



WORDS COLIN LEVITCH PHOTOS NICK WAYGOOD, MARCUS ENNO

A touch of **LUXURY** *in Derby*

Derby isn't just for the dirtbags; there is something for those who appreciate the finer things in life

Mountain biking has its roots in dirtbagging and sacrificing luxuries to go riding — except for the bike of course. Who among us hasn't stayed in dorm-style accommodation, rented a room above the pub or spent a few nights camping at a riding destination to do a trip on the cheap. Heck, even some of mountain biking's most prominent events like The Pioneer and Cape Epic house competitors in tent cities.

Derby, in north-east Tasmania, really only started attracting visiting riders in 2015 when the Blue Derby trail network opened, but since then the remote town has gone from a drive-by village to a destination that attracts visitors from around the world to ride bikes. Derby has also been the catalyst, triggering a chain reaction of other small towns across Tasmania to jump into mountain biking. St Helens and Maydena cut the ribbon on new networks in the past couple of years, and new trail centres have been approved for Queenstown, George Town and Mount Wellington.

Before the trails and the mountain bikers, mining brought people to north-east Tasmania looking for work. But as the story goes, when the mine closed, so did the isolated little town, and Derby was very nearly a

place we would refer to in the past tense.

Margaret Dingemans grew up in the area and remembered camping up near Cascade Dam as a child.

"It was still a stopover as you were heading through; there was a shop where you could get your basics, and then about 15-20 years ago, it totally went dead, and you couldn't get anything in Derby," Dingemans says.

"There were a lot of people there that bought houses to retire, and you couldn't even get rid of blocks. There were people that didn't want to pay their land taxes, but had no choice because they could not sell them."

Derby has gone from a ghost town to a two-time Enduro World Series (EWS) Trail of the Year winner, seemingly overnight. In the early days the tourist infrastructure was limited — in Derby proper, you were looking at the Dorset Hotel, a couple of private rentals, or camping.

Of course with the influx of tourists coming through town, there was a need for accommodation. An enterprising bunch of locals and transplants have risen to the task, creating what is quickly evolving into the world's first mountain biking town, and you no longer have to rough it if you don't want to.



Derby Gravity Shuttles

We've all hopped onto a shuttle bus squished in next to a bunch of other sweaty riders — the stench is always impressive. Access to shuttles alone is a luxury, but Derby Gravity Shuttles are offering a unique uplift experience with its new fleet of Can-Am side-by-side ATVs.

With seats for five riders, Derby Gravity Shuttles will be focusing on private charters, so you and four friends can book a buggy and a driver for a few hours. Even just getting around in a side-by-side ATV is fun. Derby Gravity Shuttles uplifts with Can-Am buggies because they can reach terrain that would leave vans and busses, bogged and in need of a tow.

"Because they are a small vehicle they (the Can-Am ATVs) get up and down the

shuttle roads a bit quicker than a bus and trailer, so you can get more runs in a shorter space of time — the whole idea is more gravity in the time you've got," Tim Cafe who runs Derby Gravity Shuttles, and the Premium MTB Transfers tells us.

The Can-Ams can do laps from town to Black Stump, and are the only vehicles that do pickups from the bottom of Devil Wolf. One of Derby's pinnacle descents starts from the remains of the old Altas tin mine situated about 400-vertical-metres above the rest of the trail network. With the Can-Ams capable of negotiating ultra-rugged terrain the buggies can get you all the way up to the Big Pappa shuttle drop off, adding 100m of vertical drop to the already sizable descent.



DALES of Derby

Dingemans is one such enterprising local, having set up Dales of Derby, a group accommodation that can sleep up to 24-people right in the heart of town. With a big family herself, Dingemans found that whenever they would go away with another family, they could never find somewhere big enough to house everyone.

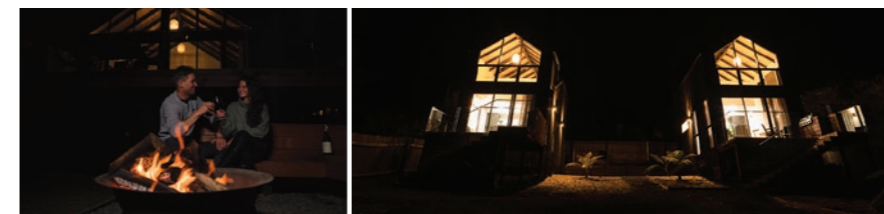
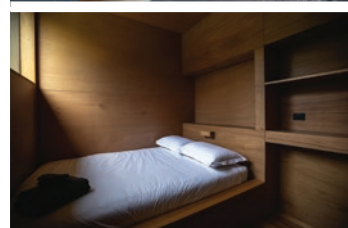
"We wanted to provide something that allowed groups to be able to get together, and have fun together," she says. It's one thing to ride the trails, but then coming together at the end of the day, hanging out and telling the stories of the fun you had, or the crash that you had — that's what really makes the memory," she says.

Situated right up against the Ringarooma River, the Dales of Derby is nothing like the Scout Camp you'd need to hire in most places to house two dozen mountain bikers. There's no need for sleeping bags or inflatable sleeping mats, because everything you need is already inside. There is a vast shared living space,

complete with a fireplace and a mile-long dining table perfect for family-style meals.

The whole place is finished in timber for that ultra-modern look, but Dingemans points out it serves a dual purpose — it's a lot harder to damage than a painted wall or tiles, which is ideal because mountain bikers are a clumsy bunch.

The Dales also have secure bike lockup, complete with a work stand and basic tools, so you're not wheeling muddy bikes through the kitchen. The bike lockup is also situated right next to the BBQ, so you can get your bikes ready to ride while you're cooking up some snags.



RIVER CABINS Derby

Not everyone is travelling with a small army, and if you're headed down to Derby with a few mates, or maybe as a family, the River Cabins are just up the Ringarooma River from The Dales of Derby and offer something a bit cozier.

"Over the last few years, there has been a boom in renovating existing houses and prefabricated buildings being installed in the area. With the experience that we had as riders coming to Derby, we could see that there was a gap in the market for something that was different," says River Cabins Derby co-owner and Shimano Australia Brand Manager Toby Shingleton. "Our goal from the start was to create cabins which are designed specifically for smaller or individual bookings, and which utilised local craftsmen and Tasmanian materials."

The River Cabins opened at the beginning of the year with one and two-bedroom options, with flexible layouts for the beds, foldouts for the mini shredders, a full kitchen and big decks to enjoy some of that crisp Tasmanian air.

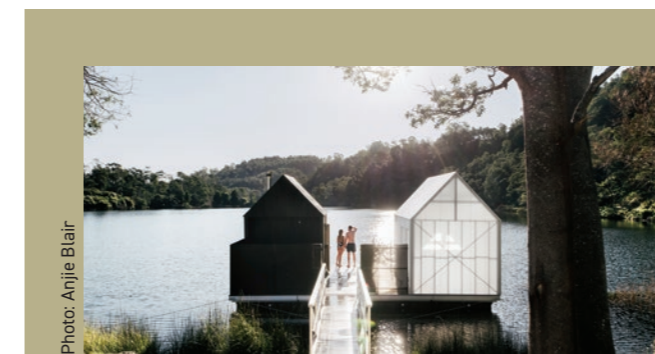


Photo: Anjlie Blair

TOP END EXPERIENCES IN AND AROUND DERBY

Floating Sauna, Lake Derby

Keen to add that spa retreat touch to your visit, with an outdoor feel? There's a floating sauna on Lake Derby, so you can add some European relaxation to the end of your day on the trails.

St Helens MTB Adventures

Offering tailored tours and shuttles, Glen from St Helens MTB Adventures can provide gastronomic delights and shuttling for you and your friends, with food and drink sourced locally from some of the best produce providers! Oysters on Swimcart Beach after the Bay of Fires Trail is quite an experience.

BAY OF FIRES BUSH RETREAT, St Helens

The crew at AMB love a bit of camping, but for those who don't want to deal with a rain fly, tent footprint or natural toilets, but still want to sleep outside; glamping at the Bay of Fires Bush Retreat might just offer the right mix of rugged and luxury. With Bell tents and bungalows available, the Bay of Fires Bush Retreat is located only a few minutes from Swimcart beach, the crescendo of the new 42km Bay of Fires wilderness trail, which is north-east of the Blue Derby trail network. There are full-size beds inside

the tents, and some of the swankiest camp showers we've ever seen.

The Bush Retreat has a fully equipped kitchen so you can cook up your own bush tucker, or leave it to live in chef Thomas Dicker. As the former head chef and part-owner of Angasi at Binalong Bay, and Drift Cafe and Restaurant in Devonport, Dicker puts a premium on quality Tassie sourced produce and will whip up a gourmet meal to have you fueled for your next day on the trails.



Photos: Adam Gibson

TOP END DIGS AND TRAILS AROUND THE WORLD

Crested Butte

While Marin County, California gets most of the credit for inventing mountain biking, some garage tinkerers in Crested Butte, Colorado were riding and racing over Perler Pass to Aspen on homemade 'Klunkers' around the same time. Crested Butte now boasts the oldest mountain bike club on the planet, established in 1983, and over 724km of world-class singletrack around the Elk Mountains.

With seemingly endless ribbons of dirt through high wildflower

dappled alpine meadows, just 35-min down Highway 135 where the high desert meets the Rocky Mountains are Hartman Rocks and Signal Peak trail networks — which takes the singletrack totals for the Gunnison Valley up to 1207km. Winding through seas of desert sage brush, granite outcrops break up the flow with a mix of slabby boulders and chunky tech.

With its roots in the Wild West, the Scarp Ridge Lodge is inside the former Croatian Hall Saloon. Step through the swinging doors, and you'll find five king rooms, an indoor saltwater pool, indoor and outdoor hot tubs, and chef-prepared meals. Given the town of Crested Butte is situated 700m higher in elevation than the top of Mount Kosciuszko, the Scarp Ridge Lodge has an oxygen-enriched air system, so the altitude doesn't get the best of you.



Photographer - Danica Bona and Eleven Experience



St. Moritz, Switzerland

When it comes to euro luxury, there is no place quite like St. Moritz, Switzerland. Nestled in one of the most picturesque regions of the Swiss Alps, the Engadine Valley has put a substantial investment into its trails. Don't be fooled by the lack of entries on Trailforks, there is no shortage of singletrack, with everything from massive berms on the Corviglia flow trail, to the 20km Il trail which offers otherworldly exposed and rugged riding — and 1600m of descending. For a uniquely Swiss experience, use the Bernina Express, a UNESCO World Heritage Railway as your uplift to the top of Bernina Pass, and ride the 15km descent into Pontresina — or drop all the way to Tirano, 1900m below.

Given it's not uncommon to see Bentleys and Maseratis driving through streets of St. Moritz, it shouldn't come as a surprise that



Photos: Swiss Tourism

budget accommodation is basically non-existent; but there is no shortage of high-end digs. If you want to live like literal kings and queens, the Grand Hotel de Bains Kempinski looks like it was plucked straight out of the Great Gatsby and dropped into the alps. If you're not interested in spending the cost of a new top of the range dually on a 2-night stay, the All In One Hotel Inn Lodge in nearby Celerina offers rooms with a modern Scandinavian feel, a bar and bistro as well as secure bike storage, tools and a washing station and provides a 'Sportsperson's breakfast.'