

# Tour the TRAILS

TEEMING WITH TRAILS ENVELOPED IN LUSH FOREST, TAKE A TOUR THROUGH COLLIE RIVER VALLEY TO HIKE, BIKE OR HORSE RIDE THROUGH ITS SCENIC LANDSCAPE. *By JANICE PLATT*

Bunbury Geographe stands as a treasure trove of pristine wilderness and natural splendour, making it a must-visit for those with a thirst for adventure. As you delve into this region, each moment is a revelation, with the next hidden jewel waiting just around the bend to surprise and enchant you.

Have you heard of the Collie River Valley? It's a burgeoning hotspot for thrill-seekers, still under the radar for many.

Nestled within is the **Wellington National Park**, a sanctuary where adventure breathes and thrives. Here, weave through walking and mountain bike trails, glide on lakes with paddle boards, or cast a line during a fishing session. With an array of picturesque camping spots along the riverbanks, every day beckons you to chart your own journey of discovery and excitement.

Start your Collie River Valley adventure at one of the most unique attractions in the South West, **The Wellington Dam**. Here, a network of scenic walking and mountain biking trails converges, from easy strolls, to challenging hikes and rides, including the breathtaking **Jabitj Trail** (12km) leading to the tranquil Honeymoon Pool, and the inspiring **Sika Trail** (9.8km) taking you past Potters Gorge. It is also the canvas on which the world's largest dam mural,

*Reflections*, is painted — an 8,000 sqm mural by internationally renowned artist Guido Van Helten. Have a wander along the new Wellington Dam walkway for a different perspective of this epic mural.

The world-famous **Bibbulmun Track**, stretching 1000km from the Perth Hills to Albany, also cuts through Collie, making for

a scenic detour to the Wellington Dam via the Bibbulmun Wellington Spur Trail (19km).

Taking on the complete Bibbulmun Track is certainly not for the faint hearted. For those seeking just a leisurely slice of the invigorating journey and some local insights too, **Forest Explorers** is the expert offering guided walking tours through the forest. As a life-long lover of nature, Alison Melvin brings the region to life as she spotlights the stunning diversity of the surrounding ancient landscape and the coal basin beneath, which makes the region so unique.

Join Alison for Forest Explorers' Wildflower Wander tour in spring to learn about the non-indigenous and indigenous uses of the local flora. You'll be amazed at how small some of the incredible plant species are and the common names can make for interesting revelations too — egg and bacon plants anyone?

When asked what people are most surprised by when on tour with her, Alison laughs, "how many plant species there really are when you look closer at the environment!"

"Our creeks and river systems, high granite outcrops, savanna sand plains and laterite escarpment bring an amazing display of flora colour all year round," says Alison, who also offers a captivating tour of



*Adventure Connections*

the town's stunning mural trail.

For those who find their thrill on two wheels, Collie offers a labyrinth of mountain bike trails designed to elevate your pulse and challenge your skills. Navigate through lush forests, where each turn is a dance with nature and every descent a rush of exhilaration. Dare to conquer the **Munda Biddi Trail**, with its heart-racing descent towards the Collie River, and cap off your adventure with a detour to the enchanting Honeymoon Pool, a hidden gem that promises a serene finale to your adrenaline inducing journey.

Maximise your Collie River Valley adventure with Kym Gibson at **Adventure Connections**, where immersive, expert-led tours await. Kym's passion for Collie shines through in curated journeys that highlight the region's world-class mountain biking trails. It's not just a tour; it's an invitation to experience the thrill of the trail and the serenity of nature in this exceptional corner of the world.

"There is so much you can do and see, every day is an adventure", says Kym.

Jump on board Adventure Connection's tour 'Wellington Delights on E-Bikes' and cruise along Collie's forest floor; follow Collie River to Minningup Pool on its sunset tour;



*Outback Horse Trails*

or, if you're a foodie, work up an appetite e-biking through scenic landscapes before a taste sensation at **Hackersley Estate Winery**, in the Ferguson Valley,

"When people come to experience one of our tours, who may never have been on an e-bike before, it can change someone's life," says Kym.

If doing it on your own is how you prefer to adventure, local adventure business **Traaverse** can take care of you with kayak and SUP hires, and transfers to the Bibbulmun and Munda Biddi Tracks. They even do food drops on the trails as part of their services if requested!

Looking for something a little different? Experience the abundant bushland around

Collie River Valley from up high. High atop a horse that is! **Outback Horse Trails** caters to riders of all levels, taking you on a gentle ride through the bush, or on one of their popular picnic rides. Cover the magnificent countryside on horseback and enjoy the remarkable views before tucking in to a picnic at the elegant **Harris River Estate Winery**.

According to owner Linda Yates, their guides provide a safe environment for complete beginner riders and the horses are highly trained to do their job enabling customers to feel completely at ease on their horse and out in nature, enjoying the views and tranquillity found only in Collie. **BG**

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