

# Cape Woolamai, Phillip Island

**Discover Phillip Island's best kept secret.  
The entire Island has a simple charm, but nestled in its  
eastern corner Cape Woolamai offers its special magic.  
Explore its many characters from your base at  
Summerhays Cottage.**

Perhaps ninety percent of visitors to Phillip Island cross the bridge and continue to the tourist tangle of Cowes, or the must-do penguins and koalas. Cresting the arch of the stylish concrete connection between the Island and the mainland of Australia, opened in November 1969, they may sense the kilometres of golden sand and lapping waves sweeping away to their left, but few will have chosen to base themselves in this captivating corner. Their loss.



Cape Woolamai protrudes just far enough into Bass Strait to block the wild ocean's flow with its westerly facing Woolamai surf beach, one of the world's best, which is patrolled in summer; and in counterpoint creates, on the other side of its spine, a serpentine sandy shoreline lapped by the gentle water of the Eastern Entrance to Western Port Bay. It seems

that here nature itself commands the ocean to pause in its tempestuous moon chase so peace seekers may find rest in the cradle of the Cape.

Once based in Cape Woolamai you are captured. For your entire holiday there is no need to drive for more than 5 minutes. For most of the time you will probably walk everywhere - unless of course you are simply sitting. For a couple, there is no better accommodation than Summerhays Cottage. As you round the side path into the tranquil garden in which it nestles, you feel your tensions peel away. This place is balanced, and it invites you to rediscover your own equilibrium.

From the Cottage, less than five minutes walk will get you to the safety beach on the channel - or, in the other direction, to the local shops which include a licensed mini-market, take away food, Dutchie's Stone Grill, a surf shop and more.

Stretch your legs for 10 minutes beyond the shops to reach Phillip Island Airport. Take a helicopter flight over the Cape, or a tour of the memorable Vietnam Veterans Museum. Turn the other way from the front gate and 10 minutes walk will take you to the tempting tastes of Phillip Island Chocolate Factory, or, across the way, to the Tourist Information Centre.



Walking 30 to 60 minutes around Cleeland Bight on the eastern side will lead you deep into the State Faunal Park that occupies the entire foot of the Cape. Cape Woolamai itself is the highest point on the island. Various walking tracks wind through the nesting burrows of the short-tail shearwaters that fly in every Spring from the Arctic. Visit the historic

pink granite quarry where giant tumbled tombstones speak silently of the lives of a sailing ship crew lost at sea ferrying rare cargo to gold rich Melbourne town. Try a little rock fishing. The water is deep here.



Cross the scrubby low peninsula to delight in the majesty of the Pinnacles. If the tide is right, meet them at sea level for another-world experience. Now you are certainly out for day's adventure, so take a food pack, water, hat and sunscreen, regardless of the time of the year. Stroll back along the magnificent sands of Woolamai and Anzac beaches. Depending on the tides, you might have to weave around a few local surf fishermen. Look for textures, patterns and bird life. They are all abundant. You might even find a treasure washed up from the Southern Ocean.



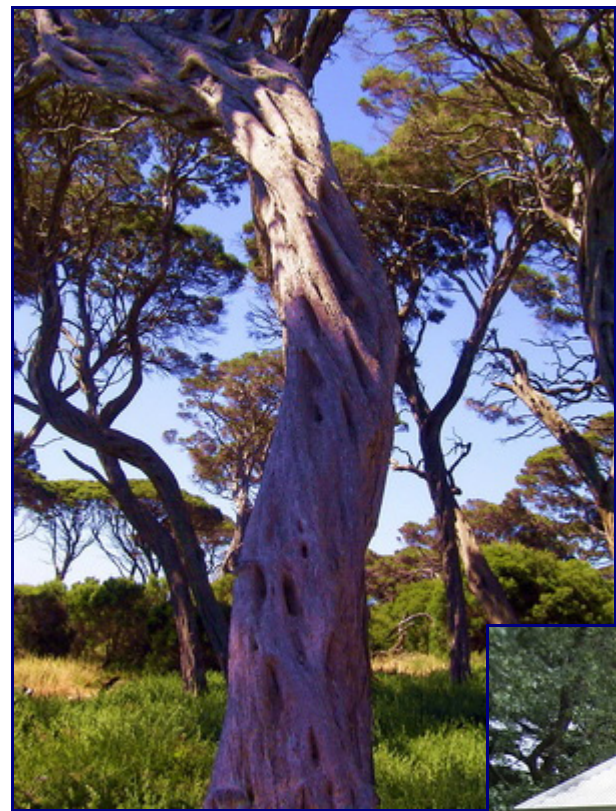
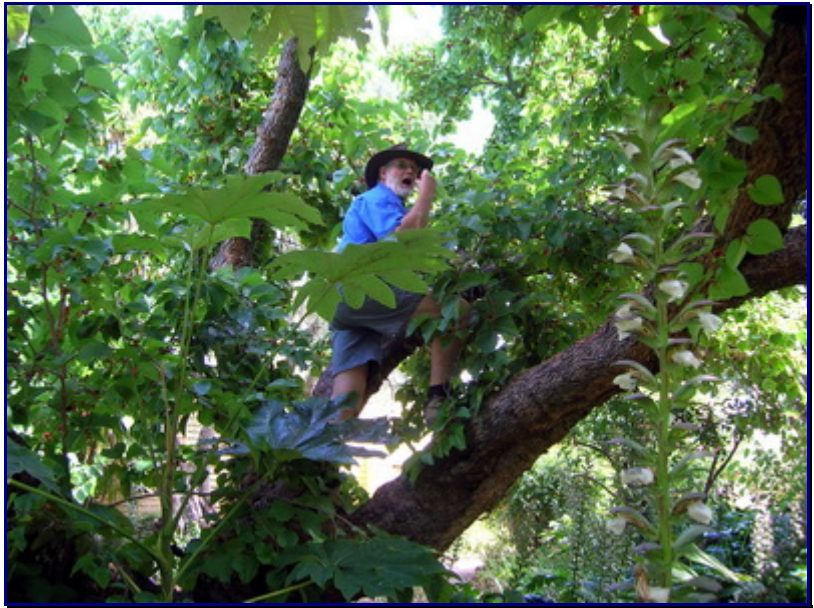
On another day turn the opposite direction on the eastern side and head for the cafe culture of San Remo, the first landfall on the mainland. Less than one hour will see you there. Time the trip to enjoy your coffee and cake, wander down to wharf for the midday pelican feeding, then drag yourself back to restaurant row to explore the lunch choices before spending most of the afternoon dawdling back to the Cottage for a read or a nap. Fire up the barbie to finish the day.



On the way to the Chocolate Factory you will have spied the entrance to Churchill Island. Five minutes drive will get you there, but you will miss much on the way. Walking is less than an hour and you will wind through light forest and wet lands, bridge a tidal inlet and meet Cape Barren Geese grazing the paddocks. This island is the site of Victoria's first agricultural activity and the entrance fee to the heritage farm is well worth the exploration of its history. In high summer, the original mulberry tree provides a feast.



Apart from the farm, the whole island is open to public access in daylight hours. Follow the walking trail which traces a shore of Western Port Bay. Pause to read the monuments, wonder at the ancient Moonah trees which hold special significance for Aboriginal people and watch the birds. Imagine that this place became the first European settlement in Victoria in 1801, when Lieutenant James Grant built a simple cottage and planted wheat and corn.



When you get hungry or thirsty, make a bee line for the tourist centre cafe before 4pm. Entry is free, but to exit without purchasing a morning tea, lunch or afternoon snack from the tantalising menu is almost impossible.

Sitting, swimming, strolling, hiking, fishing, surfing, sun-baking, shopping, eating, bird watching, photography, exploration and even adventure. Cape Woolamai has it all; but only for those who know.



Doug. Williams, 2009