

Carnarvon Gorge

Day 1 - back to nature



Tagging along with friends

Experiencing one of the many wonders of Australia

When we learned that Gary and Sue were planning a trip to Carnarvon Gorge we asked if we could join them (& Gary's brother Greg & wife Sue). The first time we visited the gorge we had time to fully enjoy about half of the many walking tracks but the second time around, 10 years ago, (again with Gary and Sue) we arrived just as the rain started and when it finally stopped (after 15 INCHES) we ended up being stranded at the Takarakka Caravan Park for 5 days. This time around we were determined to enjoy the entire gorge. And so, we set out, very early, on a 9 hour road trip. It had just stopped raining.



The Plants

Nature in the raw - starting at the caravan park and then everywhere you look walking on the tracks.



Little Things

Its the things in miniature you can easily miss - the footprints, the petals, the many hues of colour, the insects.



Colours & Sounds

The flowers, bark, leaves, bird song, the wind whistling through the trees; and the water rippling over the river rocks.



Day One

Art Gallery and Wards Canyon.

We arrived later in the day, had a great sleep and looked forward to our first walk - a 5.4km trek half way up the gorge to the Art Gallery. On the way back we visited Wards Canyon.

“Two places, each one strikingly magnificent in their own way”

The main gorge walking track criss-crosses Carnarvon Creek many times. The track is mostly flat although you must balance/step from rock to rock across the creek and some side walks are quite steep. These side tracks are definitely worth exploring and each of them have their own special wonder. A great day.



RIVER CROSSINGS

There are 23 river crossings on the track through Canarvan Gorge. In most places the depth of water is quite shallow. In some places the rocks are conveniently placed but there are also areas which were quite tricky. The suggested way to cross is to keep moving - like riding a bike. If you slow down you have to start balancing and that can cause you to slip off the rock and possibly hurt your ankle.



Our first stop was the Art Gallery with its large mural of historical aboriginal art. The paintings on the rock face have been dated back to well over 3600 years. Some of the images looked like they have been painted only recently. The mass of red and yellow motifs is made up primarily of outlines of hands made by spitting ocre paint. Apart from the many hand motifs, the rock wall is almost completely filled with stylised vulvas - thousands and thousands of them. There were also lots of paintings of nets, boomerangs, crosses and native animals. The symbolism of these motifs is lost on most visitors but the local guides will give you a great insight into what they mean and why they were painted. The nets for example, are not there to represent the catching of fish but rather a marker where bodies were hung out to dry. The Art Gallery is a very mysterious place.



The nearby side track up the side of the escarpment is quite steep. Walkers first come across a beautiful waterfall (many people stop mistakenly think this is the end of the walk). The air is cooler and a platform overlooking the falls gives a hint of what is above. The steep steps up and over the top leads to a stream running through rock. The overhang of the rockface is dramatic and colouring of the rock with a backdrop of ferns and tropical plants give peace and tranquility to the setting. At the end of the track one can see the steep sided narrow canyon continues from where the springwater comes from. The area is cool and the water is pristine. We spent many minutes just drinking in the ambience of this magical place. What really struck me was the bright orange colours of some rocks - it was the rust of the iron ore content. So glad we came here.