



TOUR MINTARO

MARTINDALE & MERILDIN

Round journey: allow 1 to 1.5 hours for this excursion

This drive requires you to drive on unsealed roads. The roads are absolutely no problem to a traditional 4-wheel drive and, except after a recent rain event, generally okay for the family car or even a small sedan. An adventure worth a bit of dust and bone shaking!

You are probably aware of Martindale Hall, arguably Mintaro's most significant attraction. Surrounding it are 11,000 acres of prime farming land, until recently all owned by The University of Adelaide. A significant acreage has been recently sold to BTG, a therapeutic pharmaceutical manufacturer that produces Rattle Snake anti venin for the North American market. The remaining land was bought, and is farmed, by two other landowners.

This drive will take you through the centre of Martindale, past its cattle yards, shearing shed, shearers quarters, managers residence and the original farm centre with its barns, stables, blacksmiths workshop and single men's quarters. And to the Merildin Railway Station and Goods Shed, where significant conservation work has been undertaken.

Lets get underway!

You may wish to combine this drive with your visit to Martindale Hall or make it a separate excursion. In any event you need to follow the signs out of town to the Hall. You will go 'down and over' a floodway just before a turn to your left up an unsealed road or a turn to the right through the gates of the Hall.

Whether you go to The Hall first or straight into the drive, the turn up the unsealed road gets us on the way. Follow the road east for about 1.5 kms until you come across modern cattle yards on the first left turn.

You may like to get out and see if you can work out how the yards work; where are cattle brought to the crush (that structure that confines them for treatment like vaccinations, de-horning, artificial insemination, pregnancy testing etc.), where are they loaded for market and how does this maze of yards allow them to be drafted (separated) into different groups.

Take the left turn and travel down the road for 200m and pull over at the iron gate. Look up the hill to your right. You will see the original, and still used stone shearing shed with galvanised extension. Further to the left are the impressive shearers quarters, still used at least twice a year.

Over the creek and up the hill for a further 400m and you will pass the Managers house, a substantial single storey colonial residence with return verandas. 100 metres further on and stop at double gates. Down to your right is the original farm centre with the buildings as listed earlier. The blacksmiths shop is the free standing faded red galvanised iron square structure.

A further 500m up the road and, over the crest, stop at the cyclone gates to your left. Note the chicken wire fencing style that indicates the 'coursing paddock,' where live hare coursing was conducted from 1884 to 1986 (102 years) by the Mintaro Coursing Club.

Approximately 1 kilometre down the road you will come to a cross roads, which offers three choices. A turn to the left will take you back to the northern outskirts of Mintaro if you do not wish to proceed on this drive. If you go straight over and 500m up Wockie Creek Road you will come to the Mintaro Gas Turbine Station, a part of SA's power grid, first opened by the then Premier John Bannon in March 1984. During the First Gulf War of 1990-91, the power station had 24 hour security guards patrolling its grounds, much to the bemusement of the locals!

If you proceed on past the Power Station you will come out on the Mintaro to Farrell Flat Road. A left turn will see you back in Mintaro, a right turn in Farrell Flat.

Best option is a U-turn and go back to the cross roads and turn left onto Merildin Road. 4.5 kms on, turn right into Bowman's Road and pull over at the Merildin Railway Station and its stone Goods Shed.

Head further down Bowman's Road for 1 kilometre, across a floodway and turn right into Martindale Road. A six kilometre drive through the heart of Martindale's rich farming land will see you pass the airstrip to your left, opposite the quarry used for road maintenance and then the current working hub of the farm with implement sheds, workshops, silos etc on your right. Before you know it you will be passing the cattle yards and back to the floodway and the gates of Martindale Hall. Turn right to Mintaro and left to Martindale Hall.

Depending on how long you spend out of the car, this drive will be less than 1 hour. Enjoy our beautiful countryside!

