

ST HELENS MY TOWN

Some friendly local wildlife spotted along the Wukalina Walk, which is a First Nations owned and operated guided walk that includes cultural activities, traditional foods and two days of hiking.

FACING PAGE Kayakers set out into the crystal-clear waters of Jeanneret Beach in the Bay of Fires Conservation Area, Binalong Bay.

MY TOWN

ST HELENS

OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS WILL LOVE THE LAND AND SEA ATTRACTIONS OF THIS VILLAGE AT THE SOUTHERN END OF TASMANIA'S BAY OF FIRES.

WORDS CLAIRE MACTAGGART



PHOTOGRAPHY SEAN FENNESSY (BEACH) AND ROB BURNETT (KANGAROOS), BOTH SUPPLIED BY TOURISM TASMANIA

MEDIAN HOUSE PRICE
\$437,500
MEDIAN RENTAL PRICE
\$295

BY THE NUMBERS

"Our market ranges from suburban three-bedroom houses starting at about \$380,000 right through to architect-designed homes with incredible water views at \$1.8 million," says Heidi Howe, sales representative at Harcourts St Helens. "We're blessed with lifestyle options for all budgets, with the holiday hotspots of Stieglitz and Binalong Bay always popular and at different ends of the price spectrum."

MARKET WATCH

"Many of our buyers are relocating to St Helens from capital cities – drawn by the prospect of no traffic, no crime and great facilities. We were one of the first places in Australia to get the NBN, so our internet speeds are great," adds Heidi.



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Mountain biking is a popular activity around St Helens; enjoying seafood by the Bay of Fires; Tom Dickers and Anna Hoffmann operate the Bay of Fires Bush Retreat. **FACING PAGE** The serene waters of Georges Bay.

THE LARGEST OF TASMANIA'S north-east coastal towns, St Helens is a pretty fishing port that overlooks Georges Bay and has a population of just over 2000 people. It's a popular gateway to the Bay of Fires Conservation Area and a plethora of accommodation and food options cater to those wishing to explore the area.

Tom Dicker, 43, and Anna Hoffmann, 37, operate Bay of Fires Bush Retreat, located 10 minutes from St Helens. Tom opened his first restaurant in nearby Binalong Bay before launching Drift, in Devonport. He then returned to St Helens six years ago, with Anna, and the pair are now raising their seven-month-old daughter, Arlie, there. Anna studied environmental design and formerly worked in event management before she and Tom opened the boutique retreat about five years ago.

"St Helens is a beautiful old fishing town and the Bay of Fires features stunning white sand, orange lichen-covered rocks and turquoise water," says Anna. "There's a real authenticity to most of the businesses here – people start something they are passionate about, particularly in hospitality. Tom and I are both passionate about design and creating the things we love about going on a holiday – good food and wine, and being out in the elements... but with all the comforts." They share a love for the outdoors and there's certainly no shortage of ways to embrace the spectacular wilderness in this part of Tasmania.

"The environment is amazing," says Anna. "We catch crayfish in the ocean or go prawning in the lagoon. Cosy Corner is great to surf and so is the south of Taylors Beach."

Tayler Paulsen, 34, grew up in St Helens but left to travel Australia and overseas when she was 18. She and husband Neil, 36, from New Zealand, are keen snowboarders and they purchased Mountain Hut Myoko ski lodge in Japan in 2018. They enjoyed two seasons before the pandemic, which prompted them to return to Tasmania in March 2020. They've since welcomed their son Finn, born in June.

"We've always been coming and going, and we wanted a base down here. For me, St Helens is home. We have family and friends here and it really does have a great community vibe," says Tayler. She works with her mother, managing Bay of Fires Holiday Homes – a group of 17 holiday rentals in Binalong Bay and St Helens.

Her favourite local places to visit include Priory Ridge Wines, the Pyengana Cheese Factory and St Columba Falls. Tayler also recommends the fish and chips at Skippers on the wharf at St Helens.

"When I was young I was so ready to see the world and I never thought I would be so happy to move back. As you get older, you realise we are lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the world." >

For more information on St Helens and surrounds, visit eastcoasttasmania.com and discovertasmania.com.au

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COMMUNITY SUPPORT

St Helens is the major population centre of the Break O' Day region and the district school caters for K-12. There is also a hospital, business enterprise centre, trade training centre, aged care facility and a range of accommodation and stores. For more information, visit bodc.tas.gov.au



Tom and Anna

OWNERS OF THE BAY OF FIRES BUSH RETREAT

These two have worked hard to turn a bare bush block into a glamping destination where guests rave about the food.

PHOTOGRAPHY: STU GIBSON (SEAFOOD), ADAM GIBSON (TOM AND ANNA) AND ROB BURNETT (GEORGES BAY). COURTESY OF TOURISM TASMANIA. ALL OTHER IMAGES SUPPLIED



OPPORTUNITY CALLS

Retail and trade, tourism, fishing, timber and agriculture are some of the major industries of the region.

St Helens is now a renowned mountain biking destination owing to a \$4 million investment in 66km of stacked loops and 42km of trails.

To learn more about the region download the Break O'Day prospectus: bodc.tas.gov.au/discover/grow-with-us



FURNEAUX Elegant dining with a firm focus on using the finest local produce. 2 Tasman Highway, (03) 6376 2151, furneauxrestaurant.com.au

SURFSIDE Casual beach bar with American-style burgers and an extensive list of Tasmania craft beers and wines. 269 Tasman Highway, Beaumaris, 0455 889 167, thesurfside.com.au

SKIPPERS Always a local favourite for fresh fish and chips – at St Helens wharf. 0418 789 883, facebook.com/skipperfishshop

SHOP

INDULGENCE This store offers a great selection of clothing, accessories, jewellery and gifts. 30 Quail Street, (03) 6376 1930, indulgencegifts.com.au

EAST COAST VILLAGE PROVIDORE The emphasis here is on the best-quality Tasmanian meats, cheeses, condiments and wines. 55-59 Cecilia Street, (03) 6376 8922, eastcoastvillageprovidore.com.au

SHOP IN THE BUSH Discover a wonderful assortment of antiques, art, vintage jewellery and collectable books. 25977 Tasman Highway, 0427 871 586, shopinthebush.com.au

STAY

NRMA WATERFRONT HOLIDAY PARK For modern cabins, studios or campsites, overlooking Georges Bay. (03) 6376 2332, mynrma.com.au/travel/accommodation/tas/nrma-st-helens-waterfront-park

BAY OF FIRES BUSH RETREAT Soak up the magnificent scenery and relax in your choice of three accommodation types – the Bunk House (for groups), the Bell Tents or the King Room. 0439 343 066, bayoffiresbushretreat.com.au

DESTINATION BAY OF FIRES Your go-to for a great range of boutique and family-friendly accommodation options. destinationbayoffires.com

PANORAMA ST HELENS Stunning views of Georges Bay, plus there's a conference centre at this eco resort. 1 Quail Street, St Helens, (03) 6376 1999

BAY OF FIRES LUXURY APARTMENTS Lovely accommodation in the centre of St Helens. 0412 686 915, bayoffiresapartments.com

There's no shortage of ways to embrace the spectacular wilderness.



REASONS TO VISIT

BAY OF FIRES St Helens is located at the southern end of one of Tasmania's most beautiful conservation reserves. Explore the area's pristine beaches – including Binalong Bay, renowned around the world for its photogenic lichen-covered granite boulders and abundant wildlife. discovertasmania.com.au/about/articles/bay-of-fires

MOUNTAIN BIKING Another major outdoor drawcard for the region, the Bay of Fires Trail takes bike riders through sub-alpine terrain and offers spectacular coastline views. Try the stacked loops or simply marvel at the beautiful surrounds as you pedal along. sthelensmtbtrails.com.au

GAME FISHING Turn your hand to estuary or saltwater fishing in what is the game fishing capital of Tasmania. There are a range of charters available.

REASONS TO STAY

HIKES Tackle the Bay of Fires Walk – it's one of the best hikes you can do in Australia – or trek the one-hour path to St Helens Point, which takes in Peron Dunes. eastcoasttasmania.com/to-do/adventure/itinerary/walking/

STUNNING NATURAL SCENERY Whether it's crashing waterfalls, unspoilt beaches or primeval forests you love, this picture-perfect region truly offers something for everyone.

EAT

SEAFOOD Treat yourself to fresh local oysters, crayfish, lobsters, abalone, scallops, marlin and tuna.

RAIDA Heavenly modern Australian cuisine with a Japanese influence. Try the *tamagoyaki* rolled omelette for breakfast. 10/55 Cecilia Street, St Helens. (03) 6376 8823

PHOTOGRAPHY: STU GIBSON (TAYLORS BEACH) AND GLENN GIBSON (FISHING). COURTESY OF TOURISM TASMANIA. ALL OTHER IMAGES SUPPLIED



Taylor's Beach, in the Bay of Fires Conservation Area. **FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** Anglers enjoy a spot of fishing at St Helens Point; inside one of the bell tents at Bay of Fires Bush Retreat; local fish often features in the beautiful dishes served up at Bay of Fires Bush Retreat.