

The party from *Lady Eugenie* heads north along Wineglass Bay. A walk to a lookout takes an hour and leads you up a well-formed rocky track.

**T**HE SUN PIERCING the eastern horizon shot fingers of light across the water and into the broad gap that leads to Wineglass Bay. The rays inflamed the orange lichen-covered boulders that lined the shore and then chased up the pink granite flanks of The Hazards, imbuing them with a rosy glow before bathing that famed arc of white in a subtle shade of lilac.

I was up early and watched this lightshow from the deck of *Lady Eugenie*, an elegant teak-and-fibreglass, 75ft (22.8m) ketch moored in the bay, and the only vessel there on that perfect autumn morning. Apart from the sound of water lapping the hull, the scene was silent and still, the abundant birdlife yet to stir. Fresh footprints on the beach betrayed the presence of a pair of Tassie devils. It was Wineglass Bay as few get to see it.

Within a couple of hours the first flurry of day-trippers would start to file onto the beach – often named among the top 10 in the world and one of Tasmania's biggest tourist drawcards. But most visitors don't make it that far. The Wineglass Bay Lookout, a 45-minute climb from the car park, is as far as the majority get.

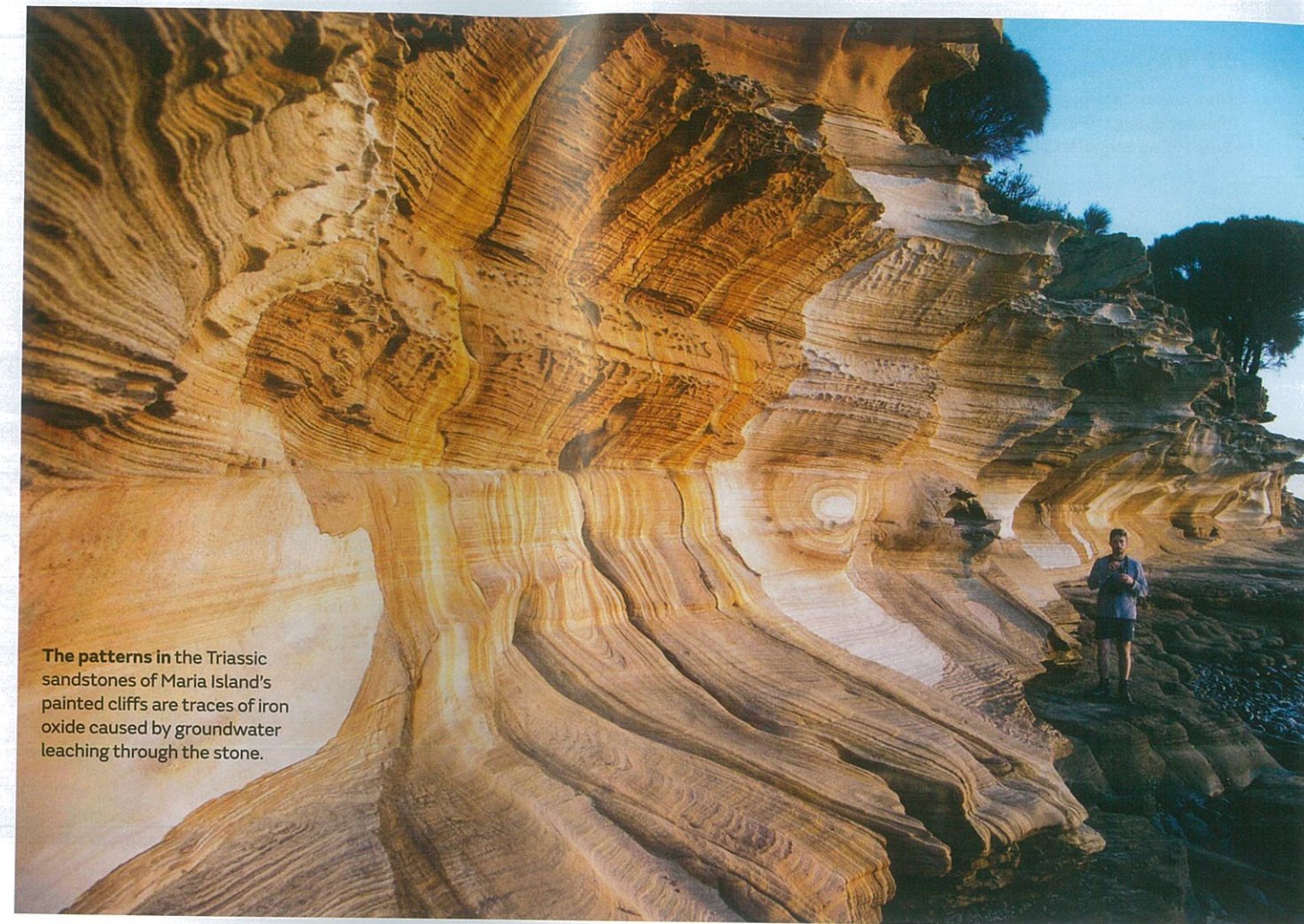
For those who do make it on the three-hour undulating round trip to the beach, it's close to a full day's outing. The prospect of carrying in all your gear reduces the numbers intent on staying overnight in the campsite there even further, but the intrepid few get to enjoy the bay at its quietest, and bathed in all its morning glory.

**A** BOAT STAY offers another way to experience the magic of waking up in Wineglass Bay. I was there aboard *Lady Eugenie* with six other passengers and four crew; we were on a Tasmanian Walking Company four-day bushwalking expedition across Maria and Schouten islands, and the southern end of Freycinet Peninsula. We stayed on the yacht at night and enjoyed guided treks by day – which enabled us to enjoy the best bushwalks in the area over the course of just a long weekend.

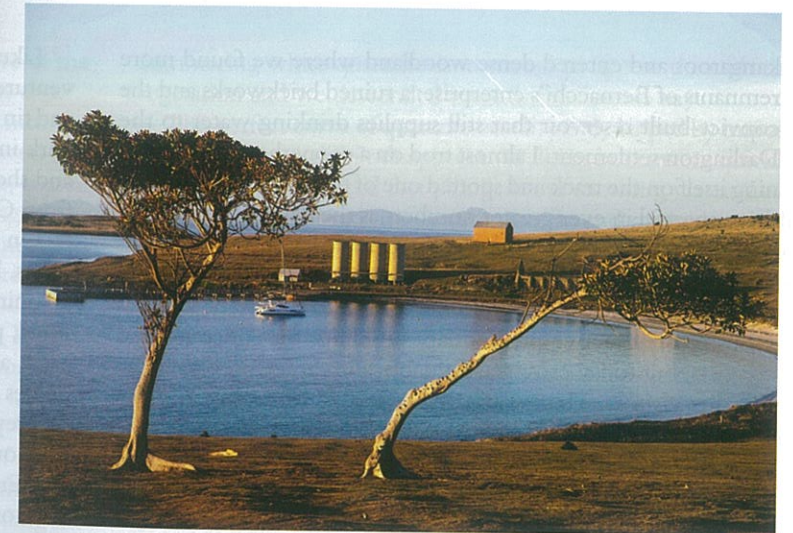
Our adventure had begun three days earlier on Maria Island after a crossing from Orford on the mainland. You can also catch a daily ferry to the island's main settlement, Darlington, from Triabunna. A quick shuttle in *Lady Eugenie's* dinghy across clear, emerald waters to Darlington's jetty and we were ready to explore this jewel in the Tasman Sea.

We only had an afternoon, so we were keen to cover as much of the 19 x 13km island that we could. We passed some very excited children riding about on bikes and a few resident Cape Barren geese grazing on the grasslands that lead down to the Fossil Cliffs (it was here that 19th-century Maria Island entrepreneur Diego Bernacchi excavated marine fossils from the limestone cliffs to make lime for his cement works, the four concrete silos of which still dominate the Darlington skyline).

We climbed back up a track onto a line of spectacular cliffs that led to the 620m dolerite peak, Bishop and Clerk, but – short of time – we detoured inland past skittish mobs of forester



The patterns in the Triassic sandstones of Maria Island's painted cliffs are traces of iron oxide caused by groundwater leaching through the stone.



▲ Darlington, founded in 1825 on Maria Island, was originally a convict settlement. Convict buildings sit beside signs of industry that began in the 1880s.

◀ The once endangered Cape Barren goose was introduced to Maria Island in 1968 as a conservation measure.