.

Rated the greatest exhibition of old masters ever to visit our shores, *The Italians: Three Centuries of Italian Art* (5 July – 6 Oct) has captured the imagination of over 50,000 visitors so far.

For arts of a performing nature, catch Cameron Mackintosh's hilarious adaptation of *Witches of Eastwick* playing at the Princess Theatre (7 Aug – 30 Nov).

Local and internationally acclaimed performers, artists and writers will again converge for the 2002 Melbourne Festival promising 17 days of unsurpassed creative excellence.

The champions of Australian football will be decided on the 'last Saturday of September'. And once the footy scarves have been packed away, it's time to don hats for the Spring Racing Carnival, a six week celebration of sport, fashion, food and entertainment.

Theatre, sports, festivals and exhibitions – it's all happening in Melbourne this spring.

For your *Melbourne in Spring* brochure call 132 842 or for further information go to visitvictoria.com/spring. For packages to Melbourne this spring or for Cup Carnival packages, contact Qantas Holidays on 13 14 15.

Media inquiries: Kirsty Watt, Acting Public Relations Manager, Tourism Victoria on 03 9653 9745 or email kirsty.watt@tourism.vic.gov.au

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For more information contact:
Zoe Scarlett, Editor
Media Unit, Tourism Victoria
Tel: 03 9653 9773
Fax: 03 9650 5672
Email: zoe.scarlett@tourism.vic.gov.au

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