

FIND YOUR GROUNDING AT FLINDERS ISLAND





In Hanny Allston's own words, "Flinders Island is paradise without the people." With large stretches of its land covered only by the native vegetation gripping bravely to the sandy soils when the roaring forties rip overhead, rimmed by a diverse coastline which, when the sun shines, turns into the turquoise waters, white sand and red rocks of the paradise dream, she certainly has a valid point! It is into this dreamscape that world champion athlete, Hanny Allston, and her athletic husband, Graham Hammond, are leading their inaugural Find Your Feet Trail Running Tour to Flinders Island.

"As trail runners, Flinders Island is paradise. We love this wild side to landscapes – the roots, mud, uphill, descents... the childlike play that comes when we get to bounce from boulder to boulder until we reach an open stretch of sandy beaches and wade into the depths of its cool waters, squealing. The thing that enticed us to lead our inaugural Find Your Feet Trail Running Tour to Flinders Island is the fact that we don't even need trails to run on! From the wide-open plains of Wybalenna Historic Area to the sandy coves, rocky headlands and smallest foot pads weaving to the top of Mt Killiecrankie... the island just beckons for us to run wilder."

Find Your Feet has been operating tours to many corners of the planet since 2014. The concept arose when husband and wife team, World Champion athlete Hanny Allston and Graham Hammond, an elite ski instructor who also caught the trail running bug, were living in Canberra but pining for their home state of Tasmania. During this time Graham was working for an outdoor retail store whilst Hanny was working at the Australian Institute of Sport. On the side they operated a small but growing running coaching 'side-hustle'. Graham's customers and Hanny's coaching clients all had one thing in common - they were all fascinated by Tasmania! One day they turned to one another and said, 'why don't we show them our beautiful homeland?' The first Find Your Feet Tour sold out in 30-minutes and departed for Freycinet and Maria Island on Tasmania's East Coast in 2014. The group's twelve runners whooped and played, but also unwound in the breathtakingly beautiful landscapes.

Returning to Canberra Hanny and Graham knew they had something special to offer and their toes began to tingle for more. Widely travelled, it was a few months later whilst standing amidst the vast mountain-scapes of Italy that the idea expanded – 'Would our guests be keen to join us here in Italy too?' Indeed, they were and now five years later the couple have hosted over 40 tours to eight countries around the world. Every tour sells out as word spreads about this new way to combine a love of running, travel and self-exploration.

As a world champion athlete, Hanny knows only too well what is required to strive for performance in running. Now as a Peak Performance Coach, she enjoys helping adults of all abilities to step up to their athletic goals, assisting them with the procedural elements of running but also with how to harness a peak performance mindset. Hanny believes in the importance of supporting large dreams with a strong understanding of 'self', and this is where the tours become a really integral part of her coaching. The Find Your Feet Trail Running Tours take athletic adults away from the hustle and bustle of busy modern life into the natural landscapes such as Flinders Island. Whilst learning the art and craft of trail running, the guests are also exposed to a slower, more conscious way of life – from quality food to thought-provoking evening conversations, informal workshops and sharing their highlights of the day around the dinner table, the tours help the guests to explore their wilder side. They all return home to their friends, families and careers with a desire to 'be wilder', 'play wilder' and then use this knowledge and energy to perform wilder too. This is at the heart of Find Your Feet's ethos.

On Flinders Island the guests will be staying in the boutique Mountain Seas accommodation, nestled under the flanks of Mt Strzelecki. From this base camp, the guests will enjoy a mixture of local hospitality and the communities' running scene, to exploratory-style runs further afield on quiet trails, beaches and mountain summits. Oh, and digging for Killiecrankie diamonds! An important part of every tour for Hanny and Graham is the inclusion of community and to provide an insight into the local



“ Away from the hustle and bustle of busy modern life into the natural landscapes ”

way of life. Enjoying the island’s local hospitality, fresh produce and participating in the local Parkrun on arrival on the Saturday morning are examples of this. Furthermore, Hanny and Graham are welcoming all members of the community to join them on their Sunday morning trail running at the spectacular Walker’s Lookout. In fact, on this run it will be the island’s locals who will lead the group through their favourite trails.

“I just love seeing the way trail running unites individuals. We will have trail enthusiasts joining us on Flinders Island from all corners of Australia, all of different ages, abilities and points in their journey to playing wilder. But after just one run on the trails we are all united, connected by the love of exploring and moving through landscapes. To then connect with

the island’s local runners in the same way... that is something incredibly special to experience... to find out more about their way of life and more about this uniquely special island home that they love so much”.

Hanny and Graham hope that this will be the first of many tours to Flinders Island although 2020 is already looking particularly full for them, with trips to the mountains of Tasmania, Freycinet, Japan’s volcanic island of Hokkaido, the French Pyrenees, Chamonix and even Bulgaria! For two people who love exploring the world around them, striving to be the best version of themselves and then turning this passion into a strength for inspiring others, they certainly do appear to be living the dream. It is for this reason, as well as the success of Hanny’s coaching, their Your Feet Podcast and their online and Hobart-based outdoor

store, Find Your Feet, that they were awarded the 2018 Telstra Tasmanian Small and Succeeding Business of the Year.

“Whilst a lot of hard work goes in behind the scenes, and there are certainly highs and lows that come with taking the risks required to make it work, we wouldn’t have it any other day. We bound out of bed each morning so empowered by what we do. So, after

our regular morning runs on our local Mt Wellington we always feel ready to lean in again and make this work for both ourselves but especially our clients and customers... to taking the steps forward that will allow us to keep inspiring others. Yeah, it is a bit surreal and I am just so excited to see where it goes next.”

For more information visit findyourfeettours.com.au



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