

Saturday, September 5, 2020

# The West Australian travel

A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE

## Young Travel Writers 2020

Mogens  
Johansen  
shares  
with  
Morgan  
Klug  
and  
Tyrhys  
Wilson



# ON ASSIGNMENT



## YOUNG TRAVEL WRITER 2020

## Wilderness 'full of surprises'

MOGENS JOHANSEN leads Coral Coast trip

It was never going to be a holiday. Our Young Travel Writer competition is more than that. It's a chance for two talented writers to travel and work alongside a professional writer and photographer.

And Morgan Klug and Tyrhys Wilson did just that on our Young Travel Writer 2020 assignment along Australia's Coral Coast.

They were with Mogens Johansen, who has had an extensive career as a professional photographer, and is a very experienced travel writer.

Mogens shares the trip here, and we can look forward to Morgan and Tyrhys's reactions and impressions of the region in future weeks.

Morgan, in Year 12 at Christ Church Grammar School, entered our competition with a story about the children of Cambodia; Tyrhys, who was then in Year 11 at Governor Stirling Senior High School, wrote about the Bungle Bungle Range in Purnululu National Park, and has since returned to live in the East Kimberley.

Australia's Coral Coast tourism team generously and enthusiastically sponsored and personally supported the competition and assignment. They drew up the itinerary that Mogens, Morgan, Tyrhys, and Australia's Coral Coast marketing and public relations manager Emily Allen follow here ...

**T**yrhys is first to spot one, and it's not long before we see another, and another. In the ocean below, humpbacks are having a whale of a time.

I'm on assignment with this year's winners of our Young Travel Writer competition, Morgan Klug and Tyrhys Wilson, and our host Emily Allen, from Australia's Coral Coast.

And we're on a scenic flight to the Houtman Abrolhos Islands off the coast of Geraldton. Our pilot, Blaze Jasper from Geraldton Air Charters, said before take-off we might see whales on our way to the islands, but we've hit jackpot — I

Whales frolic near the Abrolhos Islands.

count eight just on the way and stop counting after that because there's so much else to see.

It's overcast but perfect flying



Young Travel Writers  
Tyrhys Wilson and  
Morgan Klug at the  
Abrolhos Islands.  
Pictures: Mogens  
Johansen



Emily Allen from Australia's Coral Coast with Young Travel Writer winners Morgan Klug and Tyrhys Wilson.



Scenic flight over the Abrolhos Islands.

conditions and about 15 minutes after leaving Geraldton we see the first of the 122 islands that makes up what's more commonly referred to as the Abrolhos Islands.

The islands stretch more than 100km from north to south and consists of three main groups, Pelsaert, Easter and Wallabi.

It looks harsh and unforgiving but, at the same time, beautiful. Most islands are uninhabited but many have colourful fishermen's shacks with finger jetties reaching out through the maze of coral reef that surrounds the islands.

There's an abundance of marine life. From the plane we can clearly see sharks, rays and dolphins in the shallow water around the islands.

During the flight, Blaze shares a wealth of information about the islands' bloody history, shipwrecks and the fishing industry.

We fly over the Batavia wreck

site at Morning Reef, and see the Wiebbe Hayes Stone Fort on West Wallabi Island and the gravesites on Beacon Island.

In 1629, the Dutch VOC ship Batavia was wrecked here. While Wiebbe Hayes and a group of men were set ashore on West Wallabi Island in search of water, a group of mutineers took control of the other survivors.

They left Hayes and his men on the island hoping they would starve or die of thirst. However, Hayes and his men found a freshwater spring and tamar wallabies.

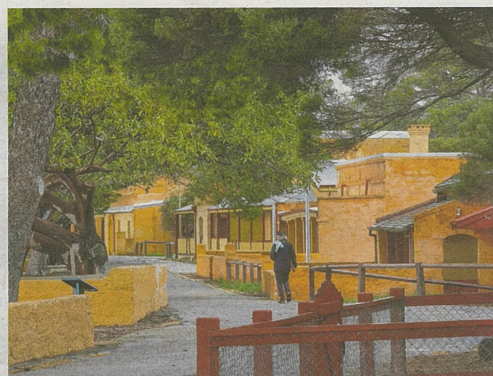
The mutineers, realising their mistake, launched a series of attacks but by then Hayes and his men had built the fort and stone

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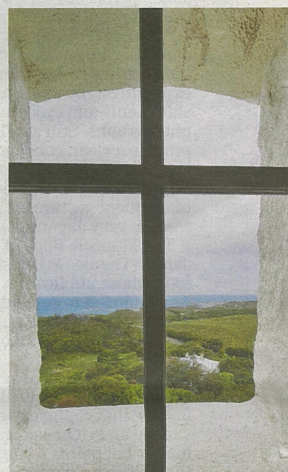


A quokka mum and her baby drinking from a puddle, Thomson Bay. Pictures: Mogens Johansen



Above, a typical Rottneest scene.

Right, view from one of the windows in the Wadjemup Lighthouse.



### fact file

■ karmagroup.com  
■ To find out about the Rottneest Voluntary Guides tours and how to become a guide, head to the website [rvga.asn.au](http://rvga.asn.au)



A lake view room at Karma Resort. Picture: Mogens Johansen



Outlook over Thomson Bay and sea.

tour. Feel free to interrupt and ask questions."

Ellis takes me for an abbreviated tour of the Oliver Hill Gun and Tunnel Tour and the Wadjemup Lighthouse. The Oliver Hill tour is a real gem. The two guns were installed prior to World War II to protect the port of Fremantle. The 9.2 inch guns could fire armour-piercing shells 29km and are the only intact emplacement of this type left in Australia. There are only 23 left in situ around the world.

Ellis guides me through the network of tunnels and rooms that form the gun battery, while giving interesting facts and figures about how they were built and

explaining what it took to operate the gun. Later, as we climb the 155 steps to the top of the Wadjemup

Lighthouse to see 360-degree views of the island, Ellis tells me how the light actually works. Although the 38m lighthouse is shorter than the Leeuwin lighthouse (at 39m), it is the highest lighthouse in WA because it sits on a 40m hill, and so has a much bigger reach.

I've been invited to stay overnight at the Karma Resort (many will still just know it as "The Lodge"). Karma Resort has that classic Rottneest feel. There's a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere as I walk into the lobby. It's elegant yet unpretentious, with cosy courtyards and a resort-style pool.

The resort is a sprawling complex that includes the Riva restaurant, serving

Mediterranean-inspired cuisine, and Gov's Sports Bar, where you can kick back and enjoy a cool bevvy in a casual atmosphere.

I'm staying in a big room overlooking one of the 12 lakes on the island. It is comfortable and well-appointed, with a king-size bed, writing desk, two-seater lounge and armchair, large flat screen TV and a modern bathroom. Karma Resort is fully catered and licensed, so there are no cooking facilities, apart from a kettle to make coffee and tea.

General manager Glen Trebilcock, who has been with at the resort for 11 years, explains that since Karma took over in 2011, there have been a lot of cosmetic improvements. They have also taken over the management of the island's nine-hole golf course and

opened the Karma Spa in a separate facility in the settlement village.

Glen is upbeat about the future and welcomes the new developments on the island. "It's fantastic for the island, it provides a different range of offerings and it bodes well for the future," he says. "There's everything from camping to high-end luxury and everything in-between."

"When Pinkies came online at the beginning of last year, that provided a different accommodation alternative for people, and when the hotel comes on in October, there will be another alternative."

Glen says despite the recent challenges, it has been a good winter. "With everything that has happened recently, it has given a lot of people the opportunity to rediscover Rottneest."

He adds that since the island reopened on June 6 business has been better than previous winters. "In prior years it was in people's mindset to go to Bali or Europe but now they can't, so they come here for an escape."

Visiting Rottneest in winter has been a revelation. I've seen the island in a different light. It's the same but different — the weather will be what it will be but the attraction remains.

**Mogens Johansen was a guest of Karma Rottneest. They have not seen or approved this story.**