

Wave Rock tour of discovery



Campervan travelling has always rated among our best family holidays, so when the opportunity to test drive KEA's latest four-berth motor home came up, we jumped at the chance to get away together to explore more of Western Australia. Craig and Liz Sinclair report.

AS WITH MOST CAMPERVAN TRIPS, the journey is the holiday - the destination a string of surprises unwrapped along the way.

Wave Rock in Australia's golden outback had long been on our children's travel wish list, with Nannup in the southwest, topping ours - so the challenge was to include both in the one itinerary.

Tracking south along the coast, we soon reach Mandurah - no longer a sleepy little holiday town but a thriving, vibrant city, and one of Australia's fastest growing regional centres.

Sandwiched between white-sand beaches and the expansive Peel inlet, Mandurah is a marine playground with playful local dolphins just adding to its personality.

The new Dolphin Quay entertainment precinct, overlooking the foreshore, makes an ideal spot for a lunch of fresh fish and chips and a wander along shady verandas to watch the boats cruising the estuary. There's also a fabulous wild dolphin tour, which allow visitors the thrill of swimming with these hyperactive, aquatic clowns.

A little further south is Bunbury, which serves as the gateway city to the southern wineries and Margaret River.

The Dolphin Discovery Centre at Koombana Bay is another recommended stop, with dolphins regularly coming to the shoreline to entice visitors to dive in and play. The award-winning interpretive centre delivers a memorable insight into the life of the dolphins.

But for us, we had a date with the southern wineries and forests near the quaint township of Nannup - a classic small-town with its one main street lined with the bakery, the local pub, a general store and a smattering of excellent art galleries.

Caravan parks and campgrounds across the region are plentiful, including some among the local tall timber forests, where you'll no doubt also meet with kangaroos and other wildlife.

Evenings in the forest are eerily silent - the clear night sky ablaze with stars so bright, you can almost reach up and grab one.

From Nannup we head inland towards Kojonup, passing all manner of Australian along the way, including colonial heritage, indigenous experiences and bush authors - this is a land chock-full of folklore, and every town has a story.

The farming township of Kojonup, is justifiably proud of its award-winning Aboriginal Interpretive centre, *Kodja Place*, while Wagin boasts a fabulous heritage village that recreates life in the early part of the 20th Century.

Nearby, Narrogin and Wickepin are the former stomping grounds of Australian author, Albert Facey, who penned the classic, *A Fortunate Life*.

A replica of the original Facey homestead is on display in Wickepin, with volunteer guides



Albert Facey Homestead