



Art for Everyone in the Great Outdoors

As you travel through this wonderful country you will see Street Art in many towns

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Australia has a wealth of talented artists and a great way to see some accessible art in your travels is to become a treasure hunter and seek out street art and murals. These scenic attractions can be just as big a drawcard in some towns as the natural landscapes, with many murals depicting what the region or town is known for.

Some places are becoming so well known for their street art that visitors are going there to find murals as part of a holiday itinerary. For travellers it's also a great

way to discover hidden places off the main roads in small towns and bigger regional areas as you walk around the streets looking at some fairly grand scale works. A self-guided walking tour is also a great antidote to long hours of road travel.

If you're not familiar with an area, a good tip is to ask the locals who are usually more than happy to point you in the right direction. Of course while you are walking you'll also get a better look at all the shops and cafes a destination has to offer. In recent travels I've found some stand out artistic





communities one of which is Toowoomba in regional Queensland. What started out as a hunt for a particular mural took me off in a completely different direction and into some amazingly colourful alleyways. I did eventually find the piece I was looking for, but discovered so much more by getting lost!

The impressive art works are painted over brick, metal, downpipes, roof gutters and more, which when you think about it is quite an achievement in itself. The texture of the buildings they adorn add to the total effect of the mural. These are as far from smooth, flat canvasses as you can get which led me to wonder how so many

murals came to be there.

The Toowoomba street art initiative is an annual event called the First Coat Mural Festival and is held in May each year. Artists, whether established or up and coming, can apply to organisers and if accepted are invited to paint murals on designated buildings in laneways throughout the city. The colour and scale of these murals draws you in and keeps you wanting to discover what is around the next corner.

It's not only inner cities or large towns that get the mural treatment though. In my travels I've also found some pretty spectacular artistic touches to public spaces

and buildings in unexpected places. Normanville in South Australia is one such place. Located on the western side of the Fleurieu Peninsula this artistic community has a lot of art in public spaces to discover. This small coastal town of less than 1400 people is under 80 kilometres from Adelaide and is home to a number of spectacular murals and sculptures. You'll find the boat ramp next to the surf lifesaving club adorned with murals as well as the spectacular and unmissable public toilets which feature an image of a leafy sea dragon which can be found off the coast in this region.

Whilst in the Fleurieu region of South Australia you can also visit Port Elliot and the Bashams Beach regional park. Apart from the spectacular coastline, if you take a walk into the park down to Crockery Bay you will see a wooden shelter structure on the edge of the caravan park. The walls have been painted with a mural depicting the local scenery whilst telling of the local aboriginal history. It was painted by school children and school staff together with the help of a local artist and elders of the Ramindjeri and Ngarrindjeri community.

Other coastal areas where I've stumbled across some impressive touches of

local art have been in northern New South Wales including the public toilets at Horseshoe Bay in South West Rocks, at Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest surf lifesaving club and further north in Byron Bay. As well as some laneway art works in Byron there are some unmissable murals in the industrial estate area.

Of course not all street art is coastal or necessarily with a local attraction theme. Sometimes there is the just plain fun and quirky such as finding the phantom adorning a wall in Murrayville on the Mallee Highway in Victoria - keeping spirits high and bringing a smile to passers-by.

Where to find street art:

We found artworks in the alleyways off Ruthven Street in Toowoomba, Queensland. Maps and more information on First Coat Festival can be found on the website. <http://www.firstcoat.com.au> Off Jonson Street and in the Arts and Industry Estate at Byron Bay, New South Wales.

At the foreshore and in Cheeseman Street, Normanville, South Australia. Crockery Bay, Port Elliot, South Australia. As for more? Well you will just have to discover for yourself.