



Ballarat

A GOLDMINE OF SPRING DELIGHTS

Left: Enjoy a long lunch in Ballarat.

OVER THE HILLS, but not far away, is a pot of spring-gold calling out for you to come and play. Ballarat, just 115km from Melbourne (and easily accessible by train) is the historically rich and culturally warm city – just waiting for you to explore.

Art and architecture are abundant in Ballarat and its historic villages, such as Clunes, Buninyong and Creswick, and they enrich the region's ambience. Couple the striking streetscapes with award-winning food and wine outlets and Ballarat will tempt you to linger a little longer. Of course you can fit a lot into one day – but why not make a night (or several) of it? Stay in a rural retreat, fantastic family caravan park, or indulge in one of the city's grand accommodation options.

Spring, like every other season in Ballarat, brings its unique set of offerings

to the table. With the crisp mornings and sunny days, you will be lured into enjoying Ballarat in Bloom. During this season, the 'Ballarat Gardens in Spring' are a green-thumb's delight. There are also numerous events catering to all tastes: from open cellar door winery weekends, the annual Royal South Street performance competition, as well as the annual 'SpringFest Market Weekend' set around the 6km foreshore of Lake Wendouree.

The table of delectable wine and fare is set, the weather is calling you outside, and vintage fun abounds. So, let curiosity get the better of you – jump in the car, step onto the train, or get on-board a bus – and visit the place where history lives.

Don't miss the opportunity to see the best regional city in its golden glory – Spring has sprung in Ballarat!

FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

Experience the gold rush adventure at Sovereign Hill, Australia's foremost outdoor museum. Visitors can pan for real gold, explore underground mineshafts and watch street performers – including the commanding Redcoat Soldiers. And when the sun goes down, be sure to book a seat for the open-air theatre experience, *Blood on the Southern Cross*. Find out more at www.sovereignhill.com.au

If it's animals you love, then enjoy interactive play with some of Australia's most-loved creatures at the Ballarat Wildlife Park. Hand-feed more than 100 free-roaming kangaroos and emus, cuddle koalas and wombats, see Tasmanian devils, and brave the reptile house with its crocodiles and snakes. For more information visit www.wildlifepark.com.au

Kryal Castle is Ballarat's newest land of medieval adventure – and it's fit for all ages to explore. Discover myths, legends and fairy tales, be entertained and thrilled in the Torture Museum, and witness the special-effects dungeon and the dramatic main arena shows. You will be enchanted by the story of the Land of Kryal, all set in the real-life castle on the hill. Find out more at www.kryalcastle.com.au

Another new and world-class attraction in Ballarat is the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka (MADE). M.A.D.E is a digitally-immersive, state-of-the-art museum. With the evocative 158-year-old Eureka flag as its centrepiece, M.A.D.E's interactive exhibitions explore the past and future of democracy – looking at culture, civics, history and citizenship. Find out more at www.made.org

Or, if you want to see the works – why not bundle the four above-mentioned attractions together to save 15 per cent on entry? Purchase the new 'Ballarat Pass', which is available from the Ballarat Visitor Information Centre at 43 Lydiard Street North and enjoy other bonus offers around the vibrant regional city too.