



TONY AND JENNY ENDERBY
encounter the whales and dolphins
of the Hauraki Gulf.

The Return of the Whales

The sight of a large whale surfacing, its spout blasting upward, is unforgettable. From close range the sound has an almost resonant ring to it. The warm air from the whale's lungs vaporises as it meets the cooler surface air, creating the spout that whales are best known for.

We experienced both the sight and sound of a spout as a large whale circled our yacht.

We were drifting, sails down, watching the best show in the Hauraki Gulf. Every

minute or so the whale surfaced, and dived again but never showed its tail above the surface.

As it passed only metres from our stern we saw the massive tail, driving the whale silently forward, through the plankton-laden water. This was a 14-metre Bryde's whale which then moved off and joined several others nearby.

We continued to watch. The whales rolled on their sides, occasionally showing a pectoral fin or part of a tail above the water, as they lunged through the masses

Above: a five-metre long humpback whale baby.

of fish and small crustaceans.

There are more whales in the Hauraki Gulf than most people realise. The Bryde's whale (pronounced broodahs), lives around the northern New Zealand coast most of the year. They are the whales most often seen, as they surface in a fish shoal feeding along with diving gannets.

At Labour Weekend last, passengers on the glass-bottom boat at the Goat Island Marine Reserve, near Leigh, were given a