



5 Must-Dos in Perth

Chris Canty shows you how to experience a city like Perth by doing exactly what the locals do.

Perth, Western Australia, is a great land of sun, sand, shores, sailing, surf and a dictionary-worth of superlatives. Its super laid-back style is the perfect antidote for the crazy pace of the city dweller, yet Perth offers all your favourite creature comforts and more. Here are five things not to leave Perth without doing:

1 SWAN AROUND

Swan River Cruises and Swan Valley

Nothing captures the essence of Perth's perpetual state of calm better than a cruise down the Swan River. Stroll down to Barrack Street Jetty and take one of the many cruises available.

While many locals like to travel to work by ferry (which must surely be one of the most stress-alleviating forms of transport possible), there is also a variety of cruising options that give a more detailed outlook of the area.

The popular Swan River Scenic Cruise is operated by Captain Cook Cruises and lasts almost three hours. It heads towards Fremantle,

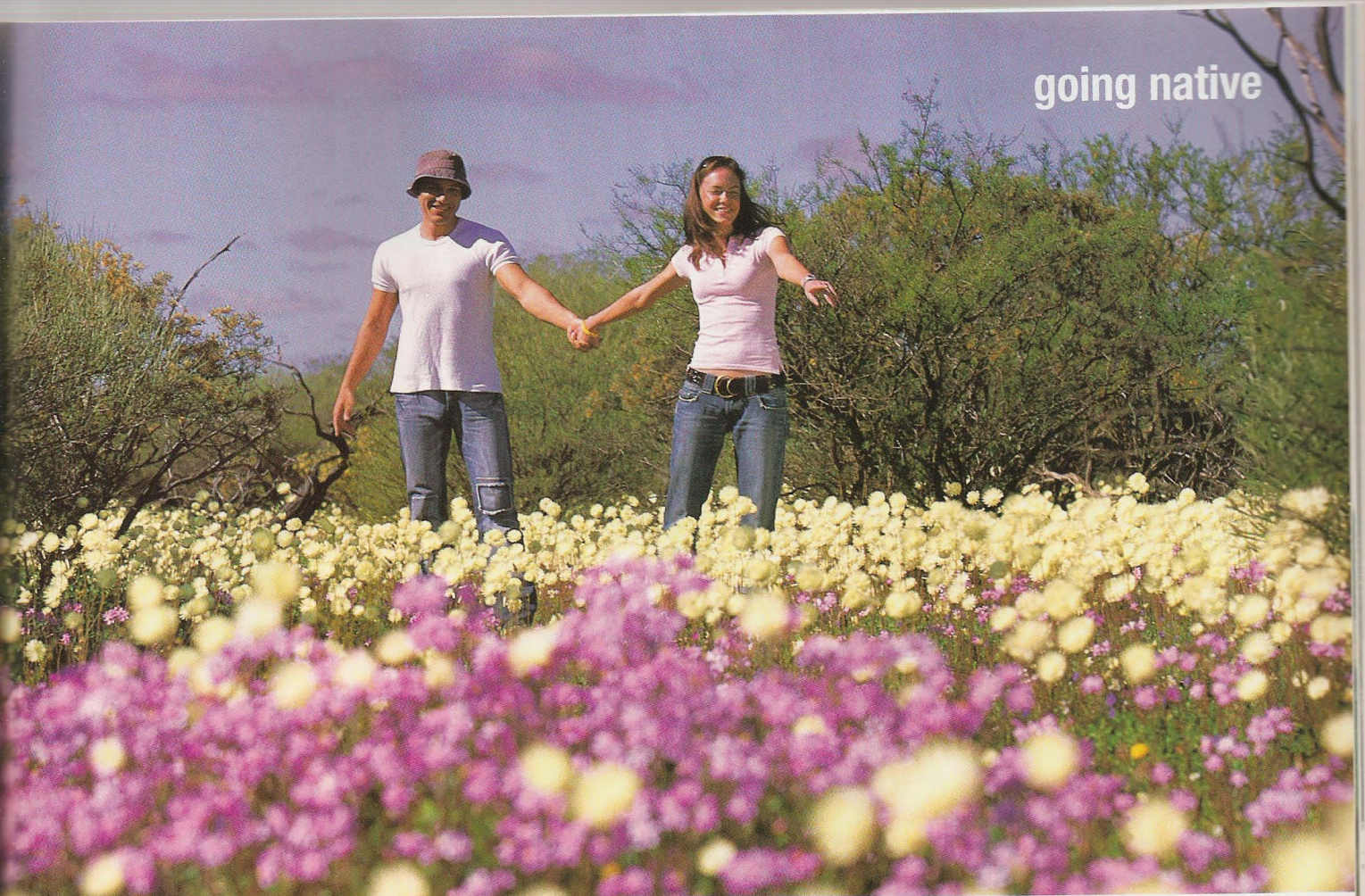
passing attractions such as the Royal Perth Yacht Club, Kings Park and luxurious waterfront houses which are home to Perth's rich.

For those who want to sample local produce, the Swan Valley Gourmet Cruise stops at the Caversham House, where the owner will prepare a three-course lunch, accompanied by three wines produced from nearby areas.

For the romantics (especially those who want to propose marriage), the City of Lights Dinner Cruise slowly wanders beside the city landscape, as you are presented with a seafood buffet, live entertainment and all-you-can-drink wine.

When you return to the jetty, venues such as the rowdy Lucky Shag and elegant Halo Café offer superb views on the water and fill up quickly when the locals clock off work.

WHERE: Captain Cook Cruises (tel: +61 (8) 9325 3341) and Golden Sun Cruises (tel: +61 (8) 9325 9916). Both have offices on Barrack Street Jetty.



2 TAKE A STROLL

Kings Park and Botanical Gardens

A few minutes out of Perth's CBD is a picturesque sanctuary that holds thousands of plants and fauna, and offers fantastic views over the city and its waterways.

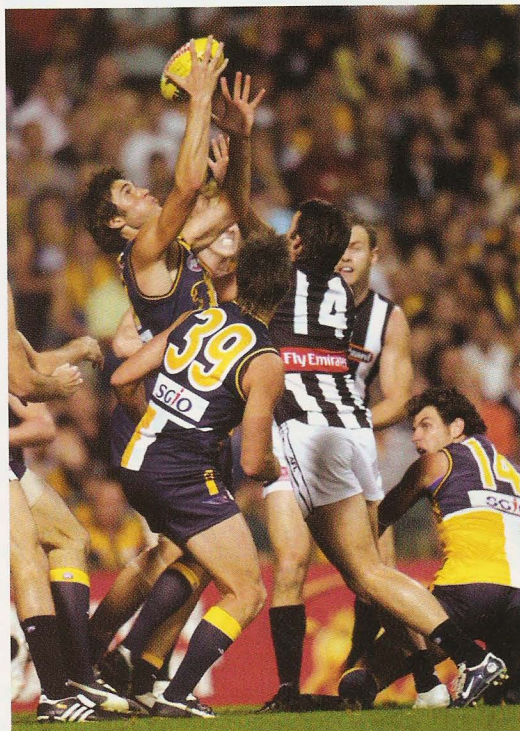
Many locals come to Kings Park to unwind after work or to relax with families. The Lotterywest Federation Walkway is a highlight, extending over 600 metres through the Botanic Gardens, including an elevated glass bridge that hovers 50 metres in the air amidst tall eucalyptus trees.

Here, impressive series of paths are signposted, giving descriptions of the passing variety of plants, as well as Aboriginal dreamtime beliefs. A simple stroll can turn into a day's worth of exploring.

The path leads to a new amphitheatre titled Beedawong (meaning "meeting place" or "celebration" in Nyoongar Aboriginal language), where performances are held. For the best view in town, climb the 101 steps of the DNA Tower (named because it looks like a DNA molecule), where on a clear day, you can see as far as the ocean.

In the summer months of December to March, the western side of the park plays host to an outdoor cinema where locals bring picnics and lounge on the grass. Free guided tours leave from the information centre twice a day (morning and afternoon).

■ **WHERE:** Kings Park and Botanic Gardens, Fraser Avenue, West Perth.



3 CATCH A GAME

AFL Football in Perth

Australian Rules Football is uniquely Australian. Invented over 150 years ago, it blends the brutality of rugby, the skill of soccer and the precision of basketball to create what is arguably one of the most entertaining sports in the world.

To try to explain the rules is futile and would only confuse the reader, which is why the best thing to do is to watch the game in action. And there is no better place than Perth in which to catch it.

Perth is a football-mad town, so don't be surprised if much of the media is devoted to the ups and downs of the team. Even the mood of the people parallels their success, so if you notice a lot of people smiling at the moment, it probably has something to do with the two teams.

The West Coast Eagles are the reigning premiers after defeating the Sydney Swans by just one point last year, and the nearby Fremantle Dockers are considered one of the best bets to win this year's premiership after finishing third in 2006. Supporters love to remind those living in the eastern states of this, and have enormous pride in their sides. Games are played at Subiaco Oval, close to the CBD, and attendance is regularly over 30,000 so tickets must be bought as soon as they become available.

At the game itself, young girls and boys will walk among the aisles selling meat pies (tasty and cheap) which is a custom in itself, and must be tried. There is nothing like being surrounded by the deafening noise of the crowd, as they hysterically cheer and scream at this high scoring ballet of muscle known as AFL football.

WHEN: Games are played between March and September

WHERE: Subiaco Oval

Get tickets at www.ticketmaster.com.au. Prices from AUD30 (SGD37.10).

going native



4 WET YOUR WHISTLE

Little Creatures Brewery

Regarded as one of the country's best breweries, Fremantle's Little Creatures has become one of the town's premier tourist attractions (although the locals love it as well) by blending just the right amount of multi-award-winning beer, incredible seaside scenery and first-rate cuisine.

Thousands can't resist popping in, due mostly to the raucous echo of laughter that can be heard coming from its doors and the ultra stress-free environment the place does so well.

For a casual place to try one of their four beers (pale ale, pilsner, bright ale or amber ale), start at the beginning, in the beer garden at its entrance, where smiling faces and gulping throats are always on hand. Just through the door is a series of mega comfy couches where people listen to iPods, read magazines and chill out.

Don't worry if you stay here for hours, because it's expected. Past the bar and the huge vats of

beer being brewed (that, by the way, tastes so good, it's worth cancelling onward travel plans for), is the highly regarded restaurant, which is known for two things: Firstly, their sublime ultra-fresh mussels that are caught in the early hours of the same day, which are delicious and even more so when marinated in lime, chilli or, of course, beer.

Secondly, their wood-fired pizzas which come with an array of gourmet toppings such as harissa spiced lamb, melenzane and feta or prawn, coriander pesto and shitake mushrooms. Every pizza is unique and very special.

Through the restaurant is the outdoor verandah area that overlooks the gorgeous water. A day could be spent here alone.

WHERE: 40 Mews Road, Fishing Boat Harbour, tel: +61 (8) 9430 5155, www.littlecreatures.com.au

WHEN: Monday to Friday, 10am to midnight; Saturday, 9am to midnight

5 PRICK UP YOUR EARS

Fremantle's Music Scene

For such a small and isolated area, Fremantle's reputation for producing some of Australia's finest bands is impressive. Multi-platinum artists such as Eskimo Joe and the John Butler Trio have a huge following at home and are the latest in a long line of Western Australians who have won over the country.

Much of the reason for this is the thriving ground roots music scene that exists in dark caverns of local music venues.

Where venues in other states have been sold or turned into a "pokies den" (where gambling machines are installed), here in Fremantle, they have continued the great tradition of "pub rock", producing original world-class music.

The bohemian café setting of Mojo's Bar is considered one of the best places to see live original bands (they also have a open mic night on Mondays for those budding stars), while the dark basement lounge at the 130-year-old Norfolk Hotel offers the kind of intimate venue real music should be heard in.

Other venues worth checking out are Rosie O'Grady's, the Sail and Anchor and the Newport Hotel.

For more information about what's playing when you're in town, pick up a copy of the free weekly music magazines *xpress* or *The Drum Media*.

WHERE: ■ Mojo's Bar, 237 Queen Street, North Fremantle, tel: +61 (8) 9430 4010 ■ Norfolk Basement Lounge, 47 South Terrace, tel: +61 (8) 9335 5405 ■ Newport Hotel, 2 South Terrace, tel: +61 (8) 9335 2428 ■ Sail and Anchor, 64 South Terrace, tel: +61 (8) 9335 8433 ■ Rosie O'Grady's, 23 William Street, tel: +61 (8) 9335 1645.

TIGER AIRWAYS FLIES BETWEEN PERTH AND SINGAPORE DAILY.

