

New BMW Z4

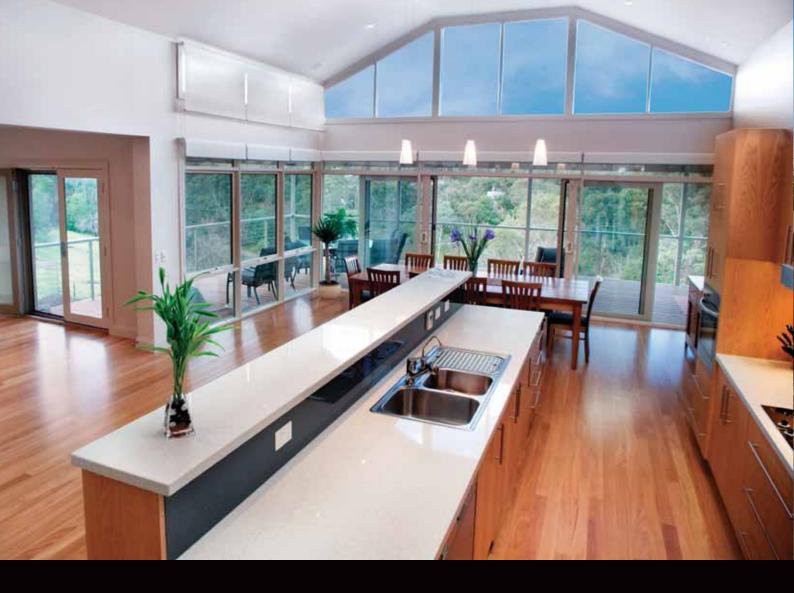
Roadster makes its debut in Detroit

The Tan Run, walk and be seen Ewen Tyler Father of the Australian diamond industry Land of the Thunder Dragon Bhutan

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Welcome

Like all Melburnians we are saddened by the loss many families and communities have experienced during the recent bushfires. At the same time we can only admire and be proud of the contribution made by the CFA volunteers and government agencies that assisted the community in these challenging times. Being a resident of the Dandenongs my family had a visit from the CFA and were told to either evacuate or implement fire plans, (our plan was evacuate with pets and photos). I managed to get part way home from work and watched from across the valley as the fire was being forced by winds towards our home. Thanks to a timely wind change and the efforts of fire crews our house escaped with a good margin of safety.

In the past weeks I have had numerous opportunities to watch the helicopter water tankers at work and I can only say they truly are a remarkable combination of technology and flying skill. Our employees also were touched by these recent events and in partnership with them we have raised \$20,000 to the bush fire appeal.

After the summer months start to cool off we start to approach family holiday time with Easter and then shortly followed by Anzac Day. This is a time for family and getting away so our magazine has some great local articles with suggestions.

If your plan is to stay in Melbourne and have a one day escape then a visit to the Tan is something our family has done many times. I can certainly recommend my experiences with breakfast at the Observatory Café, a great coffee, and then a walk through the Botanical Gardens. A bit further away is Lorne, the topic of another article and with numerous visits to

reflect upon I can vouch that it's a great place for a break. The local restaurants can surprise and delight, and after you have eaten too much there are some fantastic falls to walk around and burn off some energy.

Having lived in the USA for 10 years and with my wife being an Arizona import we have many visitors from that side of the world. Many times we have treated our guests to a trip around the bay or you can extend the whole experience and make it an overnight stay. Not only is the ferry ride across the bay a great experience you can add the Geelong water front, the Ford Museum, many great wineries not far from Geelong, and great food at both Queenscliff and Sorrento. If you still have some energy, head into the Red Hill district for more fun.

To all the many customers that respond to our questionnaire, again thank you for your feedback, and thank you for your interest in the advertisers that support this publication.

Happy Motoring.

Regards

Olm

Chris Stillwell CEO - Stillwell Motor Group



I am most delighted to have recently joined the Stillwell Motor Group. With over 20 years automotive experience with large corporations, it is most exciting to be part of a successful second generation family retail business.

Having 10 dealerships and over 500 employees throughout the East and South East of Melbourne, Stillwell Motor Group is one of the largest and fastest growing automotive retail businesses in Melbourne.

So why would you spend your hard earned money at one of our dealerships? It's simple ... we have never lost our family connections, with six family members actively involved and most importantly, our company vision with a passion for the products that we sell, our pride in our facilities and how we present the product to you our customer. We are committed to outstanding

customer service and we have strong technical competencies so that we can deliver on our commitment.

So pop into one of your facilities today as I have no doubt you will enjoy your experience with us.

Renards

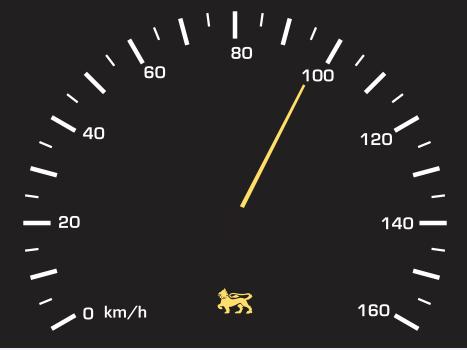
Chist Jame

COO - Stillwell Motor Group

0 to 99.95 - acceleration at a safe speed

Five Wesley College students achieved the perfect score of 99.95 in their Year 12 exams.

We congratulate them and all of our graduating VCE, VCAL and International Baccalaureate Diploma students, on their excellent results in 2008.



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Editor's message

Hello again. So much seems to have happened since our last edition late last year. The devastating and terrifying bush fires that have scorched our State, claimed its citizens and scarred the lives of so many people. Our thoughts go out to everyone involved. Summer holidays, Christmas and New Year festivities, the cricket and the tennis and the Grand Prix, they've all been and gone. It is such a busy time of the year.

And one of the busiest spots in Victoria has been the coastal resort town of Lorne, a couple of hours from Melbourne down the Great Ocean Road. It's a popular destination for Melburnians any time of the year, but in summer it's really hot. So to find out what's going on there we sent writer Caroline French down for the day. Her report begins on page 37.

I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing a fascinating man – $\mbox{\sc Ewen}$ Tyler – whose vision and dedication led to the discovery of the Argyle diamond mine in the Kimberley region of north-west Australia. His story is indeed an intriguing one and unfortunately the space I had available hardly does it justice. You'll find it on page 46.

Also in this edition David Jarwood has a chat with talented musician Ella Hooper, Rosanne Michie takes us on a trip around Melbourne's historic Tan, while contributor David Marriott takes us trekking in Bhutan.

And of course there are our usual features on wine, finance, things hightech and collecting - this time, vintage posters.

Lucky reader Mr. Bradley J Finn of Diamond Creek won the trip for two on The Ghan in our questionnaire competition in the last issue. Make page 24 and fax it in to be in the draw for another fabulous prize.

Good reading.

Editor



This issue



We would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and we are delighted to present the first edition of *Spirit* for 2009.

This year is set to be an exciting year with the launch of new BMW and MINI models.

The new BMW 7 Series will be launched in April, marking the beginning of a new era in automotive design. The car defines luxury in every way with a host of innovative driver and passenger comforts that make the BMW 7 Series the leader in its class.

In May we will be releasing the new Z4, the only open-top two seater in its class to combine classic roadster proportions. You can read more about the model in this edition!

MINI is also expecting, with the launch of the "Always Open" MINI Cabrio. The new MINI Cabrio completes the Next Generation MINI family and offers all the excitement, performance and personality of the MINI models – minus the roof.

In this edition we also introduce you to two of our team members, Sean Evans, Special Vehicles Manager, and Michael Tidball, Retail Service Manager. Both of them play integral roles in the dealership to ensure that we continue to deliver exceptional customer service.

We would also like to notify you of our Service Department's new opening hours at both South Yarra and Camberwell: Monday – Friday 7.30am – 7.30pm and on Saturdays we are open from 8.30am – 12.30pm.

We look forward to seeing you in the dealership soon and if there is anything we can do in the meantime, please don't hesitate to call!

General Sales Manager Bib Stillwell BMW

Front cover

Bib Stillwell BMW

145 Williams Rd South Yarra VIC 3141 Ph: 03 9521 2121 Fax: 03 9521 2741 www.bibstillwell.com.au

Publisher

Mike Jarvis

Bib Stillwell BMW

Sales Service Finance Parts



New BMW Z4 makes its debut in Detroit

Story and Photography: Courtesy of BMW Australia

The new more powerful and more stylish BMW Z4 has made its world debut at the Detroit Auto Show whetting the appetites of Australian customers who will get their chance to drive the new model when it arrives here in the third quarter of 2009.



The new roadster

is the only open-top two seater in its class to combine classic roadster proportions, such as a long bonnet and flat belt line, with a low seating position just in front of the rear axle, rear-wheel drive and an automatically retractable hardtop.

The new BMW Z4 will be launched exclusively with straight-six power offering passionate drivers the choice of three in-line six cylinder petrol engines with power outputs ranging from 150 kW to 225 kW.

The BMW Z4 sDrive35i is powered by the multi award winning and world's first straight-six power unit to feature Twin Turbo technology, High Precision Injection with direct injection of fuel, and an all-aluminium crankcase.

The 3.0-litre straight-six develops 225 kW and 400 Nm of torque accelerating the roadster from 0-100 km/h in 5.2 seconds (automatic: 5.1 seconds). Combined fuel consumption is 9.8 litres for the manual and 9.4 litres for the automatic. Offering spontaneous power and performance, refinement and outstanding efficiency, the two sixcylinder naturally-aspirated power units in the BMW Z4 sDrive30i and the BMW Z4 sDrive23i again offer

the very best in their segments. Weighing just 161 kg and 158.5 kg respectively, both engines are exceptionally light.

The power unit in the BMW Z4 sDrive30i develops maximum output of 190 kW from 3.0 litres capacity and maximum torque of 310 Nm. With this kind of power, the BMW Z4 sDrive30i accelerates from 0 to 100 km/h in 5.8 seconds (with six speed sports automatic in 6.1 seconds).

Offering average fuel consumption of 9.2 litres in the EU test cycle (9.0 litres with six speed sports automatic), the new car provides an impressively good balance of acceleration and fuel economy.

Displacing 2.5 litres with the same technology as on the 3.0-litre power unit, the engine featured in the BMW Z4 sDrive23i offers an unusually good balance of sportiness and efficiency, developing maximum output of 150 kW and peak torque of 250 Nm.

Accelerating from 0 to 100 km/h in 6.6 seconds (with six speed sports automatic in 7.3 seconds), it consumes 9.2 l/100km (with six speed sports automatic: 8.9 litres) making it a highly efficient entry-level model.

Buyers of the most powerful model, the BMW Z4 sDrive35i, can opt for a seven-speed sports automatic















transmission complete with double clutch gearbox instead of the standard six-speed manual transmission.

The other models are available with a six-speed automatic transmission with optimised shift-points. All sports automatic transmissions feature gearshift paddles on the steering wheel.

The low-slung front end of the new BMW Z4 is characterised by the large upright BMW kidney grille, wide air intake and dual round headlights so typical of the brand.

The side view is dominated by the dynamic flow of the car's shoulder line which accentuates the stretched, athletic look of the roadster.

The retractable roof – the first ever on a BMW roadster – opens and closes in just 20 seconds conveniently by means of a switch in the centre console or by remote control on the central locking.

The new-look cockpit features a centre console and instrument panel built around the driver, high-quality materials and exemplary build quality.

Luggage capacity is outstanding for a roadster with a hardtop.

With its precise steering, perfectly balanced chassis and Dynamic Driving Control, the new BMW Z4 is able to combine ride comfort with a genuine sports-car driving experience. Standard fitment of Dynamic Drive Control enables the driver to vary the set-up of the drivetrain and suspension at the touch of a button between NORMAL, SPORT and SPORT+.

New high-performance brakes provide powerful deceleration, fade-free characteristics, low weight, and low brake pad wear. It is the first car in its segment to feature an electrical parking brake activated and released by a button on the centre console.

The BMW Z4 sDrive23i and the BMW Z4 sDrive30i come as standard on 17-inch light-alloy rims and the BMW Z4 sDrive35i is fitted with 18-inch light-alloy wheels. All versions are fitted with runflat safety tyres, a tyre defect indicator and the latest generation of dynamic stability control. The sports-car driving experience in the new BMW Z4 can be enhanced by the optional adaptive M Suspension.

Apart from all-round visibility, the interior offers greater headroom, extra shoulder room and more elbow room than previously. The door opening has increased allowing even more convenient access with the roof closed.

Outstanding accident safety is provided through the construction of the body and highly efficient restraint systems. Frontal and head/thorax airbags, belt latch tensioners and belt force limiters are activated by the sensor-controlled electronic safety system.

The latest generation of BMW iDrive is available on the BMW Z4, featuring an 8.8-inch high-resolution Control Display with a resolution of 1,280 x 480 pixels, and 80 GB hard disk with 12 GB available for music.

The sDrive part of the model designations for the new BMW Z4 refers to the handling characteristics of the rear-wheel drive. As with the X5 and X6, the numbers do not relate to the actual engine capacity, but are intended to give an idea of the performance relative to other models in the range. The higher the number the better the performance. This system allows a distinction to be made between models with the same engine size but different levels of performance (e.g. the Z4 sDrive30i and the Z4 sDrive35i, both of which have 3.0-litre engines).

For more information on the new BMW Z4 please contact: Jason Smith

New Cars Sales Manager Ph: (03) 9521 2121 jason.smith@bibstillwell.com.au

A whale of a time

Story and Photography: Michael Roberts

Michael Roberts is a man of many faces. Once known for his prowess on the football field and later as a sports journalist and commentator, Michael has now added another string to his bow with a recent trip to Antarctica. Michael is also an ambassador for Bib Stillwell BMW playing host at company events, new car launches and drive days for customers.







Nearly 40 years ago,

football great Neil Roberts commanded a research team in Antarctica. He went back to share the experience with his son, as Michael Roberts writes.

After 36 years wondering what life is like in the frozen south, now I know.

My father Neil left for Antarctica in December 1971 when I was 11. I feared he might not return from such a dangerous place.

Last year, we both went to the Antarctic Peninsula – a wild and wonderful place.

We stepped onto the ice to celebrate 100 years of Australian exploration of Antarctica only to be swamped by what appeared to be Collingwood firsts, seconds and thirds – a pack of gentoo penguins at Cuverville Island. Some of those little fellas stood taller than Lou Richards and Tony Shaw.

As the wind picked up off the water and whistled over the frozen rock – temperatures dropping to minus 10 – my thoughts rushed back to games at "Arctic Park" at Waverley and those bleak afternoons in the mud at Moorabbin.

A trip south once meant tackling the Swans at Lakeside Oval, not battling 12 metre seas in severe storm conditions around Cape Horn.

We lobbed at historic Port Lockroy where the British maintain a research station. Grave sites dot the

landscape and a memorable landing at Petermann Island revealed three British explorers back in August 1982 vanished, apparently falling through sheet ice just before steeling themselves to climb Mt Scott.

Time stood still as we followed an old Dutch rigger into the opening of Deception Island, an active volcano. We rested at Whalers Bay where gutted huts, boilers and boats gave a hint of what life was like before 1900 for early mariners and the great explorers.

In the words of Sir Ernest Shackleton: 'Men wanted for a hazardous journey, small in wages, bitter, cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.'

We enjoyed an eventful trip, sleeping out under the stars at Dorian Bay, confronted by rugged ice cliff faces, glaciers and massive icebergs. We played with humpback whales, leopard seals and every species of penguin.

Before we returned, we were reminded that Cape Horn is a spiritual place for sailors. It is to them what Mt Everest is to the climber. As albatrosses circled our ship, guiding us north on our departure, my father remarked: "I didn't realise how much I loved the place".

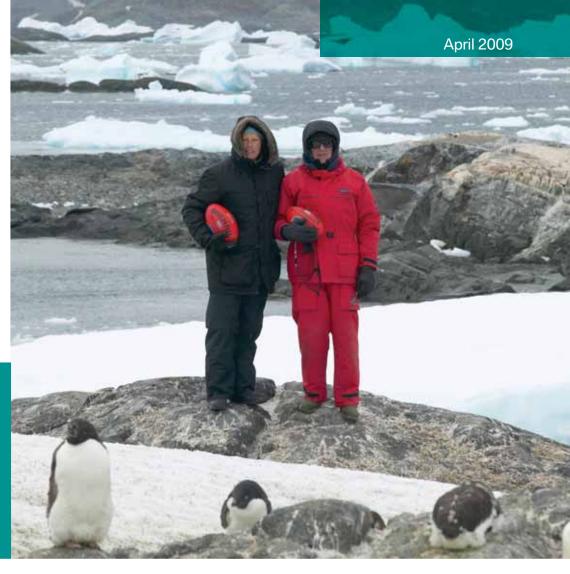
As a footballer, you never forget your first game and those who played with you, but to be with my father in such a stunning environment was remarkable.

Opposite page, top right: Michael and Neil Roberts, Sherrins in hand, on an Antarctic beach.

The myriad of wildlife and the stunning scenery of Antarctica.















A helping hand for animals in need

Story: Di J ames - Photography: Courtesy of RSPCA

It's not often that you find dogs and cats, rabbits, goats and guinea pigs, horses and birds housed under the one roof, but that is certainly the case for Victorian animals in need.

Acting Shelter Manager of the RSPCA, Allie Jalbart is part of a team that oversees the welfare of some 41,000 animals in eleven shelters around the State each year.

Allie says that too often people choose dogs, cats and other animals that are unsuitable for their environment and circumstances and do not give sufficient thought to owning these pets over the span of their lifetime, which typically may be around 15 years.

"This past year has seen a dramatic increase in the dumping of kittens," she said. "People tend to think of cats as independent and self sufficient animals and therefore think nothing of leaving the cat behind when they move house. Or they do not bother de-sexing them and leave them out at night to stray."

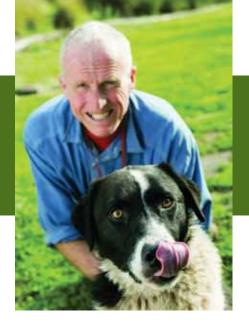
It is surprising that given the large numbers of animals sheltered by the RSPCA, it only receives 3% of its essential funding from government and has to rely on community and corporate support for the balance.

Allie says the RSPCA has several major fundraising and education events each year. Bib Stillwell BMW has been a sponsor over the last few years in some of these fundraising events including the World Animal Gala Ball, the All Creatures Open Day and a golf day. The past year and the current economic climate have escalated that need with a record number of animals being brought into the RSPCA in the past twelve months.

The combination of new legislation with increased penalties and on-going education about responsible pet ownership has, according to Allie, resulted in better attitudes by most people, but she says there are still challenges and a constant need for improvement as reflected in the growing numbers of animals requiring shelter.

However, for those who may be looking for a new addition to the family, without the cost of school fees, there are many wonderful animals waiting for the right home. All animals are graded from young, mature and senior with fees lowest for seniors. Rabbits and guinea pigs are \$50 whilst cats range from \$65 to \$130 depending upon age. Dogs start at \$170 for senior members of the canine world and may be up to \$285 for puppies. All animals are de-sexed and vaccinated, microchipped and have also had health and temperament checks.

So spare a thought for all those homeless creatures great and small.









Golfers challenged

at the Portsea Pro-Am











Above left: Category winner of the Portsea Pro-Am golf tournament was Warwick Brown.

Above: Teeing-off in front of an appreciative and wind-swept gallery.

Left: Guess the amount of golf balls in the boot of the BMW 135i?

Middle: The Bib Stillwell BMW team.

Far left: The weather proved somewhat challenging for the players and spectators.

Professionals, celebrities, sponsors' guests and amateur golfers were all testing their golfing skills against the tough and hilly 18 holes of the Portsea Golf Club at the 2009 Portsea Cascade Pro-Am earlier this year.

Portsea Golf Club looked picturesque: a beautifully prepared course, firm, fast greens and lush green fairways greeted the star-studded field. But so did the weather. You could have been mistaken for thinking it was winter as the first groups hit off in windy, cold and wet conditions. But by late morning the wind had dropped, the rain had gone and the sun was shining.

The Portsea Pro-Am is one of the most popular events on the Victorian golfing calendar with golfers, celebrities and fans alike. Bib Stillwell BMW was the Platinum Sponsor of the event for the 16th consecutive year in a row.

Bib Stillwell BMW had two teams of customers who competed in the competition alongside the professionals who were out in force. Big names included Jarrod Lyle (and his talented brother Leighton), lan Baker-Finch, Mike

Clayton and Marcus Fraser who were rubbing shoulders with the likes of Jeff Kennett, Dean Jones, Coxy, Dermott Brereton, Eddie McGuire, Nathan Buckley, jockey Damien Oliver, and a host of other well-known identities.

A range of on-course golf competitions were on offer including the longest drive, and nearest the pin. And for the fans who turned out in their droves to watch, there was plenty on offer including food and drink stalls, kids' activities, golf putting lessons, entertainment, and raffles. Furthermore, Bib Stillwell BMW ran a competition to guess "how many balls were in the boot of the 135i". An adult and kid's prize was awarded to the closest guess!

The winner of the Portsea Pro-Am golf tournament was 26-year-old Victorian professional Ashley Hall with a 65, one stroke ahead of Ryan Haywood who shot 66 and Andrew McKenzie on 68.

Michael Tidball Prestige car expert

Story: Lucy Henderson – Photography: Robert Piccoli

When it comes to prestige cars, Michael Tidball is the expert!



Michael has had over 15 years' experience in the automotive industry and has been with Bib Stillwell BMW for just over two years. He was promoted last year from Special Vehicles Service Advisor to his current position as Retail Service Manager for the dealership.

Michael's love of cars began from a very young age. Both his father and grandfather worked in the automotive industry which provided Michael the opportunity to learn a great deal about cars whilst growing up. When he was 13, he obtained his first job working at the local service station filling up petrol for customers.

At the young age of 16, Michael moved straight into an automotive apprenticeship after finishing school. After completing his apprenticeship, he then worked as a qualified mechanic for a number of years on a range of European car brands including BMW. His passion and wealth of knowledge stemmed from the experience he gained working with such a diverse range of brands.

In his current role as Retail Service Manager, Michael enjoys working closely with our customers to ensure that they receive first class service each and every time. "I really enjoy building relationships with our customers and being the contact person if they need any assistance with their vehicle."

In addition, Michael's role within the dealership involves the direct supervision of all the front-line staff. This includes the Service Advisor team made up of Phillip Hale, Eric Holton and Robert Ivanovic; our concierge Marlon Du Abreu; and Alex Vargas our chauffeur driver.

The team is responsible for helping and ensuring the customer is satisfied when they come in to get their car repaired. Furthermore, as the technology of cars is constantly changing, they have to keep up-to-date with the latest changes through training sessions so they can discuss the vehicle repairs knowledgably with the customer.

Bib Stillwell BMW is equipped to provide customers with first-class service. "We have all the latest diagnostic equipment along with a team of BMW-trained technicians. We also have the facilities to repair bumpers, windscreens and alloy wheels. Together these things ensure that we can retain all necessary work that requires to be done within the dealership, without having to outsource any of the work. Therefore ensuring our customers can get their BMW or MINI back in the quickest time possible, with the added benefit of knowing that our qualified BMW technicians performed the work in-house," Michael said.

Thirty-one-year-old Michael and his wife Madeline have recently bought a house at Point Cook. He enjoys spending his spare time gardening, going to the movies and mountain bike riding. He also enjoys walking their dog, a schnoodle called "Chevy", who was named after his life-long interest in old American cars!

Bib Stillwell BMW apprentices

win training awards

Story: Lucy Henderson - Photography: Robert Piccoli



Congratulations to

Sam Kaldor who was awarded the BMW 1st Year Apprentice Technician of the Year and also to Jordan Wright who received High Honours in the same category.

BMW Apprentice Training Awards recognise the apprentice's performance and level of participation during BMW Apprentice Technician training courses and activities.

Selection for an award is based upon the BMW Apprentice training reports issued to the Service Manager and Apprentice at the conclusion of each training course. Results are collated from written assessments, performance in physical activities and interaction between team members. The award is presented to the Apprentice who achieves the highest aggregate result in their year level.

Sam and Jordan were both very dedicated and worked extremely hard. They were awarded their prizes at the dealership by BMW in the boardroom in front of their peers. When announced, Sam said he was surprised, he knew he was doing well but it was unexpected. He was really happy. He was awarded the BMW Apprentice Technician of the Year trophy and also a voucher from BMW that he can use to buy himself a gift of his choice.

Jordan was also awarded a High Achievement Award in the 1st year Apprentice category for his hard work and also a gift voucher. Jordan laughs: "I am disappointed I was beaten by Sam – I am going to win next year!" Sam joined the car industry because of his love and passion for cars. He always worked on his own cars and thought, 'why don't I do this for a living too?' On the weekend he enjoys relaxing and riding his bike.

Jordan, who is originally from Tasmania, had a passion for cars, and in particular BMW. After his pre-apprentice course he applied for positions in Victoria as there was nothing available in Tasmania and was offered a position with Bib Stillwell BMW. Jordan goes home about twice a month to catch up with family and friends and also to go motorbike riding.

This is yet again another outstanding performance by the Bib Stillwell BMW senior management and workshop team. This is the 8th year in a row that team members from Bib Stillwell BMW have received this award.

We would also like to acknowledge the Mentors, Broniel Padayachee and Richard Morin, for their valuable contribution. The success of an apprentice is often attributable to a productive, working and learning relationship between the mentor and apprentice. "They were always happy to help and really involved us in all aspects of the business. I also looked up to the 2nd year apprentices, who had been through it the previous year, for guidance and advice," said Sam.

Sam and Jordan are both motivated to win again next year and are dedicated to moving up in the business with the hope to become service advisors after they qualify as technicians.



ALWAYS OPEN: THE NEW MINI CABRIOLET

Australian's love affair with the MINI Cabrio is set to continue with the release of the latest model of this unique rendition of motoring freedom. The driving pleasure and individual style so typical of MINI are combined once again with all the flair and refreshment of driving in the open air.

With its design improved in an evolutionary process and with an even wider range of practical functions, the new MINI Cabrio is unmistakably MINI. Equipped with the most advanced and sophisticated suspension technology, even more powerful and efficient engines, and with optimised safety technology, the new version of the open-air four-seater MINI consistently raises its strengths and qualities to an even higher level. And all of this whilst maintaining superior agility and go-kart handling, typical of MINI.

There are 12 highly attractive colour variants as well as new equipment features that add a touch of style and class. Automatic air conditioning with Cabrio mode is available for the first time that serves to provide a consistent set temperature under the influence of wind when the roof is opened. Also available is the seamless integration of external music players, a USB port and Bluetooth handsfree telephone system, suitably compatible with the Apple

iPhone. And last, but certainly not least, the MINI Cabrio combines a supreme blend of quality materials and finishes to further enhance its unique reputation.

Occupants are safely protected from wind and weather in the new MINI Cabrio by the high-quality soft top with its integrated sliding roof function. Even while driving at a speed of up to 30 km/h, the soft top folds back fully automatically in just 15 seconds, giving the new MINI Cabrio its true purpose and quality: This is a car simply begging to be driven in the open air at any time of the year.

And if you want to prove a point about just how great it is to drive topless, an optional instrument, called the Always-Open Timer, is available right next to the rev counter, to show the driver and passengers the time spent driving with the roof down – motivating the driver to really enjoy the thrill of open-air motoring as frequently as possible.

The new MINI Cabrio offers outstanding everyday driving qualities through the Easy-Load Function, the rear-seat backrest folding down individually on either side, as well as the unusually large through-loading between the luggage and passenger compartment. Luggage compartment capacity has increased 5 litres to 125 litres with the roof open and 170 litres with the roof closed,



and 660 litres (+55 litres) with the rear-seat backrest folded down.

This variability, quite unique in the Cabrio segment, is made possible by the innovative design and construction of the rollbar. The new MINI Cabrio comes with a single-piece rollbar behind the rear seats extending across the entire interior width of the car, not obstructing the driver's line of visibility in any way when looking to the rear, and moving up automatically in just 150 milliseconds, in the event this safety feature is required.

The new MINI Cabrio will enter the market during the second quarter of 2009 with two engine variants. The MINI Cooper Cabrio offers sporting qualities right from the start with its 1.6-litre four-cylinder power unit featuring fully variable valve management for maximum output of 88 kW at 6,000 rpm.

The MINI Cooper S Cabrio is even more dynamic and performance-oriented; its 1.6-litre four-cylinder with a Twin-Scroll turbocharger and direct fuel injection delivering 128 kW at an engine speed of 5,500 rpm and thus providing a particularly refreshing feeling of power and dynamic performance.

Fuel consumption and CO2 emissions on the new MINI Cabrio are reduced by up to 19 per cent compared with the previous models.

Both models are available with a standard six-speed manual gearbox or optional six-speed automatic transmission.

The new MINI Cabrio owes its exceptional handling to suspension technology significantly enhanced and

upgraded over the previous model. Indeed, thanks to sophisticated wheel suspension, extremely precise electromechanical power steering, the powerful brake system and standard Dynamic Stability Control the openair MINI combines supreme agility with equally exemplary safety all round.

- MINI Cooper S Cabrio: Four-cylinder petrol engine with Twin-Scroll turbocharger and direct fuel injection. Capacity: 1,598 cc, max output: 128 kW/175 hp at 5,500 rpm. Max torque: 240 Nm from 1,600–5,000 rpm (260 Nm with Overboost). Acceleration 0–100 km/h: 7.4 sec, Top speed: 222 km/h. Average fuel consumption: 7.2 litres/100 km, CO2 rating: 171 g/km.
- MINI Cooper Cabrio: Four-cylinder petrol engine with fully variable valve management based on the BMW Group's VALVETRONIC technology. Capacity: 1,598 cc, max output: 88 kW/120 hp at 6,000 rpm. Max torque: 160 Nm at 4,250 rpm. Acceleration (0–100 km/h): 9.8 sec, Top speed: 198 km/h. Average fuel consumption: 6.1 litres/100 km, CO2 rating: 145 g/km.

For more information please contact

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Sean Evans: Special Vehicles Manager

Story: Mike Charles – Photography: Robert Piccoli

As Special Vehicles

Manager, Sean Evans is responsible for looking after customers who are interested in or own a BMW 6 Series, BMW 7 Series, M5 or M6. Sean stays in regular contact with his customers to ensure that he can help with any matters that may arise, and so that they can receive exceptional customer service.

Sean has the knowledge and ability to highlight the differences and special features of these vehicles, including specialty built engines, race bred performance and leading edge technology, which ultimately flows through to other models in the BMW range.

"Because of this, it is important to have one person totally dedicated to these special vehicles and the people who purchase them," he told *Spirit* recently.

Sean was promoted to Special Vehicles Manager at Bib Stillwell BMW last year after several years as a Sales Executive, where he was consistently number one in the sales department.

Beginning his career in the car industry, straight from school Sean completed an apprenticeship and became a qualified mechanic. He then changed careers for ten years where he was part owner, gym manager and personal trainer of Kasey's Fitness Centre in Hampton.

Sean's passion for cars and the fast-paced environment of the industry brought him back to the car industry where he worked for a competitive brand for five years before joining Bib Stillwell BMW.

In his present role, Sean is determined to ensure that he continues to deliver exceptional customer service and help grow sales of special vehicles.

Sean and his wife Katie live in Hampton with their two Schnauzers, Mia and Winston. When he's away from the dealership Sean enjoys catching up with friends, travelling and good wine! He also has a passion for sport, in particular cycling, riding at least four times a week. Sean also stays fit running and when *Spirit* spoke with him recently he was in training for a triathlon!













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This reader promotion will cease at 5:00pm (fax entries) or last mail received (postal entries) on Friday 15th May 2009 and the draw will take place at the offices of Hudson International Marketing (HIM); 2a Scott Grove, Glen Iris Vic 3146, Australia at 5:00pm on Monday 18th May 2009.

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Competition details; Entry is open only to Victorian residents who personally receive this entry form in the magazine. Only one entry per person permitted. Employees of Stillwell Motor Group and Hudson International Marketing are not eligible to enter the competition. The winner will be notified by telephone and confirmed by mail. The publication of the winner will be posted in the Age Newspaper on Friday 22nd May 2009. The publisher's decision is final and no discussion will be entered into regarding the winner. Published by Hudson International Marketing Pty Ltd, 2a Scott Grove, Glen Iris 3146 Australia. PH: (03) 9813 8243 Fax: (03)98138254 ABN 79 107 871 492

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The Tan – Melbourne's most famous running track



A friend of mine says it takes her about 20 minutes to run the Tan, but about two hours to actually get around the iconic Melbourne running track – because she bumps into so many people she knows.

And venture there sunday

morning at your peril without the necessary preparation. I'm not talking fitness and warm ups, rather touched-up lipstick and a tracksuit without holes or paint splatters.

Because – unlike the local gym or oval - running, riding, power walking, being pushed or strolling the Tan – is an event.

It's not that it's necessarily a social occasion, it's just that the Tan, Melbourne's most famous running track, attracts all sorts of people of all levels of fitness.

You're just as likely to see Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal warming up or cooling down in readiness for an Australian Open match, as you are a school group doing time trials on the 3.8km track in the lush parklands of the Royal Botanical Gardens just south of the Yarra River.

It originated as a horse track for the well-to-do. The Tan first opened as a running/walking/schmoozing track in September 1974. While our research didn't uncover the person responsible for naming it, the 'Tan' refers to the original tan bark surfacing.

These days you see business deals getting done, personal trainers cracking the whip, mums pushing prams. The odd zimmer frame gets a creaky walk. And if you're really keen-eyed, there's always a few well-known AFL footballers stretching their legs.

While the paparazzi has been hounding Ben Cousins for a glimpse of his glistening quadriceps, they would have had more luck of a shot had they camped around the Tan. Cousins and his new team mates at the Richmond Football club conducted much of their 2009 pre-season around the famed track.

One of Australia's richest men Dick Pratt is a regular. As are well-known businessmen Solly Lew and Ron Walker. When Jeff Kennett was Premier of Victoria he used to take a break from running the State to walk his dogs. Sir James

Gobbo, when he was Governor, could be spied slipping out the grand gates and slipping onto the busy track along with hundreds of others squeezing in a constitutional before work.

Racehorse owner and recent aspirant for the role of Melbourne Lord Mayor Nick Columb never misses a day thumping around the sand and crushed rock track which circumvents King's Domain and the Botanic Gardens. Despite all his international travels he says he couldn't think of anywhere he'd prefer to power walk.

"Why do I love it so much? Because it's beautiful. It's so fresh and lush and the stretch with the Yarra River, with the city skyline as a backdrop, the Royal Botanic Gardens on the other is truly world class."

One Melbourne writer has described it as one of the world's most democratic running tracks. The swift vie for space with the slow.

International Olympic superstars Hicham El Guerrouj, Steve Ovett, Cathy Freeman and Sonia O'Sullivan have all rubbed shoulders with mortals on the Tan.

When Noah Ngeny won a silver medal behind the legendary Moroccan runner El Guerrouj at the 1999 world championships, the prestigious French sports daily L'Equipe noted that the young Kenyan held just two records: the world junior record for the mile and the fastest time for a lap around Melbourne's "Jardins Botaniques".

The Age's long-time athletics writer Len Johnson says that before the late-1970s arrival of the plastic training watch, there was no easy and accurate way to time yourself. "Coaches timed track sessions, not Tan laps," he wrote in a piece about the Tan's history.

Robert de Castella did a lap in close to 11 minutes as a junior in the 1970s, but the first men's record most runners knew about was set by Mike Hillardt, at 10 minutes, 47 seconds in the early 1980s.







Steve Moneghetti revived interest in the quickest lap when he ran 10:41 in 2003, before Craig Mottram sizzled to 10:12 a few months later. That record still stands.

Elite women began running the Tan regularly as the sport belatedly adopted distance races for women in the 1970s.

The consensus is that Kate Richardson (nee Anderson), the 1998 Commonwealth 5000 metres champion and a 1997 world championships finalist, has the fastest time, with 11:55.

Footballer David Spriggs ran 12:40 while with Geelong. Hawthorn's Tim Clarke, a world cross-country junior representative before he concentrated solely on football, ran close to 12 minutes while training with sister Georgie (the Olympic athlete).

Columb enjoys the fact the Tan attracts such diverse devotees.

"I remember when the Kenyan runners were here. You could hear them a mile off coming through, they were like a herd of antelopes flying past.

"You really do see all types. The serious and the shrieking. Some of those women you can hear talking a mile off! It's all chat, chat, chat.

"Then there's lots of people who pull the beanie down, put the sunnies on even if it's dark and power through without making eye contact."

Another advantage for the more sociable is the array of potential pitstops. Those chasing a latte or something stronger can choose from the Botanical Hotel, the Bakery, Lynch's or the Observatory all within little more than 100 metres.

Channel Nine presenter and former Olympic swimmer Giaan Rooney, who took part in a charity walk around the Tan recently, enjoys watching her dog Lester stride out once he hits the track.

"Seeing young Lester's face is everything to me.

"I'm obviously not as fit as I used to be, but I really enjoy walking. The thing I love about the Tan is its abundant greenery. Even in the middle of a drought."

For newcomers to the track, there's a big choice to make. Do they run clockwise or anti clock wise? It might seem irrelevant, but anyone who has sweated up the steep 500 metres of Anderson Street hill knows it's an important decision.

The other direction, means you get a slower arguably more painful incline (and sore shins from the jarring going down Anderson Street).

Today it's Sunday morning about 8am. My more enthusiastic (non-drinking) friends tell me that the action starts as early as 5.30am. But for me an 8am start on a Sunday is about as selfless as I'm prepared to get in the name of research.

Particularly as my direction of choice is to lope up Anderson Street, teeth clenched.

It's the start of peak traffic – like its car-version-neighbor near by in Punt Rd, you can feel the numbers building and the buzz gets louder. By 9.30am it's crawling with velour tracksuits, ipods, taut glutes and calf muscles, mothers groups and the downright dedicated. There's a few boot camps, and happy couples who are obviously in the early throes of love, as they manage to power walk while swinging hands.

We start at the "horse trough", opposite the Swan Street bridge on Alexandra Avenue, turn right into (ouch) Anderson Street, then cruise along Birdwood Avenue and around to Linlithgow Avenue, taking in views of the gardens, the Shrine of Remembrance and the Old Melbourne Observatory along the way.

This morning's crowd features as many walkers as runners. I exchange a few words with some. There's a few from the "burbs" and lots, it seems, from the newly-densely populated Southbank nearby. Several are from South Yarra, and a few have travelled up from "the coast" in Brighton.

There's what looks like an athletic club going so fast they must have got a group discount on steroids (only joking).

And there are the obligatory tourist buses, happy snappers stumbling over the track occasionally tripping up the serious runners.

Although its close to major roads, the air is crisp, the backdrop picturesque.

There's a sense of community despite the many different tribes. Everyone has chosen the Tan this morning instead of more sleep, so that alone brings them together.

And then I remember that other irresistible attribute - it's free.



"You really do see all types. The serious and the shrieking. Some of those women you can hear talking a mile off! It's all chat, chat, chat."

The are many ways to tackle the Tan; running, walking or pushing a pram.



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Ella Hooper

singing from a new songbook

Story: David Jarwood - Photography: Rebecca Hudson

Warning: if you are dating a singer/ songwriter then treat them well. Otherwise you could find yourself the subject of many of their songs.

"Mostly" a lot of what you will hear on the new album is about my last boyfriend," says Ella Hooper, of Killing Heidi fame.

"But I am not vindictive," she laughs. "I always feel more sorry for them (the ex) than me.

Ella Hooper, the girl, who with her brother Jesse took Australia by storm as a teenager, is back performing with Jesse in a whole new band and an overflowing bag of new music.

Much of the inspiration for the band's songs is on the relationships around them, especially Ella's romantic liaisons.

She has recently entered into a new relationship - "finally, because it is a long time between drinks" - a risky proposition for the new partner.

"Sometimes I do look out to the crowd while playing a song and I will catch the different people who know the songs are about them responding," she said.

"There is the ex-boyfriend standing over there, there is the friend who is in trouble, there is the new boyfriend wondering if maybe this song is about him. It is pretty funny."

One of the first things that becomes clearly apparent when talking with Ella is the maturity and optimism that comes from a new beginning.

Killing Heidi, the band that she and Jesse formed back when they were kids and took them to stardom, has been cast aside and she is adamant to set a new direction and identity.

Brother and sister are still an inseparable duo, but there is a whole new sound. The Verses is the name of the new band and the sound is very Americana, drawing upon "vintage inspirations, ala Neil Young, Fleetwood Mac, The Pretenders, a little bit of alternative country," Ella says.

The look and feel of The Verses is more grown up and Ella is happy to say that gone are the dreadlocks and fluoro of Killing Heidi. She says that for the first time in her life she is playing the music that she really wants to play - "the kind of music that I would listen to".

"It is really exciting. It feels like a whole new lease on songwriting and story telling," she said.

"I think with the current pace and trends that are around we could be in luck. We could be just stepping into a void that wants to be filled."

The success with Killing Heidi is proving both a benefit and a hindrance in creating a new band. There are mistakes to be learnt from but also a lot of work to be done to avoid being typecast.

"I see us as a new band with no history. We rock up to rehearsals and it is like there has never been Killing Heidi," Ella said.

"Don't want to be known as Ella and Jesse of Killing Heidi in a new band. We want to be The Verses.

"This is a totally different kettle of fish so it is important to treat it differently and take our time establishing it as a different creature.

"We are so into this new band and the future. It's like there has never been another band. We can see so far down those paths that we are projecting. We don't look back: we see all that could be with this new band."

And they are certainly doing the hard yards performing in small venues with a few hundred people as opposed to the stadiums that Killing Heidi filled.

Killing Heidi played some huge gigs, including to over 100,000 people at the opening of the 2000 Sydney Olympics. "People as far as the eye can see," Ella said.

"I think it is humbling (to be playing small gigs). But it is fantastic and I really enjoy it.

"I 've always enjoyed a humbling experience because they are challenging and I have caught myself going 'Wow, this is a tiny gig compared to what it used to be'.

"It is really interesting and it makes me appreciate the reception we get from the crowd.

"I'm lucky because we had that big success. I know both sides of that coin, and that is an amazing opportunity. I just try to be appreciative of each stage of the journey with the band."

While hardly a one-hit wonder, Killing Heidi had a limited shelf life filling a niche in Australian music and not progressing from there. Ella sees The Verses as being a lot more dimensional with the flexibility and maturity to develop and evolve.

"I think this could be the band than can evolve because I feel that I am starting from a spot where I already understand more about being in a band, the process of making sure the music changes and grows. I already have visions for the second and third albums of wanting to expand down different pathways.

"This time, given the chance, The Verses could have a very good debut album. But that is not what it is all about. It is about building something for the long term."

Trying to lay solid foundations with The Verses and get a good deal. With Killing Heidi they did the record deal very quickly, resulting in "not the best" deal possible.

"We made some hasty decisions on some questionable advice. And this time we are trying to do the opposite of that."

So what was the turning point? Why the change from Killing Heidi?

"Well it has been many years between writing the Killing Heidi songs and writing these songs," she said.





"The songs we were writing back then were our first attempts at songwriting and we were distilling very different influences back then: Smashing Pumpkins, Nirvana, Silverchair, Green Day.

"I think we have always had the ability to write songs. But I was writing about what a 15 year old writes about. Singing about what a 15 year old cares about at even 19 felt a bit dated, let alone now.

"The angst changes."

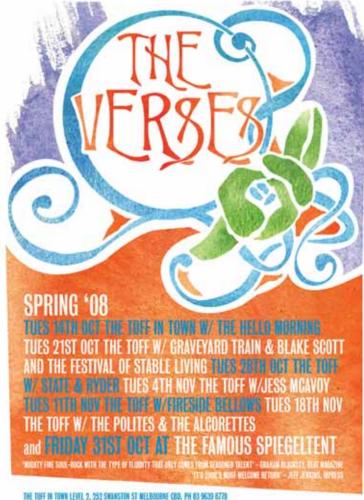
Ella has always been around music and has been playing from a very early age as she grew up in the hills on an isolated property about 25 minutes out of Violet Town in north-east Victoria.

"There was nothing but me and Mum and Dad and Jesse and some pine trees and some sheep. There was a piano and a mandolin and there were some guitars and recorders," she said.

Lack of other sources of entertainment meant that and she and Jesse would practice and dream about being rock stars.

"We pretended and we believed and we dreamed and then started giving it a name."

At 13 she performed her first gig with Killing Heidi at the local footy ground. But Violet Town, being such a small town (population less than 1000), they had to be



O manual

creative to play gigs - the fete, the blue light disco, the nursing home, the primary school, the market.

'And then even as we were living in this weird, isolated place in the middle of nowhere, it started happening. I was there for a good couple of years, even after Mum and Dad split up, living with Dad and my brother in this house in the bush and hearing my song on the radio thinking how weird it was."

She was still at high school, with feet in two worlds, "living in this remote place with no chance of visiting anyone" and was top of the charts.

At 15 she had the number one album, and number one single - the stuff that rarely a teenager would even dream about. And yet, meeting her now, there is little to suggest that she is a person who has had so much success.

Ella credits her extremely close circle of friends, friends from Violet Town who go right back to her pre-school days, for keeping her grounded.

"I don't feel that I was chewed up and spat out and I do credit my friends a lot with that," she said.

"I was so lucky to have a very strong group of friends, very long relationships since kindergarten. That world was still a very big priority for me. I always made sure they were involved either in the exciting things that I did with my success, or I came back to share those other things like going to high school or the school formal.

"I had them keeping me very real. If I came back and was on cloud nine or talking about it too much they let me know."

This down-to-earth attitude means that at times Ella finds it difficult to understand the extra attention that her success attracts.

"I still feel a bit strange about the amount of attention that was put on me. Even these days I will reject attention when people are very adoring or want to talk about my success."

At 15 she had the number one album, and number one single – the stuff that rarely a teenager would even dream about. And yet, meeting her now, there is little to suggest that she is a person who has had so much success.

There will always be a bit of country in Ella. She has lived and played in hubs of activity such London, Paris, Los Angeles but her heart and soul remain fixed in the country and she regularly visits family and friends back in Violet Town.

"I can always hear the country calling and I can visualise the granite boulders sticking out of the dry grass and see the trees and smell the dam," she said.

"The Australian bush, especially the north-east (of Victoria) is just so special to me. It makes my heart pound and my spirit sing."

And the train from Melbourne to Violet Town has been the setting for many songs. "There is nothing like the clickety clack of the V Line train to get the words flowing."

Ella and Jesse no longer have the uniqueness of the brother - sister, school kids in a band story.

"That has gone, and thank God," Ella said.

"Frankly I got so sick of telling that story. It is actually not what my music is about. Currently it is not about being from Violet Town or being in a brother-sister duo.

"I look forward to the day that the music can stand alone. But I realise that that story still looms large in my career and as a song-writer."

Her relationship with Jesse is as strong as ever. The past 12 months have been very intense rarely spending more then two days apart writing, performing small gigs, building up a following for The Verses and trying to bed down the right record deal.

"I think we are so lucky. It is really good, solid and constant, day in, day out," Ella said.

"It is weird to spend more than a couple of days apart, which I think for brother-sister relationships at our age is very strange.

"I am really relishing that this is one of those cycles where we are close, we are loving each other and working well together."

Ella and Jesse do differ in their opinions at times – especially over their methods of motivation.

Jesse is into following a strict routine, something which is abhorrent for Ella.

"Sometimes he has to get me to do things at times and crack the whip with me," she said.

"He is easy going, but when it comes to getting things musically done he sets a schedule. And I am the opposite, always sacred of scaring off the muse and killing the creative vibe.

"But more often than not he is right, and I am like 'damn you and your always being right."



Musically they are in symmetry. "We have always had a very strong, similar musical appreciation and our ears are very similar," Ella said.

"When we are looking for the next chord in a song and we are clicking our fingers and we don't know its name something weird happens and we both know the right thing to do. We have the exact same musical education for such a long time and we both have the same library in our heads for what we are looking for.

"As far as music goes there are hardly ever any problems. We both know when we have hit the nail on the head, and we both know when we haven't."

However, they do sometimes disagree with the other's choice of romantic interest.

"I am far more selective than him so he has less to complain about. I have much better taste than him, she said slightly tongue in cheek. And then quickly added: "Except with his current girlfriend, who is amazing and I totally approve".

They both have a set goal for the new album - to be proud of their music.

"Definitely to be proud of the music, but we wouldn't mind top of the charts as well," Ella says laughing.

Ella believes that if she is proud of the music the rest will follow.

"We write in a very accessible style, so I happen to believe that we might just be in luck. We are going to make music that we really love and that we want to be identified with, but I also suspect that it could be a lot of people's cups of tea.

"This is the kind of band and the kind of songs that haven't been around for a while. It is going a little bit back to the old school of having a rollicking good time."

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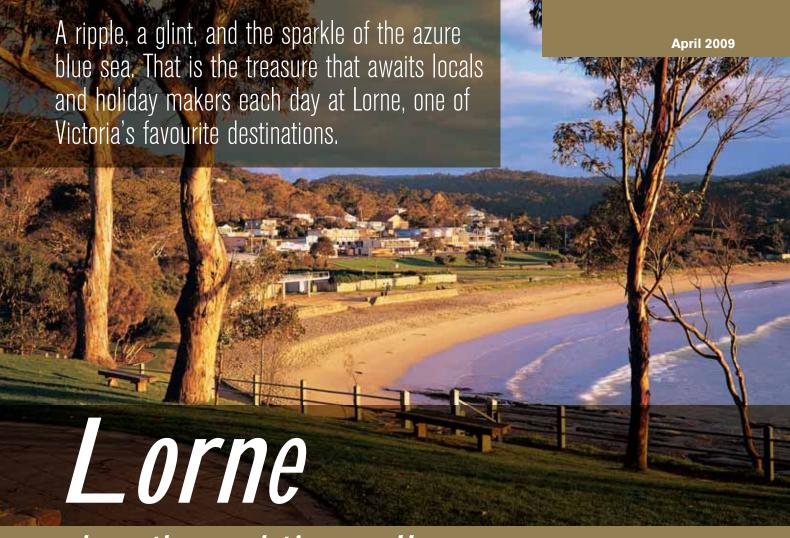












where the good times roll

Story: Caroline French - Photography: Courtesy of Tourism Victoria

And it is a destination that offers something for everyone whether you just want to while away a morning with a coffee looking out over Louttit Bay, sunbathe or

want to while away a morning with a coffee looking out over Louttit Bay, sunbathe or surf, walk the rugged and dramatic surrounding terrain or go shopping along the main retail strip. Then there are rainforest and waterfall walks and trail rides for the more energetic and galleries and berry picking for those seeking a quieter pace.

Local identity and well known sports commentator Michael Roberts says: "Lorne is really a country town by the water." No doubt it is this description that goes to the heart of Lorne which has a real sense of community, regardless of how many tourists there are.

A large part of Lorne's charm lies in the fact that Louttit Bay is surrounded by hills and dense vegetation interspersed with rivers and creeks which are the gateway to the forests of the Otway Ranges, another major destination in its own right. Lorne is also an ideal stopping off point for those venturing further along the coast to Apollo Bay and on to Port Campbell and the Twelve Apostles.

A cruise along the main street provides a feeling of returning to the sun and surfing days of the sixties and it is true, that in many respects, not a lot has changed. The Pacific Hotel at the far end of Lorne has been renovated but still has the same feel of the heady days of the late 1880s; the local timber churches nestled in the hills have also seen a coat of paint and more, but similarly have retained their country feel. Even the local hospital makes you think that if whatever the reason, you found yourself laid up there, it wouldn't be too bad after all, lying in bed and looking out through the gum trees over that beautiful blue water.

However Lorne, is not all nostalgia. In tourism terms, it has matured nicely with Mediterranean influences blending happily with modern and not so modern Australian architecture and cuisine. While many of the old restaurants still exist, some have been extended and claimed a little of the up-market cuisine scene. Even the local burger shop has been transformed and now sells 'gourmet' burgers. The fish and chip shops seem to attract a steady stream of customers throughout the day and well into the night and one shudders at how many tonnes of potatoes might be consumed in a summer.

It is over 100 years since that the Victorian Government designated Lorne "an area of special significance and natural beauty" according to Tourism Victoria, and while it has maintained its core charm, other parts of the town have a more modern image.

Some 150 kilometres from Melbourne and a two hour drive through some of the world's most stunning scenery, Lorne is just the place for a pick-me-up. Apart from those with holiday houses which often date back generations, Lorne is a destination for all Victorians, people from around the country as well as receiving a hefty influx of international visitors. Sign posts, regularly sited along the roads in and through Lorne, remind international drivers to drive on the left hand side of the road. Despite the historic Ash Wednesday fires, most people have re-built and stayed on, possibly with an even greater sense of community than before.

The two kilometre bay provides a sheltered and safe swimming haven for all ages while its grassed foreshore areas with occasional trees, provide shade for older people who have traded their sunbaking days for doing the crossword. Cafes on the beach which cater for those in search of a lazy breakfast or leisurely lunch attract a steady stream of customers who along with staff share a cheerful and laid back attitude.



The population of around 1300 swells to around 30,000 in the warmer months and holiday weekends, yet still there seems little sense of frustration by most of the locals who are tested by several major events throughout the year.

There is the legendary and long running Pier to Pub swimming race which is now so popular there are staged starts and it is sold out within a day or two of tickets going on sale. Like many fine Australian traditions, the race started as a bet to see who could get from the pier to the pub in the shortest time. According to local real estate identity Don Stewart, veterans of ten consecutive years of the swim then become members of the Shark Bait Club, named after the legendary beach inspector Vic Marshall who was affectionately known by locals as 'Sharky'.

Then there is the New Year Falls Festival which is booked out each year; the Mountain to Surf run, the Great Ocean Road Marathon and the Anaconda Adventure

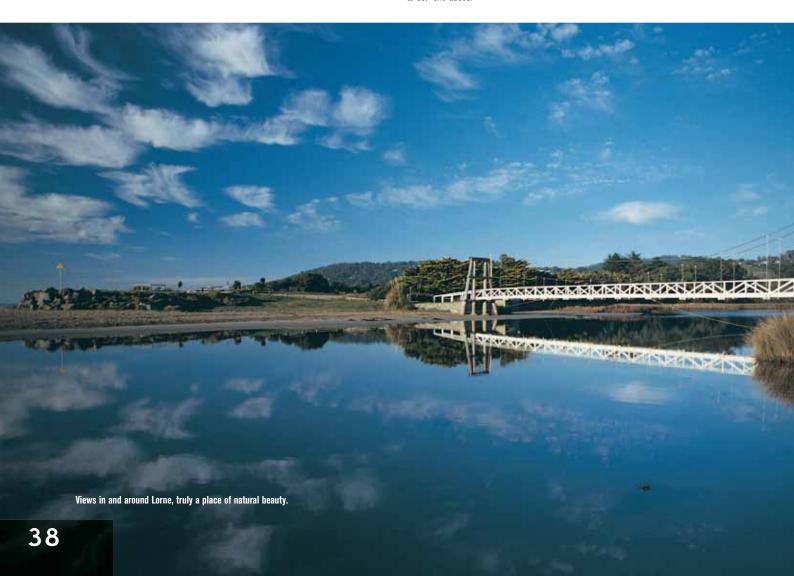
There is the legendary and long running Pier to Pub swimming race which is now so popular there are staged starts and it is sold out within a day or two of tickets going on sale.

Race, all of which attract competitors from around Australia. And that is without mentioning Schoolies Week, perhaps the least popular of events.

Organisers of the Falls Festival at Erskine Falls are keen to promote not only their international line up of artists but also their environmental credentials after receiving a Greener Festival Award which recognises environmentally friendly music festivals. The festival organisers also received a Banksia Environmental Award as the greenest festival in Australia.

"It's a stunning environment and the more time you spend here, it rubs off on you," said festival co-organiser Naomi Daly. While it takes four weeks to set up, within a week it is back to normal with all rubbish sorted for recycling.

"The music event industry leads a lot of other industries in this regard. It's not hard to do," she added.







Off the tourist trail is the Acquatic Club, originally the fishing club where locals regularly meet for a drink. Locals are known to congregate at their unofficial pub located at the far end of town near the pier, away from the maddening crowds.

"The Fisherman's Club as it was originally known has been running for some 40 years and when it had to become official and comply with current regulations, we moved the old lounge room from a local guest house down there and set up home and renamed it the Acquatic Club," Don Stewart said.

Fourth generation Lorne resident and "nearly a local," Don Stewart traces his roots back to the Kalimna Guest House.

"The guest house was started by my grandmother on the 12/12/1912 and managed and redeveloped by subsequent generations of the family. I sold out to my brother in recent years and the site has now been converted into apartments," said Don.

Accommodation is extensive and ranges from the camping ground, only paces from the beach, to neighboring back-packing facilities located on the river and escalating through a range of motels, hotels, apartments and bed and breakfast options of up to five stars.

Modern additions sit comfortably alongside the old with the bowling club located right in the middle of the newly developed Mantra hotel and apartments along the foreshore. This little gem of a bowling club must surely be situated in one of Australia's most scenic spots, and yes, the original theatre is still there for those occasional wintery days.

The Cumberland apartments, once the subject of some controversy amongst locals, sit in the centre of the town with stunning views of Louttit Bay. Integrated with the apartments is the convention centre with an auditorium that seats over 300.

Lorne's nine hole golf club offers spectacular 180 degree views of the ocean and is also a favourite of locals and visitors alike, although all agree it is challenging to say the least.

There is just so much to do. A good spot to start is the busy local tourist office - open seven days a week and an ideal place to begin exploring your options for whatever activity may interest you.

Whatever your interest or age, Lorne seems to have something for everyone, so let the good times roll on forever.









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The ferries of Port Phillip



Standing at the rail of the MV Sorrento, a state-of-the-art car and passenger ferry, as she slices her way through the sparkling blue waters of Port Phillip Bay from Sorrento to Queenscliff, its easy to let the mind drift back a hundred years or so and picture an earlier, but similar scene.

Back then, an earlier vessel – the paddle steamer Ozone – crowded with excursion passengers, is headed across the narrow entrance to Port Phillip, bound for the fishing port of Queenscliff. On board, the decks are packed with men in suits and ties, ladies in their long skirts and large feathered hats, laughing children weaving in and out of the crowd and young revellers singing and dancing to the ship's brass band.

Look down to the water and there are the dolphins surfing the bow wave, just as they were a century ago. Glance ashore, and there are the colorful bathing boxes on the beach and the cliff-top "cottages" of Sorrento and Portsea – relief for the wealthy from Melbourne's hot and sticky summer.

In that golden age of Port Phillip Bay's excursion shipping, no fewer than eight purpose-built vessels plied their trade, carrying cargo and passengers from Melbourne to towns around the coast, and providing a link between far-flung Sorrento and Portsea and Queenscliff, just a short cruise inside Port Phillip Heads. Vessels such as the Ozone, Hygeia, Excelsior, Courier and Weeroona were household names for more than 40 years and are still remembered fondly around Port Phillip.

Today the Sorrento and her stable mate Queenscliff are all that remains of what was once a booming and glamorous maritime industry on Port Phillip Bay.

Until a few years ago, two smaller passenger ferries, the J.J. Farnsworth and the Nepean, operated by the Sorrento Ferry Company, also plied the waters just inside the treacherous Rip. But now, they too have gone, and with them a piece of Victoria's maritime history, giving way to the advances in transportation that sounded the death knell for so many that went before them.

Thousands of passengers and vehicles are carried each year across the six nautical miles of water between Queenscliff and Sorrento by the two car ferries that bear these ports' names. The two vessels operated by Peninsula Searoad Transport sail seven days a week, whatever the weather, on the hour from 7 am to 6 pm and later in summer. They are a virtual "sea road" across the Bay, linking the scenic attractions of the Great Ocean Road and the Bellarine Peninsula with those of the Mornington Peninsula and eastern Victoria.

Thousands of touring motorists use the ferries to add another dimension to their tour of the State, while others cross as work commuters or to spend a few hours exploring the quaint and historic Queenscliff or the shops and restaurants of bustling Sorrento.

Over the years the ferries have carried just about every type of road vehicle and some pretty unusual cargo. Alpacas going home from a show; fully grown trees en route to a new landscaping project; army howitzer guns off on manoeuvres and a complete strike team of fire trucks and firefighters to fight the fires at Mt Martha a few summers ago.

They have also played a role in Bay rescue operations, on one occasion picking up two divers who had been swept away from their boat by strong currents. The two had been waving for assistance for forty minutes when passengers and crew on board the Queenscliff spotted them. The skipper turned the vessel around, dropped the bow door, and the two exhausted divers were dragged aboard to safety.

More than anything, the ferry service is just so convenient. And it is just so easy. Drive up to the ticket office, pay your fare and wait in the designated queue for the arrival of the next ferry.

Almost without warning, there she is, docking neatly between the concrete berthing dolphins that were built specifically for the ships. Down comes the ramp and out pour the cars, trucks, buses and foot passengers from the cavernous mouth of the vessel. Off to lunch, shop, or just on to the next stage of their journey.

Friendly crewmembers quickly and efficiently park the next load of cars and prepare to cast off for the 40-minute trip across the Heads. On board, passengers can choose between a comfortable lounge with television and a well-stocked snack bar, or take the air on the open decks, admiring the coastal scenery or looking for dolphins, fish, seals or even the occasional whale.

There is just so much to see on the water. Ships navigating the channel to and from Melbourne; the pilot vessels that help guide them through the Rip; countless yachts and small craft; and often two or three intrepid jet skiers jumping the waves in the ferry's wake. At weekends during summer the historic couta boats from the Sorrento Sailing Couta Boat Club are a colourful sight as they race off Portsea, and on December 27 each year, the ocean racers of the Melbourne to Hobart race are a stunning spectacle as they enter the Rip on their way to Tasmania.

Cruising just a few hundred metres off the Point Nepean shore passengers are treated to a stunning view of the mansions and their gardens atop the cliffs of Portsea and Sorrento, the historic Quarantine Station and the fortifications built during the 1880s to help defend the Colony.

All too soon passengers are asked to return to their vehicles; the voyage is over. With the help of bow thrusters and other modern equipment to handle wind and tides, the vessel is steered expertly between the dolphins and safely moored.

With all the development of both sides of the Bay near the Heads, today it just seems so logical to have a ferry to link the two sides. But, remarkably, despite the settlement activity taking place around Queenscliff and Point Nepean during the middle of the 19th century, regular ferry services across the few kilometres separating Sorrento and Queenscliff did not commence until 1872 when the paddle steamer Williams began a regular run down the Bay from Melbourne.

Then the excursion trade took off and most of the bayside towns became connected by sea. More and better ships were built here and overseas for the Port Phillip Bay trade, many vying with one another as the fastest or the most luxurious. For more than forty years, at a time when roads were poor and road transport unreliable, the steamers of Port Phillip provided goods, transport and entertainment to an entire generation.

The First World War saw patronage of the Bay steamers drop off and by the 1930s they had virtually disappeared as other forms of transport began to take over. The last of the excursion vessels, the Weeroona carried on the trade until 1942, and then it was over.







After World War II, there were several failed attempts to revive the down-the-Bay excursion trade, and many calls for a service between Queenscliff and the southern side of the Bay. In 1953, the brothers Jack and Harry Farnsworth started a passenger ferry service between Sorrento and Queenscliff using a converted shark fishing boat, the Judith Ann. The Komuta followed in 1955 and then the Weeroona in 1957, named after her famous predecessor.

The Farnsworth ferries were to continue in operation until 1975, with the Hygeia (again named after one of the famous Bay paddle steamers) built in 1962 and the Nepean (1965), before the business was sold to Melbourne and Sorrento businessman Warren Neale.

With no other way of linking Portsea with Queenscliff, except by way of a road journey of more than 200 kilometres, the ferries provided an essential service transporting passengers and cargo across the six nautical miles of often choppy water, during the summer months.

Neale's Sorrento Ferry Company service continued to grow in popularity with holidaymakers and in 1984 he built the JJ Farnsworth to replace the Hygeia on the service which then ran from Queenscliff to Portsea and Sorrento, carrying around 50,000 passengers a year.

But there were rumblings on both sides of the Bay for something more than a passenger ferry. Since before Jack Farnsworth restarted the service with his ex-shark boat, the idea of linking the two peninsulas was discussed and worried over. Bridges and tunnels were talked about as possibilities, but it was the idea of a vehicular ferry – a virtual road – that always came out on top as the most logical option.

In 1983, three Port Phillip sea pilots, Paul Ringe, Maurie Cobal and Keith Finnemore, founded Peninsula Searoad Transport, and began to lay the groundwork for the first vehicular ferry between Queenscliff and Sorrento. It was to take another four years of planning, negotiation, fund raising and frustrating navigation through the minefield of a complex bureaucratic system before their dream was reality. In September 1987, the MV Peninsula Princess took to the water to commence the first car ferry service



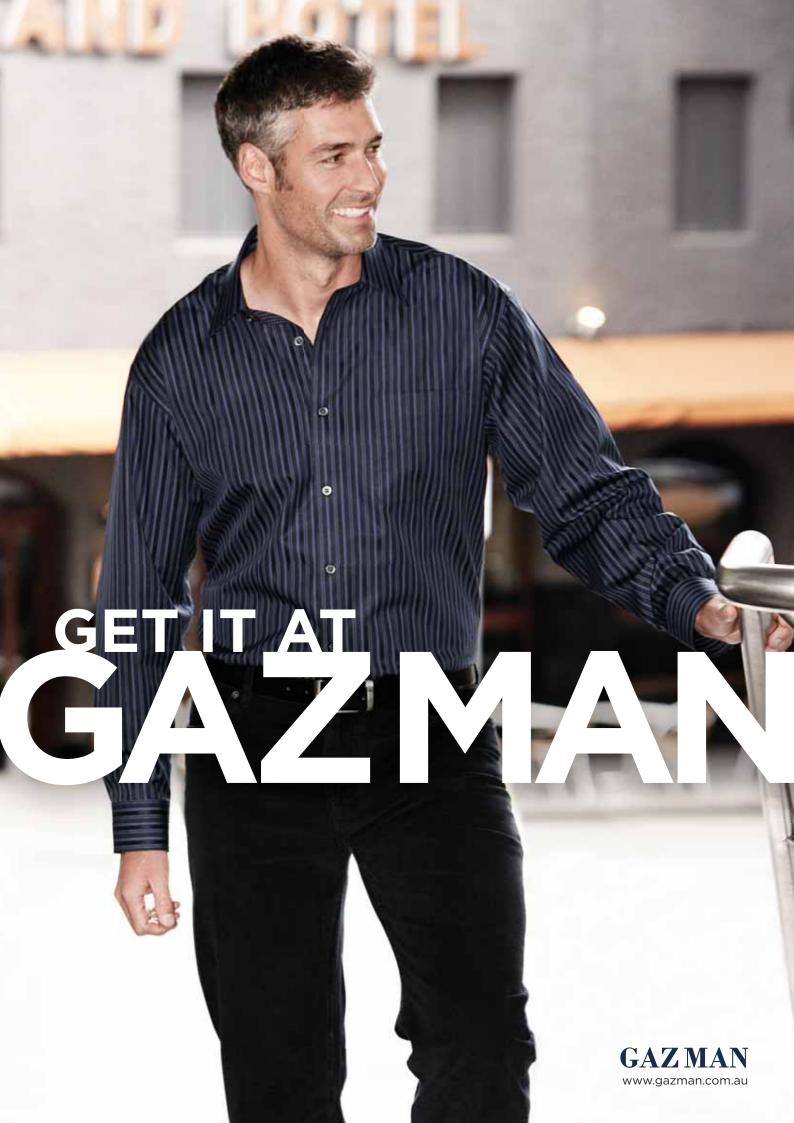
across Port Phillip Heads, and rarely missed a scheduled crossing until she was replaced in 1993. Despite many teething problems and early operational difficulties, public confidence in the operation gradually grew and by late 1988, the Princess was carrying up to 800 cars a week.

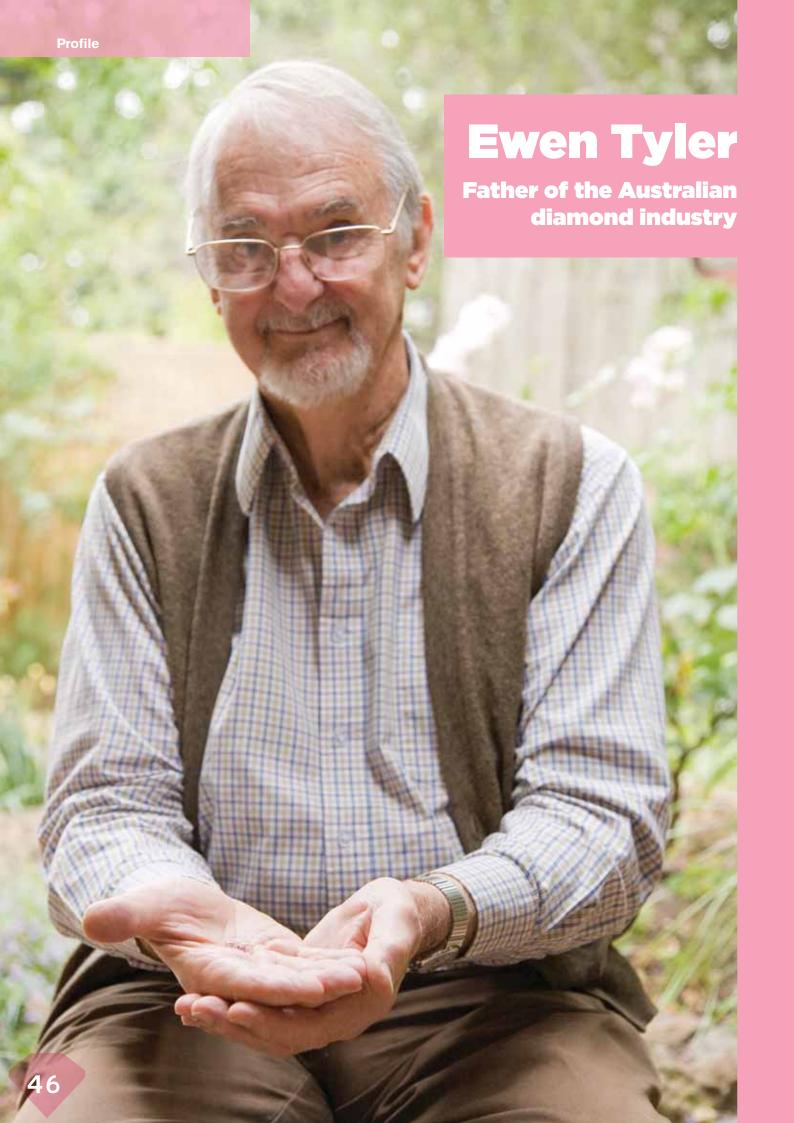
During 1993 a replacement ferry, the current Queenscliff was built at Port Lincoln in South Australia. Not only did this new vessel more than double to 80 the vehicle capacity of the Peninsula Princess, it introduced a new level of comfort and enjoyment for the 700 passengers it is capable of carrying on each crossing. At the same time, purpose built berthing facilities were constructed and on-shore passenger facilities improved.

It soon became clear that even the modern new Queenscliff could not meet the demands of the travelling public. In 2001, the state-of-the-art, 80 car capacity Sorrento at a cost of more than S12 million, joined the fleet and began to work in tandem with the Queenscliff, criss-crossing southern Port Phillip Bay 24 times a day, right through the year.

While the introduction of the modern new ferry and hourly services were clearly a boon for the touring public, it was literally the final nail in the coffin for the Sorrento Ferry Company. The passengers-only Nepean and JJ Farnsworth, operating "weather permitting", during summer months only, just could not compete. The ferry service is now closed and the boats have been sold.

The demise of the small, family-run ferries with their links back to the pioneers of the 1950s is indeed sad and they are missed by the many people and organisations that have sailed on them over the years. But their demise, while regretful, was also inevitable – that, unfortunately, is the price of progress.





When 12-year-old Ewen Tyler found his first diamond searching in the hot and steamy jungles of Sarawak where he had been taken by his geologist father in 1940, he had no idea of the significance of his find."



Little did he realize that the discovery of that somewhat unattractive chip of rock was the first small step on a journey of exploration and discovery that would chart a lifetime's career, lead to the discovery of one of the world's largest diamond mines, and earn him the title of "Father of the Australian diamond industry".

Following in the footsteps of his father W.H. "Watty" Tyler, Ewen was to become a geologist, mine manager and mining company director and administrator whose vision and determination was to lead to the discovery of diamonds in the Kimberley region in north-west Australia and the development of the Argyle diamond mine with its famous rare and beautiful pink gems.

Sitting chatting in his South Yarra home, the fit looking and youthful 80-year-old Tyler is quick to share the credit for his achievements with a host of others – mining companies that provided him with experience and knowledge, investors willing to risk their capital, geologists working in the remote Kimberley hills, laboratory analysts and a former Professor of the University of Western Australia who first planted the diamond seeds in his receptive undergraduate head in the late-1940s.

"It was really Rex Prider (later Professor Rex Prider) who first got me thinking about diamonds in the Kimberley," he recalled. "He had been working on some rocks from the Kimberley while at Cambridge in the 1930s and believed they were similar to the type of rock found in the diamond fields of Kimberley in South Africa."

"He shared that information with me while I was studying geology at the university, and those discussions would return to me later in my career."

Tyler was born in Sheffield, England in 1928 and graduated from the University of Western Australia, Bachelor of Science (Hons) specializing in geology in 1949.

Western Australia's tremendous mineral resources were untapped and largely unknown in those post-war years, and there were few career prospects for an enthusiastic, newly graduated geologist at home. So it was off to Africa for Ewen Tyler to seek his fortune in the gold mines of Tanganyika, working as a geologist and mine manager with Geita Gold Mining Company.

He married his Australian-born wife Aldyth (whom he had met at university in Perth) in Mombassa in 1951, and remained in Africa for almost a decade.

"I really learned a lot about the mining industry and the people in it during those years," he said. "It was great on-the-job experience that you couldn't learn from a book, and it taught me a lot about people and management."

"I had planned to go from Africa to Canada in 1958, but the Canadian mining industry was experiencing a downturn and there were just no jobs available," he said.

Instead, he was invited by the parent company of Geita Gold, Tanganyika Holdings Ltd, to take up a post in London for a year as a consultant. That year stretched into ten as Tyler gained valuable experience in mining management and investment, mixing with the mining giants of London and Brussels and their influential management.

"About this time mining was just starting in Western Australia, and there was a lot of interest in activities there and investment in potential projects. Being the resident Australian expert based in London I was well-placed to provide advice and share my knowledge of local conditions and opportunities."

"In 1967 I was asked to lead an expedition of Belgian mining engineers to Australia to explore potential opportunities. We went all around Australia, meeting with Commonwealth and State Government representatives, including Sir Charles Court, a family connection, who tried very hard to interest the Belgians in iron ore and uranium prospects in the State, but they weren't interested."

One venture developed from the expedition, with the Belgian mining giant Union Miniere establishing an Australian subsidiary and spending six or seven years looking for nickel and copper without success.

Another outcome of the expedition was a realization by Tyler that he'd like to return to Australia, and that was to come to pass when Tanganyika Holdings asked him to establish a branch of the company in Melbourne in 1969.

"I was to operate as a mining 'listening post' in Australia, with the principal objective of looking for platinum and diamonds," he said. "This operation progressed for the next year or so until 1972 when we launched a diamond venture."

"With four other parties including Belgian and Australian mining interests, Tanganyika Holdings became part of a group known as the Kalumburu Joint Venture with the intention of looking for diamonds in the Kimberley district of Western Australia."

Tyler's eyes twinkle more and more and his face creases into an easy smile as his mind casts back nearly 40 years and he recalls events as if they had happened just yesterday. "The whole thing was totally secret; we didn't want anyone to know what we were up to. Each party contributed \$20,000 and I headed up the joint venture on behalf of Tanganyika Holdings."

At the time, there was no real diamond activity in Australia. Some had been found in NSW and a few in Victoria, but there was no active industry.

But Tyler recalled those earlier discussions with Rex Prider during his university years, and his belief that the Kimberley region had similar rocks to those in South Africa. He was able to persuade the joint venture to explore a huge area north of Derby in WA, with helicopters flying geological ground exploration parties into remote areas to gather rock and gravel samples.

The operation collected 1200 samples from the east and west Kimberley which were then processed at a hastily-established diamond laboratory in Perth, where chemicals were used to separate potential diamond indicators from the gravel, in a process similar to methods used in South Africa. Further analysis using microscopes revealed one small trace in April 1973, encouraging news indeed, but the team was still light years away from a diamond find.

Then, four months later, they hit the jackpot. Tyler remembers the day clearly – after all it was his 45th birthday.





Left: Ewen Tyler sitting in his study

Top right: Diamond bearing lamproite ore

Middle right: Helicopters were used to access remote areas, such as Smoke Creek where geologists first found traces of diamonds.

Bottom right: The larger and more valuable Argyle pink diamonds are polished by a small, highly specialised team in Perth.

"We had some very fine gems, and some of our pink diamonds were very beautiful stones, highly sought-after and some fetching up to a million dollars for a one carat diamond."







"It was a bit like a golfer hitting a hole in one," he said. "One sample tested contained not just indicators but also a diamond, and that day my life changed forever."

Sample M109 (the "M" refers to the geologist who took the sample, Maureen Muggeridge), Tyler recalled fondly. "Women always were good with diamonds," he added with a smile.

Work on the joint venture's Kimberley interests was ramped up. Teams set out to find the source of the M109 sample, complicated by the fact that it was on an Aboriginal reserve, while other work proceeded in two other likely areas.

Very soon the original \$100,000 had been used up. "We needed to ratchet up the operation. We were finding more and more diamond indicators and we needed to bring in earthmoving equipment to expand the program. This needed further investment," he said. "And don't forget, everything was happening under tight secrecy."

By 1975 the original joint venture was experiencing change. Some parties wanted to concentrate on an alluvial diamond discovery while others wanted to continue to explore further prospects. The result was a radical split; a split that Tyler believes had the potential to sink the entire project.

"The whole project could have foundered," he recalled. "Our London interests recommended bringing in a 'Big Brother' investor and so we set about looking at that option." Eventually, after a couple of false starts and some political corporate machinations, mining giant CRA (later to become Rio Tinto) agreed to participate gaining a 35 per cent share of the new Ashton Joint Venture in return for spending \$1.3 million on further exploration and development activities.

"I stayed on as Chairman of the joint venture and my staff of 45 people moved to CRA. By now we had found the source of the M109 sample and discovered other diamond-bearing pipes and indicators in the east and west Kimberley."

The next major development came in November 1976 when CRA's chief man in the field, Frank Hughes, walked up a river bed east of Derby and stumbled on what was to become the Ellendale diamond field. It was pegged and developed during the next two years, and the news of the discovery was finally made to the outside world.

"We had found beautiful yellow diamonds," Tyler said. "The problem was there really weren't enough diamonds per tonne of rock to make full-scale mining a commercial proposition."

Meanwhile, at Smoke Creek in the east Kimberley, Maureen Muggeridge, responsible for sample M109, working with her husband, made yet another find. Further prospecting of the Smoke Creek site in 1979 revealed the Argyle Pipe, and as they say, the rest is history.

The area was pegged but there were complications, resulting in a long and drawn-out legal battle over title to the claim. It finally took special legislation enacted by the

Government of WA to sort the matter out and award right and title to the deposit to the Ashton Joint Venture.

The decision to go ahead and mine the Argyle site was made in 1983, after more than \$125 million was spent on exploration and prove-out activities. Another \$350 million would be needed to develop the mine, which began production in 1985 and was at one time the biggest diamond mine in the world, supplying up to 40 per cent of the world's diamonds.

"Our quality wasn't particularly high compared to other diamond fields, but our diamond content was very high," Tyler said. "We had some very fine gems, and some of our pink diamonds were very beautiful stones, highly sought-after and some fetching up to a million dollars for a one carat diamond. We also invented the terms 'champagne' and 'cognac' to describe our brown diamonds to help with our marketing program."

Ewen Tyler retired as Chairman of the joint venture in 1990. Since then he has continued to play a significant role in the mining industry as a mining investment consultant and company director. Currently he is still Chairman of Lion Selection Ltd, an Australian mining investment company.

He was honoured in 1991 for services to the mining industry with the award of Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and was a recipient of the Clunies Ross Science and Technology Award in 1992.

He and wife Aldyth have three children, all born during their time in Africa, and they remain very close as a family, despite son Tim living in Montreal, Canada, son Brett in Castlemaine and daughter Jane in Woodend. All are married and between them have five children, equally adored by their grandparents.

A deeply religious churchgoer, Ewen is also respected as a thinker; he has a keen interest in rock art, a life-long interest in anthropology and is a self-professed and outspoken sceptic on the subject of climate change and global warming . . . but that is another story.

His home is filled with drawings, paintings and sculpture, a Pro Hart and several Ben Shearers in pride of place among the many artifacts and mementos of a lifetime of travel. And of course, then there are the rocks – all sorts of rocks, but front and centre of his collection are the black volcanic lumps formed 200 kilometres below the earth's surface 1.2 billion years ago, that, to the geologist spell DIAMOND.

He and Aldyth were about to depart for a month's holiday in India when we had our chat, and you can bet that in between the usual sight-seeing, Ewen's sharp eyes will be on the look out for odd-looking lumps of rock to casually kick . . . just in case!

"Life's all part of a journey and I'm an explorer."

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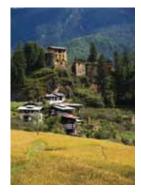
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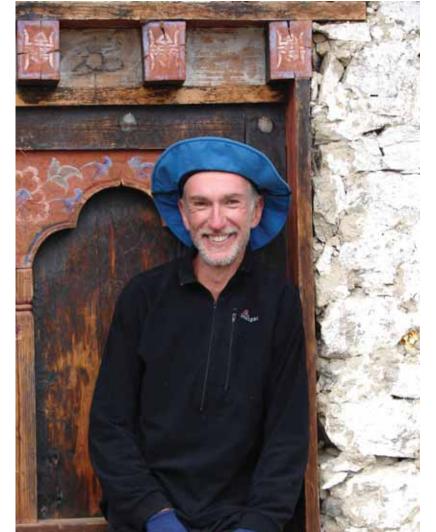














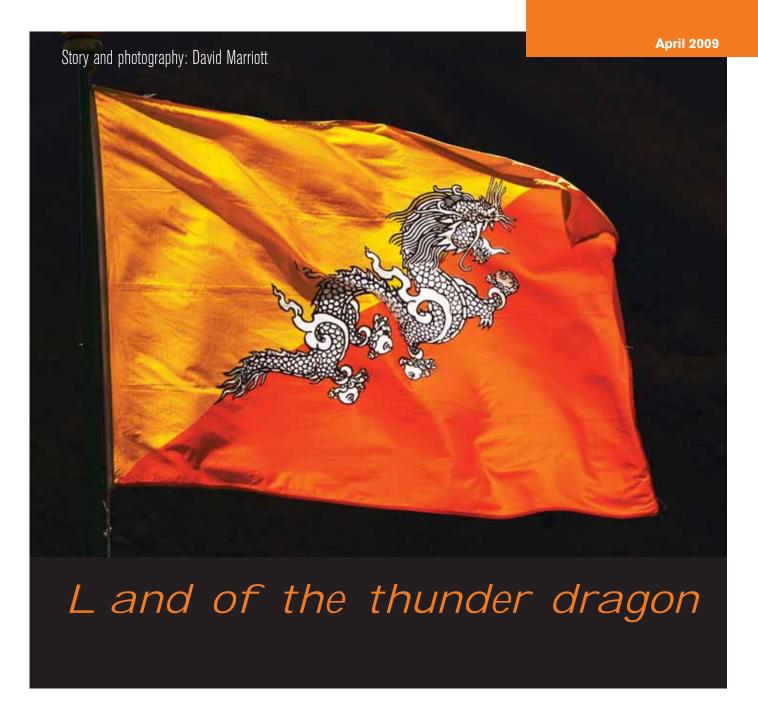






This page: Author, David Marriott, framed by images of his time in Bhutan. (Photo of David Marriott, courtesy of Jill Costigan – a fellow trekker on the trip through Bhutan).

Opposite page, top: The national flag of Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon.



Bhutan. Land of the Thunder Dragon. Even the names have a certain mystique!

Twenty years ago, on my first high altitude trek in Nepal, this mysterious country even then held a firm fascination. The fact that Druk Yul, as it is known to the Bhutanese, is also a closed country only served to increase its appeal.

Travel into, and within Bhutan is well controlled by the Government. Unlike Nepal, its close neighbour to the west, which opened its doors to all travellers, Bhutan heavily regulates the number of tourists in an attempt to help retain its own cultural identity. "Gross National Happiness" is far more important than Gross National Product to the Bhutanese people! Abolishing the monarchy's absolute rule, the abdicating king's policies have been maintained by the elected officials after the country's first ever national elections in 2008. Entry into Bhutan can only be done as a prearranged group and all the travel arrangements and accommodation must be prepaid.

Flying in via Kolkata had been an exhilarating experience, the wing tips you would swear almost clipping the mountain sides as we dropped, snaking our way down into the valley. I had joined the other members of World Expeditions' Snowman Trek at Paro, the only runway in Bhutan capable of safely accommodating a jet aircraft.

Almost adjacent to the runway is Paro Dzong, the religious and administrative centre for the province. Passing the dzong, on the way to our hotel, we stopped for a while to watch an archery competition. The locals are fiercely competitive, and take their national sport very seriously.

The first few days of the trek were through heavily wooded valleys, gradually climbing to Jangothang, an area at the base of Chomolari, Bhutan's most sacred mountain, where we had a two night stop for acclimatisation. On the way we had passed many superb examples of Bhutanese architecture, where the front and sides of the farmhouses had been, presumably at great expense, heavily decorated both in terms of the beautiful hand carved woodwork, and the exquisite paintings on the whitewashed walls. The back walls by contrast seem to be left totally unadorned. The roof space was left open in order to dry and store hay, corn and potatoes.

The day to day routine of the trek began to settle in with us all. Some of us were up before sunrise in order to capture the early morning rays on the higher peaks; others chose to capture a few more minutes sleep. Every pass we crossed (and there were eleven over 4500m on this trek) was clearly marked with a plethora of multi-coloured







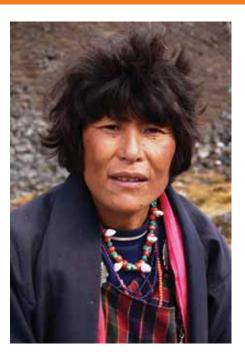


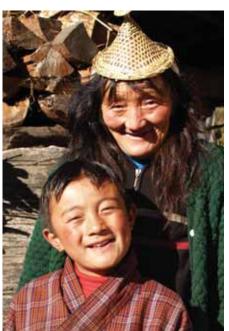


The Snowman Trek is acknowledged as one of the worlds "Great Treks", and also one of the toughest.











prayer flags, placed there by local people, and the occasional trekking group as they crossed. Tibetan Buddhists believe that mountain passes are auspicious places, and that the prayers printed on the colourful flags are released by the passing breeze. We Westerners, joined in the spirit of the nation, and shouted a very happy "Lah Gelo" as a salutation to the Gods as we passed each summit cairn.

Lingzhi deserves a particular mention; the head monk of this particular dzong gave us a full "tour", after which we were invited to sit in and watch a group of novice monks as they chanted their prayers. We were as much a novelty to the giggling young boys as they were to us!

Laya was a special stop, if for no other reason than it being only the second spot we had two consecutive nights without moving on! It is a staging post for the yak herders who carry much of our gear; for us a chance to have a rest day, and spend time exploring this delightful village. The local people throughout Bhutan were just so hospitable during our entire trip. For example, where else would you expect to see the whole village turn out on a drizzle laden night to put on a local dance spectacular, all dressed in their local costumes, the ladies of Laya with their conical bamboo hats peculiar to this village alone? A few bottles of the local 'HIT' beer (and at approximately 8%, very aptly named!) found their way into the camp that night; I'm well informed that it was followed by some local whiskey . . . but that's another story!

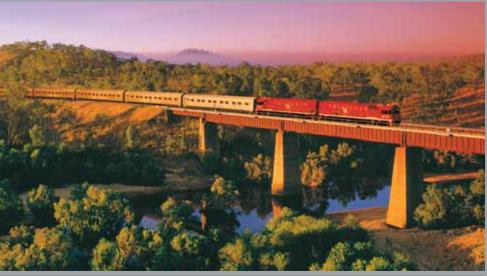
Travelling east, we spend several more days, some quite lengthy, crossing high passes, dropping into pristine almost uninhabited valleys, often with spectacular autumn colours,

inevitably followed by yet another pass. It just seemed as if these glorious days would go on for ever, yet the question in all our minds kept returning. Are we going to be able to cross the 5000m high plateau of Lunana, and complete our trek, or are we destined to have to retrace our steps as is sometimes the case? Will we be forced back by bad weather, poor health, the non-availability of yaks, lack of availability of provisions or some other obstacle? The Snowman Trek is acknowledged as one of the worlds "Great Treks", and also one of the toughest. At an average altitude of well over 4000m, and over three weeks in duration, all these possibilities begin to play on the mind, but so far every element had fallen into place perfectly!

The village of Chozo has perhaps a dozen families; some would say it is possibly just one large fully integrated family! Either way, it was a superb place for our final rest day before the big haul up to and several hard days to cross the Lunana plateau. Brilliant sunshine, when this high up, is always welcome, and we had a full day of it, right underneath the fabled Table Mountain. Some went on an exploratory excursion to an adjacent village, some merely rested; others, me included, went off camera in hand.

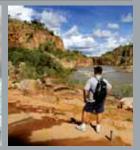
As a group, we had all counted ourselves just so lucky throughout this trip to be where we were at the right time. Yes, the following day we had a 1200m climb up from 4000m; wasn't that one of the reasons we were there? Those in the know who have seen our photos have all remarked that "the weather was just so clear". We saw Lunana as few others have. One of our cook crew, on his ninth Snowman trip had seen it all before but never all in one journey as we did. Endless vistas of snow













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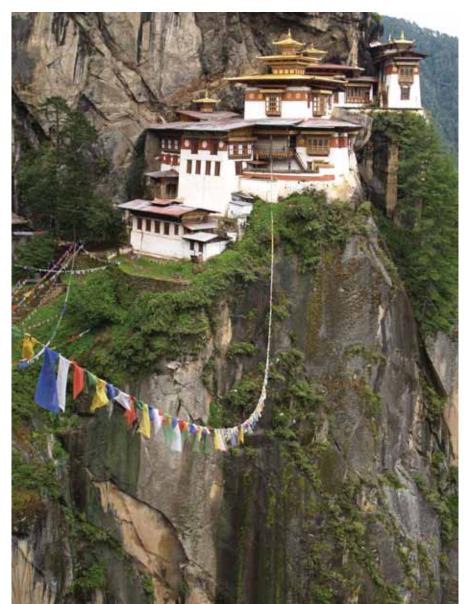
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Left: "Taktshang", or the "Tiger's Nest" Monastery, perched precariously above the Paro valley. (It's *the* most sacred place of Bhutan).

Below right: The ladies of Laya with their conical bamboo hats peculiar to this village alone perform a dance show for the visitors.

Bottom right: Setting up camp.





and ice covered mountain peaks, dark blue to black lakes of snowmelt, and bright turquoise glacial lakes, often times side by side. Then a caravan of several hundred yaks returning from the "lowlands", if 3000m can be so called, laden with winter supplies for several villages.

The end of the trek meant that our time in this paradise was drawing to a close. But Bhutan still had more in store however, as our return to Paro and home took us via Punakha, the old capital, and Thimphu, the current one.

Punakha is situated at the confluence of the Mo Chhu (Mother River) and the Pho Chhu (Father River), a very auspicious location. We had crossed both these rivers on our journey by foot through the mountains.

The main attraction is the superb Punakha Dzong, once the true seat of power within Bhutan. In essence it is together an administrative centre with its own secular areas for government, an ecclesiastical centre which houses both monks, novice monks and exquisitely decorated prayer halls, and a fortress all rolled into one! Originally introduced from Tibet, and built with a local architectural style all of their own, these buildings and the people within are almost a living breathing monument to the lives of the Bhutanese.

Yet they are so much more than monuments, as they are still fully functioning and highly active in both their governmental and spiritual roles. This country really stirs the emotions with its own delightful mixture of medieval and future. Whilst there's

no coverage in the mountains, mobile phones are a common sight in the townships, particularly amongst the younger generations, and remember, this is a country where it only became legal to have a satellite TV dish just a few short years ago.

Thimphu, the current capital is located further south and at a lower level and therefore warmer in winter; a capital city where the locals rejected traffic lights in favour of the return of a well dressed and brilliantly choreographed policeman!

Bhutan is famous for its exquisite silks, and some members of the group bought souvenirs and mementos; even the most hardened of us had to own up to the delights of seeing shops after a three week absence!

Whilst my journey within Bhutan was by design an arduous one, there are many more far less "demanding" trips to be enjoyed, some of which require only a very basic level of fitness. Bhutan is a country rich in culture, and not afraid to show it with a multitude of festivals throughout the year.

Third world travel may not be for everyone, but the rewards of doing so can enrich everyone who ventures out. All that is required is an open mind, a wish to explore, and a degree of cultural and religious sensitivity. Often it is only after a period of reflection upon the odyssey and on one's normal day to day lifestyle that the true benefits of time well spent in another culture become apparent.

Editor's note: More information on the Snowman Trek to Bhutan can be found at www.worldexpeditions.com.au



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How can I protect my 'nest egg' from falling further?

With share prices almost halving in the space of a year and media headlines battering confidence, the accepted wisdom of "hang on in there for the long run" is understandably offering cold comfort to many investors.

The weight of history

Last year was undeniably traumatic for investors, as the US sharemarket fell 38 per cent and Australian shareholders faring even worse, with local stocks shedding 41 per cent.

These are worrying times but share prices have fallen before and the markets have always recovered.

Over the past century there have been 10 occasions when the sharemarket has fallen by over 20 per cent and it has taken an average of 22 months for stocks to reach new highs.

But timing the rebound is difficult, particularly in turbulent times such as these, with share price volatility 13 times the Australian average.

So is cash the answer?

When the going gets tough, it's tempting to sit out a downturn and wait for a protracted period of growth before reinvesting in higher risk investments.

Many investors are reacting to market uncertainty by pulling out of growth assets and putting their savings in low-risk, low-return asset classes such as cash and fixed interest.

But cash isn't necessarily a safe haven. As interest rates keep on falling, cash assets will struggle to keep pace with inflation, let alone provide the growth you need.

Investors with term deposits, for example, can generally expect an average return of 4 per cent. By comparison, Australian shares are currently offering a dividend yield of approximately 7 per cent.

Growth and protection – squaring the circle

Despite the weight of historical evidence that markets inevitably recover, you could be forgiven for remaining uncomfortable about investing in the market.

A possible solution is capital protection products.

For a small extra fee, capital protection products buy you peace of mind. You can stay fully invested in the market and take full advantage of any rebound in share prices without worrying about your investments depreciating further in value.

There are some capital protection products in the market that return your initial investment and contributions or your account balance, whichever is greater.

If you're approaching retirement, your number one priority is safeguarding your retirement income.

Capital protection allows you to ensure what you have built up remains yours and cannot be taken away from you.

If you're already retired, you can remain invested in growth assets and draw an income without worrying that your pension funds will depreciate.

And even if retirement is still some way over the horizon, you might still want to consider capital protection to avoid any unpleasant surprises. One bad year can derail your investment strategy and force you to delay your retirement plans.

Capital protection products such as AXA's North product can give you:

- the opportunity to build and protect your wealth by guaranteeing your contributions
- the ability to accelerate your retirement investment strategy by increasing your exposure to growth assets without the downside risk that ordinarily accompanies them
- peace of mind that your retirement savings are protected, even if there is a downturn
- insurance against a sudden market crash, and
- the flexibility to lock-in future growth and rest the capital protection at a higher level.

If you are feeling nervous and the markets are causing you financial concerns, I would invite you to contact our office on 03 9629 6922 to find out how capital protection options can fit into your personal financial strategy.

Author of "Grow Manage & Protect your Wealth - 17 Tips You Can't Alford To Ignore", Dominic Alafaci is Managing Director of Collins House Pty Ltd and a Board Member of the Financial Industry Complaints Service Ltd. He appears regularly on Melbourne's 3AW radio as the resident financial planning and investment expert and has a regular column in the Sunday Herald Sun.

MURCOTTS driving exc

Many of us have been driving for many years and may consider ourselves experienced drivers yet, with road rage increasing and pleas from Victoria Police to take better care on our roads, it might be time to look not at others but at ourselves.

"It is not only the younger drivers that need further training and experience," says Geoff Thomas of Murcotts Driving Excellence. "Passing a licence test is simply the start of a driver's education."

While people often love their vehicles, think of themselves as experienced and enjoy driving, most will have had a crash at some stage. But, Geoff says, great drivers don't have crashes, not even small ones and that is what Murcotts defensive driving programs are all about.

As Managing Director of Murcotts, which trains emergency vehicle drivers such as Victorian Ambulance, fire crews and Department of Sustainability staff as well as Yarra Trams, Geoff knows what he's talking about. Many companies have driver training courses developed specifically for their staff and, Geoff says, the results can be major with a 40% reduction in crashes recorded at one company alone.

"What we teach drivers, is that it is not about other people's driving, it's about what you do to handle other drivers' actions and the driving conditions," says Geoff, who maintains that reflecting on your own contribution is one of the most important components to defensive driving.

While older drivers may have gleaned experience by default over the years, they lack the skills newer drivers are taught these days, and some young drivers will have taken on some of the bad traits of parents having observed them over many years.

"Another important issue is not only recognising your own driving limitations but also the limitations of your car," he added.

Murcotts mantra of safe driving is quite simple: "Look up and stay back. These two behaviours will help drivers anticipate what is happening ahead of them and will give them time to avoid any hazards," he said.

While many courses are tailored to suit the particular needs of organisations, all Murcotts Driving Excellence programs address the five key components of a driver's profile: behaviour, attitude, awareness, motivation and skills.

The core programs Murcotts offers include defensive driving, 4-wheel drive courses, young driver development and fleet and driver management. Murcotts

Murcotts the voice of driving

Story: Di James - Photography: Rebecca Hudson

also provides crash investigation training and is about to launch a revolutionary learner driver curriculum.

Geoff believes that the reduction in road fatalities over the years reflects improvements to vehicles by the automotive companies who have continued to innovate and not enough credit is given to them. However, he says while fatalities are reducing, there are 47 serious injury crashes a day in Victoria on top of the hundreds of minor crashes daily. This indicates that driver safety skills are generally below par.

He is also a critic of the current licensing system and says that in theory it is possible to obtain a licence without even having a lesson and that too little training is provided to young people who then take on the responsibility of a vehicle.

At the heart of this thinking is that drivers do not improve unless they understand their own attitude and behaviour. Geoff refers to the 'causal attribution theory' which typically focuses on "not my fault".

"We want drivers to become more reflective as well as more skilled," he said.

Murcotts trains over 14,000 drivers a year around Australia in programs that include cars, special vehicles, trams and trucks with the focus very much on defensive



"What we teach drivers, is that it is not about other people's driving, it's about what you do to handle other drivers' actions and the driving conditions," says Geoff Thomas, of Murcotts Driving Excellence.

driving. There has been a major move away from emergency response skills training that was the hallmark of the original driving programs started by the late Jim Murcott.

"Jim was a Ballarat-based journalist who became concerned at the number of accidents and fatalities he was reporting and decided to do something about it. He was a strong advocate for change in road safety, often taking on the government and police for failing to push for better education of drivers."

A well known identity in both motor racing and journalistic circles, Jim died in 2001 and the business was later sold to Geoff. Working with the strong reputation of Murcotts, Geoff decided to take the business in a slightly different direction and with his own background in health safety and organisational change, has focused more on risk management approaches and cultural change initiatives in road safety.

With his staff of 40 people around Australia and headquarters based in Dandenong Road, Carnegie, Geoff also works with road trauma specialist staff and has included psychologists in his team.

"We also operate a Department of Human Services accredited drink driver education and assessment program as well as a traffic offenders program, and have drivers with drink and drug problems who have been referred to us by the courts. We have learned there is little point in trying to improve their driving if the real problem is in their behaviour, so we are working to address these issues in this particular program," he said.

Other programs include education programs targeting schools and increasingly working with companies and organisations which recognise health factors in their staff such as diabetes, sleep disorders, vision diseases, stress and behavioural problems that can present employers with increased liability when these people drive in the course of their work.

Although Geoff has taken Murcotts in a new direction, the fundamentals of developing safer driving skills remain and are reflected in its founder's quote in a submission to Victoria Police in 1982: "Driver safety awareness comes as a natural result of learning how much they don't know."

And that's probably just as relevant 27 years later.



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Social networking: fun, friends, profit and danger

Story: Alex Zaharov-Reutt

Home

Communicating online with family, friends, colleagues, customers and strangers has become so much easier thanks to sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube - but the benefits come with dangers such as identity theft and the potential loss of privacy.

Social networking has been the buzzword of the last few years, seemingly outliving "fad" status and growing into an accepted way to stake your own place in cyberspace and take part in the global online community.

The most well known social networking sites include FaceBook, MySpace,

social networking sites

LinkedIn, Digg, Twitter, and YouTube, and all are part of the "Web 2.0" generation. There are also social networking sites for "tweens" and teenagers, such as Disney's Club Penguin, Habbo Hotel and others.

The term Web 2.0 is used because these are "second generation" web sites, each powered by an online database, with ever changing, exponentially growing "dynamic" content created almost entirely by users like you and me.

What can you do with these sites?

- Connect with current and long lost friends, make new friends
- Keep everyone updated on your activities from one central location
- Promote your business and find interesting new people to work with or sell to
- Share your photos, videos and see those of friends
- Play with and use a variety of online apps (software)
- Alert your online contacts to what you're doing or thinking
- Access the sites using a computer, or for anywhere access, from most "smartphones"
- And more!

It's addictive!

Social networking sites can quickly become very addictive, and you can find yourself spending a lot of time updating your own profile, seeing what all your friends are up to and communicating galore.

Many (but not all) schools and workplaces have banned the use of social networking sites during business hours because it can be such a time sink, but despite the threat of leaving you living more of your life online than off, social networking sites continue growing in popularity.

Facebook

The biggest social networking site of the moment is Facebook www.facebook.com. Billed by its creators as giving "people the power to share" and making "the world more open and connected", it's used by millions every day to "keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet."

MySpace

Often appealing to a slightly younger "teenager" demographic than Facebook, MySpace www.myspace.com is also still hugely popular and essentially offers the same benefits and features as Facebook. It's also very popular with bands wanting to promote their music and activities.

Twitter

Unlike Facebook and MySpace which offer a plethora of ways to share information about yourself and view the information of others, Twitter www.twitter.com is more focused.

It's a "service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" - in 140 characters or less, much like SMS.

Twitter can also be accessed on mobile phones, with people using Twitter to relay information to others faster than through TV, radio or online news stories.

This was evident during the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India and during January's plane crash into New York's Hudson River. Twitter users quickly submitted information on what they were seeing unfold before their eyes.

log out





Social networking sites can quickly become very addictive, and you can find yourself spending a lot of time updating your own profile, seeing what all your friends are up to and communicating galore.







YouTube

YouTube **www.youtube.com** has the motto of "Broadcast Yourself" and is a massive online video community that allows anyone to discover, watch and share originally-created videos.

Users can rate and comment on videos, embed clips into sites or blogs and share video links over email. There's everything from "funniest home videos" style clips through to full TV shows and plenty in between.

As long as you have a camera or phone that can record video, you can submit your own videos to YouTube too, if you want to.

Dangers of social networking sites

With so much of your personal information online, your social networking profile(s) can be backed into.

- Passwords can be guessed, so use one with letters (in upper and lower case), numbers and even symbols, if possible
- Is your PC being used without your permission? Ensure it has a password on startup and think twice before automatically letting your browser remember your passwords
- Passwords can be stolen by email viruses, Trojan horses, and malware
- Your profile can be snooped upon by hackers who are breaking into the backend of social networking sites.

Twitter was recently attacked with the profiles of celebrities such as Britney Spears suddenly sending out odd (fake) messages, while a recent email virus tried to install the "Koobface" Trojan horse on computers, specifically designed to steal Facebook usernames and passwords.

To protect yourself, use a strong password, install the latest "2009" Internet Security packages, set your operating system to regularly update itself, and make sure to update the software you use with updates, service packs and security fixes, too.

If necessary, get professional help to ensure your computer and online life is secure and protected.

Also remember not to post information, photos or videos online that you wouldn't want future employers, romantic partners or anyone else to see.

For more tips on safety, please visit www.safesocialnetworking.com, www.getsafeonline. com and www.commonsensemedia.org/advice-for-parents.

But it's not all doom, gloom and stranger danger – social networking has opened up a whole new sphere of communications and community that has captured the imagination and the attention of millions.

Go and check it out - many of your friends are ready and waiting to hear from you, online!

Editor's note: Alex Zaharov-Reutt received his first computer at the age of four in 1979, three years before the IBM PC was invented! He now works as a technology journalist in print, TV, radio and online.

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In the early days of buying and collecting wine, it is not unusual for collectors to favour certain wines and regions as they calibrate their palate. Along the way most enthusiasts begin to realise that they like their wines better after they have aged for a few years and around this time too, they also realise that most of the wines they have in their cellars are not consistent with the long term mix of the wines that they would like in their cellars.

So many collectors find themselves selling off the parts of their collections that no longer suit their drinking tastes and as it is illegal to sell alcohol without a liquor licence, the usual course of action is for these collectors to sell their wines through an established wine auction house.

Dedicated wine auction businesses began in Australia about 20 years ago, yet remarkably, only a tiny fraction of the wine buying public has ever participated in a wine auction. In the main this is because buyers participating in wine auctions need to know which wine producers they want to buy, which older vintages they wish to purchase and, most importantly, what price they are prepared to pay.

Overlaying this level of background knowledge is the question of 'provenance'; in other words where has the wine been previously cellared and how do I know I am purchasing a wine in good condition?

Somewhat amazingly, the burden of expectation on wine auction houses in regard to provenance seems to be so much higher than the public expects of their local wine retail store. I say amazingly, because the cellaring conditions in your average retail shop are not conducive to the long term cellaring of wine. Temperature control and humidity control are poor due to the need for stores to open their doors to the public, and air conditioning systems are usually switched off all together when the store is closed.

Additionally fluorescent lighting is damaging to wine over time and even worse is the situation where sunlight is shining directly on wine located close to the shop windows.

One would expect therefore that any bottle of wine which has gone from a good cellar direct to an auction house would have a far greater chance of being in better condition that a wine acquired at a retail store.

So without getting bogged down on past provenance of an aged bottle of wine, all auction buyers usually really need to pay attention to is the level inside the bottle. If a wine has been poorly cellared the elastic properties of the cork will begin to deteriorate within a few years and more and more air will be exposed to the wine causing evaporation to occur. As the wine evaporates, the level inside the bottle will decrease and if the level falls below the level of the base of the neck of the bottle into the curved shoulder of the bottle, then the chances are high that the wine drinkability will start to deteriorate.

The next problem for many potential auction customers is what price to pay. Almost always, a wine auction price will be lower than a retail price; hence wine auctions offer buyers the cheapest means of acquiring the wines they want to add to their collections. These days with the internet there are some very good search engine sites to help find wines and a retail price. We would recommend www.winesearcher. com or www.winerobot.com.au. Even experienced auction buyers can gain valuable insights into the potential market price of a wine from these sites and compare it with the forecast estimate which is usually provided by the auction house. These forecast estimates are based on the historical price performance of the same wine at prior auctions and so can be a very good guide.

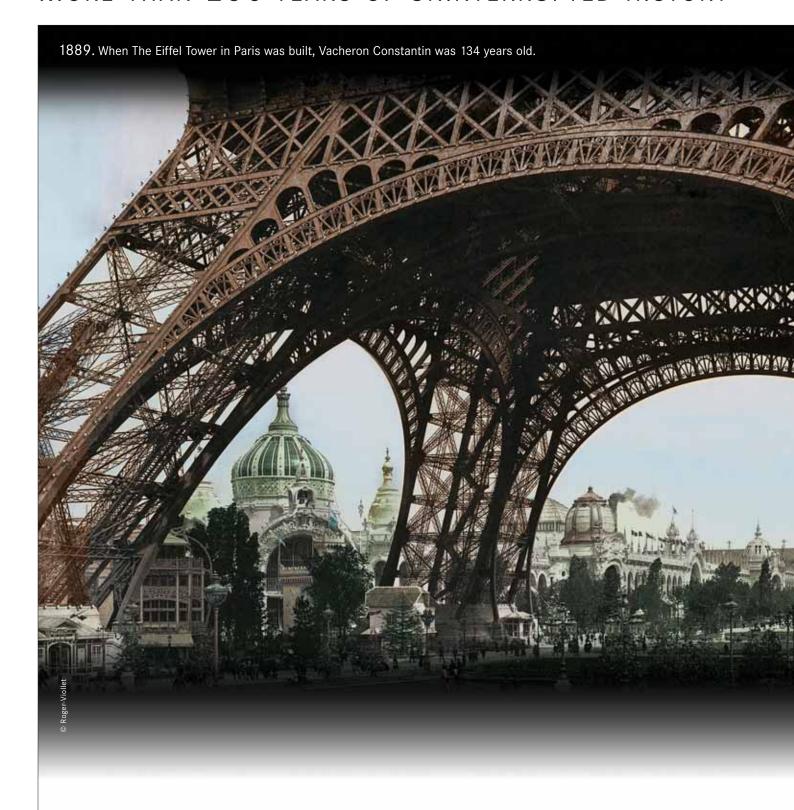
So if you're thinking about buying at auction, then seek to acquire only wines with good levels (into the neck); do your research on potential retail prices, subscribe to one or more of the leading auction houses and start bidding!

MW wines can ofter advice on the buying of cellar wines at auction. To find out more, visit
www.mwwwines.com.au. Or ring and ask to speak to Robert Worthington or Daniel Schwarze on 03 9419 6990.
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Robert Worthington is a director of MW wines, Australia's premier rare and fine wine company.



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MALTE REGULATOR TOURBILLON

(39.9 mm x 49.9 mm)

1790R hand-wound mechanical movement. Tourbillon regulator. Indication of hour and minutes via regulator display. Power reserve of approximately 45 hours. Case in 950 platinum with transparent caseback. Glareproofed crystal. Water-resistant to 30 meters (~100 feet). Platinum dial with frosted finish and "PT950" hallmark. Hands and Arabic numerals in 18K gold. Platinum deployment clasp. Limited-edition Excellence Platine Collection of 50 individually numbered watches.

30080 / 000P-9256





Manufacture Horlogère. Genève, depuis 1755.

intage Story: Di James - Photography: Rebecca Hudson posters

It's not often we think about advertisements as collectors' items with most of us finding too many advertisements irritating beyond description.









down High Street, Armadale to the Letitia Morris Gallery will Yet a trip down High Street, Armadale to the change your mind in an instant.

For those with an eye for collecting and good design, vintage poster art offers interesting art, often at an affordable entry price according to gallery owner Brett Ross.

Here famous brand names that have stood the test of time such as Bally, Dior, Chanel, Taittinger and Maggi to name a few, are featured regularly in the extensive range of vintage posters on display at the gallery.

"Poster art pre-dated photography and was used decoratively around the turn of the nineteenth century. Posters were created by well known artists such as the French artist Toulouse Lautrec and the Czech artist Alphonse Mucha," said Brett,

"Mucha in particular has become very popular with the Americans these days, with a panelled screen room divider selling in the United States recently for \$160,000," he added. Other prominent names include Leonetto Cappiello a French Italian of the 1900s and Cassandre, whose real name was Adolf Mouron, who left his mark in the art deco era.

Perhaps one of the most prolific artists of his time was Sauvignac whose work covered the 1930s through to the 1990s. Brett says that while most posters include either text or space for text - usually for a retailer to personalise their details - Sauvignac's work is characterised by a lack of text and very good humour. Other artists became associated with a particular brand, like Bernard Villemot for example, who used his talent over many vears for the Bally brand, with the two becoming synonomous.

Brett says poster art was not only used extensively to promote products, but also by train and travel companies, and in countries such as Russia, as propaganda vehicles. Similarly, events such as the Spanish Civil War and even the student up-rising in Paris in 1968 have been captured on posters and are considered important portrayals of history.

"Their work can be found in galleries around the world such as Musee des Art Decoratifs in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

"Poster art is fashionable across Europe, with its core interest in France. I came to know the poster art world during 35 years living in Paris and sourcing paintings for Christies and Sothebys." Brett said

Brett returned to Australia in 2006 taking over the gallery which was started by his mother, Letitia. The gallery had primarily dealt in antiques, but Brett and a cousin began the vintage poster business in 1994.

Unlike the United States where major collections of poster art are held, the Australian market is not as sophisticated, with most interest being focussed on the 1930-70 period rather than the earlier years which appeal to overseas collectors and institutions. Brett says that some major Australian galleries have small collections of poster art, but lately Australian libraries such as the Queensland National Library in particular are starting to acquire some of the Australian poster art from the 1950s for display. However in terms of private collections Brett believes there is probably only one serious collector of international standing in Australia and three public galleries.

"Part of the value of a vintage poster lies in the fact that the artist did not just contribute his creative in-put but often his technical in-put as well," he said, adding that often the artists could demand they be printed with the finest techniques such as lithography. Brett says that poster art can start at \$50 for a poster and may range up to \$100,000 depending upon rarity of the work, the artist involved, the condition of the poster and interest by collectors.

A member of the International Vintage Poster Dealers' Association, Brett says that of all the posters produced only about one per cent have any real value. "The majority are useless and unwanted. Many have been damaged but sometimes they are found unused having been stored in garages and warehouses. Even then many of these are by artists not considered significant by collectors."

Above: A selection of posters available from the Letitia Morris Gallery.

Right: Brett Ross, owner of the Gallery - named after his mother, who originally dealt primarily



'OUTSHINE'



HOLLOWAY DIAMONDS
THE SCIENCE OF LIGHT**



