TOUR CODE

VRAU

ADVENTURESABROAD

AUSTRALIA with Victor Romagnoli

Featuring the Red Centre, Kakadu, Western Australia & Tasmania

21 days

Updated 06/01/2013

Day 1 *Arrival in Sydney*

Today we arrive in Sydney, New South Wales.*

Sydney is regarded as one of the world's greatest coastal cities. The odd thing is that when the British explorer Captain James Cook sailed up the east coast of Australia in 1770 he missed the site altogether. He saw the Sydney Heads, of course, but did not guess that a vast harbour lay behind them. So when a British fleet arrived to establish a colony in Australia in 1788 it went first to nearby Botany Bay. Within days, however, Sydney Harbour was discovered and the settlement moved there.

* As many travellers have already been to Sydney, we don't include any sightseeing on this program. If you'd like some independent time in Sydney pre-tour, please advise so that your flights and extra accommodation can be booked well in advance.

ATTENTION: This tour is based on a Qantas air pass that MUST be booked by Adventures Abroad in conjunction with Qantas international air tickets. If you intend to secure your own international air a SURCHARGE (approx 600-1000 USD) will apply.

Overnight in Sydney. Sydney Mercure Hotel or similar(hotels listed are tentative). Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Sydney - Ayers Rock (Uluru)*

Today we fly to Uluru, commonly called Ayers Rock, located in the centre of the continent.

Towering 343 m (1,143 feet) above the plain and measuring 9 km (5½ miles) in circumference, the rock is twice the size of central London! The rock is honeycombed with caves, some of which are used for tribal ceremonies and burial chambers. We enjoy the sunset which creates a series of ever-changing colours on the rock. Uluru is a remnant of ancient mountains which long ago weathered away, leaving the sandstone monolith standing alone in the desert. In 1989 scientists found evidence that Uluru, the Macdonnell Ranges, and a cluster of huge rock domes named Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) were part of a single plateau. Although British explorers trekked through the Red Centre as long ago as 1844, none of them visited Uluru until 1873 when it was named Ayers Rock after a colonial administrator of the day, Sir Henry Ayers.

This afternoon we will travel to Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) where we will have time for a short walk. We then proceed to Uluru for a short walk at the base before travelling to the sunset viewing area.

Overnight at Uluru. Desert Garden Hotel. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 *Uluru (Ayers Rock) & Olgas - Alice Springs*

Early this morning we will return to Uluru to view the sunrise and visit the Aboriginal Cultural Centre. This will also be your opportunity to climb Uluru.

We then cross the West MacDonnell Range to Alice Springs -- or "The Alice" as it is affectionately known. This is the heart of Central Australia, an area comprised of cavernous gorges, boundless desert landscapes, remote Aboriginal communities and a charming pioneering history. Alice Springs was established by the early explorers and remains as the centre of activity in this region. From the early 1900s, the vast desert of Central Australia was explored for its promise of rubies and gold.

Overnight in Alice Springs. Chifley Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Alice Springs Area*

Our day tour of Alice Springs includes the panoramic ANZAC Hill, the Old Telegraph Station, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service HQ. A must see for every visitor is the Alice Springs Desert Park. In the space of just a few hours, you can discover many of the secrets of the Central Australian deserts. Hundreds of species of plants and animals found across Central Australian deserts can be seen. Our visit involves an easy walking trail through three desert habitats. Witness free-flying birds of prey in the nature theatre, see rare and endangered animals in the spectacular nocturnal house, hear the insights into the interlinking world of plants, animals and people from our local guides and enjoy a cinematic journey through four-and-a-half billion years of desert evolution during the 20 minute cinematic journey of "The Changing Heart".

Overnight in Alice Springs. Chifley Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Alice Springs - Darwin: City Tour*

Today we transfer to the airport for our flight to Darwin, located at the "top end" of Australia and a city unlike any other. Darwin is Australia's most northern capital city and its isolation from the other states has encouraged the evolution of a unique lifestyle. It is both old style Australia and
distinctly Asian in feel and the genuine multicultural mix is reflected in the food, open-air markets and a people of immense character and hospitality. Here you will find a living Aboriginal history and art heritage, the elusive 'Dundees' and their crocodiliac partners lurking in the farms and wildlife parks. The perennially warm, tropical climate has bred an energetic outdoor lifestyle and a friendly, easy-going attitude to match.

On arrival we'll tour Darwin. Highlights include Parliament House, Stokes Hill Wharf area, Mooring Basin, Botanic Gardens and East Point Reserve. We continue to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. The galleries focus on the aspects of the Northern Territory environment, history, ethnic diversity maritime and natural history. The museum houses an impressive display of Aboriginal art.

Overnight in Darwin. Crowne Plaza Superior. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Darwin - Kakadu National Park*

Today we travel by road to Kakadu National Park along the Stuart and Arnhem Highways. We continue to Nourlangie Rock, an ancient Aboriginal living shelter. The area surrounding Nourlangie has great diversity: creeks, billabongs, sandy alluvial plains, forest and sandstone escarpment. Rich in food sources -- fish, waterfowl, wallabies, flying foxes and yams -- groups of Aboriginals made this area one where they would make camp and utilise the natural resources. Paintings of animals, insects and people that were done years ago, now help us to record human occupation in the

region. Signs and displays will give detailed explanations of the art and area.
We also have time to visit the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre to better understand the park's culture and history.

After a break for lunch, we visit the Ubirr Art Site on the edge of the Nadab floodplain, where there are several natural shelters that have a collection of Aboriginal rock paintings, some of which are many thousands of years old. The art depicts certain creation ancestors as well as animals from the area. We also visit the Warradjan Cultural Centre and learn about the traditions of the Aboriginal people.

Overnight in Kakadu. Aurora Kakadu Hotel (Kakadu room). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Kakadu National Park*

Today we have a relaxing cruise on Yellow Water Billabong, Kakadu's most famous wetland, located at the end of Jim Jim Creek, a tributary of the South Alligator River. The river system, which is the largest in Kakadu, contains extensive wetlands that include river channels, floodplains and backwater swamps.

Our visit coincides with the season known as Gunumeleng, the pre-monsoon season of hot weather that becomes more and more humid. Thunderstorms build in the afternoons and scattered showers bring a tinge of green to the dry land. As the streams begin to run, acidic water that washes from the floodplains can cause fish to die in billabongs with low oxygen levels. Waterbirds spread out as surface water and new growth become more widespread. Barramundi move from the waterholes downstream to the estuaries to breed. This was when Bininj/Mungguy moved camp from the floodplains to the stone country, to shelter from the violent storms of the coming wet season.

Overnight at Kakadu. Aurora Kakadu Hotel (Kakadu room). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 8 *Kakadu - Darwin*

This morning you have the option of a one hour scenic flight over Twin and Jim Jim Falls (optional: AUD 195 - your Tour Leader can pre-book).

We depart Kakadu and return to Darwin with a stop at the Wetlands Visitors Centre, which has great views over the wetlands.

Overnight in Darwin. Crowne Plaza (superior). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 9 *Darwin - Perth*

Today we fly south to Perth.

Founded in 1829 by James Sterling as part of the Swan River Colony, Perth was Australia's only free settlement. As the most isolated city on earth, it has slowly evolved into a dynamic, modern, multicultural city. The nearest city to Perth with a population of more than 500,000 is Adelaide, which is 2104 km (1,307 mi) away. Author Bill Bryson states that Perth is the most remote city on earth, which he justifies by noting that the population of metropolitan Perth is greater than the combined populations of the rest of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia, west of Adelaide.

Depending on the timing of today's flight, we may accomplish some of our sightseeing today upon arrival.

Overnight in Perth. Travelodge Townhouse. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 10 *Perth & Fremantle Tour*

Today's Grand Tour of Perth and the Perth area, we'll visit picturesque King's Park and enjoy stunning views of the city skyline and Perth River. We can grab a bite at any of the restaurants lining Marine Parade in Cottlesloe Beach and wander around Fremantle, with its docks, and alfresco cafes and restaurants. Fremantle is renowned for its well-preserved architectural heritage, including convict-built colonial-era buildings, an old jetty and port, and prisons; presenting a variety and unity of historic buildings and streetscapes.

We'll join a Captain Cook cruise (with complimentary wine tasting) on the way back to Perth. We enjoy more spectacular views from the Swan River and the posh Barrack Street Jetty.

Overnight in Perth. Travelodge Townhouse. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Perth - Margaret River & Winery*

Today we travel south through Busselton, a popular holiday resort on the shores of Geographe Bay. We visit the Margaret River Caves and explore awe-inspiring Mammoth Cave, home to ancient fossil remains of extinct animals.

We continue to Margaret River, one of Australia's premier wine growing regions. It has been a mere 40 years since the first vines were planted in the Margaret River region and already the area is recognised as one of the world's great fine wine producers. There are some 200 vineyards in the region and 90 wineries. The first type of wine to win acclaim in the region was Cabernet Sauvignon. Today Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Shiraz and Semillon are also of consistently high quality and win many awards.

The town is named after the river, which is presumed to be named after Margaret Whicher, cousin of John Garrett Bussell (founder of Busselton) in 1831. The name is first shown on a map of the region published in 1839. European migrants lived in the area as early as 1850, with timber logging commencing in around 1870.

Overnight in the Margaret River area. Margaret's Beach Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 12 *Margaret River Area*

This morning we enjoy a scenic journey through the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, with its peppermint trees and karri forest. We'll see Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse, situated at the most south westerly tip of Australia. Facing due west, the coastal cliffs and rocky shoreline bear the brunt of giant ocean swells generated across thousands of miles of ocean by the prevailing westerly and south-westerly winds. Punctuated along the coast are scenic lookouts from which to marvel at the ocean's beauty and power.

We will have a cellar tour, tastings and lunch at a local winery.

This afternoon there is time to explore Margaret River, including the ever-popular Chocolate Factory.

Overnight in Margaret River area. Margaret's Beach Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 13 *Margaret River - Albany*

En route to Albany, we view the enormous Gloucester Tree, the highest fire lookout tree in the world. We journey through the Valley of the Giants with its huge Tingle and Karri trees, and explore the canopy of the tingle forest along the Tree Top Walk.

We continue to Torndirrup National Park, home to the Natural Bridge and the Gap. The park is along the coast on the west side of King George Sound and consists of a range of cliffs, gullies, blowholes, beaches and promontories. The park was gazetted in 1918, one of the first in Western Australia. It was later named for an indigenous clan that lived in the area.

Our destination is Albany, which in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, served as a gateway to the Eastern Goldfields. For many years it was the colony's only deep-water port, having a place of eminence on shipping services between Britain and its Australian colonies. Today the town is a base for exploring the southwest of the state and well-regarded for its natural beauty and preservation of heritage.

Overnight in Albany. Metro Inn. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 14 *Albany - Esperance*

Albany has an important role in the Anzac legend, being the last port of call for troopships departing Australia in the First World War. The "legend" aspect tends to capture the idea of an Australian and New Zealand "national character," with the Gallipoli Campaign often described as being the moment of birth of the nationhood of both Australia and New Zealand. we visit the Anzac Memorial and enjoy the panoramic views.

We then travel to Bluff Knoll Lookout to witness the rugged beauty of the Stirling Ranges and continue to Esperance. French explorers are credited with making the first landfall near the present day town, naming it and other local landmarks whilst sheltering from a storm in this area in 1792. The town itself was named after a French ship, the Esperance. In 1979, pieces of the space station Skylab crashed onto Esperance after the craft broke up over the Indian Ocean. The municipality fined the United States $400 for littering.

We see the nearby Pink Lake, a salt lake that gains its rosy hue from red algae living within its waters.

Overnight in Esperance. Margaret's Beach Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 15 *Esperance - Cape Le Grand National Park - Kalgoorlie*

Today we travel into Cape Le Grand National Park, an ancient landscape that has been above sea level for well over 200 million years and remained unglaciated. As a result the area is home to many primitive "relict" species.

We continue through Norseman to the gold mining town of Kalgoorlie, founded in 1893 during the Yilgarn-Goldfields gold rush. The name Kalgoorlie is derived from the Wangai word Karlkurla, meaning "place of the silky pears". We stop at the Golden Superpit Lookout for an amazing view of Australia's largest open cut gold mine. An orientation tour of this historic gold mining town will reveal unique turn of the century buildings including the famous Exchange Hotel and Hay Street.

Overnight in Kalgoorlie. All Seasons Kalgoorlie Plaza. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 16 *Kalgoorlie - Indian Pacific Train*

We spend this morning at the Mining Hall of Fame. Try panning for gold, witness gold bullion being poured and go underground for a tour of the Mining Reserve. We visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service for an insight into the work of this great Australian icon. There is the opportunity this afternoon to explore this gold town at leisure.

Later this evening we head for the rail station to board the famous Indian Pacific Train at around 01:00 am. Travelling between the Indian and Pacific oceans for over 40 years, this truly is one of the world's great train journeys. Named after the two great oceans it joins and symbolised by the magnificent wedge-tailed eagle that so often soars above it. One of the highlights is our traverse of the Nullarbor Plain -- flat and arid yet fascinating, with 478 km of straight track, the longest in the world.

Our 'Gold Service' sleeping carriages provide quality accommodation to make your journey a comfortable and enjoyable experience. All cabins are air-conditioned and remain at a constant temperature throughout your journey. Gold Service passengers can leave their cabins to relax in the Gold Service lounge, enjoy some refreshments with other passengers.

As a memento of your trip on this world famous train, all Gold Service passengers receive a complimentary toiletries kit. Information on the train journey such as a route map and service information can be found in your complimentary on board compendium.

Each compartment has an en-suite with shower, wash basin, toilet and fresh towels. Other accessories include: 3 pin 240/110AC power point, wardrobes, full length mirror, reading lamps, foldaway table, in cabin radio, PA system and luggage storage space. Single compartments unavailable; our single supplement rates reflect sharing while on the train.

Overnight on board the Indian Pacific Train. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 17 *Indian Pacific Train*

During our journey, you'll discover the landscape of the ancient Nullarbor Plain, with the landscape unmarked by the passing millennia. Stepping off during a brief pause at Cook in the middle of the Plain, you will experience Australia's vast open spaces from a unique perspective.

The Nullarbor Plain (Latin: nullus, "no", and arbor, "tree") is part of the area of flat, almost treeless, arid or semi-arid country of southern Australia. It is the world's largest single piece of limestone, and occupies an area of about 200,000 square kilometres. Historically, the Nullarbor, considered by Europeans to be almost uninhabitable, was used by the semi-nomadic Spinifex Wangai Aboriginal people. It was used for thousands of years before that by prehistoric Aborigines.

Despite the hardships created by these conditions, European settlers were determined to cross the plain. Although Edward John Eyre described the Plain as "a hideous anomaly, a blot on the face of Nature, the sort of place one gets into in bad dreams", he became the first European to successfully make the crossing in 1841. Today for many Australians, 'crossing the Nullarbor' is a quintessential experience of the 'Australian Outback'.

Overnight on board the Indian Pacific Train. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 18 *Arrival in Adelaide*

Early this morning we arrive and disembark in Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia. Adelaide is a beautiful city with wide tree-lined streets, sidewalk cafes, large colonnaded colonial buildings, and grassy parks with elaborate fountains. All of this makes Adelaide the most European of Australian cities. The city, founded in 1836, was the only colony comprised totally of free settlers.

We have a panoramic tour of Adelaide, a young Australian city rich in recent history yet charmingly modern. It is a pleasant place for walking, shopping, lunching, and enjoying the local markets. Adelaide's markets have always been an important part of local life and are the perfect place to search for genuine bargains.

Overnight in Adelaide (dinner on your own this evening). Mercure Grosvenor. Meal plan: Breakfast.

Day 19 *Adelaide - Melbourne*

Today we fly to Melbourne.

Melbourne flourished in the 1850s when the city emerged as a result of the huge gold rush in the Victorian hills. Melbourne is culturally very diverse and has several times been named the world's "most liveable city."

We'll aim for a morning flight with some Melbourne area sightseeing upon arrival.

Overnight in Melbourne. Rydges (Deluxe). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 20 *Melbourne Touring*

Melbourne boasts broad and leafy streets, plenty of parks and gardens, and an air of distinction. This is the stateliest of all Australian cities, though a fairly recent creation, for it was only in 1835 that a Tasmanian farmer named John Batman arrived to establish a settlement here. He made a deal with local Aborigines, trading blankets, knives and other items for 500,000 acres of land and a township began to grow. A gold rush in the 1850s resulted in rapid expansion and, by 1861, Melbourne's population (then 125,000) had already overtaken Sydney's. Sydney moved ahead again in 1911 and has stayed ahead, but Melbourne has never been far behind.

Today our tour includes a number of highlights, including Fitzroy Gardens, originally laid out in the shape of the Union Jack. The prime attraction is Cook's Cottage, the family home of James Cook, the English navigator who explored the southern hemisphere in three great voyages. It was purchased in 1933, shipped over from Yorkshire and presented as a gift to the state of Victoria for its 1934 centenary. We will also see the Old Melbourne Gaol, Shrine of Remembrance, St Kilda Road, Victoria Market, Melbourne University, Parliament House, Lake Albert, and pay a visit to St Patrick's Cathedral.

Overnight in Melbourne. Rydges (Deluxe). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 21 *Departure*

Departure from Melbourne.

BON VOYAGE! Meal plan: Breakfast.