

Melbourne Garden & Flower Show

Ballarat Begonia Festival Combo Tour



TRADE TRAVEL
Group & Private Tour Specialists

With Val Henry

9 Days / 8 Nights



Tour Departs: Saturday 19 March - Sunday 27 March, 2022.



Day 1. Sat 19 March: Brisbane - Ballarat

Lunch & Dinner

Flight VA318 Departs Brisbane 0855 arrives Melbourne 1215

We meet at Brisbane airport for our **morning flight to Melbourne** where we then board our luxury coach and begin our **drive across to Ballarat**, a city that enjoys a rich and prosperous heritage thanks to the Gold Rush which began in 1851. News that the Ballarat region was home to the richest alluvial goldfield in the world resulted in a population explosion as people came from all over the world seeking fortune. By 1855, Ballarat had grown to a city with a population of 100,000 people. Impressive public and private buildings sprung up which were financed from the wealth generated by the diggings. The city is also home to the **Ballarat Begonia Festival** which has a long and rich history, beginning in 1953 and has now become an innovative garden-based horticultural festival that showcases the city's natural assets, including its unique and rare collection of Begonias. Before check in to our accommodation our local guide will join us on the coach and introduce us to the city's rich history, historic buildings and the gold sites of Bakery Hill, Golden Point and Poverty Point. After our tour, check in and freshen up we gather for dinner in the on-site restaurant.

Overnight Ballarat: Sovereign Park Motor Inn

Day 2. Sun 20 March: Brisbane - Ballarat

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

After breakfast we spend the morning within the spectacular Lake Wendouree and **Ballarat Botanical Gardens** precinct which is home to the **Robert Clark Botanical Gardens Conservatory** housing an iconic **display of over 700 Begonias**. Our local guide will accompany us through other highlights within the gardens such as the **The Prime Ministers Avenue, Stoddard Collection, Statuary Pavilion** and the **Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial** with the names of more than 36,000 Australian ex-POWs etched into a 130-metre long granite wall. We then head to **The Boatshed Restaurant on Lake Wendouree** which provides the perfect spot for **lunch**. After lunch we make our way to the **Ballarat Tramway Museum** for a tram ride around Lake Wendouree. This afternoon we view the **Eureka Flag** located at the site of the 1854 Eureka Stockade rebellion. The Eureka Centre is surrounded by the scenic Eureka Stockade Memorial Gardens and is the perfect place to grab a coffee, enjoy the wonderful park surrounds and learn more about the Eureka story. We return to our accommodation for a rest and dinner in the motel

Overnight Ballarat: Sovereign Park Motor Inn

Day 3. Mon 21 March: Ballarat

Breakfast & Dinner

After a good nights rest and hearty breakfast it's back on board our coach before transferring to the **Sovereign Hill Gold Mining Township** where all our Australian history comes alive and the spirit of the 1850's gold rush lives. We start at the **Gold Museum**, which houses a unique collection of alluvial gold, nuggets and displays relating to Ballarat's social and mining history. Then its time to step inside the Sovereign Hill Township itself, experiences and demonstrations we may include on our visit are the 'Musket Firing, Gold Pour, Blacksmithing, Candle Making, Coach Hitching and the Sly Grog Tent to name a few. This afternoon we have some free time to explore on our own or have a rest. Tonight we return to Sovereign Hill for dinner and to witness the **spectacular new sound-and-light show Aura, a multi-sensory experience**, feel the vibrations as stars explode in front of our eyes, watch as the land is transformed by the gold rush, and dive into the chaos of the **Eureka Rebellion** as we witness the creation and discovery of the world's most precious metal. This exciting presentation takes place across the whole 25-hectare panorama of Sovereign Hill. After the show we return to our motel for a good nights rest.

Overnight Ballarat: Sovereign Park Motor Inn



Day 4. Tues 22 March: Creswick - Daylesford

Breakfast & Dinner

After a leisurely breakfast we make our way to Ascot, home to **Lambley Gardens and Nursery**, world renowned as a benchmark in beautiful sustainable gardening. David provides a wonderful guided tour through the Ornamental Gardens, Vegetable and Flower Cutting Garden and then through the Nursery. Across at the **Creswick Woollen Mill** our visit will include a self guided tour of the working machinery, a browse through the Ryzowy Gallery, the Mill Shop and then **morning tea on the viewing deck**. Our next stop is in **Daylesford** to enjoy a **guided tour of the Daylesford and Hepburn Springs area** including a drive across **Lake Daylesford** and taking in the peace and tranquillity of the **Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens**, which still retain their 19th century character. For those wishing, enjoy the views from the observation tower overlooking the township of Daylesford and surrounding countryside then step inside the **Begonia House** and view the stunning displays. Following our tour enjoy some **free time in Daylesford** to soak up the **galleries, shops and cafés** including the famous **Mill Markets**. Nestled on the crest of Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens over-looking Daylesford, is **The Convent Daylesford** home to a stunning sculpture garden, beautiful chapel and a three level gallery, a haven of fine art in an historic 19th century mansion. We arrive back in Ballarat mid afternoon where there will be time to relax or enjoy some retail therapy. This evening after dinner we head up to the **Sturt Street Gardens** to view and stroll amongst the **amazing 'Illuminated Garden of Blooms'**.

Overnight Ballarat: Sovereign Park Motor Inn

Day 5. Wed 23 March: Mount Macedon - Melbourne

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Today we depart the home of the annual Begonia Festival and travel up to the **beautiful Macedon Ranges** home to some of the most beautiful gardens in Australia. On arrival enjoy a cuppa up at the **Top of the Range Cafe** and marvel at the views from the **Memorial Cross** which commemorates Australia's war fallen. We then call in at the simply **stunning Forest Glade Gardens** and astonishing **"Stokes Collection"**. The collection is regarded by many antique experts as the greatest private collection in the southern hemisphere. After touring the collection it's time to meander through the **Forest Glade Gardens**, which is one of Australia's finest private gardens, that has existed for nearly one hundred years. **Pick a spot amongst the garden to enjoy our picnic lunch**. The magnificent landscaped garden covers fourteen acres (5.6ha) and has four distinct sections: The large English section with its huge exotic trees and masses of colour, the delightful Japanese section complete with bonsai house, the beautiful woodland section displaying masses of shade-loving plants and the cool fern gully. The features of the garden include a stunning blue bell patch and an impressive daffodil lawn during spring; a topiary garden, two aviaries, a magnificent laburnum arch, a peony walk highlighted with climbing roses, as well as numerous pergolas, ponds, fountains and statues. Later in the day we make our way to our accommodation in Melbourne for check in and freshen up before dinner in the 115 Grill and Brewhouse Restaurant.

Overnight Melbourne: Hotel 115 Premier Collection

Day 6. Thurs 24 March: Melbourne

Breakfast & Lunch

This morning after a leisurely breakfast we shoot to the dizzying heights of **Eureka Skydeck** to enjoy the most spectacular floor-to-ceiling 360-degree view of Melbourne. 285m above ground, the fastest elevator trip in the Southern Hemisphere taking only 38 seconds. From the top we can see the Albert Park Lake, Port Phillip Bay, the Dandenong Ranges and beyond plus some of Melbourne's favourite attractions and landmarks. Next is **lunch and tour at the Australian Sports Museum**, located at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). No ordinary museum, it is home to Australia's largest collection of sporting memorabilia with interactive displays and a number of special faces sharing first-hand accounts of their sporting story. Then explore the inner sanctum of the MCG, walk on the hallowed arena and experience where legends play. Gain an insight into Melbourne's sporting culture while exploring one of the world's most iconic stadiums, go behind the scenes of the 'G visiting the famous MCC Long Room, MCC Library (founded in 1873), MCG Tapestry, player change rooms, Cricketers' viewing room, Ron Casey Media Centre, Portrait of Sir Donald Bradman and Sachin Tendulkar, Cricket Victoria Bill Lawry Centre plus more. After our visit we stop by **Fitzroy Gardens and Cooks' Cottage**, a memorial to Captain James Cook. This afternoon we have at leisure and this evening dinner is at own cost and venue choice.

Overnight Melbourne: Hotel 115 Premier Collection



Day 7. Fri 25 March: The Q Train

Breakfast & Lunch

After a relaxing morning we transfer into Docklands and hop aboard the **Port Phillip ferry which takes us across to Portarlington**. On arrival we are transferred once more to the **picturesque Drysdale Railway Station** where we join **"The Q Train", Geelong's amazing restaurant train**. Enjoy a glass of local wine on the Platform Bar prior to boarding. When it's time to depart, our Maitre D' will welcome us on board and show us to one of **The Q Train's restored Dining Cars**. The Q Train proudly offers local, independent wines, beers and ciders from the Bellarine and across Geelong and the Otways. As the train whistle sounds our journey begins, travelling along the beautiful Bellarine Railway, offering views of the rolling hills. Our first course of 6 courses will be served within 30 minutes of boarding. Between the set courses of **our delicious degustation menu**, we are free to walk around the train and soak up the rich history, or to enjoy a relaxing beer in the Club Loco Bar Car. The Q Train will pause for a period of time at **Suma Park Historic Homestead**, then runs alongside beautiful Swan Bay, with another stop to enjoy views while we dine and then continues on to Queenscliff. Our final dessert course is served on our return trip from Queenscliff to Drysdale, and as The Q Train closes its return journey into Drysdale Railway Station, enjoy a final cup of coffee or tea, perhaps with a digestif of our choice? Once we arrive at the station approximately 3 hours later we cruise back across the Bay to Docklands and then transfer back to our hotel for a relaxing evening after our day on the peninsula.

Overnight Melbourne: Hotel 115 Premier Collection

Day 8. Sat 26 March: Melbourne Flower Show

Breakfast & Dinner

After breakfast we make our way to the **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show** which is held at the **Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens**. Australia's top landscape designers are responsible for the breathtaking "Show Gardens" and, as a result of their stunning designs, could be crowned the Gold, Silver or Bronze winner for the top Exhibition Garden. **The Royal Exhibition Building** turns into the **Great Hall of Flowers** for the 5 days of the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. A glorious and vibrant exhibition from Victoria's leading florists and floral designers. Everybody loves a great flower market, the sights and sounds, the people, the atmosphere and the visual beauty of some magnificent floral displays. The show also comes alive with roving entertainment throughout the Carlton Gardens and the Royal Exhibition Building. An open exhibition and sale of garden sculptures, organised by the Association of Sculptors of Victoria, will also take place in the Carlton Gardens in the Central Boulevard. There is also the opportunity for those wishing to stroll next door and visit the **Melbourne Museum** or hit the **Bourke Street Mall** shopping precinct for some retail therapy and even catch a theatre show. After a day at leisure exploring the gardens, museums, mall or Melbourne Central its back to our hotel for a rest before gathering for dinner in 115 Grill and Brewhouse.

Overnight Melbourne: Hotel 115 Premier Collection

Day 9. Sun 27 March: Melbourne - Brisbane

Breakfast & High Tea

This morning we visit the **Melbourne Flower Markets** showcasing hundreds of varieties of fresh flowers, foliage and potted colour, which come direct from local growers and other suppliers to The Melbourne Market weekly. After the markets we are in for a treat, enjoying a delicious **Wedgwood High Tea** at the **Langham Hotel** with an exquisite selection of tea time delights served on the finest Wedgwood china. Then transfer to Melbourne Airport for our flights home after exploring Melbourne and the annual International Flower and Garden Show with The Donald Simpson Centre & Trade Travel.

Flight VA337 Departs Melbourne 1600 arrives Brisbane 1710



The Spectacular Victorian Floral Festivals Combo Tour



Tour Highlights:

Lunch Boatshed Restaurant Lake Wendouree; Ballarat Botanical Gardens - Robert Clark Botanical Gardens Conservatory Begonia Displays, Prime Ministers Avenue, Stoddard Collection, Statuary Pavilion, Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial; Ballarat Guided Highlights Tour; Sovereign Hill Gold Mining Township; Gold Museum; The Eureka Flag; The Spectacular New Sound & Light Show 'Aura'; Lambley Gardens & Nursery; Creswick Woollen Mill - Ryzowy Gallery, Mill Shop; Highlights Tour Daylesford & Hepburn Springs; Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens & Begonia House; Daylesford - Galleries, Shops, Cafés & Mill Markets; Daylesford Convent Gallery, Chapel & Gardens; Top of the Range Tea Rooms; Mt Macedon Lookout & Memorial Cross; The Stokes Collection & Forest Glade Gardens; Eureka Skydeck; Guided MCG Tour & Australian Sports Museum; Fitzroy Gardens & Captain Cook Cottage; Return Ferry Cruise of Port Phillip Bay; The Q Train Lunch & Peninsula Rail Journey; Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show; Melbourne Flower Markets; Wedgwood High Tea Langham Hotel & much more!

Tour Price Includes:

- Return flights Brisbane - Melbourne - Brisbane
- Luxury coach travel
- 8 Nights quality accommodation
- Breakfast, lunch & dinner as per itinerary (Meals 19 + High Tea)
- All entry fees & guides as per itinerary

\$3425.00 per person Twin Share (Single Supplement \$715.00)

Tour cost based on minimum 20 pax

The tour prices valid for travel in 2022. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change without notice.

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