

Reflections 9 – Wyndham & El Questro...

We moved to Kununurra from where we could tour Wyndham and store "Matilda" while we explored Emma Gorge and El Questro. 'E' (my friend from Melb who is my tour director) was raving about "The Grotto" so it was first port of call on the way to Wyndham... H.....S..... I thought and SAID as my body went into overdrive when I looked down the gorge where we were to walk!!! There was a straight drop next to the stairs where we walked and I was clinging to the rocks beside me.... My head says "I'm safe!" but my body goes to jelly when I'm near the edges of cliffs! My bravery was rewarded when we reached the pool at the base of the cliffs! We swam in the milky, warmish water for quite some time and marvelled at the tenacity



of the trees and plants that clung to the cliff face and then became entranced by droplets of water bouncing over the mossy green covering with its tangle of roots... We returned up the precarious steps without looking down and were dry by the time we reached the top... Along the road to Wyndham more OMG moments when around the corner appears this...



and this....



sauntering across the road... Closer to Wyndham we wound our way up and around,

up and around,
up and around,
Five Rivers Lookout
-five rivers couldn't actually
be seen from the top
but the plaque
told us where they were.



The 'paintings' on
the tidal mudflats
fascinated me -
they looked
as though
someone had manipulated
a huge canvas
next to the water
but as we drove
alongside them,
dried beige mud,
white salt stains
and damp grey mud
were the cause
of the patterns!



We drove around the backstreets
to find the Warri Dreamtime Statues

and finally found them
almost covered
in weeds....

later we learned
that there are disputes
about how and who
should take care of them.

We bumped and bounced
splashed and lumped
our way to Emma Gorge
which is part of El Questro...
Drove up to our 'tent'...
set in the bush,

our own private hideaway.
Unzip the flaps
the wind flew through
and cooled us down...
a swim in the pool -
modelled on a waterhole,
that we later saw
in Emma Gorge.

Arise the next morning
breakfast in the tent
pack our walking stuff
and head into Emma Gorge
The towering red cliffs
soar above the savannah
vegetation as we scramble
over empty water courses
and ones with water



'Front'
'Back'-ensuite



trickling down the creek...
Over many different kinds
of rippling rock
laid down in seas
of long, long ago
and now tumbled down
with the tons of water
careering over the top
in huge torrents
throughout the 'wet'...
As we take a breather
and look up from
the uneven ground
the site ahead amazes us
jaw droppingly beautiful!
Around a bend
the first glimpse
of the waterfall
greet us
and after scrambling
over more rocks
and crossing more water
we are rewarded with....
E swam, I paddled, sat
and soaked it all up...
socks on to dry the feet
and trundle off
on the return journey
spurred on by what we had seen.
Ah! now I know where the



resort pool design originated
with its pebbled beach entry
and deep turquoise tiles...
Wildlife has escaped me
as I've wandered so far
but this lizzie was happy
to sunbake on his rock
as we passed....
Some features look different
when you're on the return journey
and this view had escaped me
on the way up
but there it was before me
on the hot, tired, walk back.
After a rest and lunch
we tested Ulysses out
on the road to El Questro Station-
and was he tested!!!!
Though the grader had been
through recently,
or so the sign said,
we rocked and bumped
over floodways damaged
in the biggest wet ever
and through running rivers
especially the Pentacost
which was running fast
and was over 30 metres wide
No time for photos though
as getting through safely



was the aim.
But later at the Station
we saw it in all its glory
as it provided a swimming hole
and beautiful backdrop
near the restaurant...
Back to our tent
for a cocktail in the bar
and (therefore) a good sleep..
before leaving the next morning
at 6:30 a.m.(!!!!)
back to El Questro
to walk Amalia Gorge...
totally different to yesterday's walk
along the creek bed
which had been a raging river
not long before!!!!
Not far along
we met the 'squeeze' part
so on my stomach
I slithered
not looking down
at the sheer drop
to the water 4 metres below!!!!



As a reward for that trek,
we sojourned to
Zebedee Springs
where warm,

clear mineral water
tumbles down
the slope
making people sized pools
as it goes.

The striking difference
between the environment
close to the pools
and that of the slopes
leaves one gaping
in wonder!

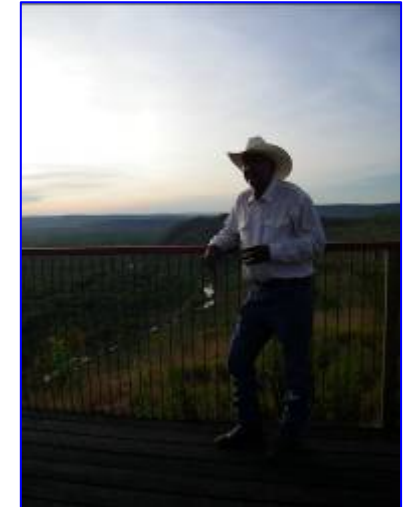
After a rest
on the lawns at the Station,
we joined others
on the
'Wet Season History Tour'
and learned about
the biggest 'wet' in many years
which caused devastation
in the Chamberlain river gorge
as water from the catchment
some 500 kms away,
joined the already
flooded Chamberlain river
and backed up
at the junction with the
King River
swelling it to levels
and power
not seen in 1000 years.



Trees that had stood firm
all those years
were washed away.
One huge boab
lodged under the
stilts of the Homestead
and withstood a pounding
from other huge trees
as the water swept them along-
thus saving the Homestead
from being demolished completely.
The public 'dunny'
standing proudly up
on the bank
was half filled with sand
carried by the swirling waters
but stood strong
in the raging torrent!
Now calmer waters
flow from Chamberlain Gorge
and the cruise
begins again next week!
We stood upon the river bank
now cleared of all its huge trees
and saw a boab graveyard
though they were bravely
sending out shoots
it's doubtful
they will live again.
The 'Durack Tree' survived



to hold more stories
within its massive trunk,
though debris surrounded it.
Into the trucks
we climbed again
and through the running water
we waded...
'twas not quite as wide
as the Pentacost we crossed
in Ulysses on the way
but was more fun
with Luke driving!
As we stood
way up on Saddleback Ridge
Buddy started yarning
of his life lived well and long.
He told us of the Baillieu's,
and starring with Russell Crowe,
of blokes with
"more plums in
their mouths than a plum tree"
and of the blackfella
"who was so black
that charcoal left a white mark!"
He told us of all the owners
of El Questro he had known
and how he met the Queen
and dined with those in the know!
He had us in stitches
and wishing the 'dunny'
was nearer as



he talked and talked
until the light began to fade
and we had to begin
the descent to the Station

way down there..
But still he kept on yarning
to the bloke next to him
until we hugged and kissed
and said goodbye!

As we bumped back
along the road
the sky turned on its
best colours
to farewell our
busy day at the Station.



Back in our 'deluxe' tent,
showered and refreshed,
we dined in fine style
at the in-house,
but un-walled, restaurant
back at Emma Gorge..
The food was quickly
demolished
and astonishingly delicious –
the barramundi and accoutrements
so marvellously constructed
that I was still wiping the remnants
when the waitress took our plates!
We were sad to leave
our comfy tent
after sleeping like the dead,
but glad to be on bitumen
and to see
Matilda waiting for us
back in Kununurra...

