



## MICK QUILLIAM, ABORIGINAL GUIDE, SAFFIRE FREYCINET FREYCINET, TASMANIA

Tasmanian Aboriginal artist and tour guide Mick Quilliam offers a fascinating Connection to Country tour from luxury lodge Saffire Freycinet on the stunning east coast of Tasmania.

Growing up in Hobart, Mick was lucky enough to have a grandfather who taught him about the bush. After his grandfather died, Mick “went off the rails” and found himself in jail – and that’s when he began to connect more deeply with his heritage.

“I started painting, and that helped connect me to my culture,” says Mick. “Now, through my tours at Saffire Freycinet, I have another powerful way to explain the importance of my connection to the land as a Palawa man, respecting the past and moving forward.”

After connecting with his Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage, Mick did extensive historical research which informs and enlivens his two-hour Connection to Country walking tour. He explains to guests how his ancestors made string from bulrushes and rope from bark, how they built canoes and made fish traps and timber traps for ducks. And he shows them which plants are edible and which were used for soap, tea and insect repellent. He also tells stories about how Aboriginal Australians grew their own special wheat that only needed rain once a year and how they kept warm with hats and cloaks made from possum fur.

“Tasmanian Aboriginals certainly weren’t running around naked all the time, which is the popular misconception. It was too cold,” he says, laughing.

I am passionate about showing people what our traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal life was like and how sophisticated our culture was. It’s all about passing on that message and sharing the story of us. That’s also why I started painting – to tell our stories.