

Beat: Travel

## SOUTH OF WOLF CREEK

### The Historic Outback of West Australia

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**USPA NEWS** - South of Wolf Creek and north- north- east of Perth , Western Australia is an untouched place of Solace called "Yalgoo", once a thriving gold rush town built in 1896 after the discovery of some of the richest gold in Australia it now is home to some 50 residents and a handful of tourists .

In the Midwest of Western Australia just two hours east of Geraldton is the captivating town of Yalgoo , known as the "Gateway" to the outback. It's here in Yalgoo you will meet Stan and Valerie Willock have owned this hotel since 1993 affectionately known as the "Pink Hotel" it's actually divided into two sections with "Locals" frequenting on side of the bar and tourists frequenting the other which I found very unusual in this day and age but the locals seem to prefer it that way, not the other way around. Historically known for its gold discovery in 1896, Yalgoo has some of the largest cattle and sheep stations in the world. The Yalgoo Shire part of the Division of Durack covers some 28,215 square kilometres or over 17,500 square miles of land and all looked after by the Federal Member for Durack Melissa Price. Melissa is a member of the Australian House of Representatives for the Division of Durack.

On a recent trip to the outback with adventurer John Bergin (JB) ( apartment manager during the week and adventurer by weekends) pictured here armed with modern day weaponry - a metal detector. John has no issued roughing it in the outback sleeping under trees living off the land whilst searching for treasures including on this trip "cannon balls , relics and yes" Gold nuggets. John was a little protective of his finds however I was able to tag along with JB for a few days and watch this man simply walk where ever he wanted to walk and without fear of wild dogs, dingoes and other deadly reptiles that inhabit the bush. I asked JB about the recent missing prospectors ( one found dead down a mine shaft that week) and he simply shrugged his shoulders. A few moments later I stumbled across what looked to me to be an old grave , after reporting it to Yalgoo police ( who didn't seem interested in even knowing where it was ) we continued north disturbingly in the direction of the infamous "Wolf Creek"

Yalgoo is peppered with the remnants of life from the gold boom of the 1800's and littered with garbage slowly rusting and returning to the earth. The land is harsh and arid yet during the rainy season the dry parched land turns to a plethora of textures and shades of reds, yellows and greens as wildflowers paint the landscape with a myriad of colours. Western Australia is home of the largest variety of wildflowers found anywhere in the world with rainbow colours reaching to the distant blue skies.

My expedition to this amazing tourist destination allowed me to experience temperature extremes from 41 degrees Fahrenheit to dry heat of over 118 in the shade. (5 Celsius to 48 Celsius ) The dust storms, the midnight thunder storms and the heat parching my lips as I breathe the hot outback air made me realise that water is your best friend in the outback. When it rains the concrete like tracks , which are gazetted main roads, turn to slush . Without a dependable 4WD don't even think about leaving the bitumen roads. If your keen to experience the outback yourself make sure you drop into the tourist office for directions or talk to the publican Stan who will tell you that Yalgoo is a friendly place that has no roundabouts or traffic lights and his food is the best in town. Find out for yourself but don't go wondering near open mineshafts, you just might fall into one. Deaths have been recorded in the region with one prospectors remain found recently decomposing and his wife still missing. Take your camera explore the wonders of Western Australia , maybe even find yourself a cannon ball or alluvial nugget but remember safety and do your homework.

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**Editorial program service of General News Agency:**

United Press Association, Inc.

3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168

Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA

(702) 943.0321 Local

(702) 943.0233 Facsimile

[info@unitedpressassociation.org](mailto:info@unitedpressassociation.org)

[info@gna24.com](mailto:info@gna24.com)

[www.gna24.com](http://www.gna24.com)