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10 reasons why you should visit Geelong & The Bellarine

Wondering what to do in and around Geelong and its seaside sister of The Bellarine? We've done the hard yards and road tested the best of the best to bring you our Top 10 list.

Reason 1 - Destination dining

The region is home to some amazing regional dining and some fabulous newcomers have hit the scene. You can't go past iconic award-winning [Igni](#) in Geelong's laneways. The team behind Higher Ground has moved to Eastern Beach to open [The Beach House](#) in the gorgeous 1930s heritage-listed building. Italian styled, [The Continental](#) opened its doors in November, further transforming the happening Little Malop Street precinct, while [The Greek @ Customs House](#) is serving modern Greek cuisine overlooking the waterfront. [ALMA](#) channels modern South American, and in the suburbs [Bistrot Plume](#) offers an elegant and boutique French eatery. On The Bellarine, [Campbell Point House](#) has opened its restaurant to the public and [Merne](#) delights with its inspiring local shared menu. Find boutique wineries, farm gates and provedores and establishments serving up dishes featuring local produce on the [Bellarine Taste Trail](#). Pick up a map and start discovering today.

Reason 2 – Reinventing the past... in a trendy way!

Creative and inventive locals continue to transform old manufacturing spaces converting them into hip cafes, bars, restaurants and accommodation. On The Bellarine, [The Whiskery](#), set on a former Cobb & Co historic site is turning heads with its original Teddy and The Fox gin, while [The Q Train](#) offers guests a gastronomic journey of local produce on board restored Queenslander carriages. In Geelong [Little Creatures Brewery](#) and [White Rabbit Brewery & Barrel Hall](#) have firmly imprinted themselves at the site of the old woollen mills and [The Old Paper Mills at Fyansford](#) along the Barwon River is home to the award-winning [Provenance Wines and arts and culture precinct](#).

Reason 3 – Melbourne's not the only place with a thriving laneway culture

In and around Geelong's Little Malop Street the city continues to thrive, with every doorway eluding a surprise for the senses. You will find [Geelong Cellar Door](#), a wine bar dedicated only to Geelong wine, Nashville style hot chicken at the [Hot Chicken Project](#), a hidden 1930s speak-easy cocktail lounge in [The 18th Amendment Bar](#), ramen and sake at [Sober Ramen](#), exciting new [The Continental](#) brings euro-inspired share dishes and wines and [Blackmans Brewery](#) is further hidden down another laneway. Around the corner on Gheringhap Street you'll discover the brand new [Augustus Gelato](#), delicious Asian dishes on the grill at [Sumi](#) and authentic Italian dishes at [Osteria Fiorenza](#).

Reason 4 – World class beaches – surf, swim, paddle

Avid surfers head to popular surf spots such as 13th Beach or Ruffs Beach in Barwon Heads, while beginner surfers can enjoy a surf lesson at Ocean Grove with [Go Ride a Wave](#), [Sea Earth Adventures](#) or [Great Ocean Road Surf Tours](#). Families can take advantage of the pristine sand and gentle waves at the Ocean Grove main beach, considered one of the safest in Victoria. The mouth of the Barwon River, Barwon Heads is great for paddling and rock pooling. Other great beachside spots are at Point Lonsdale and the sheltered and family friendly bay at Portarlington. Geelong has the [Eastern Beach Reserve](#) with sandy bay beach, sea bath pool, playground and the iconic bollards.

Reason 5 – Unique boutique accommodation

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Two unique luxurious accommodation venues recently opened on the Bellarine. [Lon Retreat and Spa](#) allows guests to slow down and relax. Set on 200 acres overlooking the ocean, the adult only exclusive retreat features seven luxurious suites and a mineral spa. [Campbell Point House](#) has been modelled after the famously extravagant chateaus of rural France. This waterfront private estate sits on the edge of Lake Connewarre and houses a maximum of 30 guests at any one time. Infinity pool, day spa, manicured gardens and a fine dining restaurant feature at the property. There are some other great accommodation options on the Bellarine including [The Nest](#) and [Starhaven](#).

Reason 6 – Arts and culture

Visit the [Geelong Library and Heritage Centre](#)'s magnificent five-storey dome structure with children's tactile area, archive collection, café and of course a library. Head over the road to the [Geelong Arts Centre](#) which has just been through a redevelopment and plays host to an array of shows, such as theatre, opera, dance, comedy and live music. [MoPA](#) (Museum of Play and Art) just opened in January 2020 and is a creative intellectual fun learning and interactive space for young children. [Geelong Gallery](#) is one of Australia's leading and oldest regional art galleries with an outstanding collection including Eugène von Guérard's *View of Geelong* (1856) and Frederick McCubbin's *A bush burial* (1890) and in 2020 will have a major exhibit by Geelong's own Rone.

Reason 7 - It's all about the water

With a spectacular coastline that spans from Geelong to Barwon Heads and beyond, it's no surprise there's plenty of water based activities. Swim with the dolphins with [See All Dolphins Swims](#) or cruise between the Bellarine and Mornington Peninsula aboard [Searoad Ferries](#) vehicle and passenger ferry. You can now access Geelong and Portarlington direct from the Docklands as a foot passenger with [Port Phillip Ferries](#). [Great Ocean Road Surf Tours](#) and [Wards Stand Up Paddle Boarding](#) will have you up in no time or snare a catch on a fishing charter from [Queenscliff Harbour](#).

Reason 8 – Time to par-tee

The Bellarine is a golfer's paradise with four outstanding public courses which are consistently rated in the Top 100 Public Courses in Australia. Take your pick from [Barwon Heads Golf Club](#), one of the two courses at [Thirteenth Beach Golf Links or Curlewis Golf Club](#). Add golf courses at [Queenscliff](#) (sitting on the scenic Swan Island), [Portarlington](#) and [Point Lonsdale](#) to the impressive list of courses.

Reason 9 – On your bike

Whether you wear shorts or lycra, the region is home to a number of cycling trails. The [You Yangs](#) are great for mountain biking, boasting two designated mountain bike areas with 50 kilometres of track. [The Bellarine Rail Trail](#) is a scenic 35 kilometre trail that winds from South Geelong to Queenscliff. Thousands flock to Geelong in January every year for the [Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race](#). Cyclists can join Cadel himself in the People's Ride which starts and finishes in Geelong.

Reason 10 – Keep it in the family

Geelong's waterfront comes alive in summer. Young ones love discovering the old world charm of the beautiful [Geelong Carousel](#) and older kids enjoy the diving boards at the historic early century Eastern Beach promenade. Everyone enjoys the iconic bollard trail that comes to life – check the Activate Geelong APP. Out of town head out to [Adventure Park](#), to ride the Tsunami water ride and many more, and stay in the cool safari tents at [Big 4 Bellarine](#) or family friendly [Big4 Beacon Resort](#).

IMAGES:

<https://platform.crowdriff.com/m/s-18gbY9Zh8gDf0G3H>

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qxq8jeb814kwvqe/AADp3PxTMfMC6oM4TgV-kq09a?dl=0>