

West Coast Heritage 4 x 4 Safari 2011

Or Wanderings on the Wild West Coast

From far and wide we came, old hands and three newbie's with 4 wheel drives all primed.
Introductions made, diesel tanks full, over Jack's Pass we climbed,
The fog and drizzle clagged the high peaks, hoping the sun would appear.
And through the mist came the persistent call, "Nancye, are you there?"

Robbie must have really floored it to catch us finally,
St James homestead the next stop, but where to have a pee?
A new mantra was established, "Never let a loo opportunity go by."
So when caught short, a Wild West Coast Wee is a great experience to try.

Twin power lines stretching across the rugged tussock terrain,
Weaving our way through Molesworth like a slightly disjointed train.
Onto the Porika stock track Nancye discovered an unexpected washout,
Interesting backing manoeuvres allowed us to turn about.

Murchison for the night and up the Glenroy Valley the next brisk morn
Well, take off 40 years, on average, and ten new boy racers were born.
They tore through the mud with glee written all over their faces,
Powering through the river crossings, men and machines put through their paces.

Passengers with white knuckles hoping the DOC hut wasn't too far,
Nancye, a new item to add to the packing list – for the ladies – a sport's bra!
That evening's daunting debrief set the tone for the next day,
We would try to conquer the worse river crossing, the dreaded Mackley, so pray

Slightly anxious, we waited for Robbie to try and get across,
Ian waged a dollar we'd go and we know he doesn't like a loss.
So, "yes", the call came through and we edged down the steep incline,
Malcolm directing, "Upstream, UPstream, UPSTREAM!, left – no the OTHER left – ok, you're fine."
Over the ridge, disaster again, another washout to foil Malcolm's route,
No choice but to cross the Mackley again. "I know I can, I'm sure I can." Just like Little Toot.

History interwoven with 4 wheel trekking through Lyell and the Denniston Incline,
Reefton's great Info Centre (not retail therapy!) and the Big River Mine.
Great work by DOC on restoring historic sites so they're on NZ's map,
Stories about pen pushers and Big River long drop placement – in other words "Bureau-crap"

Nancye not feeling well with a cold, resorted to popping drugs,
Robbie and Kathy keeping their distance, so they wouldn't catch her bugs.
When asked to be the "corner person" (or CP), Malcolm gave a resounding "NO",
But duly took his turn, wise man to avoid Nancye as a foe!

What a treat on our final day, sliding down Napoleon's Hill set our hearts pumping,
We nearly met our Waterloo but we managed to achieve a "successful humping."
What a great group of people, predominantly farm folk and those from the Super City,
Great company, great food and stories that were witty.

For any slight misdemeanour, the wooden spoon would go around,
Eco terrorism, battery terminals, invisible hairdryers and a lost hubcap, now found.
So our adventure is now at an end and the four wheeling is over,
But wait, we couldn't end without mentioning the infamous Landrover,
You entertained us with stops, a flat tyre, beeps and the crew with the X-factor,
Make sure you leave the mud on to differentiate yourself as not another Remuera tractor.

A big thank you to the fabulous NZ Adventure crew,
Drill sergeant Malcolm, kept us on our toes and avoided Search and Rescue,
Nancye, you fought off a cold and kept us laughing with the radio one-liners,
Kathy, we loved your colourful hats and the lunches fit for starving miners,
Robbie – you kept up the pace and was the brave lead guinea pig.
So a final call from tail end Charlie with a thank you – THIS BIG!