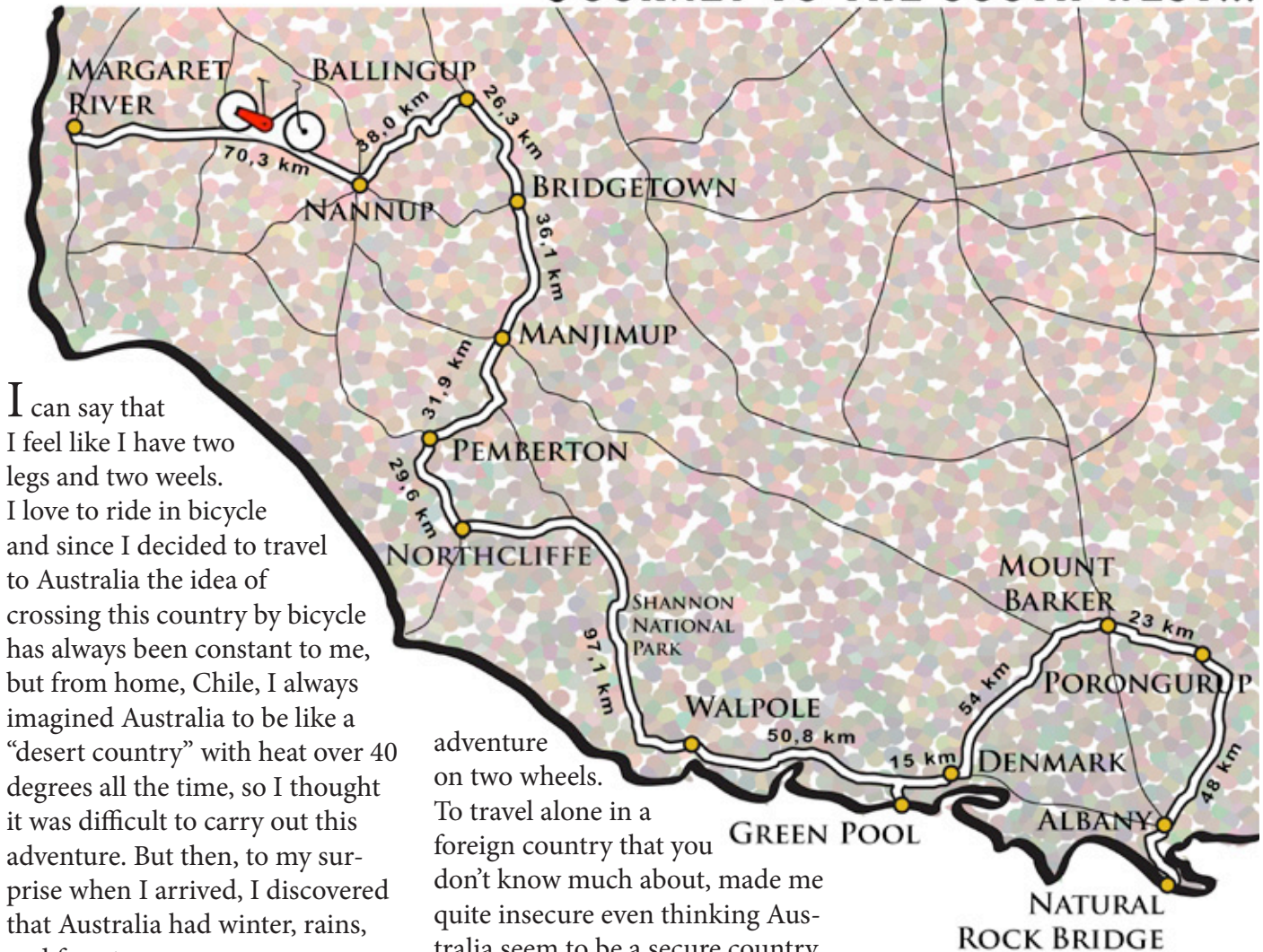


# JOURNEY TO THE SOUTH WEST...



I can say that I feel like I have two legs and two wheels. I love to ride in bicycle and since I decided to travel to Australia the idea of crossing this country by bicycle has always been constant to me, but from home, Chile, I always imagined Australia to be like a “desert country” with heat over 40 degrees all the time, so I thought it was difficult to carry out this adventure. But then, to my surprise when I arrived, I discovered that Australia had winter, rains, and forests.  
- ¡And I have left all my winter clothes back home!

At least the first problem to carry out my journey didn't exist anymore but I was insecure about my

adventure on two wheels. To travel alone in a foreign country that you don't know much about, made me quite insecure even thinking Australia seem to be a secure country, but I can avoid that feeling about going by myself on the middle of deserted highways.

I Crossed Australia, with the Indian Pacific, to have a general idea about what was the “b u s h”. I arrived in Perth, but big cities

are not for me, so I quickly went to a place which was described in guidebooks as fun and with incredible natural beauties, (that was for me!). It was there, in Margaret River and after a month of intense rain that the idea of my journey began.

I was staying at a hostel and one morning a French man was talking to me about the Giant Valley, Green Pools in Denmark, Bridge Rock in Albany and the beauty of Esperance. He said:

- !By car you can go wherever you want and stop and take photos whenever you want!

- What about by bicycle? - I asked  
- Hmm, of course you can go by bicycle!, (You can also go walking, he probably thought)

I didn't say much to him but I was starting to feel the adrenaline that comes before you start a journey



Photo: Nannup the Garden Village



and decided that day to go out and get a price on some bicycles. To my surprise as soon as I got to the street I met a couple of travelling cyclists, they were the first ones I saw in Australia, after a few photos and a good conversation with them, I asked myself - Could this be a sign?

I bought everything that I needed: bicycle, saddlebags, spare tube, pump, repair patches, and a helmet! The only thing I needed was to decide on a route. My journey was going to begin, I was going to Albany by bicycle.

I photocopied different maps and guides to have an idea of the different towns and natural attractions and parks, that I could find along the way. But the most important thing to me was to learn the distance between the towns to know where I was going to sleep because I didn't want to sleep in the bush by myself.

It was easy! The distance between most towns was only 30-50kms from each other, just a few other towns were further away. Some people told me to follow the Munda Biddi Trail because it was more quiet, and more scenic. But one thing was to travel by myself and it's another thing to travel and see absolutely know one else along the way.



*Photo: Shannon National Park*

So I decided that my route was going to go through the main highways and it was a good idea because I saw cars going by every now and then, and everyone was very respectful keeping their distance. The ride to Albany was quite an very easy ride as the roads were flat whit not many hills.

It rained and then the sun came out, I cycled by night, some kangaroos followed me, sometimes I followed them. I stopped whenever I want and take photos, and long walks into the bush, and I saw the sunset and sunrise. I was listening to the wind and I could smell the moist soil, and I could



*Photo: Police Museum Mount Barker*

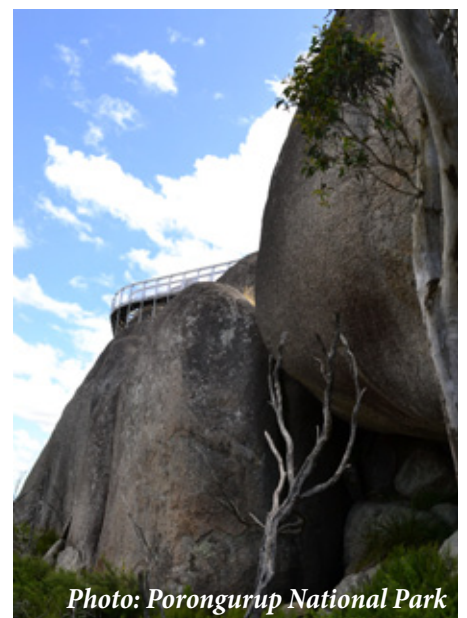


*Photo: Tree Top Walk*



*Photo: Tree Top Walk*

*Photo: Puzzles collection Bridgetown Museum*



*Photo: Porongurup National Park*





*Photo: Green Pools Denmark*

hear the music that the wild birds were making and I smiled every time I arrived to a new town. I left Margaret River on the 19th of October, it was raining and I was scared, but I told myself that if it didn't work out I could just simply catch a bus back. However, once on the route cycling with the wind on my face I felt completely happy for this new adventure. That's how I tried all the "Best Coffee in town", and I visited the Garden City of Nannup, I walked through the beautiful Museum of Trees in Balingup, and I was amazed with the collection of Puzzles at the Museum in Bridgetown. (The biggest one was a world map of 9000 pieces). I thought of my country in Pemberton with houses

made of wood and the smoke coming out of the chimney, and I took deep breaths in the immense trees from Shannon National Park. I also descended 2kms to see some waterfalls but because of the season of the year they weren't there. I wasn't very happy on the way up!! I had an amazing aerial view of the landscape at Mount Frankland and I tried to climb the Diamond Tree, however I only got to the fourth tier when I realised that if I fell there was know one around to assist me, so I climbed back down. In Walpole I visited the famous Tree Top Walk but I definitely fell in love with Green Pool in Denmark. In Mount Barker I visited the Po-

lice Museum with its garden full of magical spots and an incredible collection of old artefacts that took me to the old days of Australian history, so many tools that were used back in the old days!. I also visited the Porongurup National Park where I discovered they had a high bridge anchored to a huge rock that makes you feel like your walking on air. I finally arrived in Albany, where I visited the monumental Rock Bridge.

I didn't get to see the whole of Australia, but at least I can say that part of the spirits in the south-west of Australia is engraved into my memories.



*Photo: Tree Museum Balingup*



*Photo: Mount Frankland*



*Photo: Pemberton*



*Photo: Bridge Rock Albany*