

how to spend it



Travel wise

Know where you're going

Road travel websites can be a big help in seeing the big country

Last month *Travel wise* talked about NRMA's link with caravan "safari trails" and that led us to try for the first time the road service outfit's online maps and guides for general domestic road travel. We found the service outstanding, easy to use and full of useful information. It compares very favourably with leading overseas websites including the legendary map maker Michelin (www.viamichelin.com) and Rand McNally in the US (www.randmcnally.com).

Many of you already use the NRMA service (www.mynrma.com.au/travel) but for those who haven't and are planning a long-delayed road trip to, say, Adelaide from Sydney, it's so easy on the website to pop up a map of the most likely route. Click on domestic travel, then on "plan your driving trip". Then you can click on places to stay, things to see & do, town



info, tourist drives or driving directions. Of the six categories in things to see and do we ticked just two - nature, parks and gardens and food, wine and relaxation - and came up with 78 attractions, which you can check out in detail by more clicking. Who could resist the Aurora Clydesdale Stud & Pioneer Farm at Collingullie, NSW. Where? Click to find out.

Then click on tourist drives and you get four

"side" round trips to flesh out your trip if you have ample time. The driving directions, the way, are extremely detailed and you inspect a map of each section.

Satellite navigation devices may be the latest driving thing, but for me browsing sites like the NRMA's is more fun. Of course there are links to accommodation which can be useful. JIM CRAIGIE

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HERE**

"My recent best buy was... bamboo fibre, black business socks from bamboobody.com.au. It's hard to believe how incredibly comfortable, soft & cool they feel."

**Michael, Strategy and Product Development Manager,
Savings and Investments, HSBC Bank**

Out now

What is it? Apple TV media adaptor

For years we've been watching internet movie trailers on our PCs, but wouldn't it be better if you could watch them on your expensive flat-screen LCD television? Or what about your digital photos and MP3s?

Media adaptors like this box from Apple let you do just that - they plug in to your TV and a wireless receiver lets you download movies and music from your computer, even if it's in a separate room. The Apple TV's drawcard is that it seamlessly links with iTunes on your PC, so you connect your TV to the same iTunes collection you've got on your iPod.

You don't need your computer on. The Apple TV has a 40GB hard drive - once you

download the movie trailers (up to 50 hours), or music (up to 9000 songs) they're ready to go whenever you turn on your TV. There's no fiddling around with web browsers - you browse the menus on your TV using the Apple TV remote. Downside? For people in the US the Apple TV is marketed as a way to plug in to the growing hoard of movies and TV shows from the iTunes store (for a fee), but at the time of writing this wasn't available here.

The good news is you don't have to pay for everything - you can watch movie trailers from Apple's website. Free internet-only shows, or "podcasts", cover everything from news to cartoons. WILLIAM MAHER

What is it? Media adaptor - connects your PC to your TV

How much? \$449

Pros: Fast wireless networking, has a remote control

Cons: Only works with widescreen TVs