

Park Life

SCOTT PODMORE

Hot spot lures coastal road trippers

IT'S not uncommon these days for a holiday park's general store to double as a funky cafe, but when the owner straps on a guitar and serves up an intimate poolside performance for guests on a lazy Sunday afternoon, then we're talking about a real point of difference.

Multiskilled Andy O'Donnell and his wife, Lynne, run the Merimbula Beach NRMA Holiday Park, cafe and store the Cheeky Mango, and it's a pivotal feature of the popular resort, positioned above cliffs on one side and breathtaking surf beach on the other. It's a southeastern NSW hot spot known as the gem of the Sapphire Coast.

Merimbula is also a coastal midway point for Melbourne and Sydney, a one-hour flight from either direction through Rex Airlines for about \$120 one way.

But keep in mind it's the thrill of the coastal road trip that lures campers, caravanners and cabin hunters from far and wide, and Merimbula Beach NRMA Holiday Park, one of BIG4's major players in Australia, offers the complete package – stacks of family activities and superb facilities, prime location on a peninsula, and accommodation that caters for all types.

Sleep talking

One to three-bedroom condos, villas and cabins beautifully fitted out, some with barbecue balconies and coastal views, clifftop camp sites, a range of powered and unpowered caravan sites.

A wide variety, extremely clean and whether you're a vanner, camper, big family, young couple or flying solo, there's something for everyone.

Unforgettable

Migrating humpback whales putting on a spectacular show of breaching and tail slapping 100m from the resort's sweeping clifftop views.

Downers

The double go-karts will burn your calf muscles to nothing. Too hard for kids to scoot around in, so be sure to get the singles. And if you dare unleash the kids in the games room, make sure you take a bag full of gold coins.

The damage

There are three types – low season, holiday season and peak. Low-season



PENINSULA POSITION: Merimbula Beach NRMA Holiday Park (below) is perched on a cliff top along the Sapphire Coast.

prices range from \$25 a night for unpowered tent sites (\$35 for clifftop van site), Seabreeze cabins for \$82, Oceanbreeze bungalow \$105, Clifftop ocean condos \$210. And remember that a Big4 annual membership entitles you to savings, too.

The details: Merimbula Beach NRMA Holiday Park, 2 Short Point Rd, Merimbula. Visit www.merimulabeachholidaypark.com.au or www.big4.com.au

Outdoor activities

The Cheeky Mango cafe, a place to grab a great espresso and supplies or enjoy scrumptious meals. Awesome children's activities at Kidz Korner (crafty, sporty, adventurous and pizza and Paddle Pop movie nights), two resort pools, giant jumping pillow, games room, go-kart and bike hire, tennis courts and beach volleyball court. Stroll down the hill for beautiful beach walks or head for the rocks to watch the surfers hang 10 from about 50m away.

