

THE SUNDAY EXAMINER

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TV eye on Tassie's French explorer history

A French connection is written all over the bays, islands and inlets of Tasmania's south-east. This week ALEX DRUCE and a team from France 2 TV retraced the voyage of French explorer Nicolas Baudin.

BOUNDING Cape Bonifante, it's a straight shot for the French coast — a deserted granite outcrop dwarfed by the magnificent Pinnacles Freestone.

We're crossing the waters of Tasmania's south-east coast, observing landmarks delineated by French scientists of the early 1800s.

Cape Baudin, Cape Peron, Cape Bonifante. Had things turned out differently 200 years ago, today's crew might be staying *La Mer du Nord* instead of *Adelaide* Australia. The naming of landmarks such as the Freestone Pinnacles, Bruny Island, the Huon Valley and the Ouenart Channel predates most of Tasmania's first settlements — with the French interest in the state continuing well after colonisation. In the past week it was another team of French documentarians and crew, the *Les Explorateurs* Melbourn-based producers Hakin Abdolhake and Cyril Frey, who were shooting a new piece for TV station France 2.



A sea cave on Maria Island.

"Ours is a story on the French connection to this coast, the French names, and how it has been preserved," Mr Abdolhake said. "I had heard of Bertrand — every French person in Australia has," Mr Abdolhake said. "It was not enough for us to come here and do a story solely on him, but when I learned of the French history here, it added another layer. I asked him to be our tour guide for the two days, and after seeing his knowledge and passion, it was obvious for him to become our narrator."

At the centre of each foreign-



Glennan Spring Bay Mayor Bertrand Cadart, the flamboyant Frenchman who fell in love with Bicheno in 2000, has narrated a new piece for TV station France 2 on Tasmania's East Coast.

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For his latest face-to-camera piece, Mr Cadart took the France 2 crew for a walk on the Freestone Pinnacles, named after young naval officers Louis and Henri Frey, visiting Cape Tourville lighthouse and Whirligig Bay. The next day the crew jumped on a boat at Triunfo and cruised to Maria and Schouten islands, visiting the du Nord, Cape Peron and Bicheno de Taillefer along the way.

"You can imagine the French explorers — seeing these things for the first time," Mr Cadart said. "The French were one of the first to explore these places, but they came here for scientific reasons, to discover the plants and the people."

The Examiner was a guest of East Coast Cruises for this report. Email alex@examiner.com.au or Tel: 08 9400 1987



France's expeditions to Tasmania

- **Marc-Joseph Marion de Fresne** — Said to be the second European visitor to Tasmania after Abel Tasman, and the first French explorer to interact with the island's natives in 1772. Marion Bay in the south-east is named after him.
- **DuRoi d'Entrecasteaux** — Perhaps best known for his exploration of the Australian coast in 1792, while searching for the doomed *La Perouse* expedition. D'Entrecasteaux mapped and named much of the Tasmanian coastline in his ship the *Recherche*. The D'Entrecasteaux Channel was named after the admiral, who reportedly was the first European to discover that Bruny Island was, in fact, an island. D'Entrecasteaux sailed alongside the *Esperance*, which was commanded



Bird Rock off the East Coast.



Seals on Red Des Phouques.



Members of the French film crew on the East Coast.