

## *Cruising with a difference!*

Six Geelong yachts and their crews are about to join the main fleet of 39 other yachts on the north-west corner of Tasmania for the 2009 Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise. They are 'Maatsuyker' (Bill Newman), 'City Limits' (Richard Ince), 'Samyono' (Austin Swain), 'Bundaberg' (John Kint), 'Lady Bay' (David Radbourn) and 'Fistral' (Victor Bibby).

Covering almost 1,200 nautical miles (2,225 Kms) the cruise will be back in Hobart on or about 17th March.

The VDLC has been conducted every second year for the past 18 years by the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in conjunction with the Royal Geelong Yacht Club and is a well-established, world-class event. It's a cruise-in-company involving the 800 nautical mile circumnavigation of the island state of Tasmania and provides the opportunity for overseas visitors, as well as the local cruising community, to take part in one of the world's more adventurous and spectacular cruising experiences. It will take 5 weeks to complete this anti-clockwise circumnavigation.

All participating boats must meet strict safety requirements and provide daily radio scheds with the accompanying radio relay vessel and the total fleet size is limited to 45 boats because of a limited capacity of some ports and anchorages. They must be well-found sea-going vessels with a Length Over All of more than 30 feet with a minimum crew of 2 who can meet the offshore experience required. All yachts will be supported by people with a practical knowledge of the Tasmanian coast which includes some of the finest maritime scenery in the world.

The first stop will be at the old convict settlement of Port Arthur with the magnificent views of the tall dolerite cliffs of Cape Raoul, Cape Pillar and Tasman Island. Then it's north along the East coast to Maria Island and the perfection of the Schouten Passage and Wineglass Bay with bright white beaches and pink granite mountains rising steeply out of the sea.

Through Banks Strait on the north-east corner of Tasmania to the Tamar River with its many vineyards and picturesque anchorages to places along the North West Coast such as the city of Devonport on the Mersey River and the pretty fishing village of Stanley nestling under The Nut (not so curiously named once you have seen it!).

Then the fleet will rendezvous with the Geelong contingent at Three Hummock Island at the north-west corner before heading south along the West Coast, through Hell's Gates into Macquarie Harbour and the Gordon River with its majestic gorges and rich rainforest.

A victualling stop will be made at the pretty west coast village of Strahan before heading south once more to Port Davey, the 'ultima thule' of Australian cruising destinations with its sparkling white quartzite mountains and tea-coloured water!

Then finally, around the South Coast to the sheltered havens of D'Entrecasteaux Channel and home to Hobart. The Geelong contingent will continue to complete their circumnavigation by heading for Port Arthur, Cape Raoul, Cape Pillar and Tasman Island. Then north along the East coast to Maria Island and the Schouten Passage and Wineglass Bay.

They will sail through Bass Strait to the Tamar River, along the North West Coast to the city of Devonport and Stanley before heading for Port Phillip Heads arriving approximately 6th April.

Whilst this is going on, four more Geelong yachts, 'Tiercel' (Darryl Morrison), 'Sapphire of London' (Grant St. Quentin), 'Windswept' (Ray Orr) and 'Swish' (Rick Doherty) will join seven other yachts, led by Queenscliff Cruising Yacht Club's director of cruising, Darryl Morrison to head for, and enjoy, Wilson's Promontory, Corner Inlet, Port Welshpool and the Bennisson Channel. They expect to return mid March.



Rescue practice?



Rest time



Relaxing at Strahan



Just bigger than the wheel!



Wine Glass Bay



Relics of the Past



Friendly locals