

MAGNETIC ESPERANCE

The coastal town of Esperance in Western Australia has a way of stealing your heart.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GLENYS GELZINIS

The coastal town of Esperance in Western Australia's southeast has a way of sneaking up on you and stealing your heart. At least that's how it was for us when a planned few nights' stay turned into more than a week. Esperance has a subtle charm about it and layer upon layer of things to see, do and explore that will entice you to stay a little longer. We started our familiarity with the town by staying at the Esperance Seafront Caravan Park, in a prime position overlooking the bay and only a two kilometre walk into town along the walking path. It is an easy stroll with plenty of natural beauty to see on the way and lots of historical information



Tasting time at Lucky Bay Brewing

DON'T MISS

- Esperance Museum
- Lucky Bay Brewing
- Esperance Stonehenge
- Cape Le Grand National Park

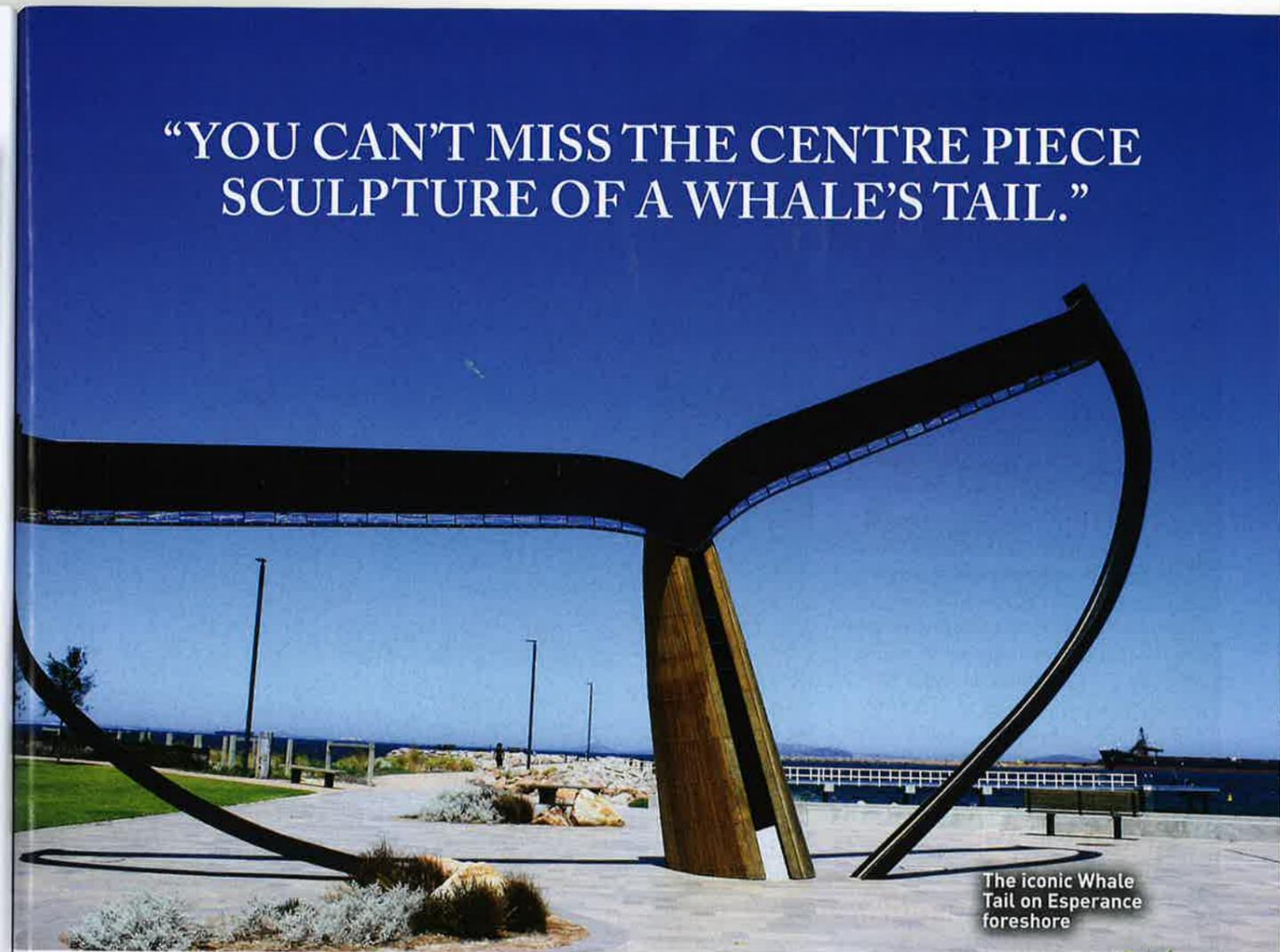
dotted along the walk.

At the heart of the foreshore you can't miss the centrepiece sculpture of a whale's tail. This stunning landmark was created by Jason Wooldridge from steel and timber and features beautiful glass panels made by local artist Cindy Poole in shades of blues and greens that stand out day and night. This

striking piece represents the beauty of the local ocean as well as incorporating the industry and history of the local port and original Tanker Jetty. As with most coastal towns there are huge Norfolk Island pines lining the foreshore, but this iconic piece of art is a stand-out on its own.



Esplanade walking path



The iconic Whale Tail on Esperance foreshore

A PICTURESQUE FORESHORE

The foreshore is a destination in its own right with a fabulous children's playground, green lawns, shelters and barbecues as well as an area where mobile food and drink vans set up regularly. It's a spectacular spot to sit and rest awhile before making the two kilometre walk back to the caravan park. There is a safe swimming beach complete with swimming pontoon and slides for kids to splash down into the water. At the end of the foreshore you will find Adventureland Park with a mini rail, skate park and maze and for the adults a café and garden area to enjoy. Local markets are held here at certain times of the year.

Another must-see is the Historic Museum Village as you drive into town.

This precinct, which is also home to the Visitor Information Centre, is made up of historic buildings of Esperance and surrounds that were saved from demolition and relocated to the museum park. What were once the schoolmaster's house, the old court house, a blacksmith shop, Methodist Church and other historic icons, are now home to gift shops, lolly shops, art galleries, local photographers, jewellers and more. It's a brilliant concept that maintains the region's history while creating a drawcard for travellers in one convenient location.

The town has every other type of shop you could need to restock and service you and your rig. There are great food establishments with something to please everyone's taste: there's a noodle bar, kebab shop, French bakery and a really good butcher with plenty of ready-to-cook meals, perfect for caravanners.

FREE CAMPS



48: QUAGI BEACH

Camp area 71km west of Esperance



49: BENWENERUP CAMPGROUND

Camp area 83km west of Esperance in Stokes National Park



50: COOMALBIDGUP PARKING AREA

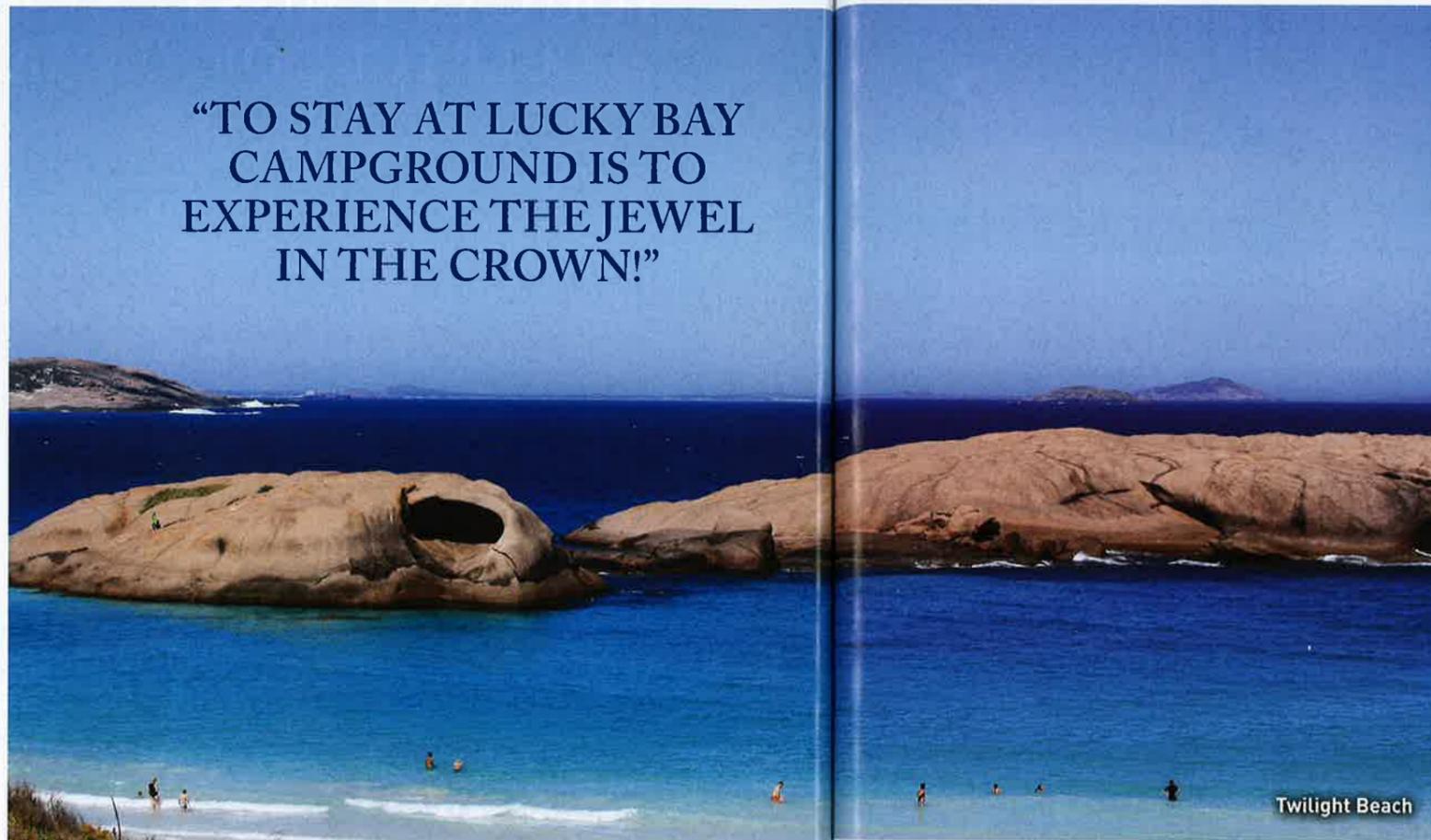
Parking area 88km west of Esperance



In the heart of town, you'll find the Esperance Museum, housed in the old Customs Bond Shed. Unlike a lot of museums this one gives you a closer, more relaxed view of items on display. For those not particularly inclined to visit museums, don't miss this one; the volunteer-run site is choc-a-block full of interesting memorabilia. There is everything on show from old farm machinery, pioneer household products, old technology (things that we grew up with) and some fascinating and funny memorabilia on Skylab. Items of interest include a littering fine that was sent to NASA when debris from their space station fell over the town of Esperance in 1979. The tongue in cheek \$400 dollar fine went unpaid for nearly 30 years until a Californian radio DJ raised the amount to pay for NASA's bill, from his listeners.

GREAT OCEAN SCENIC DRIVE

The Great Ocean Drive starts from the foreshore area; it's a scenic 40-kilometre loop which takes you past spectacular coastal bluffs and circles back past other attractions in town. Maps for the scenic drive can be picked up from the information centre and clearly set out the distances between attractions and what there is to see at various spots along the drive.



Some of the highlights are the stand-out incredible ocean colours and pristine sand at West Beach, Blue Haven and Twilight Beach. Watching windsurfers in the wild ocean at Observatory Beach

and sampling locally made craft beers at Lucky Bay Brewing are also high on the list. The Lucky Bay micro-brewery prides itself on being preservative-free and using only pure ingredients, including premium barley sourced from local farmers, making them the only brewers in Australia to do this. At the brewing shed you can sample a paddle of beers on offer and buy your favourite, canned for you on the spot, for a happy hour drink back at camp.



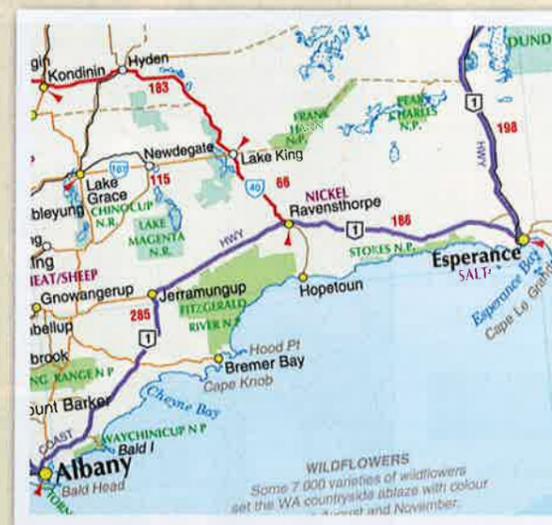
CARAVAN PARKS

ESPERANCE SEAFRONT CARAVAN PARK

Located on the foreshore with ocean views. Powered sites starting from \$45 for two people
W: topparks.com.au/parks/wa/esperance-seafront-caravan-park

HOW TO GET THERE

717km from Perth via State Route 40 and National Route 1
925km via National Highway 94



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Historic buildings repurposed

Perhaps the most unexpected thing you'll see in Esperance is a life-size replica of Stonehenge in the UK, but this one isn't in ruins! This 2500-tonne monument is made from locally-quarried slabs of pink granite and sits on a private farm 15 kilometres from town. It was built to align with the solstices in Esperance. Visitors are welcome to stop and wander through the structure, to marvell at it and the existence of the original on the other

side of the world. This is definitely a quirky but interesting place to stop on your way to Cape Le Grand National Park, a further fifty kilometres east.

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

A day trip to visit Cape le Grand national park – or for a longer stay at the Lucky Bay campground – is to experience the jewel in the crown of Esperance. You would be hard pressed to find a more perfect fusion of white sand and azure-coloured seas. Top that off with mobs of kangaroos visiting your campsite or lounging alongside you on the beach, it's a winner!

This Esperance experience, along with its beautiful rugged coastline and friendly community, make this place a magnetic holiday destination.

VISITOR INFO

ESPERANCE VISITOR CENTRE
 Dempster Street, Kemp St, Esperance,
 WA 6450
P: (08) 9083 1555
W: www.visitesperance.com



Market at Adventureland Park



Thar be treasure to find in Esperance



Esperance Museum entrance