



Hobart to Home Westcoast cruise

Melbourne to Hobart competitors are invited to join *Alien* for a cruise home.

Departing Hobart 03 January 2026

Arriving in Melbourne around 17 January 2026



Hobart to Home

Yachts competing in the Westcoaster are invited to join *Alien* on their annual cruise back to Melbourne via the pristine World Heritage Westcoast harbours, departing Hobart on 3 January.

“We don’t sail when the weather is bad but, based on experience over the past 10 trips, *Alien* will arrive back in Melbourne on the weekend of 17 January.”

There is one unavoidable overnight leg from Macquarie Harbour to King Island but apart from this it’s day sailing well suited for short-handed crews.

The cruise in company is an informal event – boats are free to join or leave the group at any time and each boat sails at its own risk. The return passage typically falls into 4 stages as described below.

Itinerary

Stage 1 – Passage to Port Davey

After leaving Hobart on the afternoon of 3 January we normally stop at Kettering near the start of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, or in an inlet at Bruny Island, before heading down "The Channel" to Recherche Bay, the yachtie's stepping off point for the World Heritage areas.

From Recherche its less than 70 miles to Port Davey but we will usually opt for a leisurely cruise past the impressive De Witt and Maatsuyker Islands and stop at New Harbour for the night. From there it's another easy sail around the SW Cape to Port Davey and past the Breaksea Islands to a sheltered anchorage at Brambles Cove.



Recherche Bay the stepping off point



Brambles Cove – with a rare visitor

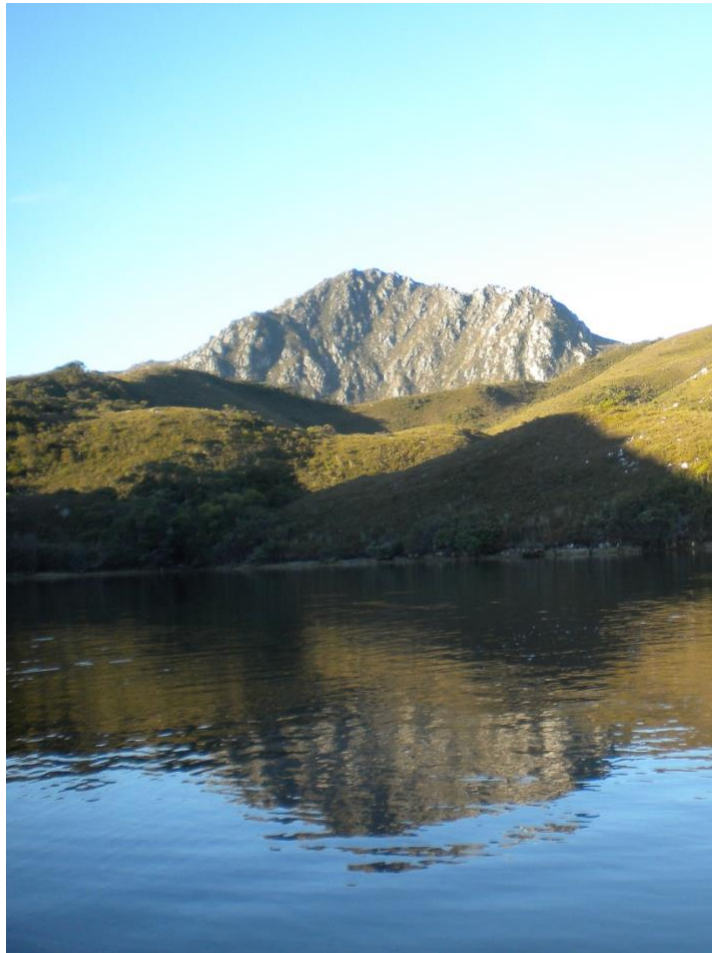
Stage 2 - Bathurst Harbour and Claytons Corner ~ 3 days

The Bathurst Channel offers a fjord-like experience through the heart of the SW Wilderness area to reach Bathurst Harbour – steep mountains, button grass, inlets and the odd beach. Totally inhospitable in the winter, but a sailor’s paradise in mid-summer.

For those interested in stretching their legs, climbing the odd mountain or visiting the long abandoned tin mining outpost near the end of Melaleuca inlet, Claytons corner in the northwest arm of Bathurst Harbour is on the “Bucket list”. A lifestyle legend, cray fisherman Clyde Clayton and his wife Win established a 3 room house, garden and jetty, and were the last residents leaving the area in 1976. Since Clyde’s death, the house has been maintained by the “Friends of Claytons” volunteers and it’s not a bad place to sleep overnight.



Bathurst Channel – deep water and plenty of anchorages



Another great anchorage

Stage 3 Strahan, Macquarie Harbour and the Gordon River

It's 100-odd miles from Port Davey to Hells Gates at the entrance to Macquarie Harbour, so it's an early start to make the entrance in daylight and reach the pub at Strahan before closing time. The entrance at Hells Gates is usually benign but not when there is a NW swell so we wait for the right weather before making the trip.

After refreshing and restocking at Strahan it's time to head down Macquarie Harbour for a few days. Kelly basin and the ruins of the East Pillinger settlement are definitely worth an overnight visit, but the main attraction is the Gordon River and its truly impressive rainforest. The river is navigable for some 20 miles to St John's falls with Huon Pine walks, landings and plenty to see. The photos say it all.



Gordon River magic



The landing at St John's falls ... both sides up!

Stage 4 – King Island, and back to Melbourne

After a few days on the river it's time to go back to the other world. This involves about 2.5 days sailing plus an overnight stay at Grassy Harbour. With short handed sailing we need a west or SW breeze for an enjoyable trip home, the swell outside Hells Gates needs to be under 5 metres, and we like a smooth passage through the King Island Gap.



The light at Hells Gates entrance on a good day



Grassy Harbour