

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Off to see the MONA? - April 9, 2025

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SUMMARY

First stop of the day: Mawson's Huts Replica Museum. It's a fascinating recreation of the huts used in Antarctica by Douglas Mawson & his team, plus stories of the expedition. Wandered through the Salamanca market and had lunch. Took a long, really pretty walk to Cascade Brewery for afternoon refreshments. Ubered to the Botanical Garden which we found prettier than the one in Sydney, certainly there were a lot more flower! Lucked into a ride back to our hotel from a Tasmanian woman Scott struck up a conversation with. Very good seafood dinner at Mures (upstairs, not down, per many locals). - Karen

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DETAIL

In the dark of last night we couldn't tell much about where we are. At 8 am, late for us, it's sunny and bright. We can now see we're in a beautiful, hilly part of the world, right on a wharf with lots of boats. It's cool now but is predicted to get nice, up into the upper 60s, later today. We prep and have our coffee.

Again we're on our own for the day, but our plan is to visit the MONA, the eccentric Museum of Old and New Art. At the front desk Don gets the good news (the ferry to the MONA is just a short walk from here) and the bad (it's closed today). Well damn.

We have stuff planned the rest of our time here so it's doubtful we'll make it another day. Apparently during the high season, at the warmest part of summer, everything's open every day, but as we get into fall local attractions are open less often.

Plan B we just have breakfast and head out to explore the city. Soon we come across a formidable wooden shack that should be closer to the South Pole. In fact it is close to the South Pole, the real one, that is. This is the Mawson Shack, named for Sir Douglas Mawson who lead an expedition to Antarctica back in 1911. Back then they built a serious shack to live in during their expedition about 3,000 miles south of here. It's still down there, which makes it one of the very few such structures to survive to make that claim.

More recently an exact replica of the shack, complete with authentic and replica equipment, food, bedding, etc. was built here in Hobart. We tour the fascinating building, examining the gear and cramped living quarter they called home for many years. There's lots of pictures and tales of amazing hardship endured in the cold climate down there.

Chilled from absorbing all that, we head back out into the sunshine and start hiking to a famous brewery, two plus miles away. There's a walking path by a creek, with lots of nature all around and the shade of eucalyptus overhead (of course). We later learn we passed many dozen duck-billed platypus (platypi?) but didn't realize it at the time.

We do note a lot of flowers in bloom. It's fall, is this supposed to be happening? The more we see, the more impressed we become. This place must have some nice mild climate.

We see blooming fuchsia, hydrangea (regular, and shooting star), roses, iris, mandevilla, plumbago, agapanthus, magnolia, apple fruit, figs, nasturtiums, white wisteria, camellia, rosemary in bloom, pleroma (had to look that one up), oleander, sage, Chinese Fringe flower, status, and penstemon. And that's just the ones we know.

Later we look up where we are (distance from the equator) versus other cities with which we're familiar. Hobart is a tad less than 43° South. That puts it at a similar distance from the equator as Toronto, Nice, Florence and Split (in Croatia). It's one degree further south than Monaco and Christchurch (New Zealand) and one degree further north than Boston. Nice climate they have here!

The Cascade Brewery doesn't disappoint. It's the oldest brewery in Australia, we learn, and we like the beer. They've planted an incredible garden, not surprisingly, and are well known for their food. they offer tours which are supposed to be awesome, but we just stick to the beer.

Rested and refreshed, we catch an Uber to Hobart's Botanical Garden. It's at least equally impressive. Apparently there was no limit to the amount of land that the gardens could occupy and the place is both massive and incredibly well done. The plants all like the climate here.

In addition to the impressive trees, bushes and flowers there are a few native animals enjoying the gardens as well. We see three cockatoos eating foraging for tree nuts and a lot of "turbo chickens". These birds look just like chickens, but we're told they can quickly turn on the speed, getting up to 30 miles per hour very quickly. It's impressive (if you're one to be impressed by a chicken).

Towards the end of our visit we stop and look around, trying to figure out if there's anywhere else in the gardens we still need to see. A nice older lady asks if we need any directions. We thank her but say we're pretty much done, having all of the impressive gardens. But... does she know if we will be able to walk back to the center of town, is it far? Ah yes, too far, but I'm happy to drive you. Wow, how nice, are you sure??. So we end up catching a ride back to our hotel, courtesy of our new friend, Jan. En route we relate our travel and plans in Australia and learn about Jan and her extended Hobart kin. How nice is that?

For dinner we walk a short ways, to the other side of one of the tidal basins filled with fishing boats, to Mures Upstairs, a fancy seafood restaurant. Our waiters were many and very disorganized. We ordered drinks and then were asked many more times if we want to order drinks. Thank you, we already have. All of the servers are from Southeast Asia, France, or elsewhere. They do recruit the labor here.

The restaurant is promoting an AU\$200 per person show/meal where you get to see a tuna 'disassembled'. Today is (supposedly) not the day this is offered, not that we'd do it anyway. But before long four guys do come by, struggling under the weight of a 300? pound tuna, just beautiful. It was fully intact on its way around the corner. It came back, quite a while later, in pieces. There was a big asian group there, so apparently they said the right thing to get the show/meal on the wrong day.

Not what we had planned, but a fun, full day nonetheless. A cool, calm walk back to our hotel in the moonlight and then off to bed. Tomorrow's another tour and more Australian animals.

Photos



The view from our room of the hotel open-air, covered seating area for the coffee shop. Karen, Tricia and Don are already there.



In front of our hotel, with Karen emerging, it's a bright, crisp, cool morning. Does it look like an old warehouse/jam factory?



Across from our hotel is where the fishing boats park. These natural cages are to catch crabs, we're told.



A little birdy told me the muscles here are very tasty.



In Mawson's Shack, a replica of the one 3,000 km to the south in the antartic. Mawson's private room and part of the other living quarters (and kitchen, etc. etc.) for everyone else.



They did everything they could to stay warm, given the technology of the time.



Back outside, in the bright sunshine, a flat, reflective surface catches my attention.



This handsome boat, The Lady Nelson? was headed out with a charter group. We chatted with one of the crew, a lady from Oklahoma, prior to it's pushing off.



Going on our two plus mile walk to a brewery. Unbeknownst to us at the time there are fifty of so duck-billed platypuses (platipi?) in the waterway to our left.



An impressive brewery if we ever saw one.
And the oldest in Australia (we're told).



A glam shot in the Hobart Botanical
Gardens.

FARNSNIENTE





Someone else visiting the Botanical Gardens, a cockatoo, and two friends. There for a quick bite.



At dinner an enormous tuna fish went swimming by as we waited for our food.



On the walk back to our hote. So pretty here.

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