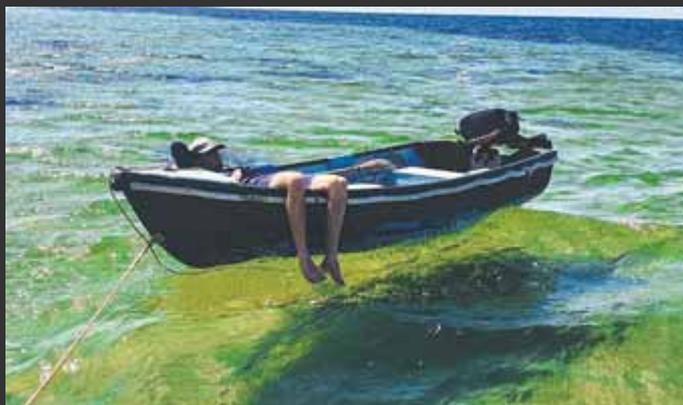


Unlocking a buried treasure

SUMMER HOLIDAY SERIES



Colin James says Yorke Peninsula has a host of gorgeous secret locations.



Lazy summer days on Yorke Peninsula.



The Stansbury jetty.
Pictures: Colin James

The beautiful beaches of Yorke Peninsula are ideal for fishing, walking and simply relaxing, writes Colin James

I was sworn to secrecy about a spot on the lower Yorke Peninsula I have visited

In the late 1990s, Tourism SA ran a successful campaign promoting lesser-known South Australian holiday destinations, aptly named Best Kept Secrets.

Sticking with this theme, some years ago I was sworn to secrecy about a spot on the lower Yorke Peninsula I have visited for more than two decades every February.

It is a rule I have never broken. Until now.

At the risk of being run out of town when I return next month, and to help support regional tourism during a time of crisis, it is time to call out Corny Point, or “Corny”, as my favourite South Australian place to take a summer break.

It is, quite simply, one of the most breathtakingly beautiful places in the state, if not the country.

To the left is an unspoilt stretch of wild coastline with sandy beaches, crystal-clear water, reefs, rock pools and perfect waves.

My pick of the beaches is Berry Bay, a terrific spot for boogie boarding, surf fishing, sunbaking and long walks.

To the right, a sweeping crescent-shaped bay leads to more coastline which features some of the best King George whiting spots in the state – Point Souttar, Point Turton and Hardwicke Bay.

An hour’s drive away is the rugged and pristine Innes National Park where, in the early 1990s, I almost drowned. It was at a surf break called Chinaman’s.

I came off my board in a pretty big swell and got sucked under a nasty rock ledge. It was pretty hairy.

The last time I surfed at Yorke Peninsula was a few years ago at Salmon Hole, not far

from Innes. A big great white popped up not far from me.

That was even hairier.

The place I have fished the most since coming to Australia from New Zealand in the late 1980s is Yorke Peninsula.

Mates of mine have a place down at Corny Point. It is nothing flash but sits on top of a small hill overlooking the bay. It has the most amazing view, especially at sunrise and sunset.

There is a mooring for the boat which we reach by dragging the dinghy out behind the tractor until we get in water deep enough to start up the outboard.

We drop craypots near the lighthouse on Corny Point before chasing whiting and squid. At night, we go dabbing for garfish with our nets and torches.

When my youngest son, Joseph, turned 13, I decided it was time for him to spend some time at Corny Point with my mates, a knockabout crew fond of beer.

It since has turned into a tradition to celebrate his birthday down there. This year he is 19. He learnt to fish at Corny Point. And drink beer.

About 30 minutes away is the tiny hilltop town of Warooka, which has a great, no frills country pub. On Tuesday nights we play barefoot lawn bowls with the locals under lights at the nearby bowling club.

During the day, depending on how hot it is, we either fish, read, watch midday movies, do crosswords, play pool or doze.

And drink beer.

If the wind is blowing too much, you can duck across to Marion Bay or Edithburgh, which has one of the best jetties on Yorke Peninsula for squid, blue swimmer crabs, garfish, tommy ruffs and whiting.

On the way there or back you can stop off in Yorketown to top up on groceries.

And beer.

Trust me, if you are lucky enough to get down to the bottom of Yorkes, spend some time at Corny Point.

The general store makes a mean steak sandwich and the Howling Dog Tavern has a decent schnitzel.

But do me a favour. Keep the place a secret. My mates will shout you a beer if you do.