



WILDSIDE

THE WILDERNESS SHOP NEWSLETTER # 51

Trip Review: Camping The Overland Track *by Nick*



view from Lake Ayr campsite

Perhaps you are like me? You like the idea of walking the Overland Track, but you don't want to spend every day with 50 other people. When I walked the Overland recently we hardly saw anyone except on the last night waiting for the ferry.

While planning the trip I came to the conclusion that the two key factors were timing and sleeping in a tent. While winter offers the best opportunity to have the Overland Track to yourself, I really wanted to go in Summer with the longer days, wildflowers and more settled weather.

Tip #1: I figured that school and University holidays as well as public holiday weekends were likely to be the busiest periods. This leaves March and April as your best opportunity for less people on the track.

Tip #2: Comfortable huts, like those found on the Overland Track, are a rare commodity in Australia. Its tempting to plan your trip around staying at a new hut each night. But with our objective being to keep away from the crowds, we opted to camp away from these areas and we were rewarded with a much wilder impression of this very beautiful part of Tasmania.

The following is a list of the places we camped at each night. Keep in mind that the scrub is very thick along the Overland Track, which means there are very few places you can camp. In addition to this there are several designated 'no camping zones' which must be respected.

Night 1 - Scott Kilvert Memorial Hut: We took an alternative start to the Overland Track by heading east over Hansons Peak, which leads to the south side of Cradle Mountain. Very few people go this way and we were lucky enough to have the hut all to ourselves. There are also some beautiful campsites next to Lake Rodway.

Night 2 - Lake Will: The next day we made a side trip to Barn Bluff (which was much harder than I had expected). From the top of Barn Bluff the first half of the Overland Track can be seen, as well as what was to be our campsite that night, a sandy beach on the shore of Lake Will.

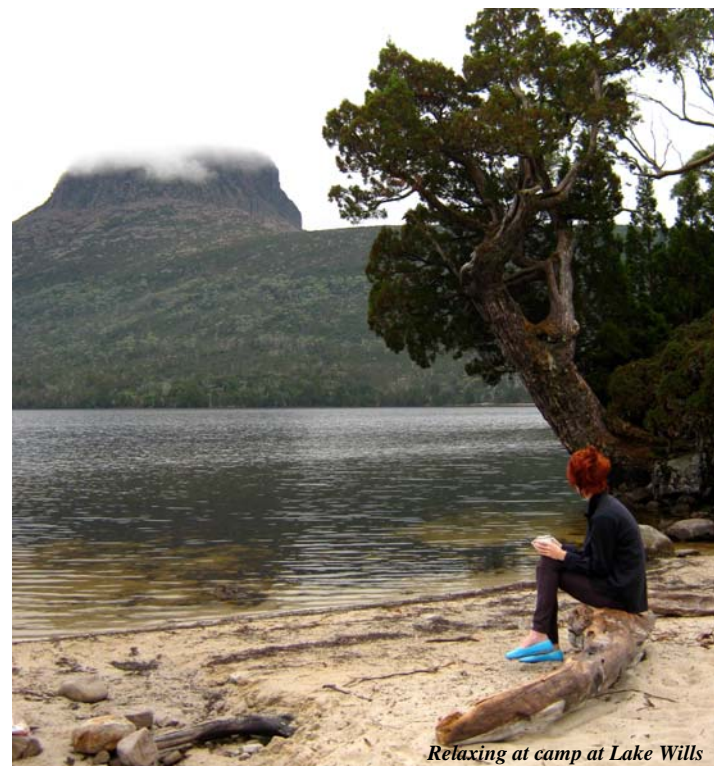
Night 3 - Frog Flats: Our next campsite was at Frog Flats, which is a natural clearing on the banks of the fledgling River Forth. The ground was a little moist, but the clearing, amongst the Myrtle Beech rainforest, is so beautifully located beneath three striking mountain peaks: Pelion West, Mt Achilles and Mt Thetis.

Night 4 - Lake Ayr: The next side trip we had planned was to climb Mt Oakleigh using Lake Ayr as a base. On our way we passed New Pelion Hut at about breakfast time. After our relative isolation it came as a bit of a shock to see scores of people going

about their morning rituals. The campsite at Lake Ayr is on a rise of moraine deposits and Mt Oakleigh is reflected in the still waters of the Lake.

Night 5 - Campfire Creek: From Lake Ayr the opportunities for camping are limited. We left early in the morning and made the side-trip up Mt Ossa. We had a beautiful clear day and the white massif of Frenchmans Cap glowed on the distant horizon. Having lingered on the summit longer than we had intended, we made our way back to our packs, walked passed Kia Ora Hut and in a few kilometres made it to Campfire Creek campsite. While nowhere near as spectacular as our previous campsites it was nice to camp next to a fast flowing creek amongst tall forest.

Night 6 - Narcissus Hut: We planned to catch the ferry across Lake St Clair, so had come to the conclusion that camping at Narcissus Hut was our only option. Considering virtually everyone catches the ferry, there were people everywhere and the campsites were really degraded... back to humanity, reality and the big smoke!



Relaxing at camp at Lake Willis



The Wilderness Shop is excited to announce that we will be stocking Edelrid climbing equipment. Edelrid is an iconic German climbing equipment manufacturer who have, for over 150 years, been innovating in the material, production and design of truly world class climbing kit. During those 150 years Edelrid can proudly claim to have invented the kernmantel rope (1953), was a key innovator in the first purpose constructed climbing harnesses (1964) and developed the dynamic rope, the first rope capable of withstanding multiple falls (1964).



Rope production at the Edelrid factory

Time has not slowed those at Edelrid. The range for 2016 covers ropes, harnesses and a wide range of climbing hardware and accessories. Every product is thoughtfully designed to provide maximum functionality, durability and of course it looks beautiful too! In 2009, Edelrid was the first company to produce climbing ropes to the stringent Bluesign® environmental standards. This standard means that no materials that threaten the environment are permitted in the manufacturing process.

Sixty percent of Edelrid's equipment is manufactured in their custom-built production facility in Isny, Germany. Products which are not produced in their own facility are done so because of a particular expertise which exists elsewhere which Edelrid taps into. For example, the production of climbing harnesses requires extremely complex hand sewing. Up to 3.5 hours is required for each harness. Such attention to detail makes Edelrid some of the most comfortable harnesses that we've ever seen.



Edelrid's production facility in Germany

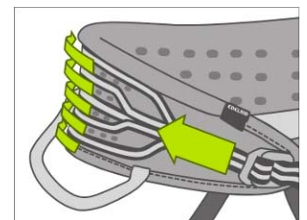
Edelrid Ropes



The first thing you notice about Edelrid ropes is how well they handle. These are seriously well made ropes. The Wilderness Shop will be stocking a range of Edelrid ropes with a wide range of features including dry-treatment and bicolor ropes. All Edelrid ropes are made to the strict Bluesign® environmental standards. To give you an idea of the lengths they go to under Bluesign®, the Taipan ropes sheath are made from the ends of spools, so that each rope has a different colour pattern. We reckon they are pretty cool.

Edelrid Harnesses

Edelrid harnesses are meticulously constructed for maximum safety, comfort and useability. The core of the range is the Jay and Jayne, mens and womens harnesses, which feature the Centre-Fit construction. This means that the tie-in point can be centered and the gear loops aligned for all waist sizes. Edelrid's top of the range 3D-vent models, the Orion (mens) and Solaris (womens), feature webbing with a branching structure which means that the load is more evenly spread across the waist and legs. This means the harness is more comfortable under load. Importantly, the 3D webbing design means that the harness receives better venting. The Wilderness Shop is also stocking Edelrid children's harnesses.



3D-Vent construction

Edelrid Innovations

TechWeb slings: Finally!, a composite nylon and dyneema sling which blends the abrasion resistance of nylon with the light weight and low bulk of dyneema. Edelrid TechWeb slings are 40% lighter than nylon slings and have better knotting than dyneema slings.



Mega Jul

Jul Belay devices: Until the release of the Jul range of belay devices, belayers had two distinct options; tubular devices or brake assisted devices like the GriGri. The unique design of the Jul means that it can be used for belaying a leader with brake assistance, lowering a climber, belaying a second from above, lowering a second from above and abseiling.



HMS strike safelock

Slider carabiners: Edelrid's range of slider carabiners allow climbers the convenience of a snap gate with the added safety of a sliding locking mechanism. Available in a range of shapes and sizes for different applications.

Trip Review: Top 5 Melbourne daywalks

by Nick

I must admit that I am a bit of a sucker for 'best of' lists... so here's a list of my favourite daywalks within 1.5 hours drive of Melbourne. The only conditions that I had, was that the walk needed to be at least 1.5 hours in duration and that I had to have been there myself. I've tried to include variety within the walks chosen and likewise a spread of locations. I'm sure others will have different suggestions, but that's half the fun of a best of list!

1. Werribee Gorge Circuit: Werribee Gorge is probably the place I've been back to the most times. Although the park itself is quite small, the deeply incised gorge separates you from the outside world. There is so much to like: wild flowers, a beautiful river, impressive rock formations and a little bit of mining history. The circuit walk showcases the best Werribee Gorge has to offer. You start in open woodland with occasional rocky outcrops and views and then head steeply down to the river. The Werribee River is really diverse; there are quiet pools, sandy beaches, fast flowing sections and of course the ochre coloured walls of the gorge. The walk finishes by following an old mining water race which is a peaceful way to finish a fantastic walk. Walk time approximately 4 hours. If you find you like Werribee Gorge as much as I do and are keen for a hard daywalk, then you should also try the semi off-track walk down Needles Spur returning via Falcons Lookout.



2. Edwards Point: For such a small Reserve, Edwards Point on the Bellarine Peninsula, leaves a large imprint. What starts as an innocuous walk through coastal scrub quickly becomes a tour through a maze of salt-marsh lakes. Subtle differences in size and salt content create a variety of rich ecosystems and are home to a large number of migratory wading birds, some which have come from as far away as Siberia. There is interpretive signage at key points along the track which really help explain the complex eco-system. The highlight of the walk is a section of timber boardwalk which goes over the largest of the salt lakes. The track ends at the beach, where views open up across Port Phillip Bay. To make this into a circuit walk you can follow the beach back to the carpark, but this is best done at low tide to avoid wet feet. Walk time approximately 2.5 hours.



3. Sugarloaf Peak: Nowhere else near Melbourne can you find a walk with so much exposure as the Wells Cave to Sugarloaf Peak circuit at the Cathedral Ranges. There is a small sign at the beginning of the walk which warns walkers that this is a difficult walk, but in today's litigious environment I think most people simply ignore it. That is until the walker is confronted with a giant slab of rock which they must scramble up unaided. Needless to say, many turn back at this point. Adding to the adventure is the 50 metre long Wells Cave, which is quite dark and rarely wider than shoulder width. There is towering forest in the lower section of the walk, but as you climb higher the forest becomes more stunted and dotted with wildflowers. The crest of Sugarloaf Peak requires rock hopping and scrambling but it is definitely worth it, with views extending in all directions from the summit. Walk time approximately 2 hours.



4. Peninsula Coastal Walk: While better known for its beaches, shopping and cafes, the Mornington Peninsula is a spectacular walking venue. The National Park runs as a wide strip along the ocean beach side and there is a 30km track that goes from Portsea back beach all the way to Cape Schank. The highlight of the walk is the rugged sea cliff section between London Bridge in Portsea and Number 16 beach in Rye (from which point the walking track follows the beach for almost all of the second half of the walk). The track is mostly through low dune heath and there are magnificent views of the sea cliffs and the moody ocean. There are lots of side tracks that lead off to view points and down to swimming beaches and rock pools. At times tracks head further inland and you often get the feeling of walking through a tunnel cut through the Tea Tree. There are a few very short circuit walks you can do, but longer walks require a car shuffle. Alternatively, you can walk through the interesting holiday house streets and make your way to the front beach in order to create a circuit walk. Walk time approximately 3.5 hours from London Bridge to 16th Beach. You will need to add time for side trip to lookouts and down to the beaches.



5. Lerderderg Gorge: There are lots of great walks in the Lerderderg Gorge but my favourite one is along the middle section where the gorge is at its steepest and there is no walking track. The walk begins and ends at Mt Blackwood where a series of tracks diverge, each making their way steeply down to the river. I've always found the forest at Lerderderg quite monotonous and boring but the river corridor is really amazing. Even though there is no track along this section of the river, there is always a way through, whether its by rock hopping, climbing over a fallen tree or some fairly easy bush-bashing. The absence of a track really makes it feel like an adventure and you are likely to see a few rock wallabies and feral goats precariously sidling their way across the rocky walls of the gorge. My favourite track into or out of the gorge is the Bears Head Range track which is a razor-thin ridge with rocky bluffs requiring some scrambling. Walk time approximately 6.5 hours. This walk can also be done as an overnight trip as there are numerous spots you could camp within the gorge, including a particularly nice spot at the base of Bears Head Range track.

