

3 Quick Quests

Intent on going to extremes around Adelaide, CHRIS CANTY discovers adrenalin-pumping action as far as the eye can see

Adelaide is known as the city of churches, but beyond the spires you'll find uplifting experiences of a different kind. Situated between the Mount Lofty Ranges and the Gulf of St Vincent, the Adelaide area boasts adventure opportunities on land, sea and air. Whether your adrenalin rush of choice involves dizzying altitudes, jaw-dropping speeds or vertigo-inducing drops, there's a custom-made adventure for you within easy reach.

IN THE AIR

High above the vineyards and olive trees of the Fleurieu Peninsula, an assortment of majestic aircraft from a bygone era ply the skies. From the ground, a flight may look placid and slow, but in the cockpit, with the wind blasting and the engine roaring, you'll soon learn that even a vintage aircraft can make for a nail-biting ride.

Adelaide Biplanes has 10 different types of World War I-style fighters, though on this day we're cruising the skies in a classic Waco. It's a modern incarnation of a 1935 design and I feel like the Red Baron just looking at it. It's small, painted bright white and has a polished wooden propeller. I want it for my next birthday.

Pilot Martyn, who may well have the best "office" in the world, is as experienced an airman as they come and has passion to match. When clouds threaten to block our view, he shouts "here we go" and skilfully weaves his way through them. Then he tumbles into a dive that ratchets up our speed so much that I'm left gripping the fuselage in a mix of fear and exhilaration.

We execute a low pass over the coast towards Sellicks Beach, where Martyn points to a shipwreck visible from above. He then remarks through our headsets that a nude beach is just ahead. It's too cold for beachgoers today – especially skinny dippers – so we speed off towards the wineries and with a smirk I say I'll be sure to make a return visit when back on the ground.

The time passes by as quickly as the landscape and as we come in for gentle landing, Martyn shouts, "Don't worry, I've found the ground on every flight!"

Forget the birthday present, I want his job,

ADELAIDE BIPLANES, ALDINGA AIRFIELD, COLVILLE ROAD, ALDINGA (40 MINUTES SOUTH OF ADELAIDE), TEL: +61 (0)8 8556 5404, WWW.ADELAIDEBIPLANES.COM.AU. FOR A 30-MINUTE FLIGHT, PRICES RANGE FROM AUD210-AUD270 (SGD257-SGD330) DEPENDING ON THE AIRCRAFT.

Top Gun: Adelaide Biplanes' pilots give daredevils bird's-eye views of the city and (opposite) the coast



Helava ride: Twists and 180-degree turns are par for the course; Speeds reach 65 km/h (below)

PHOTOS: HELAVA JET BOAT

ON THE WATER

“How do you like my mid-life crisis?” Dennis asks, as he manoeuvres his supercharged jet boat across the water at a speed more befitting a six-lane freeway. It’s a bright Monday morning and despite the calm waters, Dennis still manages to perform abrupt 180-degree turns, sudden stops and a seemingly endless series of mind-bending twists.

This custom-made 9-metre speed machine is the fastest thing on the water and as Dennis cranks up the *Top Gun* soundtrack, it’s hard not to share his obvious “need for speed”. Beneath us, two 5.9-litre turbo-charged engines capable of pushing out over 1,200 litres of water per second power us ahead with so much thrust so that our safety-harnesses start to strain.

Three years ago, Dennis decided to put some excitement back into his life and in so doing, get the pulses of others racing at a similar clip. After an exhaustive process of custom-designing and building the 12-seat boat, he launched Helava Jet Boats and began offering the “thrill rides” that have become especially popular with those celebrating “buck’s” and “hen’s” nights. More recently, tourists have been won over by his “Ride and Dine” package, which combines

gourmet meals at seaside restaurants with hair-raising rides.

Back on the water, a police boat emerges in the distance and Dennis instantly speeds towards it. At first his motive is a mystery, until he darts behind their boat and starts manoeuvring within its wake.

“You can’t do this on the roads,” he says with a grin, presumably referring to fact that we’re fearlessly tailgating the cops – and at speeds of up to 65 kilometres an hour. Those on the vessel ahead look concerned, or perhaps they’re just jealous. It doesn’t really matter because soon we’re speeding past – this time leaving them in *our* wake.

HELAVA JET BOATS, MARINA PIER, GLENELG (20 MINUTES SOUTHWEST OF ADELAIDE), TEL: +61 (0)8 8376 8288, WWW.HELAVA.COM.AU, A 20-MINUTE THRILL RIDE IS AUD70 (SGD85). DINNER AND RIDE PACKAGES START AT AUD103 (SGD126)



Beneath us, a pair of 5.9-litre turbo-charged engines, capable of pushing out over 1,200 litres of water per second, power us ahead with so much thrust that our safety harnesses start to strain”



Into Thin Air: An abseiler hazards a downward glance; Adventurers come in all age groups (below)

PHOTOS: ADRENALIN

OVER THE EDGE

Just 35 km south of Adelaide, a group of people are happily jumping of cliffs.

While most come to Onkaparinga River Recreation Park for the striking scenery and unique rock pools, a brave few come to abseil down its 50-metre vertical drops.

“Placing your trust in the ropes and your guide, then stepping over the edge is a great and alternative way to see some amazing scenery,” says Stephen Blake of tour agency, Adrenalin. “Plus, a lot of people go abseiling to conquer their fear of heights.”

And while adventure junkies make up the bulk of their clientele, Stephen says that other, somewhat more unlikely daredevils, have also taken the plunge.

“Recreational abseilers just enjoy the challenge and the incredible buzz of facing their fears and going over the edge,” he says. “We get all types of customers, from groups of 10 year olds on school excursions, right through to a grandmother doing an abseil blind-folded on a dare.”

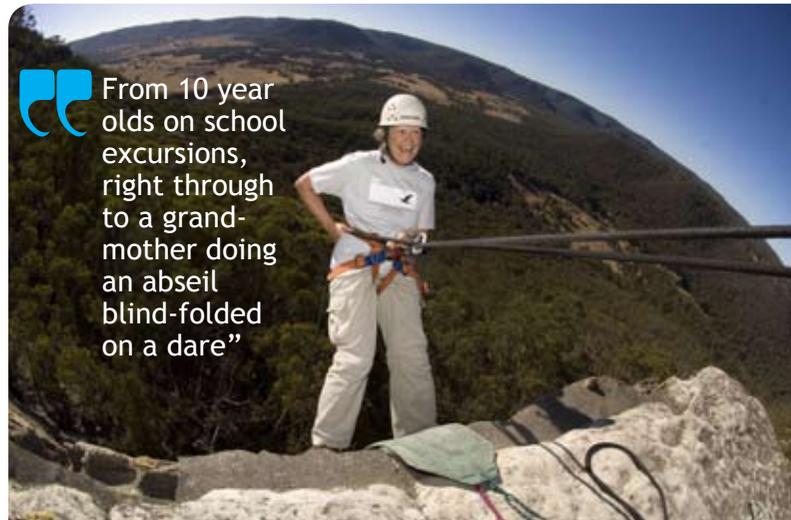
As with most major undertakings, it’s that first big step that is the toughest, as your mind fails to comprehend why your body would want to leave good

ol’ reliable Mother Earth. But when the ropes do their job and you convince yourself not to look down, the adrenalin takes hold and before you know it you’re back on solid ground ... and then you’re ready to do it all over again.

Adrenalin can be addictive. 🐯

ADRENALIN, ONKAPARINGA RIVER RECREATION PARK (30 MINUTES SOUTH OF ADELAIDE), TEL: 1300 791 793, WWW.ADRENALIN.COM.AU. A HALF-DAY TOUR IS SGD89 (SGD109)

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