

TWO HOLIDAYS IN ONE

AT GOOLWA IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Can't decide if you want a river holiday or a beach holiday? Then Goolwa in South Australia might be right up your alley. Glenys Gelzinis shines a spotlight on this tranquil town where the Murray River meets the Southern Ocean.

WORDS AND PICS BY GLENYS GELZINIS S142795



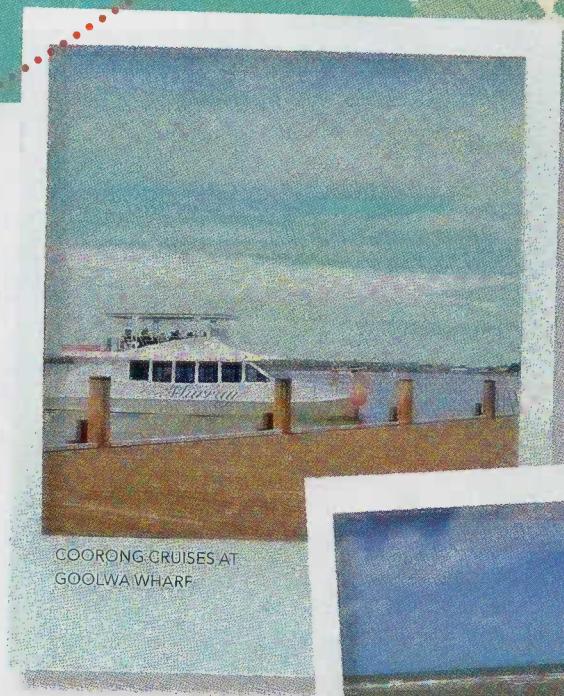


If you can't decide between a river or beach holiday, then Goolwa in South Australia is where you can experience both in a friendly, tranquil town where the Murray River meets the Southern Ocean.

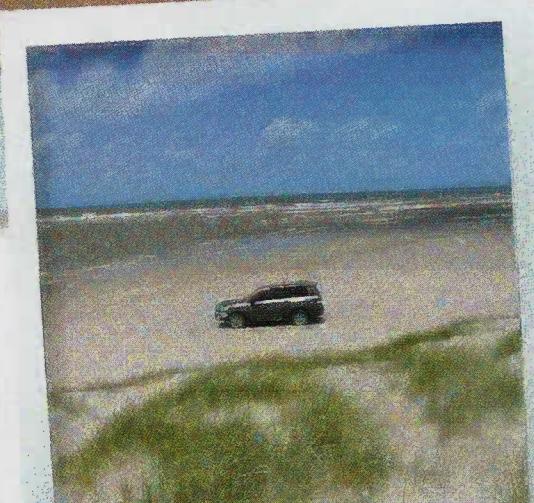
The Indigenous and European history Goolwa is celebrated collaboratively in storytelling, art and sculptures throughout the town – which has a thriving population, increasing each summer with holidaymakers.

Goolwa is on the Fleurieu Peninsula, a little over 80 kilometres from Adelaide, and it's been a popular holiday spot for South Australians for generations. The laid-back atmosphere and choice of recreational activities on the river or beach makes it a popular destination for everyone, from young families to retirees.

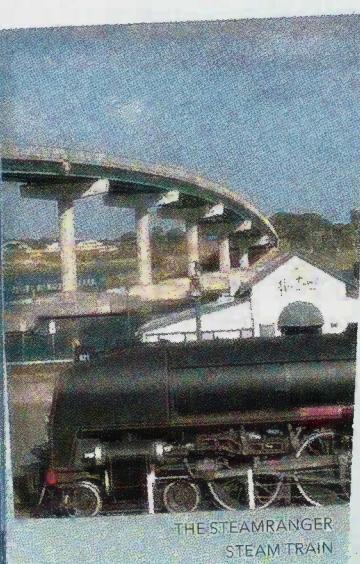
What makes it so popular is the delicate balance that has been maintained by preserving history whilst embracing change. Established and new businesses, including bars, a distillery and a plethora of dining options, have kept the town a firm favourite with visitors over the decades.



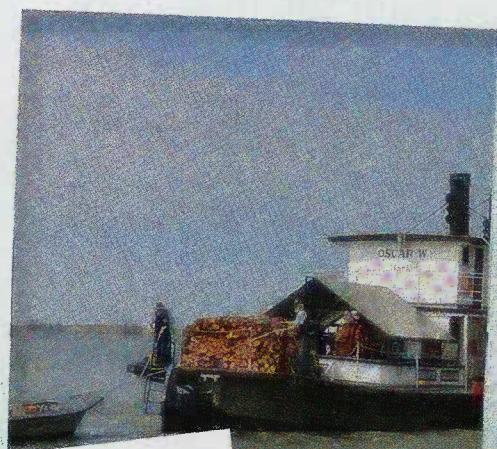
COORONG CRUISES AT GOOLWA WHARF



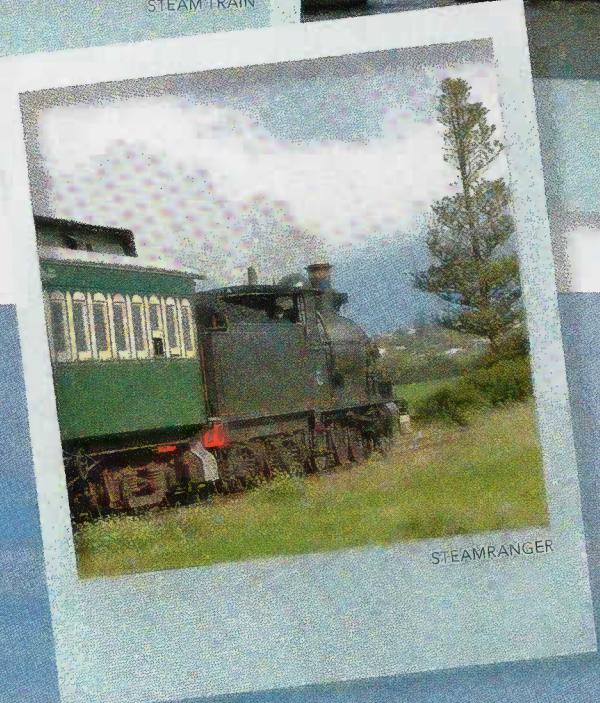
DRIVE TO THE MURRAY MOUTH



THE STEAMRANGER
STEAM TRAIN



PS OSCAR W
PADDLE STEAMER



STEAMRANGER

Goolwa has a history of Australian firsts - including being the first river port town; the first Cittaslow town in the country (embracing the slow city concept); and having Australia's first public railway which used horses to move goods from the Port of Goolwa to the seaport of Port Elliot, 11 kilometres away. The horses were eventually replaced by a steam train line in 1885.

Goolwa was the only place in Australia where river paddle steamers would dock and transfer goods to a steam train to be taken inland. It remains one of only two places in the world where you can still have a steam-to-steam experience. The PS Oscar W paddle steamer docks at the Goolwa wharf to take passengers for cruises on the Murray River; and on return, you can walk to the adjacent railway station and continue the journey on the SteamRanger steam train (affectionately known as the cockle train). This popular tourist train runs regularly between Goolwa and Victor Harbor along a scenic coastal track.

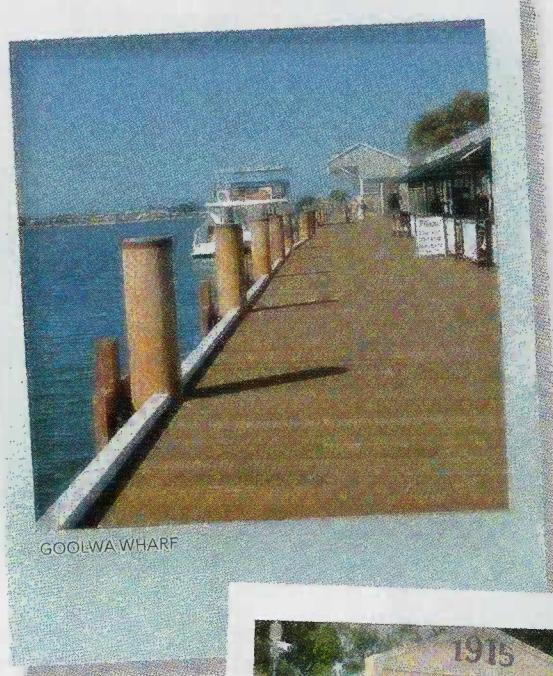


FLEURIEU DISTILLERY AND GOOLWA TRAIN ST

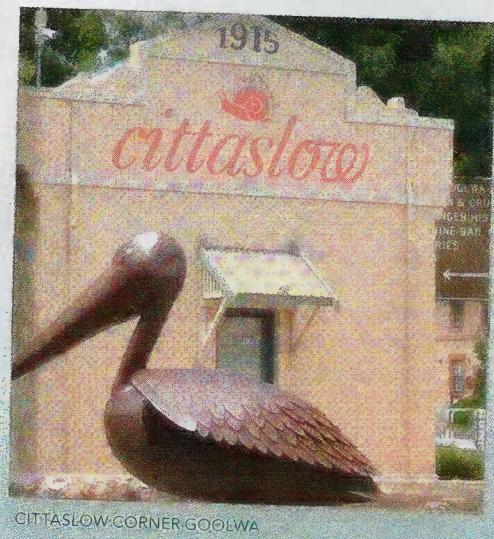
Another option for a river cruise is to go on a comfortable Coorong Cruises boat. They also operate from the wharf, and passengers can take a cruise with commentary along the river, through the last lock of the river and onwards to the Murray Mouth, where the river flows out to sea.

There are a variety of experiences offered - including venturing down into the Coorong, a waterway of world significance where you can see a diverse array of migratory birds, emus roaming in the sand dunes, and a huge colony of pelicans who use this area as a breeding ground. Some of the cruise options include guided tours where you disembark and walk through the pristine sand dunes to the ocean beach on the other side.

For other ways to experience this unique wilderness area and see the Murray Mouth, you can drive from the Goolwa Wharf area over the bridge to Hindmarsh Island and follow signs to Sugars Beach, all on bitumen roads. While you're there, make sure to sit a while and enjoy some tasty fish and chips from the Coorong Café food van, with outdoor seating overlooking the water. Or if you have a four-wheel-drive with high clearance, you can drive along Goolwa Beach for around 10 kilometres to reach the mouth and see it from a different perspective.



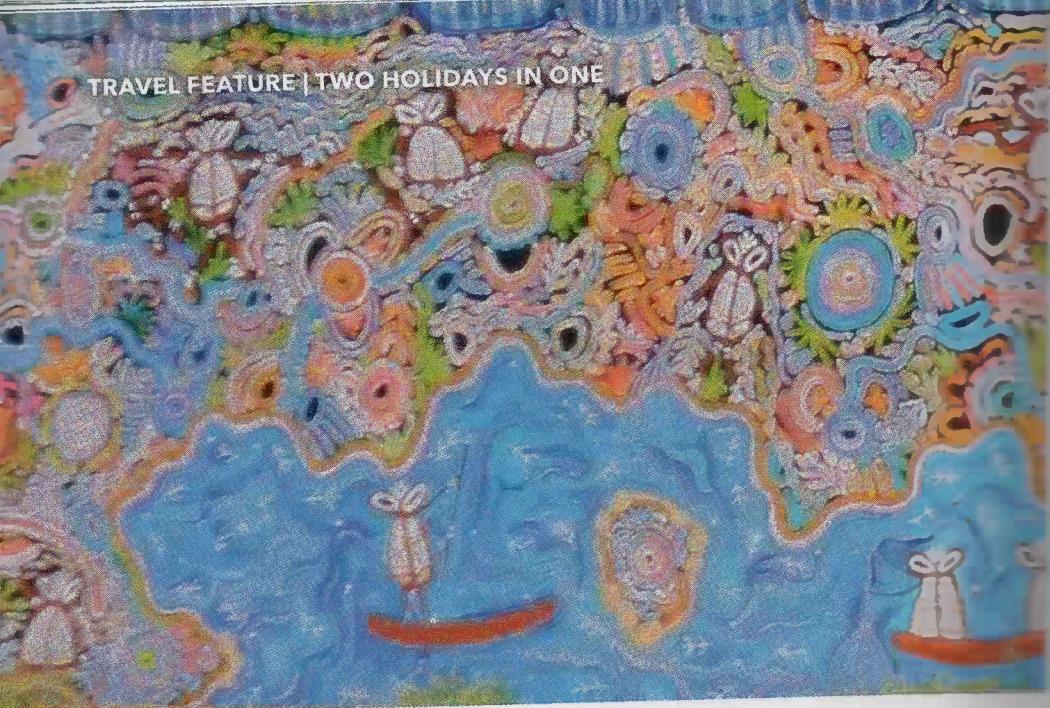
GOOLWA WHARF



CITTASLOW CORNER GOOLWA



COORONG CRUISE



The Ngarrindjeri culture is very much a part of Goolwa today, and to gain more of an insight, make sure to visit the Signal Point Galley near the bridge which tells the stories of the first people of the area. The rich Indigenous culture is shared in stories, videos and nearby outdoor sculptures.

A number of Indigenous-based tours can be taken in Goolwa, and the visitor centre is a great starting point for information on these and the self-guided walks to take around town. You can also pick up information on the regular craft and produce markets held in Goolwa.

Goolwa has many historic buildings as well as numerous art galleries that showcase local talent. For a longer walk or bike ride, you can take the popular Encounter Bikeway trail, which extends from Goolwa to Victor Harbor for around 30 kilometres, and enjoy scenic coastal views along the way.

