



Cruise Director Carol, First Mate Bill and Captain Ray



Next morning for the keen photographer there was abundant birdlife to photograph - pelicans, blue wrens, black swans, kookaburras, Great Cororants, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Brown Falcons and Whistling Kites. As we cruised upstream to Blanchetown, we passed through lock one which is the first of a series of 13 locks on the river. They maintain the flow and levels of water. After that there was the opportunity to go souvenir shopping and join the captain for a talk about paddle steamers, pioneers and engineers that tamed the river. A special "Waltzing Matilda Lunch" followed with the crew providing an entertaining sketch based on Waltzing Matilda. Late afternoon we reached Salters Station for our overnight anchorage. It was time to join a guided tour of Burk Salter's vineyard on the banks of the river and enjoy wine tasting at his cellar door.

Burk Salter Wines is a boutique style operation with the premium wine predominately possessing fruit driven characteristics that bring out the full flavour of the grapes.

The wines were of the highest quality and enjoyed by all who tasted them. Hopefully they will be included on the wine list on board in the future.

Back onboard it was time to prepare for dinner as it was fancy dress night. (You can bring your own or hire fancy dress on board.) It was a most entertaining dinner featuring a parade of those in fancy dress and to close the night we had a musical quiz.

Next morning after breakfast (as an alternative, priced at \$36 per person, guests could book an on-shore Champagne & Bush Tucker Breakfast - rabbit fillets, bush tomatoes, wattle seed toast and champagne - in a beautiful Murray River bush setting) there was a guided walk along the eco-sensitive wetlands of Salters Station.

The afternoon gave us the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful landscape as we cruised downriver before arriving at Sunnysdale. It was all ashore for a visit to the Woolshed for a shearing demonstration, a fashion show featuring live sheep, a sheep race followed an auction of race starters and a visit to the Native Wildlife Shelter where some of South Australia's most interesting native animals are cared for. We then joined the great Aussie Barbecue - cooked and served in a bush setting on the banks of the mighty Murray River. Again we were treated to a special humorous musical presentation by the crew. After dinner there was a nocturnal eco-tour by tractor and cart searching for animal life by torchlight. It was a night to remember!

Next morning after breakfast the ship cruised slowly downstream past magnificent cliffs scoured by the river over millions of years. We reached Ngaut Ngaut Aboriginal Reserve, one of Australia's most significant archaeological sites, for a step back in time - tens of thousands of years - for a guided boardwalk which meanders up the majestic cliffs of a seabed laid down eons ago, viewing ancient rock carvings and learning about aboriginal history in the area. We returned to the Murray Princess to cruise downriver to Youngusband, our overnight anchor. The ship passed large billabongs, open expanses of water, surrounded by cliffs and reeds. Along the way we took a speed boat ride. Throughout our journey we passed three dominant tree species - the River Red Gum, Black Box and Coolibah.

During our time on the River Murray we passed many river boats, some on the river and others tied up. We had not expected to see so much action. Also we had not expected to see so many holiday shacks and houses on the river side. We passed many ferry services and busy settlements. Sadly it was to be our final night onboard Murray Princess. As a finale there was a special buffet dinner hosted by the Captain and his officers. It was also an opportunity to dress up (other nights it was smart casual in the dining room).

Next morning after breakfast, PS Murray Princess arrived at Mannum where we reluctantly said farewell. We joined our bus for the trip back to Adelaide. Some passengers had booked the optional post-cruise Barossa Valley tour and we caught up with their bus on the way back to Adelaide...

This four-night Outback Heritage Cruise on the Murray Princess is certainly one for all ages. A number of passengers said they would have liked to have stayed for a few more days (Captain Cook offers a 7 day cruise of the river Murray). We found that the time went extra fast. The Murray Princess is a great ship, although the cabins maybe a little small, we seemed to be there only to sleep and shower. The beds were comfortable, the bathroom was not made for tall people, but you quickly learn to adjust. The food was excellent - great choice and the buffet on the last night was absolutely sumptuous as was the earlier river side barbecue. The buffet style breakfast provided for all tastes. The crew were first class, always smiling, friendly and providing great service.

This is a cruise you must consider at some time. The longer seven night cruise probably would be better as you get to see a much broader area of this great river system in such a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere. Also consideration should be given to the cruise to Renmark or return which occurs about every two years when the vessel has its service check. I think this would be the ultimate adventure. **JTIKT**



**The Ship** - The PS Murray Princess is a true inland paddle wheeler, purpose built for the Murray River. She is faithfully designed as a modern romantic representative of a time when hundreds of such vessels plied the river. Unlike most modern-day river vessels with imitation paddles, Murray Princess is propelled by an authentic, massive stern paddlewheel. Accommodating just 120 passengers, Murray Princess brings the unique advantages of small ship cruising to the Murray River. The Captain and crew know the river intimately and are delighted to share with you their knowledge and stories. The lounges and dining saloon are spacious with a character and charm of yesteryear. Grand in name, yet relaxed and informal by nature, Murray Princess fosters a warmth and friendliness unique to the river.

**Facilities** - Two spas, two saunas, sun deck; two bars, two lounges, single-sitting dining saloon; speed boat; gift shop, library and video; lift (Rendell to Sturt Decks only); guest laundry and 24-hour tea and coffee facilities.

**Inclusions** - The Murraylands spectacular landscape of cliffs, gorges and bio-diverse wetlands \* Most tours \* Complimentary scenic coach transfers from Adelaide or car-parking in Mannum \* Guided nature walks & eco-tours \* Onboard presentations on a variety of themes from the flora and fauna to the Murray's food & wine trail, from the river's paddlesteamer heritage to lifestyle themes \* Daybreak photography \* Aboriginal Cultural Tour \* Captain's Dinner \* Shipboard accommodation, dining, all on-board facilities including the use of spas, saunas and exercise deck, entertainment and 24 hour self-service coffee bar. Prices exclude drinks, personal purchases, any optional tours and fuel surcharges. Dining - Dining aboard Murray Princess includes delicious table d'hote menus, Captain's Dinner and buffet dining, with a special campfire barbecue on the Heritage Cruise (four nights only). Breakfasts are buffet style.

**Accommodation** - The PS Murray Princess has 60 cabins and staterooms each with private bathroom ensuite, adjustable air-conditioning, electric blankets, soaps, shampoo and towels; serviced daily. Each cabin is approximately 12 sq metres. A surcharge applies to all Cabins with double beds - Staterooms (4) on Randell and Cadell Decks open onto the outside deck and include complimentary sparkling wine, flowers, fridge and tea and coffee making facilities. All staterooms have a double and a single bed (twin/double/triple) - Outside Cabins (47) on Randell and Cadell Decks open onto the outside deck and have picture windows. (twin/double/triple) - Inside Cabins (9) on Chaffey Deck open onto an inside passageway and have portholes facing the outside (twin/double)

The River Murray is 2530km long from the Snowy Mountains on the New South Wales-Victoria border to the Southern Ocean in South Australia. The headwaters comprise less than 2 percent of the Murray- Darling Basin, but contributes nearly 40 percent of the inflow to the Murray River. The flow in the Murray is very low by world standards. Its annual average flow would pass through the Amazon in less than a day. The Murray like the Darling also has a highly variable flow and in the early 1900's construction of locks and weirs began and the result is a more regulated river.

