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## WORUMBA STATION S.A.

Do you drive your kids to school in a 4x4 vehicle? Do you dream of taking them off-road instead? Then a visit to Worumba Station is just what you need. 30kms east of Hawker and 400kms north of Adelaide in the Southern Flinders Ranges, this is a marvellous place for a few days break away from the frenetic pace of city living. Set amidst rolling hills of spinifex and encircling Mt Plantagenet and Mt Craig, Worumba is 48,000 acres and 170 square kilometres of awesome beauty.

The road into Worumba crosses Willow Plains and takes you past the ruins of historic homesteads dating back to the late 1800's, and through Willow Creek Gorge before you come to the Worumba boundary gate. This is a working station and it's important to remember that gates must be left as they are found. The day we were there, in early spring, the trees were alive with birds, their calls almost musical.

Worumba Station offers self-catering accommodation in recently refurbished, fully self-contained shearer's quarters. The quarters are located some distance from the homestead, ensuring privacy for the guests during their stay. It accommodates up to 12 people in 6 rooms, has 4 bathrooms, a living room, a kitchen large enough for a handful of cooks, and a terrific outdoor barbecue area. There's no television reception and no mobile phone coverage so, if you want to get away from it all, this is the place to do it!

Worumba boasts its own art gallery and features some delightful landscapes by artist-in-residence Mary Clock-Clarke. Each of Mary's paintings is marvellously detailed and, of course, original; you won't find any prints here. The gallery is well worth a visit. And if you're interested in the history or geography of the area then Mary is the one to talk to. Having lived here for some time, she's a mine of information.

A stay here is not complete without the "Worumba Experience", a low range, 36km self-drive 4x4 excursion around the property. Maps and

detailed instructions are provided and it will take 4-5 hours to complete the circuit. You will be awed by green pastures, abundant thanks to recent rains, wildlife, especially euros and kangaroos, and spectacular views of the Flinders Ranges.



Here we are at the start; the track is well signposted and when we started the House Paddock was empty. Generally there are some sheep here but the shearing had been finished only the week before. At the Station Paddock Lookout the hills rolled on into the distance and a few euros were

feeding in the grass. The homestead was just below us and over the top of it we could see Devil's Peak at Quorn.

Devil's Peak is directly above the homestead in this shot.



Further on, near Willow Creek, we passed cattle grazing by the side of the road, stopped to photograph a friendly shingle-back lizard, and then paused briefly at Eagle Hawk Dam.



He almost looks resigned to having his photo taken!

After passing the Watershed and through Spinifex Country we entered the Big Paddock. This paddock is approximately 20,000 acres and the stock here is only mustered once each year because of the terrain. From here on the track became very rough. It was

seat belts and low range all the way now!

In Golden Wattle Gorge the trees were just starting to bloom; in a few weeks they would be a riot of colour. Our next stop was the Yacca Lookout. This is the highest point along the route and the view from here was magnificent! Not to mention Mt Plantagenet and the walls of Wilpena Pound!



In this photo we're coming down from the lookout, it was much steeper than it looks!

We stopped for lunch just before the pine forest and then continued on our way through mallee and pine woodlands, a semi-permanent spring, and into the creek bed known as Mary's Folly. That's a particularly steep descent into the creek bed followed by an equally steep ascent out of it. And that proved to be the hardest part of this track.



Down into Mary's Folly

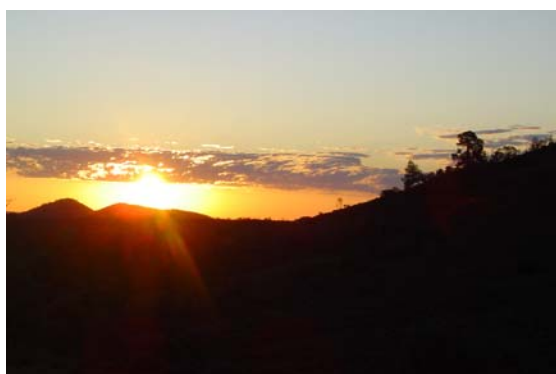


And back out again!

After that we had a brief, if much-needed stop at Finlay's Lookout before driving into the dry creek bed of Mt Craig Creek and following it through to Willow Creek and Willow Waters Gorge Road.

There is another section of off-road track, a new part being added on. We were invited to give it a try and John never needs to be told twice! This is the one for the off-road enthusiasts. The path is not very well defined ... yet; it needs a little more traffic along it, and in parts the road disappears altogether. Into and through creek beds, over rocks, and even up the side of a mountain, we bounced and thudded our way back to the homestead.

After a day of off-road adventures the barbecue area at the quarters is a welcoming sight. Sipping a cool drink, a couple of steaks sizzling, and the sunset over the mountains. Perfect.



Whether you're an off-road enthusiast or not, The Worumba Experience is a not-to-be-missed, never-to-be-forgotten excursion; challenging for the inexperienced, but still a whole lot of fun.

You can read more about our visit to Worumba in our journal "The Back Of Beyond". For enquiries about Worumba Station, e-mail Mary at [worumba@bigpond.com](mailto:worumba@bigpond.com)

