

IT'S GETTING HOT

One hour from Monash, Lot's Wife dives into the idyllic paradise of the Peninsula Hot Springs. By Carmel Wallis with Sam Whitney and Sasha Lytas



Some thirty years ago, the government decided to engage in an extensive geological survey along the Mornington Peninsula. Looking for gold, uranium, oil- anything- the surprising find was not riches to rival Saudi Arabia, but rather, a more innocuous prize; hot water.

Given that Japan was one of the only countries investing in hot springs at the time, a report on the findings was compiled and sent off to the Japanese government. That was the last anybody heard of what was boiling below the Peninsula's surface, until Charles Davidson, whose interest in hot springs had been piqued whilst living in Japan, happened to start speaking to a Japanese man about the industry. The gentleman inquired if anything had been pursued with the geothermal water down at the Mornington Peninsula.

Obtaining a copy of the report and confirming the findings, Charles formed a partnership with his brother Richard, the duo then purchasing forty two acres in the Mornington Peninsula- the place where Peninsula Hot Springs now stands.

Despite having purchased the land in 1997, Peninsula Hot Springs has only been operational since June, 2005. The time taken reflects not only the pragmatic necessities- obtaining a license for the water and financing the venture,-but designing the facility. Even now, the springs are constantly being updated and built upon, but in a way which incorporates them into the landscape

However, the hot springs already has a dedicated clientele, ranging from professional people looking to unwind to students looking to escape the rigors of university. Adele, who has been attending since the Hot Springs opened, can only fault the fact that she spends far too much time in the sun now, but catching her during the evening, she seemed too tranquil to muster any adjectives other than "amazing".

Speaking with Roy and Ian, who had been golfing since the morning and needed "somewhere to rest after a hard day" (tough, huh?), the draw for them seemed not only to be the unwinding that the Peninsula hot springs facilitates, but the novelty of finding such a place

so different and so close to Melbourne.

Strewn around the pools were couples immersed in water and each other- less approachable, but clearly enjoying their selves immensely.

Inside, as well as outside, the place is humming; not just with people soaking away their day, but with the variety of specialised services the centre has the opportunity to offer. Yoda, anyone?

Yoda, a portmanteau of Yoga and dance, is a form of exercise that starts on dry land and ends up in the springs themselves. Amanda, who takes the class, explains that after an initial warm up session, being in the pools allows for another dimension of the exercise- and allows people to stretch further. The session is guided, rather than forced, and at all times participants only engage on the level they feel comfortable. Speaking to the testament of her instruction, every member of the class concludes by chanting in the hot spring encased in a cave. Bizarre, but enriching in the

context.

Happily being in a position where we as a student newspaper feel no compunction about the journalistic ethos that are infringed upon by accepting the offer to review the hot springs, Lot's Wife had the chance to experience the culmination of thirteen years hard work. Given how little thought we gave to any of the mechanics of the hot springs whilst enjoying them, we feel it would be prudent to explain these to you now:

Six hundred and thirty seven metres below the surface, the water wells up from an aquifer. The water rises under its own pressure to about ten metres below the surface, where it's then pumped from a bore into the bathing pools. Scientists in New Zealand, Japan and the United States tell us the water is teeming with rejuvenating minerals, and is technically classified as a "Sodium Chloride Bicarbonate Spring".

But honestly, whilst lazing languidly

in gently bubbling waters in the most pristine and natural environment you could conceive, who cares? At reception you're greeted by staff whose uniform is a pair of fishermen pants, led through the wooden entrance building down into a rocky and (as night crawls in) well lit expanse of luxury.

Pools start at 37 degrees to ensure as you wander into warmer and warmer waters your body has time to adjust. While none of us were brave enough to venture into the cooler pools, the walk from each bath was as pleasant as the baths themselves- a specially designed reflexology walk meant you could tread along stones designed to alleviate tensions, while a wander throughout the gardens provides as much delight as the water itself.

The distinction between the public baths and the Spa Dreaming Centre (a more exclusive tier of Peninsula Hot Springs) means that one can elect for a broadly relaxing, fun experience, or opt into a more intimate, sedate

CENTRE: Public Bathing area at dusk, TOP: Spa Dreaming Centre; BOTTOM: Reception area // Sam Whitney

section. No matter where you are, however, you can't shake the feeling of being pampered and looked after- a testament to the attentive staff as much as the stunning setting.

Every aspect of the experience has been considered down to the last detail, but sitting blissfully immersed in warm and therapeutic waters, little of this occurs to you. The Hot Springs, being so distinct from any experience, allow you to focus and rejuvenate without even realising it.



THE FACTS

PENINSULA HOT SPRINGS
Springs Lane, Rye
03 5950 8777

Open Daily 7:30am-10pm

GETTING THERE: One hour from Monash Clayton. Head to Frankston then follow the Mornington-Peninsula Fwy (Route 11), left on Boneo Rd then follow the signs. Map recommended

COST: Public Bathing \$25(Tu-Thu)/\$30(Fr-M), Treatments from \$95 (10% less off-peak)