

Traveldiary Brigitte & Heinz

Western-Australia: short journey
and naturist life at Sunseekers



Chapter 16

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After 13 days relaxing, respectively writing our travel diary about China, we left Thailand on a flight to **Singapore** on Nov. 25th, 2006. In the meantime, most streets in the uncountable shopping districts were being decorated for Christmas. Even though the population only has very few Christians: business is business! Only now we realized that Singapore is another country, which was transformed by a “communist government” into an economical success story.

Although we both felt that the food and the climate in the resort islands of Asia would be perfect, this region could not satisfy us completely as a quiet hideaway for the X-Mas and New Years period. Somehow it is not only the obligation to wear clothing whenever somebody could see us, there are so many other differences that make the stay in a nudist place to us so much more pleasant than to stay in an ordinary resort. So, we looked for a suitable alternative.

After some “surfing” in the internet and a couple of phone calls, we booked a cabin at Sunseekers naturist club near Perth plus a cheap return flight (Euro 348) from Singapore. This was with Qantas, which offered surprisingly good service: a perfect introduction to our “joy trip” to Australia.

Perth: arrival in Western-Australia's capital

On November 29th, 2006 we arrived in **Perth**, the capital of Western Australia. This is our [favorite state of Australia](#) as it offers not only the most impressive landscapes, wildlife and fauna, but also the best on the culinary side, which is just as important to us. You can find decent bread and good restaurants even in the countryside.

Last time when we passed through Perth 16 months ago, we had come down the west coast from the lonely Kimberley region. Then we felt like finding civilization again and it gave us the impression of a real big city. But this time, as we had just been to China, Perth looked more like a spread-out country village to us now, with its handful of high rise buildings. Ironically, the Lady from the tourist office we spoke to on the airport, said that not long ago, an English woman had asked her: “are all Australians living in Bungalows? I hadn't seen any big buildings from the plane as we were landing”.



We had to phone around a bit to find accommodation and funnily, we got to stay at North Lodge, the place we had started our Aussie adventure when we had first visited together in 1992.

We enjoyed the charming city and the many cheap and excellent Asian restaurants around the North Bridge area nearby, catching up on Chinese food...

After a week, we moved by train to the touristy coastal town of **Fremantle** (nicknamed Freo), 20 km to the south. There were many ice-cream parlors, Italian eateries and street café's. On the hottest days, we went by train to Swanbourne beach, but on the weekdays, the gawks outnumbered the nudists by far.

Once a while, European immigrants mentioned that they were initially surprised, how big the cultural differences to Australians are and we felt the same. Never the less: the Aussie mates are in general very friendly, very helpful, easy going, and a frank and humorous pack. Once we heard a man wishing another: “Merry X-Mas and all that crap” and an Australian opposition politician announced on TV: “Our country should aim to be more than just China's quarry and Japan's beach”.



With a rental-car trough WA

After two weeks diving into city live, we opted to rent a car to explore the [countryside](#) once again. We did a

short loop (1'600km) which brought us to Toodyay, from where we followed the „Southern Highway“ via Northam, York, Narrogin through the so-called wheat-belt to Mount Barker and from there, down to the south coast to the village called Denmark. From there we later followed mainly the coast via Pemberton, Margret River, Bunbury and Rockingham back to Fremantle and Perth.



The landscapes on this loop were incredibly varied; first the dry harvested wheat fields, then the wonderfully blue coast with its beautiful rocks, then we came across green pastures into the fire

tested Karri forests, up to the urbanized areas with the holiday places near Perth. We've seen many kangaroos, Emus, colourful parrots and lizards and what surprised us: many big sting rays along the shores. We enjoyed the amazing coastline even more now in summer, than 16 months ago when we had passed through in winter.

We stayed in rental-cottages on campgrounds, in Motels or B&B's. The food we got out in the countryside was again mostly of top quality.



Sunseekers: a pleasant month as members in a naturist-club near Perth

When we arrived at [Sunseekers](#) naturist club in the Perth hills on December 21, 2006, we still had the rental-car for one day shopping.

After we had made our reservation for a cabin already 10 weeks ago, we had received an e-mail from the caretakers Jytte & John, who proposed that we become "country members", so we would only pay A\$ 15 (Euro 9.15) instead of \$ 50 per night – the \$ 245 initial membership fee would be amortized within the first week of our stage. Of course, we couldn't resist this offer, as this deal saved us \$ 770.- (Euro 470) because we ended up staying there for 29 days – a real bargain!

We got a nice cabin but the kitchen was definitely geared to locals who spent the weekend only. It had a fridge, the compulsory microwave and on a shelf 1.5 m (one point five meters!) above the ground, two simple hotplates. We wonder how somebody could use them on that height. We were probably the first ones who thought about it. Never mind, we decided to make it a bit more European. First thing, we moved the microwave oven for storage into a cupboard and put the hotplates in its place.

As our membership deal saved us so much money, we decided to invest in some additional appliances which we donated to the club once we moved on.

As we still had our rental car, we took advantage and went out to buy as much as possible of things that would last, so we'd only need to go out to the city to buy fresh stuff later. Pasta, rice, flour and many liters of mineral water and fruit juices soon filled our shopping trolley, together with some food we could store in the clubs huge freezer. So we were invading the shops at the same time as the locals on their exercise to complete their Christmas present collection in time. We heard that the average Australian puts a whopping \$ 1'300 on the credit card for Christmas shopping alone.





In a second-hand shop, we found a little baking oven for \$ 27.- and for \$ 5 a coffee maker. We also bought an additional hotplate as one of the two didn't work properly. To go with this, we added some better pans, a grater and salad bowl plus a draining sieve and a few small tools which spoiled kids, as we, like to have when cooking. After that, we were very well equipped to spoil ourselves with culinary delights during the festive season. Our little oven permitted us to bake breads and cakes, as well as do roasts and filet in puff pastry.

Looking at the eating habits, the cultural differences become very apparent. The young Aussie couple that moved into the similarly equipped cabin next to ours, shouted out: "wow how wonderful, this kitchen is much better equipped than we'd expected!"

The next day we returned the rental car and made our way back on public transport. First, we took a train to Midland and then a bus to Parkerville from where we walked the final pleasant 1.7km. We were pleased to find out that the club was well connected by bus with the outside world – at least during the week. When we had first enquired about that, nobody of the club was able to advise us, as all members have a car. So we believed we would need to call a taxi each time we wanted to go out, but in the end, this was never necessary.

Sunseekers is situated in a beautiful lot of gumtree forest. On the hottest days (~40°C), we could see how the trees were literally dripping out Eucalypt sap (oil). That's one of the reasons why forest fires spread so quickly during the hot summers down under. Some researchers predict however, that this problem will be solved before the end of the century, as there wouldn't be any big trees left by then!

The grounds were well maintained by two caretaker families, both of whom live permanently on the site. A large two storey clubhouse formed the center of the club. It was complemented by two smaller cottages, one for small children and one for youths, of which quite a big number were around during the festive days.



Una und Austin are an interesting couple from the UK and they also stayed at Sunseekers. The two of them had travelled since 1999 and camped here in their Safari vehicle, in which they had come overland all the way through Africa, before they had shipped it over to Australia. They are a bit older (70+76) and their children think that they are crazy – that's probably what our parents think about us as well.

During the first 10 days it was amazingly busy on the grounds but after New Year it got very quiet quickly. Most members were very friendly and there was always somebody to chat to. Jytte & John let us use their computer and a visiting couple: Chris & Lloyd lent us their laptop that had a mobile antennae, so we could go on the internet. Many times Una & Austin offered us to bring some groceries along when they went out shopping and Bob even took us along in his oldtimer. Also a few other people had offered us to help so twice only, we went out by bus.

We enjoyed the large swimming pool and some of the many sports grounds to play badminton. Some children joined us for badminton and a 9 year old girl insisted to have a shower together with us, she even paid the 20 cents to activate it out of her pocket money.

Unfortunately, the sauna had recently been eaten away by termites. Occasionally, the disturbingly large huntsman spider could be seen in the toilets. At first sight, it usually affects the blood pressure of oversea-tourists. The Aussies just laugh, as they know it's harmless – the small spiders that's the poisonous ones!

On the club grounds, also more tourist friendly wildlife could be seen: like Kangaroos, Opossums, Lizards and many colourful birds as parrots and kookaburra that often came to visit (or beg).

As water shortage is a common problem, not only in this part of Australia, the club was allowed to water its lawn only two times a week and therefore it was also advisable to shower in pairs.

A common weather forecast during our stay was usually about as follows: "up to 40°C hot and over the weekend a bit cooler with hopefully some rain and afterwards very hot again. Twice we got some rain which let the temperatures drop to 20°C quickly, at night even down to 14°C which meant Brigitte got her socks out from the bottom of the backpack.

As the 700 m round-loop on the ground was a bit short, we went regularly out for a walk on the other side of the fence. Around sunset time (20:00 h), we regularly could spot about a dozen kangaroos in the bush and even in the backyards of houses, before we reached the "center" of Parkerville after 2 km. It consisted only of a convenience store with post-office, a pub and a proper restaurant, all dotted around the forest.

Our 4 weeks at Sunseekers passed very quickly and it turned out to be exactly what we had hoped for: a quiet and very natural place, where we enjoyed our freedom. We both felt it

was the right decision for us to come down under again. This was the ideal holiday in which we relaxed completely and digested our previous travel experiences perfectly.

The club had a big video library where we found some movies about some of our favorite places in France like Sablière or Bélézy. When we watched them on the hottest days in the cool club house, we realized that naturism in Europe is even more what we like, so we decided to go back this summer.

On January 19, 2007, Jytte from Sunseekers drove us to the station, from where we took a train to Perth. After enjoying three more days in this charming city, we flew back to **Singapore** on January 22nd, 2007. From there, we still want to go to some exotic adventures and so we booked a flight to Kuching, the main city of the Malaysian state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo.

Brigitte & Heinz



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