

Trip Report – Hunter Valley/Wollombi to St. Albans March 15th & 16th

Lee Wade & Brian Webster
Jack & Pam Simpson
Eric & Stephanie Guthrie
Ian & Rhonda McKinley
Ian Bamforth

Patrol
Pajero (White Knight)
Landcruiser
Rodeo (White Submarine)
Rodeo

Author: Brain Webster Day One

We meet at the Twin Service Stations F3 at 9.00am on a magic Saturday morning; it was that great, even the Fair Weather families came out to play! (Believe there are a few new members)

We then departed for the Hunter Valley, 5 vehicles in total.

We worked our way to the first winery "Golden Grape", a quick check of the watches and it was 10.01 am, phew, we nearly had to wait till it was after 10am. Ian spotted the Chilli Dragon Snaps, he just had to try it, we all watched the perspiration run down his forehead and we knew he liked it! Pam then spotted the love potion; we will have to find out later of Jack if it was any good??? We also learnt why they have roses around the grape vines.

Then we were off to Drayton's Family wines, we took time out to look at the damage from the explosion, which sadly had claimed two lives. Then we drank to them, in true Hunter spirit, while Rhonda & Lee were busy buying up bags to put their stash of wine into, and others were looking for paper bags!

Here we were at the third winery and it wasn't even 11.30 am, we were then lead into the Hunter resort, where the Hunter Valley Gardens are, chocolate shop, lolly shop, beer tastings, Restaurants and Hunter cellars.

Some wanted to just set up camp in the gardens, as they though they thought they had found paradise!!!! Oh, Ian found the Ken Duncan Gallery; he was last seen talking about portraits, landscapes and blowing things up??

We then headed into Mc Guigan's for tastings and sampling their award winning wines. The more we bought the bigger the discount, the trouble was that we were all running out of room!!!

We had a picnic lunch in Mc Guigan's winery, a lovely setting you picked, Lee. We had planned on cheese biscuits etc, but cheese from the cheese shop at \$25.00 per 200g. was off the list. That's almost two bottles of wine.

After lunch we headed to Mc Williams, for more tastings. Lee was heard to be looking for a Sunstone; we all thought she had too much of the good stuff! But it was a wine from the Riverina area. It was just about time for a nap.

We then headed off to Wollombi, but we arrived to find out the grass was a tad long!!

We realized why Ian had brought his mate Ian along, to find all the holes in the ground.

He nearly disappeared down some!!

We set up camp; we then headed up to the tavern to discuss the day so far, over some cool liquids. It was then forwarded that it was happy hour time, so we

returned to camp and enjoyed a great afternoon, chatting over the wines acquired from the area that day.

After dinner we sat down and discussed the finer points of wine and how sticky properties of paspalum. Eric had brought some Dr Jurds Jungle juice for everyone to sample, it has a great effect, and we all relaxed and were ready to hit the hay.

Day Two

It was an early start, first person up at 8am. And the fog!!!
We had brekkie and tidied up, and sadly Eric and Stephanie had to leave us

We left the Tavern around 10 am and head to Finchelys via Yengo Creek Rd, Ian was asked to lead in the White Submarine to check the water crossings out ☺
Sorry Ian.

It was only 20 km and we allowed 45 min - an hour and a half later we arrived. After a few steep sections and dirt tracks we stopped and looked at the Trig and took some photos of the magnificent view. Wow, it was like being on top of the world!

Jack was showing us his tight rope skills on a rail whilst taking photos, and then received a lecture from Pam.

We then headed down to look at the caves Ian knew of with the Aboriginal art (hand painting). We also looked at sandstone outcrops that contained carvings by the indigenous aborigines where they had carved images of local fauna; there were also a lot of new carvings, but sadly not by the Aborigines.

Back to Wollombi for lunch then onto the Great North Rd, There were figures of people along the side of the road everywhere, even a wedding at the church. Later found out it was annual competition for the locals.

We stopped and looked at the historic convict sandstone walls along the way, and how they had carved the road out of the sandstone. We then traveled on to Mogo Camping area and what a great area this was.

Then through to St Albans, were we washed the dust down, land looked at the vintage cars that just happened to be there on display. We wondered what the rest of the world was doing??

Sadly it was time to head home, only one last water crossing (ferry) and then on home.

A fantastic weekend with great people, thanks Lee for a wonderful weekend.