



TASTING TRAIL

ROCKING THE CRADLE

The fact you can pair a glorious food experience with challenging hikes has helped lure visitors to the Cradle to Coast Tasting Trail, writes **Carla Grossetti**.

Since its inception two years ago, the Cradle to Coast Tasting Trail has expanded, adding a few more notches to its belt with an interactive map, app and range of itineraries that thread together the many, varied epicurean experiences to be enjoyed in this northwest pocket of Tasmania. **o**



DAY 1 ►

From Launceston to Devonport about 100 kilometres

To get to the first stop, we drive some 60 kilometres past lush meadows with wattle dancing in the wind before arriving at **41 Degrees South Salmon and Ginseng Farm**. Here, we meet Ben Pyka, who manages the business along with father Ziggy and sister Charlotte. This is the only salmon farm in Australia with a wetland that serves as a biological filter for its fish waste. It uses hydroponic power, is solar powered and gravity fed, too. “We produce up to 20,000 fish a year, the same amount of water leaves the river as what came in and the output water is cleaner than the input water,” says Ben, who helped his father set up the farm 12 years ago. Ben takes us to a crook of the Western Creek River that snakes through the property and demonstrates aquaponics in action. He

is again on hand to provide a tutored tasting of the farm’s signature hot-smoked salmon at the café and shop, which sells a range of delicious ginseng products, too.

Next stop, after a 2.8-kilometre crawl through woodland, is **Three Willows Vineyard**, where we meet winemaker Philip Parés at a site that is also 41 degrees south with an elevation of 250 metres, making it ideal for cool-climate viticulture. In a former life, Philip was an academic with an interest in literature, culture and history and says his years spent researching have proved invaluable since he planted his first pinot noir and pinot gris vines in 2003. “When I was studying, I had all these ideas swimming around in my head. I now enjoy the practical application of those ideas,” says Philip, who hosts teams of WWOOF-ers to help carry out traditional methods such as hand lees-

stirring, basket pressing and piggagé (foot stomping). “I’m a terroir-ist! My wines are a true reflection of the region,” says Philip. After sampling a few boutique drops at the rustic cellar door, we make a beeline for the Bass Highway and the **Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm & Café**, about 10 kilometres away. A walk around the picturesque grounds whets the appetite for a raspberry-kissed lunch served with fruity fizz before we burn a few kilometres down the Bass Highway to **Ashgrove Cheese Factory** and **Tasmanian Farm Store**, which produces superb English country cheeses as well as niche products spiked with locally grown wasabi and lavender. To better connect these dots on the map, book a berth at **Pier01** in Ulverstone, just 15 kilometres away, where head chef Matthew Waller embraces the farm-to-fork approach with dishes such as Deloraine truffle, confit leek, Spreyton





DAY 2 ▸

Latrobe to Smithton via Penguin and Burnie *about 140 kilometres*

Today's day of decadence begins at the **House of Anvers**, which is a must for the couverture chocolates, truffles, pralines and fudges that Belgian-born chocolatier Igor Van Gerwen and his oompah loompas temper and mould on site. The confectioner also sells Fortunato No. 4, chocolate made from the rarest cacao beans in the world and the acclaimed chocolate factory also has a mini museum.

The GPS shepherds us the next 25 kilometres to **Cradle Coast Olives**, where we find an idyllic scene and stretch of green presided over by Carol and Tony O'Neil, who planted the 400-strong olive grove 15 years ago.

The olive oils are natural, handcrafted and cold-pressed and have won a multitude of awards, including the coveted Carol L'Heureux Perpetual Trophy for Best Australian Olive Oil. Tony

accompanies us around the grove, gilded golden by the sun, which he says benefits from the microclimate and rich volcanic soils.

"The imperative for this business has always been about the lifestyle and health benefits and about caring for the land," says Tony, who is president of the Tasmanian Olive Council.

The volcanic soils of the northwestern area of Tassie are again evident at Mount Gnomon Farm, where we meet farmers Guy Robertson and Eliza Wood. Trotting along beside the couple, sending russet puffs of dirt into the air, is their prized Wessex Saddleback pig Henrietta, a waddling advertisement for the couple's ethos "to respect the animal from paddock to plate".

As well as getting up close and personal with the loved-up livestock and heritage breeds of pigs, cattle and sheep, you can eat some of them for lunch at **Mt Gnomon's** stunning new farm centre café. After stocking up on smoky bacon, we head to **Hellyers Road Distillery**

to road-test the single malt whiskey and learn about the distilling process. Then it's onward and upward to **Cable Station Restaurant** for dinner, where we watch the colour seep out of the sky over the Bass Strait, while enjoying a robust selection of sharing boards. You will find **Tall Timbers**, some 20 kilometres away, a terrific place to stay that's not too far from the culinary action. 🍷

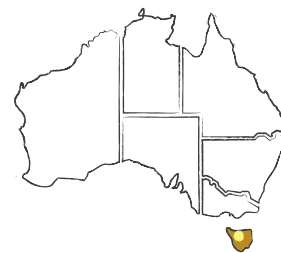




DAY 3 ►

From Smithton to Cradle Mountain about 200 kilometres

Although **Spreyton Cider Co**, **Seven Sheds Brewery** and **Gioconda Coffee Roasters** are also suggested on the C2C site, the point about such self-guided trails is that you can take your foot off the pedal whenever you like. It seems only fitting that we complete the circle from the Coast with a hike through the Tarkine wilderness, followed by a drive to the iconic Cradle Mountain, where we balance all that eating and drinking with a glorious circuit around Dove Lake, Cradle Mountain. After dinner at **The Grey Gum at Cradle Mountain Hotel** we sit around a crackling log fire with a glass of fine Tasmanian wine reliving the trail that has allowed us to get a taste of the local culinary scene and explore the stunning countryside at the same time. Salut! 🍷



Round-up

GET THERE

You can fly into **Launceston** or **Devonport** (Qantaslink) or travel on the **Spirit of Tasmania** arriving in Devonport.

STAY

Cradle Mountain Hotel

3718 Cradle Mountain Road,
Cradle Mountain
03 6492 1404
cradlemountainhotel.com.au

Tall Timbers Tasmania

5/15 Scotchtown Road, Smithton
03 6452 9000
talltimbershotel.com.au

EAT AND DRINK

House of Anvers

9025 Bass Highway, Latrobe
03 6426 2958
anvers-chocolate.com.au

Pier01 Restaurant + Café

3 Wharf Road, Ulverstone
03 6425 7811
pier01.com.au

THINGS TO DO

Celebrate all the region has to offer at **the Devonport Food and Wine Festival**, held every March. facebook.com/devonportfoodandwinefestival

Curl around Cradle Mountain

Complete the two-hour circuit (5.7-kilometre one way) around Dove Lake when the pinnacles of Cradle Mountain are bathed in afternoon light. parks.tas.gov.au

Celebrate all the region has to offer at the **Cradle to Coast Farmers**

Market' held every Sunday 8.30am–12.30pm at The Wharf, Crescent St, Ulverstone.

cradlecoastfarmersmarket.weebly.com

MORE INFORMATION

DiscoverTasmania.com.au
Cradletocoasttastingtrail.com.au