

Itinerary for: Harley & Lori Bassman & Family
The Highlights of Australia

Saturday, Jul. 14, 2007

Meals Provided: (Aloft)

DEPART USA

Fly New York JFK to Los Angeles on QF #108 (19:20 - 22:10)

Fly Los Angeles to Brisbane on QF #176 (23:20 - 06:05)(+2)

Sunday, Jul. 15, 2007

Meals Provided: (Aloft)

FLIGHT EN ROUTE

You lose a day crossing the International Date Line.

Monday, Jul. 16, 2007

Meals Provided: (Aloft)

ARRIVE BRISBANE/HERON ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

Arrive Brisbane at 6:05 AM. Welcome to Australia. After Immigration and Customs, connect to your domestic flight to Gladstone, the gateway to Heron Island.

Fly Brisbane to Gladstone on QF #2332 (08:50 - 09:55)

Pick up and transfer, via coach/ferry, to Heron Island.

Arrive approx. 2 PM. After checking into the resort the remainder of the day is at leisure to relax, swim, dine and explore on your own.

Heron Island is a true coral cay right on the World Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef. Here you can swim straight off the beach to an endless garden of coral where the waters are literally teeming with beautifully colored fish and marine life.

It's what you don't see around Heron that makes the resort so special. You won't see any buildings above the tree line. And you won't bump into any day-trippers either. The reef experience on Heron is exclusively for guests, a unique experience few other resorts in the world can offer. There's a relaxed island lifestyle that sets Heron apart, a sophisticated yet casual resort atmosphere. Here, the emphasis is on exploring and discovering the natural attractions that have made Heron famous around the world.

You'll enjoy some of the world's best reef snorkeling. There's a choice of spectacular sites just minutes from the beach.

Overnight Heron Island Resort - 2 Reef Suites (1 Double & 1 Family).

Tuesday, Jul. 17, 2007

Meals Provided: B

HERON ISLAND

Today choose from a variety of activities: Join a guided reef walk to learn more about the unique ecology of the Great Barrier Reef, snorkel off the beach and come face to face with the kaleidoscope of marine life just below the surface or spend the day just lazing by the pool. The choice is yours.

Heron is renowned for its abundance of birdlife with dense Pisonia forests which are home to thousands of Noddy Terns.

At night there's live entertainment or a quiet drink at the Pandanus Lounge.

Overnight Heron Island Resort.

Wednesday, Jul. 18, 2007

Meals Provided: B

HERON ISLAND

Today choose from a variety of activities, including snorkeling excursions to, the Junior Ranger program, guided research station walks or the Aqua Soul Spa.

Overnight Heron Island Resort.

Thursday, Jul. 19, 2007

Meals Provided: B

HERON ISLAND/CAPE TRIBULATION (CAIRNS)

This morning is at leisure before your 2 PM boat transfer back to Gladstone for the flight to Cairns in Northern Tropical Queensland, via Brisbane.

Fly Gladstone to Brisbane on QF #2307 (17:05 - 18:05) .

Fly Brisbane to Cairns on QF #786 (19:30 - 21:50)

Upon arrival, meet your driver (who will be waiting outside the arrival area holding a sign with your names on it) and transfer to your rainforest lodge.

Coconut Beach Rainforest Lodge is unlike any hotel in the world, nestled between Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef.

Cape Tribulation is one of nature's true paradises, and you will be staying in one of the world's most remarkable environments. Both the Daintree and The Great Barrier Reef are World Heritage listed sites. The ancient forests of the Daintree are home to 85 of the world's 120 rarest species of plants, and thrive with native fauna - a living museum that has barely changed over thousands of years. The Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral formation, comprised of nearly 3,000 separate reefs, made up of 400 different kinds of coral. Its waters teem with spectacular marine life.

What's more, guests can unwind in exquisite natural surroundings without sacrificing anything in the way of comfort. You'll find four-star accommodation amidst wild surrounds, offering private rainforest views with easy access to white-sand Coconut Beach itself.

Overnight Coconut Beach Rainforest Lodge (2 Daintree Retreats).

Friday, Jul. 20, 2007

Meals Provided: B L

DAINTREE RAINFOREST/CAPE TRIBULATION

Today, set out to Daintree National Park. This full day (join-in) tour offers you the best of Daintree at a relaxed pace. A very enjoyable and informative day. There's so much to see and learn about the rainforest. Your experienced guide will show you many fascinating parts of the forest, how they interact with each other, and how important rainforest survival is to the rest of the world.

Your day begins on the Marrdja Boardwalk, taking you through ancient forest growth, before you embark on a one-hour discovery cruise along Cooper Creek. You'll see abundant bird life, mud crabs, pythons and the fearsome saltwater crocodiles that inhabit this stunning coastal mangrove system.

Lunch at a freshwater swimming hole is followed by a visit to the Daintree Discovery Center, and the opportunity to try out their new aerial walkway through the rainforest canopy.

Your final stop is the Daintree Ice Cream Company, where local ingredients are made into divine ice creams.

Return to the lodge for the remainder of the day at leisure to relax, dine and explore on your own.

Overnight Coconut Beach Rainforest Lodge.

Saturday, Jul. 21, 2007

Meals Provided: B

GREAT BARRIER REEF/CAPE TRIBULATION

Today, experience the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef, snorkeling at pristine Mackay and Undine reefs. This tour allows for up to five hours on the reef to explore the dazzling diversity of the underwater world.

You'll board the Odyssey H2O (join-in day excursion) and set sail for Mackay or Undine reefs just 45 minutes offshore, visiting two different sites for an extraordinary array of marine life and coral species. Morning tea is provided en route, before you arrive and begin preparations for your first snorkel. The experienced crew will ensure that your day will be filled with exhilaration and delight.

Following a hearty lunch you can sit back and relax as one of the crew enriches your understanding of the marine life and delicate ecosystems you may encounter as you head below the surface again during the afternoon. On the way back, gaze once more at this spectacular coast, with its dense, green chaos of trees reaching down to the white sandy beaches. Not much has changed at Cape Tribulation since Captain Cook first laid eyes on it in 1770 just before the Endeavour ran aground.

Return to our lodge for an evening to relax and dine on your own.

Overnight Coconut Beach Rainforest Lodge.

Sunday, Jul. 22, 2007

Meals Provided: B D

AYERS ROCK (ULURU)

Early morning, transfer to the airport for the flight to Australia's Red Center. Fly Cairns to Ayers Rock on QF #989 (09:35 - 11:55)

Upon arrival, pick up and transfer to your hotel for time to freshen up and lunch before a journey through the desert plain to the Olgas, known to the Aboriginal people as 'Kata Tjuta' (meaning 'many heads'). This (join-in) tour departs early afternoon for the domes of Kata –Tjuta (The Olgas). Your guide will walk you through Walpa (Olga) Gorge describing the geology and Aboriginal plant use of the area.

Late afternoon, before sunset, pick up and transfer to the award-winning dining experience under the stars, "Sounds of Silence" which is a truly unique event, offering the best of the Red Centre distilled into four unforgettable hours. The event includes transfers, entertainment, canapés, beer, wines and non-alcoholic beverages, gourmet barbecue buffet (vegetarian arrangements made with prior notice), scrumptious dessert, tea, coffee, port, star talk and stargazing.

Overnight Desert Gardens Hotel (2 Standard Rooms).

Magnificent ghost gums and flowering native shrubs are the setting for this lovely hotel. Voyages Desert Gardens Hotel is centrally located to all resort and touring facilities and offers a range of accommodation.

You can relax in the comfort of your own private balcony or courtyard, or unwind in the hotel's refreshing pool.

It's only a short stroll to Desert Gardens' numerous lookouts, where you can view what is arguably Australia's best sunset, with the spectacular play of colors across the face of Uluru and the surrounding desert.

Monday, Jul. 23, 2007

Meals Provided: B

AYERS ROCK/ALICE SPRINGS

Rising early, set out for a sunrise tour of Uluru (Ayers Rock). Watch the sun rise over the Rock before returning to your hotel for breakfast.

Pick up and transfer to the airport for the short flight to Alice Springs.

Fly Ayers Rock to Alice Springs on QF #1940 (09:40 - 10:30) .

Welcome to Alice. Alice Springs is an Outback town that is the heart of Australia. It's where the Arrernte Aboriginal tribal group has lived for 20,000 years and where pioneer men and women gave "tough" a new meaning. The town races camels and holds hilarious holiday regattas in dry riverbeds. This is where Peter Finch caught up with Virginia McKenna in the 1956 film classic "A Town Like Alice." With a population over 27,000, the town is a self-contained business community, catering to its population and the many thousands of annual visitors.

Upon arrival, first visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service. This service was established by Reverend John Flynn in 1939 and is still very active today. The service's headquarters in Alice allows us to view the communications systems and history of this service.

Next, tour the School on the Air. This is the headquarters of a unique Australian concept. The school opened in June 1951 and classes are held daily. Teachers communicate with pupils over distances of up to 1,000 km by 2-way radio – you'll hear lessons in progress and meet some of the teaching staff.

After lunch on your own, visit the Desert Bio-Park. This unique, natural history facility has been established near Alice in the arid center of Australia. It is combining plants, animals and Aboriginal culture to introduce visitors to the Australian desert environment, and is the most significant development that has ever occurred in terms of the promotion of Australia's desert flora and fauna.

Tonight is at leisure to relax, dine and explore on your own. Perhaps visit the Mbantua Aboriginal Art Gallery, famous for Aboriginal indigenous art.

Overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel (2 Garden View Rooms).

Tuesday, Jul. 24, 2007

Meals Provided: B

HOBART

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to Hobart, Tasmania, via Melbourne.

Fly Alice Springs to Melbourne on QF #797 (11:25 - 14:30)

Fly Melbourne to Hobart on QF #5041 (16:00 - 17:10)

Welcome to Tasmania. 'Tassie' is a place of wonderful contrasts, consisting of wild ocean beaches, dense temperate rainforests, rugged mountains, deep blue lakes and delicate alpine moorlands. The state was originally known as Van Diemen's Land and was an infamous British penal colony during the 19th century. Today approximately one-quarter of Tasmania is designated as national parks. About 20% of the state has World Heritage status!

Upon arrival, pick up and transfer to your comfortable hotel, situated on the wharf in the heart of the city.

Overnight Henry Jones Art Hotel (2 Standard Rooms).

A former jam factory dating from the early 1820s, the Henry Jones Art Hotel has been transformed into an enthralling first class property showcasing the work of Tasmania's finest artists. All suites feature natural timber furnishings and equipped with European-style stainless steel and translucent glass bathrooms, complemented by magnificent sandstone walls. Most suites have close harbor views, while others overlook the stunning glass atrium and reveal glimpses of the old jam factory interior. Guest rooms and public spaces exhibit original artworks which are available for purchase and a catalogue is provided in every suite.

Wednesday, Jul. 25, 2007

Meals Provided: B L

PORT ARTHUR/HOBART

After breakfast, departing your hotel and travel around the historic birthplace of this fascinating city - Salamanca Place, Constitution Dock and Battery Point before making our way across the Tasman Bridge to the historic convict village of Richmond.

Pausing briefly, visit Australians oldest Catholic church and take a stroll around the village before rejoining the vehicle to make your way toward Port Arthur. On the way visit the tessellated pavement which is a unique rock formation disappearing into the sea. You will also wonder at the other natural attractions on the peninsula's rugged coast, such as Devils Kitchen.

The settlement of Port Arthur was created to put fear and hatred into the minds of those unfortunate enough to be sent there.

After a light lunch your guide will personally escort you around the ruins of the settlement telling you tales of the hardships suffered by the convicts. You will end this amazing experience with a short cruise around the harbor on a modern catamaran.

Return to Hobart for an evening to relax, dine and explore on your own.

Overnight Henry Jones Art Hotel.

Thursday, Jul. 26, 2007

Meals Provided: B L D

CRADLE MOUNTAIN

This morning, pick up and drive through the heart of Tasmania to Cradle Mountain, via Launceston and other villages en route up the Heritage Highway.

After lunch in the Launceston area at a Tamar Valley vineyard, continue driving to Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair. This is Tassie's best known national park and is part of the World Heritage area.

Check into your accommodations with the remainder of the afternoon free to relax and explore on your own before a dinner at the lodge's Highland Restaurant.

Overnight Cradle Mountain Lodge (2 Pencil Pine Cabins).

Cradle Mountain Lodge is a unique wilderness retreat on the edge of the national park. From here, see the face of creation all around in the mirror lakes and rugged mountain peaks.

Friday, Jul. 27, 2007

Meals Provided: B D

CRADLE MOUNTAIN

After breakfast, begin your day with a visit to the park's visitor's center (near the lodge). There are usually talks by one of the rangers on conservation. Follow this with a short, easy walk along a spectacular boardwalk through the rainforest – the Rainforest-Pencil Pine Falls Walking Track.

This afternoon, take a meandering drive through a Myrtle rainforest to an old bushman's hut. Back at the lodge, enjoy a warm drink by the fire or indulge in a sauna and therapeutic massage (own expense). You can also choose to hike on the Enchanted Walk, Rainforest Walk, or Weindorfers Forest Walk.

Overnight Cradle Mountain Lodge.

Saturday, Jul. 28, 2007

Meals Provided: B

SYDNEY

This morning, pick up and transfer to Launceston for your flight to Sydney, via Melbourne. Fly Launceston to Sydney on DJ #975 (11:05 - 12:40) Economy Class.

Welcome to Sydney, Australia's oldest and largest settlement. This is a vibrant city built around one of the most spectacular harbors in the world. Sydney Harbour has melded and shaped the city's psyche since the first days of settlement. Today it's both a major port and the city's playground.

Pick up and transfer to your hotel. The remainder of the afternoon will be free to relax, dine and explore on your own.

Overnight Hotel Intercontinental Circular Quay (2 City View Rooms).

The Hotel Intercontinental Circular Quay is located one block from the Circular Quay ferry wharf. It is just moments from the city's financial district and is a 10-minute stroll from the Sydney Opera House. This unique property blends a modern hotel tower with the 1851 heritage-listed sandstone and brick Treasury Building. The hotel boasts a beautiful glass-roofed courtyard, and rooms are housed in a modern multi-story tower overlooking Sydney Harbour and the city, giving guests a choice of sweeping views. In keeping with the style and mood set by The Treasury, all public areas reflect the gracious Victorian era and artwork is hung depicting historic Sydney, while guest rooms have recently been updated and offer the latest in comfort and technology, from high speed internet access to on-demand movies with a luxurious window seat and chaise lounge.

Sunday, Jul. 29, 2007

Meals Provided: B L

SYDNEY

After breakfast, meet your local guide and stretch your legs with a walking tour of the historic Rocks area of Sydney (near your hotel).

Sydney's first European settlement was a squalid, raucous place of convicts, whalers, and street gangs, though in the 1820s the nouveau rich inexplicably built houses on the ridges overlooking the slums. Since the 1970s, redevelopment has turned the Rocks into a historical precinct, full of narrow cobbled streets, fine colonial buildings, converted warehouses and tea rooms.

Your walking tour will conclude with lunch at the Restaurant of the Rocks, followed by free time to shop and explore on your own.

Late afternoon, take a (join-in) tour of the Sydney Opera House. The Opera House is dramatically situated on the headland of Circular Quay. The hullabaloo surrounding construction of the Opera House was an operatic blend of personal vision, long delays, bitter feuding, cost blowouts and narrow minded politicking. Construction began in 1959 after Danish architect Jørn Utzon won an international design competition. After political interference, Utzon quit in disgust in 1966, leaving a consortium of Australian architects to design a compromised interior. The building was finally completed in 1973.

Your tour will conclude with dinner reservations at the Guillaume at Bennelong (payment on own). This restaurant is situated in the southern shell of the Sydney Opera House, where we'll sit beneath Jørn Utzon's vaulted concrete "ribs". Sensuously curved, chocolate-colored banquettes surround generously spaced tables. Both the restaurant and the bar offer spectacular views of Sydney Harbour, the Sydney Bridge, Royal Botanic Gardens, Circular Quay and the city.

The remainder of the evening is at leisure.

Overnight Hotel Intercontinental Circular Quay.

Monday, Jul. 30, 2007

Meals Provided: B

SYDNEY

Your final day in Australia is at leisure to explore, shop and dine on your own. Good options for today would include a cross harbor ferry to Manly, visit the Taronga Zoo, the city's shopping complexes: the Queen Victoria Building (QVB), and the restored Strand Arcade.

You can also stroll through Hyde Park which contains the dignified ANZAC Memorial, covering the nine overseas conflicts Australians have fought in.

Perhaps go for a stroll along Oxford Street with its boutique shops. Other sites would include Darling Harbour, the Powerhouse Museum or the Sydney Aquarium.

Overnight Hotel Intercontinental Circular Quay.

Tuesday, Jul. 31, 2007

Meals Provided: B (Aloft)

FLY HOME

This morning, pick up and transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Fly Sydney to Los Angeles on QF #149 (09:45 - 06:05)

Fly Los Angeles to New York JFK on QF #3095 (09:30 - 17:50)

Welcome Home.

End of services.

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Includes: All meals indicated (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner), hotels as shown based on accommodations, airport transfers as indicated, and tours as shown (private unless otherwise indicated).

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