

AUSTRALIA

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

COME
and say
G'DAY

*GOLD COAST
QUEENSLAND

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JOURNEY STARTS HERE*

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SOUTHPORT BEACH,
GOLD COAST

PHOTOGRAPHY:
TY SHEERS



BONDI

COME and say G'DAY!

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the last few years have been incredibly challenging, with many aspects of day-to-day life changing drastically, including our access to travel. Many people around the world were forced to put vacations on hold, however travel is finally back, and we have all earned a big getaway. We would like to extend a warm welcome to come visit us Down Under.

While Australia's key attributes have remained unchanged during the pause to international travel – namely our glorious wide-open spaces and famously easy-going way of life – in recent years everything from food to fashion has had a fresh, new makeover. Interesting tourism experiences and places to stay have opened, reimagined cultural attractions reflect the vibrancy of our diverse community, and major event plans are being made for 2022 and beyond.

Our message to our mates in North America is simple: whether you are looking to relax, reconnect with loved ones or are dreaming of discovery, Australia is the perfect destination for an epic adventure. And when you're ready for your big trip, we'll be here to say G'day.

I may be biased, but there really is nowhere else quite like Australia, and we're delighted to be able to present you with this magazine to showcase so many of the incredible destinations and experiences that make this country the world-class destination that it is.

Phillipa Harrison
Managing Director, Tourism Australia

AUSTRALIA

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

SPECIAL EDITION 2022

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THERE'S NOTHING LIKE AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN TRAVELLER
HONESTLY AUSTRALIAN

* Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this issue was current and correct at the time of going to print.

ONE JOURNEY, TIMELESS ENCOUNTERS

REEF — RAINFOREST — OUTBACK

A collection of boutique sustainable lodges and experiences that celebrate Queensland's diverse natural beauty in one bespoke journey. Inspiring authentic experiences and lasting memories, discover a secluded island paradise on the Great Barrier Reef, a luxury super yacht complete with its own helipad, a soul-enriching retreat in the Daintree Rainforest, and invoke the spirit of adventure in the outback.




ORPHEUS
ISLAND LODGE
GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA


MT. MULLIGAN
LODGE
QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA


DAINTREE ECOLOGE
QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA


FLYING FISH
GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA

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AUSTRALIA | *The Aussie Way*

UPSIDE DOWN DOWN UNDER

Down Under, July doesn't mean summer and there's no such thing as a white Christmas! Here, the best things to do when it's hot, cold and everything in between.



Summer
DEC - JAN - FEB
When it's winter in the Northern Hemisphere, Australia is making the most of its summer. A government approved 'changing of the clocks' (they go forward an



hour in summer, except in Queensland) means that the days are extra-long and the whole country is in a great mood. Summer temperatures hover between 82°F and 96°F so it's a good time to head to the beach: Sydney's **BONDI** is the most famous; in Perth head to **SCARBOROUGH** and **COTTESLOE**; **BURLEIGH HEADS** on the Gold Coast; and **MOOLOOLABA** Main Beach on the Sunshine Coast.



Fall
MAR - APR - MAY
Summer fades into fall slowly, with the early months boasting pleasantly mild temperatures between 58°F and 72°F. This is prime food festival time in Australia, with **NOOSA FOOD + WINE** taking place in Queensland, **TASTING AUSTRALIA** happening in and around Adelaide, **MELBOURNE FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL** creating a buzz, and **ORANGE F.O.O.D WEEK** in the regional New South Wales town of Orange. Or, if you prefer festivals to serve up art instead of food, check out the world-renowned **ADELAIDE FESTIVAL** and **ADELAIDE FRINGE**.



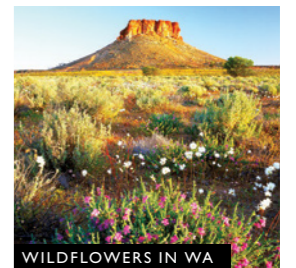
Winter
JUN - JUL - AUG
The winter months present a best of both worlds proposition in Australia. There's a chill in the air and



snow can be found in places like the **VICTORIAN HIGH COUNTRY** in Victoria and the **SNOWY MOUNTAINS** in New South Wales; meanwhile, up north, in places like the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tropical North of Queensland, slightly cooler temperatures make it the perfect time to visit attractions like **ULURU**, **BROOME**, **THE KIMBERLEY** and **CAIRNS**. In **TASMANIA**, indulge in coastal walking tours and moody scenery.



Spring
SEP - OCT - NOV
There's a sense of excitement in the air when spring arrives: the days start getting warmer and the country bursts into color. Now's the time to head to Western Australia for **WILDFLOWER** season, where some 12,000 species are on display during October and November. In New South Wales, the North Coast city of **GRAFTON** is painted a beautiful shade of purple when its jacaranda trees bloom. And in Canberra **FLORIADE** is a month-long celebration of spring with cultural events, food and wine, and abundant blooms.



PLANNING THE ULTIMATE AUSSIE GETAWAY

Whether you have 10 days or 20 (or more), there's plenty to see and do Down Under.

IF YOU HAVE 10 DAYS OR MORE



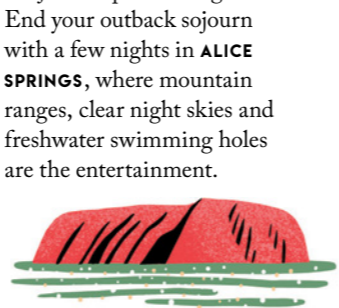
SEE THE CITIES

SYDNEY makes for a great introduction to **AUSTRALIA**. Beyond the beautiful **SYDNEY HARBOUR** – home to the **SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE** and **SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE** – the city boasts some of the world's best beaches, coastal walks, well-appointed museums and a thriving food and wine scene. Day trips to the magnificent slate-colored cliffs, canyons and waterfalls of the **BLUE MOUNTAINS** to Sydney's west, or the secluded beaches and rainforests of the **ROYAL NATIONAL PARK** to the city's south, are both easily achieved in your first week. From here, fly to **MELBOURNE** – Australia's other mecca on the east coast – which offers up **ART-FILLED ALLEYWAYS**, legendary **SPORTS** events, trendy neighborhoods and a cornucopia of world-class cafes and bars. Spend a night or two in the **MORNINGTON PENINSULA** to relax on its sparkling beaches, dine on the abundant local produce and unwind in luxe boutique accommodation.



MARVEL AT THE ICONS

For a delightful contrast of rainforest and reef with red earth and rock, start at the **GREAT BARRIER REEF** and finish at **ULURU**. Spanning a staggering 1430 miles along the east coast, and home to 2900 individual reefs, 300 coral cays and 600 continental islands, the **GREAT BARRIER REEF** (Earth's largest living thing) is deserving of its UNESCO World Heritage listing, and offers visitors myriad possibilities to swim, snorkel, dive and sail. You can access the reef from **BRISBANE** via **COOKTOWN** in **FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND**, the mainland gateways of **CAIRNS** and **PORT DOUGLAS**, **TOWNSVILLE**, any of the pristine Whitsunday Islands, or via **BUNDABERG** and the surrounding islands in the Southern Great Barrier Reef. Bookend your trip with a stopover in **BRISBANE** and the nearby **GOLD COAST**. A three-hour flight from Brisbane is all it takes to get to Australia's other most important natural landmark, **ULURU**. So immense, deeply spiritual and eerily still is this red rock monolith that little can be said to match its significance. Nearby **KATA TJUTA** (The Olgas) and **KINGS CANYON** are just as spellbinding.



End your outback sojourn with a few nights in **ALICE SPRINGS**, where mountain ranges, clear night skies and freshwater swimming holes are the entertainment.

IF YOU HAVE 20 DAYS OR MORE



GO FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

For a mix of lush rainforests, islands and reefs, white-sand beaches, coastal towns and cosmopolitan cities, stick to Australia's east coast. Start in **CAIRNS** or the **WHITSUNDAYS** before making your way down to **BRISBANE**, the **GOLD COAST** and bohemian **BYRON BAY**. It takes roughly 90 minutes to fly direct from Byron Bay to Sydney, where more pristine beaches and Aussie landmarks await. From here, jet to **MELBOURNE** and wander the city's bustling laneways for all things trendy and tasty, but keep a few days free to explore the **MORNINGTON PENINSULA** (one hour out of Melbourne) and **WILSONS PROMONTORY** (three hours out of Melbourne), or join a tour of one of the world's most scenic coastal drives along the **GREAT OCEAN ROAD**. Finish up your vacation in **HOBART**, the capital of the state of **TASMANIA** – less than one hour by plane from **MELBOURNE** – where countless natural wonders and epic walks are within reach.



CROSS FROM EAST TO WEST

Start in **SYDNEY**, then zigzag your way south west to **ADELAIDE**, up to **ULURU** and **ALICE SPRINGS**, onwards north to **DARWIN** and across to **PERTH** for a marathon all-of-Australia itinerary. **ADELAIDE**, with its heritage architecture, sophisticated dining and burgeoning small-bar scene, will be your last taste of city life before you venture into Australia's **RED CENTRE** and spiritual heart. Crocodile encounters, balmy nights and adventures into the fern-fringed swimming holes, wetlands and waterfalls of nearby **KAKADU** and **LITCHFIELD NATIONAL PARKS** are accessible from **DARWIN**, before a quick airplane jaunt west puts you in **PERTH**. Life unfolds at a comfortable pace here, making it a relaxing end to an ambitious schedule.



IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME

Lucky you; the **LAND DOWN UNDER** has plenty more in store for visitors with extra time. From **SYDNEY**, travel two hours by air to spend a few days at World Heritage-listed **LORD HOWE ISLAND** – a natural paradise packed with adventures in and out of the water. Boasting more than 150 wineries and 50 cellar doors, taste some of the most awarded wines in the world and sample some of the region's best local produce in the **BAROSSA VALLEY** near **ADELAIDE**. From **PERTH**, fly to **EXMOUTH** – the gateway to nearby **NINGALOO REEF** – to swim with gentle and elusive whale sharks.



WORDS: PAIGE RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHY: ELISE HASSEY (BYRON); NICKY RYAN (SYDNEY); LEIGH-ANN POW (LORD HOWE ISLAND ILLUSTRATION: MIKE ROSSI)

A GUIDE TO AUSSIE ENGLISH

Here are some useful words and phrases to help you navigate Australia's unique take on the English language.



G'DAY: A popular form of greeting; an abbreviation of "good day" used in place of "hello"

MATE: The mystique and meaning of 'mate' to Australians is enormous; it's used to refer to friends and strangers alike and implies a level of friendship, inclusion and egalitarianism that goes to the heart of the Australian culture and national identity

TA AND CHEERS: Both mean "thank you"

NO WORRIES: A general response to being thanked; "no problem" is also popularly used

GONE WALKABOUT: Used figuratively when someone or something can't be found, or literally when someone heads into the bush without a set return date

FAIR DINKUM: Genuine, honest or authentic; "That's fair dinkum amazing"

or "Are you fair dinkum?"

ARVO: Afternoon, as in "See you this arvo"

YEAH, NAH: Also heard as "yeah, but" this translates to "I understand what you are saying but I don't necessarily agree with it"

RIGHTO: Delivery is key here; it can mean "OK", "Right, let's get going" or "I understand, but I'm not sure I believe you"

SHE'LL BE RIGHT: Everything is OK

GOOD ONYA: Congratulations given on doing something well

CRIQUEY OR STRENGTH: Translates to "Oh my goodness" or "wow"

YOU LITTLE RIPPER: That's fantastic

HEAPS GOOD: Used when something is excellent

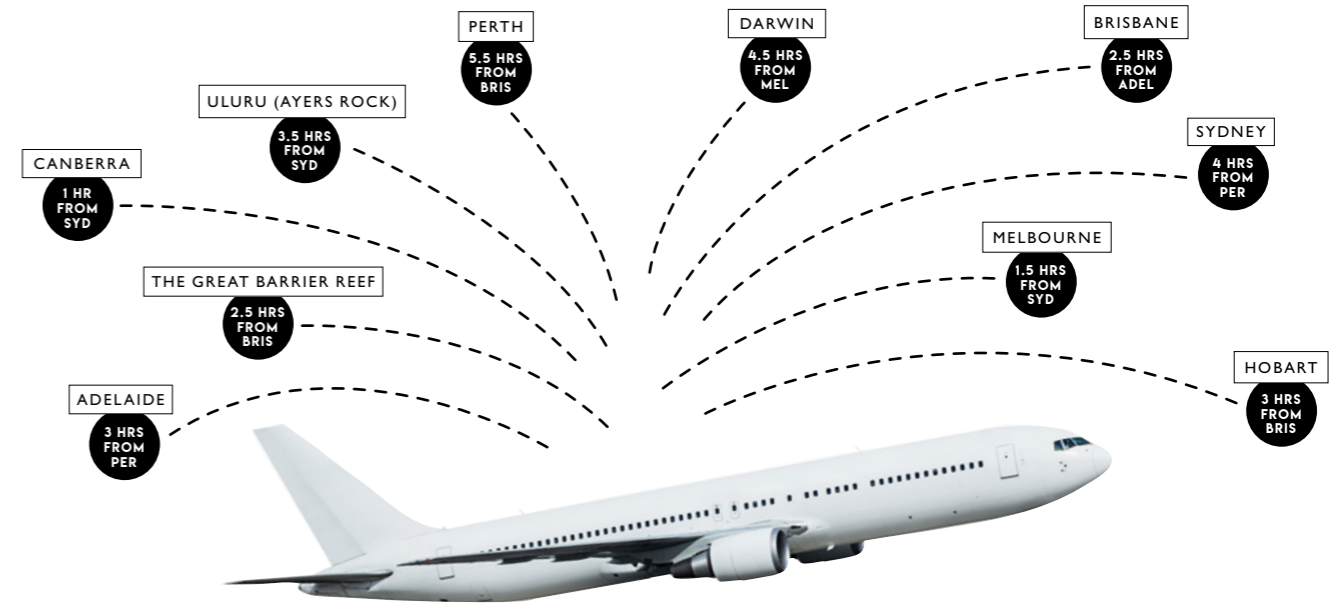
GALAH: A derogatory remark for someone behaving foolishly, as in "stop acting like a flamin' galah"

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BARBEQUE

It would be a mistake to underestimate the role that the barbeque plays in Australian society. Unlike the Texan barbeque – involving wood, charcoal, spicy rubs and large hunks of meat, the traditional Aussie barbeque is a little more all-encompassing, referring to the grilling of any kind of meat over a flame. Known locally as the "barbie" (pronounced "baaarbie"), as in "throw another shrimp on the barbie", the word is used not only to describe the appliance itself but also the social gathering that results from it. If you're invited to "come over for a barbie", you'll be offered a choice of snags (sausages), prawns (shrimp), yabbies (freshwater crawfish), burgers, chops (a cut of lamb) and steak; modern offerings influenced by Australia's multicultural society include kebabs, aromatic marinated chicken, stir fry and even pizza. Australians also utilize the barbie to raise money for charity. Known as a "sausage sizzle", the traditional offering is a snag on a folded slice of white bread with a generous slug of tomato sauce (ketchup), although flaky bread rolls and fried onions on top are also popular. The best place to find a sausage sizzle in Australia is at popular hardware store Bunnings Warehouse. **A**



WORDS: LEIGH-ANN POW WEBER BARBEQUE COURTESY OF WEBER



HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME?

Flying from the United States to Australia is possible from various cities and with a range of airlines including Qantas, Delta, United Airlines, Virgin Australia and American Airlines. The popular route from Los Angeles to Sydney takes 15 hours direct and just shy of 16 hours to Melbourne; New York to Sydney direct clocks in at around 22 hours and roughly 24 hours to Melbourne. Dallas to Sydney takes 17 hours, while Houston to Melbourne is

20.5 hours. From Honolulu to Sydney, the direct flight will get you there in 10 hours. Once in Australia there are frequent flights between the capital cities of each state via domestic carriers such as Qantas, Virgin Australia and Jetstar, as well as to regional centers on the likes of Rex Airlines and QantasLink. Before booking and/or departure, make sure to check visa and entry requirements, and travel updates at australia.com

SYDNEY: Sydney is serviced by numerous domestic airlines, and you can get just about anywhere by plane: Brisbane or Melbourne are a short 1.5-hour flight away, and Perth is just over four hours' flying time. Getting to popular regional hubs like laidback 'Newy' (Newcastle) and boho Byron Bay (via Ballina Airport) is also easy from Sydney.

MELBOURNE: Melbourne to Brisbane takes about 2.5 hours, Perth takes about 3.5 hours, and there are regular 1.5-hour flights throughout the day to Sydney.

HOBART: While the Tasmanian capital is not serviced by international flights, there are daily flights into Hobart from Sydney (roughly two hours) and Melbourne (just over an hour), as well as flights from Brisbane and Adelaide.

ADELAIDE: Adelaide Airport receives some

international flights as well as daily direct domestic flights from every capital city. Sydney takes just over two hours while Perth is roughly three hours away.

PERTH: There are direct flights to Perth from every capital city in Australia. It takes about 5.5 hours from Brisbane or 3.5 hours from Darwin.

DARWIN: Direct flights to Darwin are available from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide. From Melbourne it takes about 4.5 hours, Perth takes 3.5 hours and Sydney takes 4.5 hours.

BRISBANE: Fly into Brisbane's International Airport direct or take a short flight from any capital city; from Adelaide it's 2.5 hours and Hobart is just short of three hours away.

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF: Cairns, Townsville, Airlie Beach (Proserpine) and

Hamilton Island are all gateways to the reef, with flights available from many capital cities. Flying from Sydney to Cairns takes about three hours, while Perth to Cairns takes roughly six hours.

THE RED CENTRE: Fly to Alice Springs from most Australian capitals; it takes just over three hours from Sydney and just under from Melbourne. You can fly direct to Ayers Rock Airport to see Australia's most iconic monolith, Uluru, from Sydney (3.5 hours) and Melbourne (three hours).

CANBERRA: There are flights to Canberra from many capital cities – including Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. From Sydney and Melbourne the journey takes just over an hour, while flights from Perth take just under four hours. **A**



EMBARK ON A SOUL-ENRICHING ADVENTURE AT AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST LUXURY LODGE, FULL OF INDULGENCE, CONNECTION AND NATURE.

SEQUOIA is positioned amongst Australia's world famous wine regions with Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale, and Eden Valley all within a 30-mile radius.

SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

Wine – Exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences, available from 200+ cellar doors, ranging from the boutique to the iconic, including the home of Penfolds Grange.

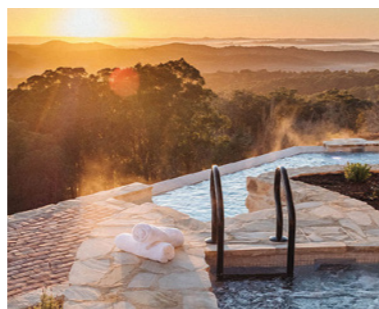
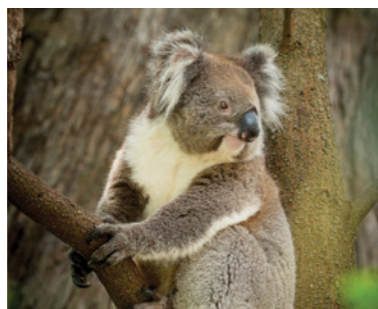
The World's largest Koala population – Daily guided nature walks offer guests the opportunity to see Koalas and Kangaroos.

Lodge Welcome – Gather at the valley rim at sunset to hear the story of the region, local producers, tales of local legends (such as R.M. Williams), along with the Aboriginal significance.

Spring-fed hot pools – Rejuvenate in our artesian natural spring-fed hot pools and indulge in local Jurlique treatments at our day spa.

Sommelier Masterclass – Join our Sommelier for a rare opportunity to discuss and taste wine in an intimate, creative, and informative setting. Your pressing wine questions will be answered!

Private exclusive tours – SEQUOIA's concierge team open doors to experiences you didn't know were possible and are delighted to tailor your unique all inclusive packages for a truly one-of-a-kind unforgettable Australian escape.



Adults and Couples Boutique Tropical Escapes and bespoke service by the Coral Sea. Enjoy inclusive packages and activities curated for rest, relaxation and rejuvenation in our small hotel dedicated to house guests.



Famous for our luxury adults and couples tropical escapes, The Reef House is an iconic colonial style boutique hotel. Relax in the adults only tranquillity pool, revive with yoga, aqua aerobics and cocktail making classes or rejuvenate in the Reef House Day Spa. Finish your day with complimentary drinks and canapés served in the Brigadier's lounge before dining under the stars in the awarded Reef House restaurant.

Boutique Tropical Escapes are based on a stay of 3 or more nights and include, daily à la carte breakfast overlooking the Coral Sea, candlelit three-course dinner on one-night, curated welcome with in-room sparkling wine and chocolates, complimentary signature inclusions & experiences, poolside butler and luxury concierge assistance.



The Reef House is perfectly situated in the heart of Palm Cove on the beachfront, just 25 minutes North of Cairns Airport.



HAPPY GLAMPER

WORDS KATE SYMONS

Camping isn't for everyone. The equipment hauling, the uncertain weather, the questionable (or absence of) bathroom facilities. Nature, on the other hand, is a real crowd pleaser. If only there was a way to enjoy camping's many wonders without all its pitfalls. All hail the rise of glamping. The glamorous/camping amalgam has taken off in Australia and shows no signs of waning as new and unique variations of the trend continue to pop up in bustling cities, in sweeping bushland, on sandy shores – anywhere there's room to pitch an (admittedly larger than average) tent. Here, some of Australia's top glamping options.

SANCTUARY BY SIRROMET

One sip at Sirromet's tasting room and you won't want to leave. And fortunately, you don't have to. Less than 40 minutes from Brisbane, Sirromet offers 18 luxury safari-style tents, allowing guests to linger a little longer among the grand paperbarks and scribbly gums. Each tent boasts contemporary furnishings, private bathrooms and air conditioning, and a balcony where guests can mingle with the resident wildlife. The modern Australian cuisine at its restaurant, Lurleen's, won't disappoint either.

PEBBLE POINT

Set behind the geological marvel that is the 12 Apostles on the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, just over three hours from the heart of Melbourne, Pebble Point is truly bush meets beach. Located within a few feet of three national parks, Pebble Point's six safari tents put nature front and center. Amazing walking trails, migrating southern right whales and secluded beaches await, as do those craggy limestone stacks – numbering seven rather than 12 these days due to erosion, but still a truly dramatic sight.

ROAR AND SNORE

Forget a room with a view; this is a room with a zoo. Roar and Snore is Taronga Zoo Sydney's own unique glamping experience. Safari-style accommodation comes with a glamorous backdrop of Sydney's famous harbor, but what's really wild about Taronga's overnight offering is the permanent residents. Intimate animal encounters and an exclusive night safari are all part of the experience before guests turn in for the evening, to be lulled to sleep by a wildlife serenade.

PAPERBARK CAMP

For glamping fans, a visit to the place responsible for the portmanteau is a must. 'Glamping' is believed to have been coined by a UK journalist after his visit to Paperbark Camp – a luxe 13-tent property, located just minutes from the township of Huskisson and easily accessible from Sydney. Tents are set in the thick of beautiful casuarinas, spotted gums and, of course, paperbarks, while eastern grey kangaroos, brushtail possums, king parrots and crimson rosellas are among Paperbark's regular visitors.



THE NAKED CUBBY



REEFSLEEP

REEFSLEEP

The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia's biggest draws. About two million people visit the World Heritage-listed wonder each year, lured by the opportunity to swim, snorkel or dive in the aquatic Eden. Now you can spend the night on it, too. A once-in-a-lifetime experience, Reefsleep's two-day, one-night excursion brings new meaning to the expression 'ocean views'. Guests spend the night on a permanently moored pontoon, in an elevated swag (a sleeping bag with an inbuilt mattress) under a canopy of stars and surrounded by the deep blue. Guided snorkeling safaris, scuba diving and scenic heli-flights are available extras, giving guests a 360-degree look at the technicolor dream.

BELLWETHER WINES

Set against the grandeur of centuries-old red gums on the Limestone Coast (less than four hours from Adelaide), Bellwether Wines' campsite includes 10 bell tents, all just a short stroll from the tasting room. Each tent is decked out for a cozy stay, including a complimentary bottle of world-famous Coonawarra red wine. Outdoor kitchen facilities are at your disposal, but for something really special, book the Table of Twelve experience – a six-course celebration of fine food, wine and conversation set in a repurposed 1868 shearing shed.

KARIJINI ECO RETREAT

In the heart of Karijini National Park, the Karijini Eco Retreat puts guests face-to-face with remarkable ancient landscapes. Glamping is just one of the accommodation options at the environmentally friendly retreat, and each spacious tent has its own deck. A short walk away, the spectacular Joffre Gorge is a sight to behold; its deep, rugged crevices just waiting to be explored. Aboriginal people are known to have lived in the region for at least 20,000 years and the sense of place is truly powerful. **A**

THE NAKED CUBBY

As if the name wasn't intriguing enough, The Naked Cubby is all about celebrating "good food, wine and even better company" – a travel trifecta. 'Naked' is a reference to stripping down, letting go of technology, leaving the stress of day-to-day life and reconnecting with yourself or a loved one... and with nature. There are two cubbies, Edgar and Frank, both set on Mount Majura Vineyard, located just outside the nation's capital, Canberra. Guests can stay simple in Edgar or stay 'schmick' (Australian slang for stylish) in Frank. Either way, going Naked (metaphorically or literally – you'll be the only guests on the vineyard, so bare bottoms are encouraged) is a real treat.



SANCTUARY BY SIRROMET



PAPERBARK CAMP



KARIJINI ECO RETREAT

THE MAIN EVENTS

A CALENDAR OF AUSSIE FESTIVALS AND EVENTS TO ADD TO YOUR TRAVEL DIARY.

JANUARY

AUSTRALIAN OPEN
Victoria, January 17-30
The best tennis players in the world compete in the first Grand Slam event of the year at Melbourne Park.
ausopen.com

FEBRUARY

ADELAIDE FRINGE
South Australia, February 18-March 20
The biggest arts festival in the Southern Hemisphere transforms the city with a program of eclectic, colorful and fun events.
adelaidefringe.com.au

MARCH

SCULPTURE BY THE SEA, COTTESLOE
Western Australia, March 4-21
The world's largest free outdoor sculpture exhibition is held along the shorefront at Perth's Cottesloe beach.
sculpturebythesea.com/cottesloe

APRIL

PARRIJIMA - A FESTIVAL IN LIGHT
Northern Territory, April 8-17
Artworks by Indigenous artists are transformed into luminous light installations projected onto the Alice Springs landscape.
parrijimaaustralia.com.au

MAY

VIVID SYDNEY
NSW, 27 May-18 June
Sydney transforms into a canvas of brilliant light installations alongside a packed schedule of music and workshops.
vividssydney.com

JUNE

TRUFFLE KERFUFFLE
Western Australia, June 24-26
A weekend-long celebration of all things truffle-related in the heart of Australian truffle country.
trufflekerfuffle.com.au

JULY

BOULIA CAMEL RACES
Queensland, July 15-17
The Kentucky Derby of camel racing, this quirky event is a one-of-a-kind Australian Outback experience.
bouliacamelraces.com.au

AUGUST

DARWIN FESTIVAL
Northern Territory, August 4-21
Australia's tropical Top End comes alive for 18 dazzling days and nights of cabaret, theater, dance, visual arts, outdoor concerts and family-friendly events.
darwinfestival.org.au

SEPTEMBER

FLORIADE
Australian Capital Territory, September 17-October 16
Canberra's Commonwealth Park is transformed into a vibrant display of over one million flowers alongside music, cultural celebrations, food and wine, horticultural workshops and activities.
floriadeaustralia.com

OCTOBER

AUSTRALIAN MOTORCYCLE GRAND PRIX
Victoria, October 14-16
Among the many reasons to visit Phillip Island is this adrenaline-charged race and its entertainment events.
motogp.com.au

NOVEMBER

MELBOURNE CUP FESTIVAL
Victoria, October 29-November 5
The racing elite descend on Flemington Racecourse between October 29 and November 5 for four days of sport, fashion and food. Make sure you dress to impress!
flemington.com.au/melbournecupcarnival

DECEMBER

ROLEX SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE
Tasmania, December 26-January 1
One of the world's most prestigious ocean races, watch the flotilla of colorful yachts race out of Sydney Harbour, following Australia's east coast to the finish line in Hobart.
rolexsydneyhobart.com

LIKE NOWHERE ELSE.
WITH NO ONE ELSE.



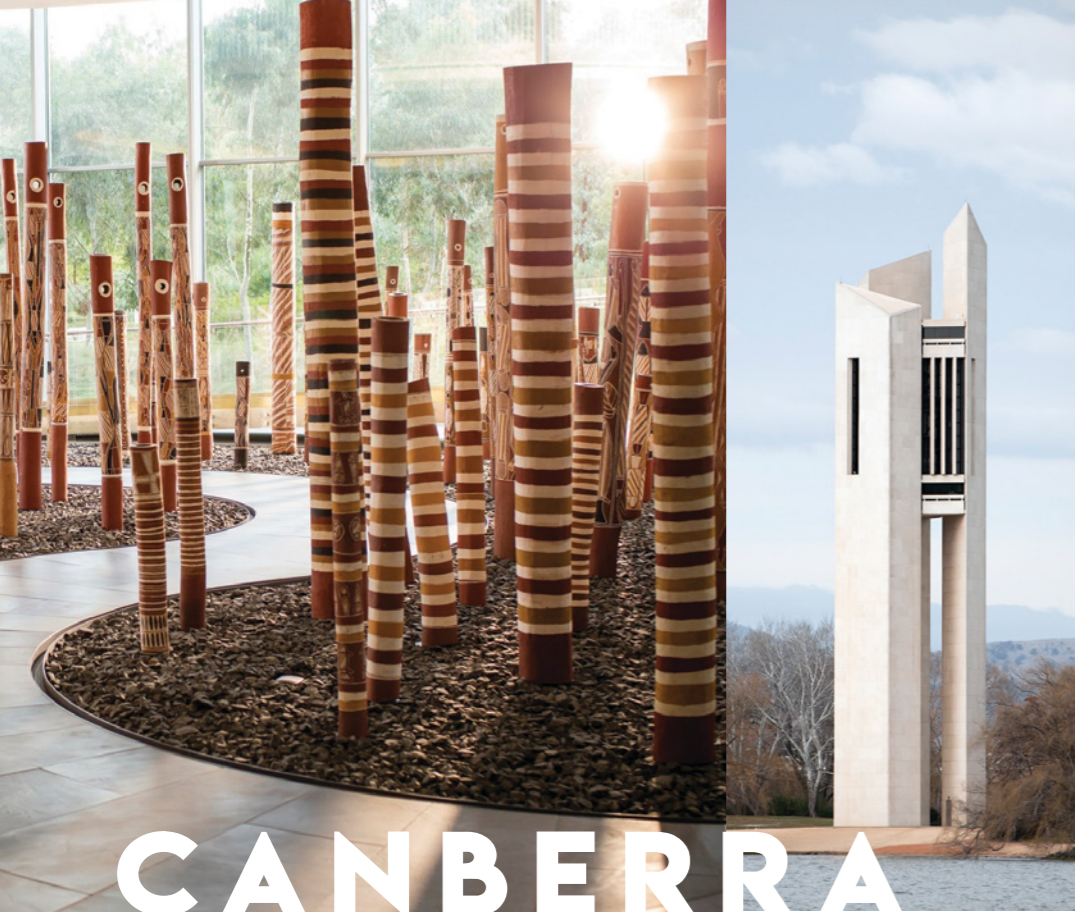
In the Great Barrier Reef, nature's luxury is all around. Only Lizard Island Resort puts you right in the middle of this magical world. Out here, you have the beaches virtually to yourself, along with exquisite dining and customized activities. Make yourself at home—you have the keys to the whole island.

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Book your vacation now at LizardIsland.com.au/LikeNowhereElse

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Lizard Island
GREAT BARRIER REEF



CANBERRA

THE CELEBRITY OF AUSTRALIA'S INTRIGUING CAPITAL CITY IS ON THE RISE THANKS TO ITS TRENDY NEW NEIGHBORHOODS, CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS AND GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCES.

WALK THE CITY

Do as the locals do and follow the three-mile loop track circling **LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN**, crossing Commonwealth Bridge and Kings Avenue Bridge, and taking in Canberra's most important landmarks and memorials. visitcanberra.com.au/getting-around/walking

GETTING AROUND

Ride the free Culture Loop bus to 10 of Canberra's best attractions including Parliament House, the **NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA** [pictured above, left] and the Canberra Centre, or hire a bike and use the extensive network of cycle paths to navigate your way around the city.

WHERE TO EAT



BAR ROCHFORD

AUBERGINE: The set five-course menu here is updated daily to make the most of local produce that is in-season and at its best on the day. aubergine.com.au

PILOT: Located in the suburb of Ainslie, the refined seven-course degustation menu at Pilot seeks to redefine fundamentals. pilotrestaurant.com

BAR ROCHFORD: This bar's popularity with locals is owed to an exciting wine list with restaurant-quality food and great beats to boot. barrochford.com



OVOLO NISHI

THREE STAYS

Hotel Realm

This five-star hotel is like its own mini lifestyle hub, encompassing several swanky restaurants, a heated lap pool and sauna. hotelrealm.com.au

Ovolo Nishi

This boutique NewActon hotel is brimming with new-school charisma and designer quirks. ovolohotels.com/ovolo/nishi

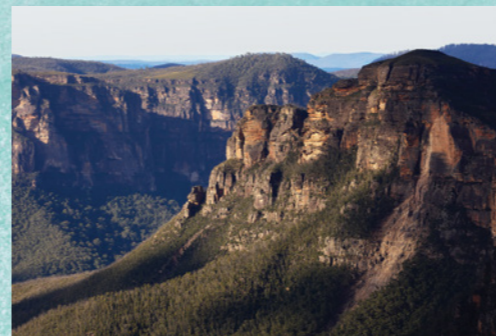
Jamala Wildlife Lodge

Wake to the roar of lions or hand-feed a giraffe at this 18-room Africa-style luxury lodge inside Canberra's National Zoo & Aquarium. jamalawildlifelodge.com.au

ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

SEE LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN ON A HOT AIR BALLOON RIDE WITH BALLOON ALOFT, OR VISIT DURING THE CANBERRA BALLOON SPECTACULAR, WHEN MORE THAN THIRTY HOT AIR BALLOONS TAKE TO THE SKY. BALLOONALOFTCANBERRA.COM.AU

HOT AIR BALLOONING



In Partnership with Blue Mountains Tourism

Why the world *LOVES* the Blue Mountains

On Sydney's doorstep lies ancient wilderness and urban sophistication.

Few of the world's premier cities have vast wilderness on their doorsteps, but 90 minutes west of Sydney an extravaganza of ridges, cliffs and waterfalls unfolds. The rugged Blue Mountains is a vast landscape of eroded valleys, home to the famous Three Sisters rock formation, which many visitors see only on whirlwind tours. But stay longer and you'll find rainforest and soaring eucalyptus trees loud with cockatoos and king parrots, where lyre birds dance in clearings and kookaburras cackle. No need to rough it in this wilderness, since attractive villages offer sophisticated accommodation and dining.

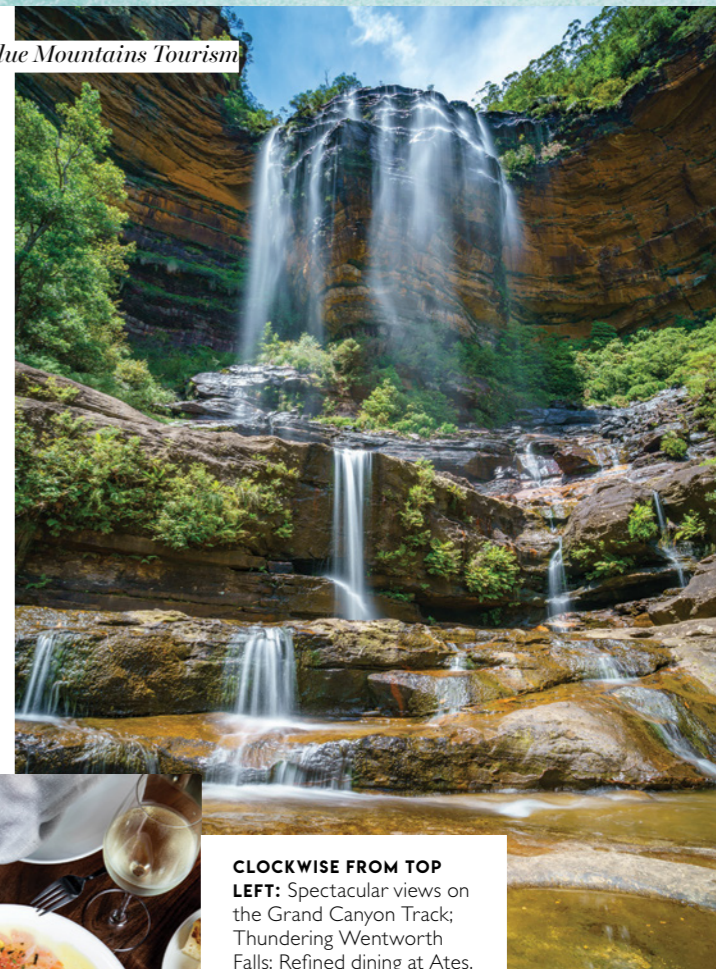
WORLD HERITAGE NATURE

Spectacular walks take you into eucalypt-scented landscapes. One of the easiest along the clifftops between **LEURA** and **KATOOMBA** is a two-hour showcase of rugged escarpments, waterfalls and vistas such as the aptly named Sublime Point. Sydneysiders love that National Pass walk at **WENTWORTH FALLS**, down the side of a waterfall and along the middle of cliffs high above the Jamison Valley. Also spectacular is Grand Canyon track near **BLACKHEATH**.

Up for a challenge? Tackle the three-day **SIX FOOT TRACK** or go canyoning, abseiling or rock climbing.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Spectacular views on the Grand Canyon Track; Thundering Wentworth Falls; Refined dining at Ates.



check out **MOUNTAIN CULTURE BEER COMPANY**. Meanwhile hot new distillery **KARU** produces internationally awarded small-batch gin.

UNIQUE CULTURE AND SHOPPING

Take a day to explore pretty, historic towns, where cottages sit in flourishing English-style gardens bursting with daffodils, roses or rhododendrons. Boutiques in Leura favor country chintz, and you'll want to taste the likes of honey-and-lavender or basil-cream truffles at **JOSOPHAN'S CHOCOLATES**. In Katoomba, browse its renowned **ANTIQUES STORES** and art galleries that feature striking Australian landscapes and wildlife. You can take workshops in painting, glassblowing and pottery making. Or you might simply want to check into one of the many day spas for a body scrub and aroma massage.

WORLD-CLASS FOOD AND WINE

The Blue Mountains is a notable gourmet destination. **DARLEYS RESTAURANT** offers innovative contemporary Australian cuisine in a Victorian-era homestead, **LEURA GARAGE** is a local favorite for its upmarket cafe-style dishes, and **THE WINTERGARDEN** serves traditional high tea with a side of spectacular views. Among new restaurants are **ATES** for Mediterranean shared plates and **MISTY'S** for high-end French fare.

Meanwhile, the Megalong Valley is dotted with olive groves and vineyards including **DRYRIDGE ESTATE**, which produces a zesty riesling. In Katoomba,

For more information, see visitbluemountains.com.au



VIBE HOTEL

THREE STAYS

Vibe Hotel

This modern hotel is just steps from the public lagoon, and some of the city's best dining and shopping. vibehotels.com

Oaks Elan

Located in the heart of the city, each room at Oaks Elan comes with uninterrupted views of Darwin Harbour and Frances Bay. oakshotels.com

Mindil Beach Casino Resort

Set among 29 acres of lush tropical gardens, this is Darwin's only beachfront resort. It has eight restaurants and bars and an onsite spa. mindilbeachcasinoresort.com.au



ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

RECLINE ON A DECKCHAIR AND WATCH A FILM UNDER THE STARS, WITH A DIFFERENT SCREENING EVERY NIGHT DURING THE DRY SEASON. DECKCHAIRCINEMA.COM

ROCK STARS

STANDING AT THE BASE OF ULURU WILL RECALIBRATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM NATURAL WONDER, SO INTENSE IS ITS BEAUTY AND SO AFFECTING THE IMPRESSION IT WILL LEAVE IN YOUR MEMORY.

WORDS LEIGH-ANN POW, IMOGEN EVESON, PAIGE RICHARDSON



FROM TOP: The bush food experience is complimentary at Sails in the Desert; A view of Uluru and Longitude 131° from the air.



AUSTRALIA'S TROPICAL CAPITAL CITY HAS A LEISURELY PACE OF LIFE, BALMY NIGHTS AND SOME OF THE FRIENDLIEST LOCALS YOU'LL MEET.

WALK THE CITY

Darwin's waterfront is rich in history; it was home to the Larrakia people, the site of the early Malay and Chinese settlements, and was bombed during World War II. Follow the **HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TRAIL** that weaves along the promenade to learn more about the area's historical significance.

GETTING AROUND

Darwin is small enough to navigate on foot, with a dedicated walkway linking the waterfront to the city center. Visitors can also take the public bus Route 4, which stops at popular attractions in the city including **CROCOSAURUS COVE**, the **MINDIL BEACH SUNSET MARKETS** and **FANNIE BAY GAOL**, and further afield.

WHERE TO EAT



CHAR RESTAURANT: Located in the heritage-listed Admiralty House, Char is renowned for being the best steak house in the city. admiraltyhouse.com.au/char-restaurant
LITTLE MISS KOREA: A celebrated Korean BBQ restaurant with an edgy, industrial vibe headed up

by celebrity chef Chung Jae Lee. littlemisskorea.com
PEE WEE'S AT THE POINT: Darwin institution Pee Wee's offers relaxed fine dining and local produce – think saltwater barramundi, tiger prawns and tropical fruit – with views across Fannie Bay. peeweess.com.au



THE BATH TUB IN THE DUNE PAVILION



LONGITUDE 131°

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEIGH-ANN POW (BATH TUB IN THE DUNE PAVILION); PAIGE RICHARDSON (SAILS IN THE DESERT)

LONGITUDE 131° IS AS MUCH ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES AS THE APPOINTMENTS IT BOASTS: TRAVERSING ULURU, WALKING KATA TJUTA AND LEARNING ABOUT THE PROUD PEOPLE WHO HAVE DWELT HERE FOR MILLENNIA.



BUSH FOODS



SAILS IN THE DESERT

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

ONE-OF-A-KIND ACCOMMODATION

LONGITUDE 131° There are some places in the world that are a privilege to experience; **LONGITUDE 131°** is one of them. Exquisitely positioned in the Red Centre landscape to maximize uninterrupted views of Uluru, the sense that a stay here will offer up the sort of once-in-a-lifetime experience that is the modern definition of luxury is instantly clear upon arrival.

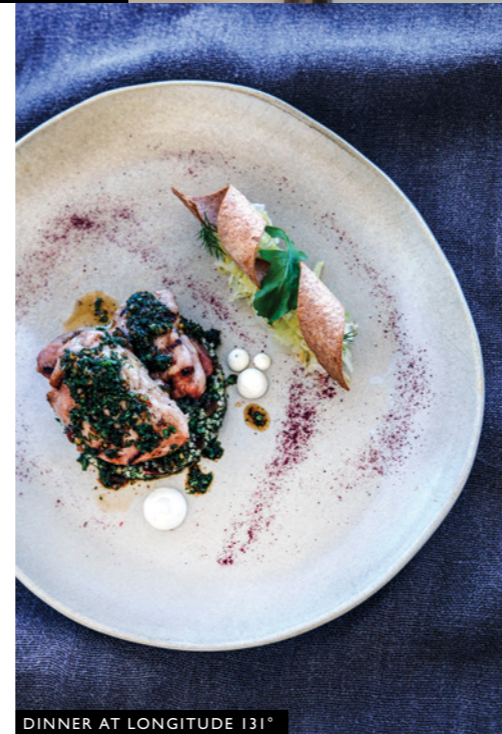
The central lodge, sitting atop an ocher sand dune, forms the heart of the property, the place where guests return to enjoy meals created from native ingredients, the open bar stocked with the country's best wines and spirits, or just to relax looking out to a vista millions of years in the making.

From here the resort's 16 tented pavilions fan out across the low scrub. Each is decorated with understated elegance, with giant beds looking out towards 'the rock', Indigenous art

works on the walls sourced from the remote **ERNABELLA ARTS STUDIO** (special arrangements can be made for guests to visit the closed community to see the artists at work) and wide decks with all the requisites for serious lounging.

Next level luxury here comes in the form of the two-bedroom Dune Pavilion, which offers the double whammy of views towards both Uluru and Kata Tjuta in the distance. It also boasts one of the most perfectly situated bath tubs in the world (see above for proof).

Of course **Longitude 131°** is as much about the experiences to be had as the appointments it boasts: traversing Uluru on a base walk; walking Kata Tjuta's **VALLEY OF THE WINDS** in the crisp early morning air; sleeping under the stars on your deck (complete with nightcap); and, perhaps the ultimate privilege, learning the history of the proud people who have dwelt here for millennia.



DINNER AT LONGITUDE 131°



SAILS IN THE DESERT

A five-star hotel that rises out of the red dust, **Sails in the Desert** is an outback oasis of 228 elegantly appointed rooms and suites, diverse dining and bar options, and modern design with Indigenous elements. Dine on brasserie-style fare at **ILKARI RESTAURANT**, sample Indigenous-inspired cuisine in the **WALPA LOBBY BAR**, and browse a vibrant range of Australian and Indigenous arts and crafts in the **MULGARA GALLERY**.

The flagship property of **VOYAGES AYERS ROCK RESORT**, **Sails in the Desert** gives you a front-row seat to all of the unforgettable experiences the Red Centre has to offer (and is easy to reach, too: your stay includes return Ayers Rock Airport transfers). While there, take advantage of the resort's program of complimentary activities. Options include a bush food experience during which you'll learn about Australian and local native bush foods through a tasting and cooking demonstration, and a guided garden walk through the grounds of nearby **DESERT GARDENS HOTEL** to learn about the local flora and how it's traditionally used in food and medicine.

Beyond this, Ayers Rock Resort hosts a number of special events against the majestic backdrop of Uluru, from the world-famous **FIELD OF LIGHT** to unique performances from **OPERA AUSTRALIA** to the completely idiosyncratic **ULURU CAMEL CUP**. Its open-air dining experiences are out of this world, too: from dune-top dining with **TALI WIRU** to the iconic **SOUNDS OF SILENCE**, which has been part of the Australian Tourism Hall of Fame since 1999.

And, when you find yourself finally in need of a little R&R, retreat back to **Sails in the Desert** to sip a cocktail by the gumtree-lined swimming pool or opt for an indulgent treatment at the hotel's **RED OCHRE SPA**. ▶



TALI WIRU

DESERT DINING

TALI WIRU

A trip to the Red Centre is unforgettable no matter what you do when you get there. But if you really want to up the ante, book yourself into **TALI WIRU**. Running seasonally each year, Tali Wiru – meaning beautiful dune in the local Pitjantjatjara language – is Voyages Ayers Rock Resort’s exclusive dune-top dining experience for just 20 guests each evening. Travel out to a remote desert sand dune to kick off a magical four hours, arriving in time for Champagne and bush tucker-inspired canapés to the sounds of a didgeridoo as the sun sets over **ULURU** and the domes of **KATA TJUTA**: possibly the most quintessentially Australian welcome you’ll ever receive.

With a bounty of culinary awards to its name, Tali Wiru is all about creative uses of local Australian bush food and blends ancient flavors with contemporary technique: think local spinifex foraged daily or freeze-dried finger lime and Illawarra plums smoked the traditional Indigenous way. As night falls, you’ll dine under the stars on a four-course menu matched with Australian wines. Hear tales of the southern night sky from a First Nations perspective and wrap up your magical evening around the campfire with a Ceylon Souchong tea infused with Australian native peach, cinnamon and honey – or something a little stronger.

Tali Wiru diners also receive a pass to **FIELD OF LIGHT** to use during their stay at Ayers Rock Resort. And, if you really want to splash out, choose a rock-star arrival by helicopter.



SOUNDS OF SILENCE

SOUNDS OF SILENCE

Voyages Ayers Rock Resort launched this iconic under-the-stars dining experience some 25 years ago. The aptly named **SOUNDS OF SILENCE** starts on a remote viewing platform with 360-degree views of fabled Uluru in front and the familiar domes of Kata Tjuta and the spectacular setting sun behind.

Champagne and canapés are served among the group where, for the next hour – amid the gentle drone of a didgeridoo – your attention is equally shared between the kaleidoscope of sunset colors thrown over Uluru and tasty morsels of smoked kangaroo with native pepperberry yoghurt.

Native Australian flavors feature on the three-course buffet menu, too, with dishes like barramundi with lemon myrtle cream, and native dukkah-crusting kangaroo with organic quinoa. Braised crocodile makes its way into the salad selection, while for dessert there’s desert lime cheesecake, apple and quandong crumble, and chocolate and wattleseed slice.

As dinner comes to an end, the resident astronomer or “star talker” takes you on a journey of the magnificent southern night sky, pointing out the Milky Way and the Southern Cross – one of the most familiar star patterns in the Southern Hemisphere and the asterism represented on the Australian national flag. You will also be invited to take a look through telescopes set up to see the ripples, curves and rings of Saturn, Jupiter and the Moon.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PAIGE RICHARDSON (SOUNDS OF SILENCE); FIELD OF LIGHT) EMILIE RISTEVSKI (ULURU)



ULURU FROM THE SKY

ULTIMATE EXPERIENCES

SEE THE ROCK FROM THE SKY

It’s hard to get a sense of Uluru’s magnitude with two feet on the ground, but from the sky it’s truly monumental. Charter a helicopter and soar over Uluru and nearby Kata Tjuta for uninterrupted views of the 500-million-year-old formations, or get a glimpse from 12,000 feet on a tandem sky dive with **SKYDIVE ULURU**. skydiveuluru.com.au ▶



FIELD OF LIGHT

Artist Bruce Munro’s solar-powered installation of 50,000 spindles of light twinkle and sway in the shadow of Uluru like a field of flowers in bloom at its base. See it at dawn as the sunrise glows on the horizon; at sunset at your own pace; atop a camel; or combine it with the award-winning Sounds of Silence dinner at **A NIGHT AT FIELD OF LIGHT**.

ayersrockresort.com.au

KATA TJUTA

It's not as famous as Uluru, but nearby Kata Tjuta is just as impressive. Walk among the series of giant sandstone boulders on the guided 1.6-mile **WALPA GORGE** walk or the slightly more challenging 4.5-mile **VALLEY OF THE WINDS** walk with **SEIT OUTBACK AUSTRALIA**. seitoutbackaustralia.com.au



KATA TJUTA



ULURU MOTORCYCLE TOURS

CYCLE AROUND THE ROCK

You can walk Uluru's 5.8-mile base, but cruising around it on two wheels (with the crisp early-morning wind in your hair) is more fun. Slap on a helmet and jump on a Segway, hire a bike and cycle the pathway, or see if from the back of an iconic Harley Davidson with **ULURU MOTORCYCLE TOURS**. ayersrockresort.com.au

OPERA ALFRESCO

After the incredible success of past performances, **OPERA AUSTRALIA** will return to Uluru from 20-22 May 2022 with an expanded program. Events will include Early Morning Opera atop a sand dune, a performance of some of Brahms' most beautiful love songs as the sun rises, and the headlining Opera Gala, with performers illuminated by Field of Light's 50,000 twinkling glass spheres. opera.org.au



DARWIN STREET ART FESTIVAL

BEYOND THE CITY

Just 1.2 miles north of Darwin, **GEORGE BROWN DARWIN BOTANIC GARDENS** are spread over 103 acres and home to a magnificent display of tropical, primitive and native plant species, as well as a lovely cafe (botanicgardenscafe.com.au). Travel a little further (three hours) to explore the rugged and remote beauty and ancient Aboriginal rock art sites of Kakadu National Park. parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu

ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT OPTION

The arts and cultural bonanza that is **DARWIN FESTIVAL** brings an action-packed 18-day program of theater, dance, visual arts, outdoor concerts and more to this tropical city. Staged annually in August. darwinfestival.org.au

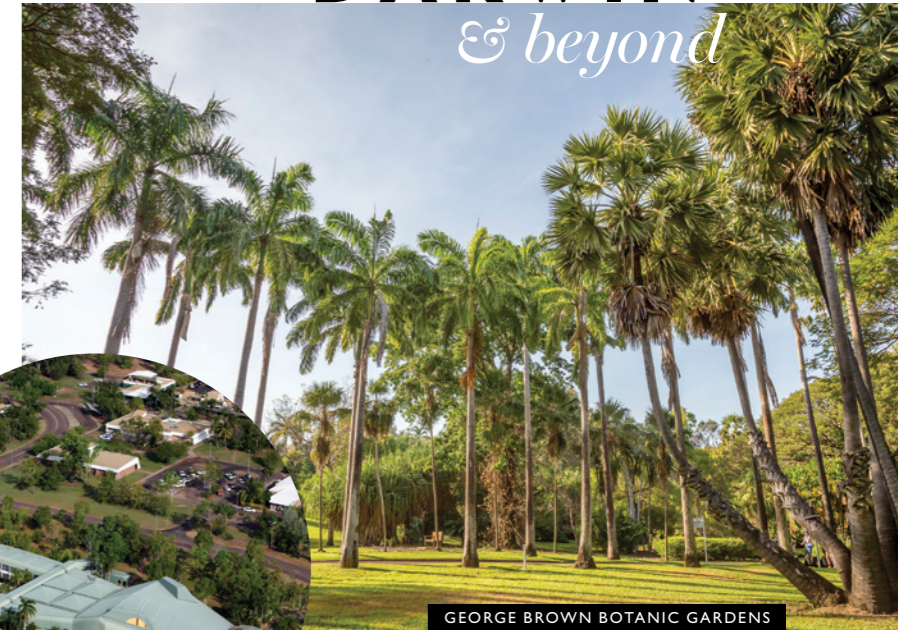
ANOTHER GOOD WALK

Darwin's annual **STREET ART FESTIVAL**, held in September, brings artists from all over Australia to paint the city's walls in color. If you can't make the event itself, download the walking map to see multistory murals from previous years. darwinstreetartfestival.com.au



CROCOSAURUS COVE

DARWIN
& beyond

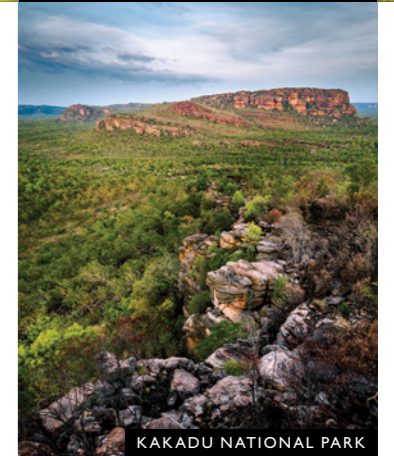


GEORGE BROWN BOTANIC GARDENS



A UNIQUE STAY

THE QUIRKY CROC-SHAPED MERCURE KAKADU CROCODILE HOTEL IS THE PERFECT BASE TO EXPLORE THE WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE OF KAKADU NATIONAL PARK, JUST THREE HOURS OUT OF DARWIN. ALL.ACCOR.COM



KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

FAMILY FUN

CROCOSAURUS COVE: Home to huge saltwater crocodiles, this city enclosure is the ultimate urban wildlife experience. If you're feeling brave, take a dip with a real croc in the Cage of Death! crocosauruscove.com

WAVE LAGOON: This huge, lifeguard-supervised lagoon, with its own swell simulator, is the perfect way to keep cool in Darwin. Boogie boards and inflatable tubes are available for use. waterfront.nt.gov.au

SEA DARWIN HARBOR CRUISE: Take in Darwin's famous harbor and learn about its history on a one-hour interactive cruise with Sea Darwin. You might spot a dolphin and other marine life if you're lucky! seadarwin.com

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:
Western Australia Gourmet Escape; The Fervour pop-up dinner at Taste of Kakadu; Taste of Summer; Noosa Eat & Drink Festival on Noosa Main Beach; Oysters at Gourmet Escape.



plating
up
AUSTRALIA



From world-class dining and wineries to small-batch producers and a rich First Nations heritage, Australia is devoted to its seriously good food culture. Discover why at an array of festivals across the country.

WORDS LARA PICONE

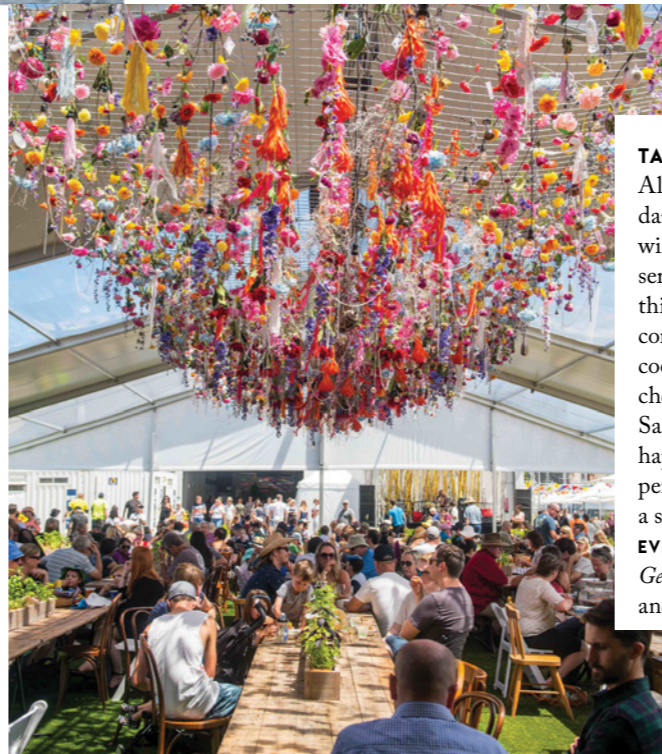
Australia's landscape swings from meandering coastlines to canopied rainforests and the vast, red outback. It offers travelers both remote adventures and modern thrills in cosmopolitan cities. Its enduring constant, however, is its great bounty: yielding everything from award-winning wines, to the freshest-of-fresh produce and incredible seafood. This abundance, melded with a rich First Nations food history and generations of multiculturalism, is the source of Australia's robust food culture. One way to embark on an edible odyssey of Oz, and discover some of the country's most picturesque regions in the process, is to plan your trip around a cluster of top notch food festivals, like these.

TASTE OF KAKADU, KAKADU

To truly immerse in the rich tapestry of Australia's food philosophy is to experience the native ingredients used by traditional owners of the land for 65,000 years. Each year in May, **KAKADU NATIONAL PARK** hosts the Aboriginal food festival Taste of Kakadu in celebration of the area's ancient food history. Here you can learn about bush foods and Aboriginal culture from the local First Nations community. Kakadu is perhaps not what you would expect of the Australian outback; it's a place of lush wetlands, waterfalls and rainforests, and home to some of the country's most exotic wildlife. Tap into the ancient knowledge of the Kakadu people and experience flavors and stories like no other. parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/taste
Getting there: Fly direct to Darwin from Sydney. From there, join a guided tour to Kakadu National Park.



Australia's enduring constant is its great bounty: yielding everything from award-winning wines to incredible seafood.



TASTE OF SUMMER, HOBART

Although small, Tasmania displays a dazzling array of landscapes, from deep wilderness to wind-whipped coasts and serene bays to lush forests. It's little wonder this southern state is bequeathed with a cornucopia of eats such as briny oysters and cool-climate wines, distilleries, amazing cheeses and truly astounding produce. Sample it all at Taste of Summer, which happens every year over the New Year period in **HOBART**. Expect dining events, a showcase of producers and a **NEW YEAR'S EVE** party. thetasteofsummer.com.au
Getting there: Fly to Hobart from Sydney and Melbourne.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA GOURMET ESCAPE, PERTH

A food festival of epic proportions, Gourmet Escape is held every November on Australia's west coast. Spanning **PERTH** and the neighbouring regions of the **SWAN VALLEY** and the idyllic **MARGARET RIVER**, it's one of the country's flagship food events. A beautiful three-hour drive south of Perth, Margaret River is a coastal haven peppered with excellent wineries, restaurants and producers, making it the perfect setting for the event, which attracts big name international chefs such as **MARCO PIERRE WHITE** and Momofuku's **DAVID CHANG**, alongside Australia's own culinary glitterati. gourmetescape.com.au
Getting there: Fly direct to Perth from Sydney and Melbourne, or to Busselton in Margaret River via either city. ▶

MELBOURNE FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE

Melbourne is considered to be Australia's food capital. The city's funky laneways are crammed with flavor-illuminating eateries and many of the country's best restaurants helmed by award-winning chefs. It would be nearly impossible to understand MELBOURNE's devotion to food and wine in a short trip, so arriving just as the Food and Wine Festival kicks off will give you a good head start. Held every March, the festival has everything from food talks to street fairs, performances, tastings and even an entertaining wine quiz. melbournefoodandwine.com.au
Getting there: Fly from Sydney in under two hours and Brisbane in under three.



TASTING AUSTRALIA, ADELAIDE

Many of Australia's best-loved wineries sit in a cluster just a short distance from the charming city of ADELAIDE. Among them are MCLAREN VALE, ADELAIDE HILLS and the BAROSSA VALLEY, regions well worth touring, even without a festival to unite them. To get deeply involved in the food scene of this up-and-coming city and its surrounds, however, plan your trip to coincide with Tasting Australia, which runs for 10 days over April and May. With events held in the city, in regional areas and on the coast, Tasting Australia casts a wide net from the ocean to the fringe of the outback. Experience the freshest seafood, bush foods and everything fortified, foraged and fermented. tastingaustralia.com.au
Getting there: Adelaide is a two-hour flight from Sydney or one-and-a-half hours from Melbourne. From there, hop on a number of tours to explore the city's neighboring wine regions.

ORANGE F.O.O.D WEEK, ORANGE

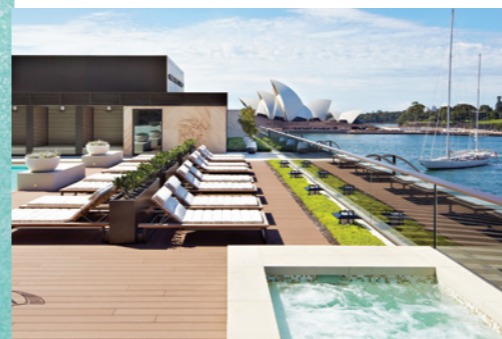
The charming regional city of ORANGE has been attracting culinary adventurers

for almost three decades to its annual Orange F.O.O.D Week festivities. Held over 10 days in April, the festival aims to champion the region's incredible additions to Australia's food scene; a fairly easy task given the area's abundance of wineries and artisan producers. orangefoodweek.com.au
Getting there: Orange can be reached from Sydney in less than four hour's drive or a short one-hour flight.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: Noosa Eat & Drink Festival; Enjoy candlelit dinners at Melbourne Food and Wine Festival; Cooking up a storm at Glasshouse Kitchen at Tasting Australia in Adelaide.

NOOSA EAT & DRINK FESTIVAL, NOOSA

Noosa is on the must-see list for many people traveling to Australia, where the laidback surf vibes extend to the sandy-toed dining scene – all supplied by the rich produce of the nearby hinterland and the ocean. If you truly love your food you should time your visit to coincide with the four-day Noosa Eat & Drink Festival, held in June. Dine under the stars, enjoy live cooking demonstrations or settle in for some serious beachside brunching. noosaeatdrink.com.au
Getting there: You can drive the two hours from Brisbane or fly to Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast and drive 30 minutes to Noosa. 📍



In Partnership with Park Hyatt Sydney

A luxurious icon perched on the edge of Sydney's sparkling harbor, PARK HYATT SYDNEY sits high on the bucket-list stays of travelers all over the globe. Here's why it's become a well-established must-visit

A room with an **UNFORGETTABLE VIEW** hotel on Australian travel itineraries.



Even the most discerning and experienced globetrotters will agree there are few views as striking as Sydney Harbour. Fewer still are luxury accommodation offerings that present awe-inspiring views of this world-renowned sight. And yet, there is one inimitable, five-star hotel that provides its guests with the finest panorama of the harbor's happenings. Enter: Park Hyatt Sydney.

A sophisticated stay that boasts a view of two other beloved Australian icons – both the grand, stalwart SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE and the cultural center that is the SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE – Park Hyatt Sydney is a name that's synonymous with luxury. And yet,

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The hotel has a front-row view of the Opera House; A King Opera Premium guest room; The rooftop pool and terrace oasis.

there's more to this well-known structure than its desirable location.

Inside the refined hotel, a chic, pared-back design ethos epitomizes understated sophistication. Home to just 155 spacious rooms and suites, the hotel ensures each guest's stay is an intimate one in which top-notch service is the order of the day. Here, no detail is overlooked: from its world-class service to the thoughtfully curated room designs featuring unique Australian works.

For elegant harborside dining and drinking, in-house restaurant THE DINING ROOM and its siblings, THE LIVING ROOM and THE BAR, serve up enticing plates, premium wines and craft beer. For a more casual meal, guests can lounge in the ROOFTOP POOL AND BAR area (reserved exclusively for resident guests), where delicious dishes and drops are available. And, for those who'd prefer to

dine in the comfort and privacy of their room, allow one of the hotel's expert butlers to bring the restaurant to you.

Weary travelers can reserve time to recoup at THE SPA – whether it's for a single treatment or a day of holistic self-care.

Nestled on the edge of The Rocks village precinct, Park Hyatt Sydney places its guests in the heart of the city's cultural landscape.

During celebratory times of the year, especially on New Year's Eve, the hotel presents a spectacular view of fireworks and light shows. And yet, no matter the occasion, one thing is true: Park Hyatt Sydney provides its guests with a striking view, impeccable service, and a luxurious vantage point all year round.

Book your stay at Park Hyatt Sydney at parkhyattsydney.com

SAY G'DAY TO LUXURY

WORDS KATE SYMONS

Australia is well acquainted with life's little luxuries. Natural wonders abound, wide open spaces are there for the taking, the laidback lifestyle reigns supreme, and mates – old and new – are just around the corner. But Australia is well acquainted with life's big luxuries too. Luxury Lodges of Australia is a case in point; a carefully selected collection of acclaimed accommodations scattered across the country and ready to elevate any journey Down Under.

Positioned in Australia's most remarkable landscapes – think the heart of the outback, reef-fringed islands, ancient rainforests, world-famous coastline – each luxury lodge offers an unforgettable experience. Here is just a taste of the award-winning catalog.

QUALIA

An extraordinary mosaic of coral and marine life, **THE GREAT BARRIER REEF** is one of the world's most spectacular natural wonders. And at **QUALIA** (pronounced kwah-lee-ah), guests have a front-row seat. The resort utopia sits on the secluded northernmost tip of **HAMILTON ISLAND**, a sun-drenched paradise that happens to be surrounded by the underwater world of Australia's famous reef. The 60 private pavilions at qualia are the ideal launchpad for all manner of extraordinary experiences, from snorkeling and diving in the impossibly blue waters, to scenic reef flights and dreamy sailing journeys.



QUALIA

SAL SALIS

Introducing glamping at its absolute finest. **SAL SALIS**, located on Western Australia's **CORAL COAST**, puts guests in the thick of the country's jaw-dropping natural splendor. Tucked among the dunes just a few feet from the shore and overlooking Ningaloo Reef, Sal Salis's 15 luxury tents will satisfy nature lovers and adventure seekers alike. Swim with whale sharks and humpback whales in the glorious Ningaloo Reef; meet the resident red kangaroos, wallaroos (smaller than a kangaroo; bigger than a wallaby), echidnas and emus; and immerse yourself in the restorative powers of the wild.



SAL SALIS



MT MULLIGAN LODGE

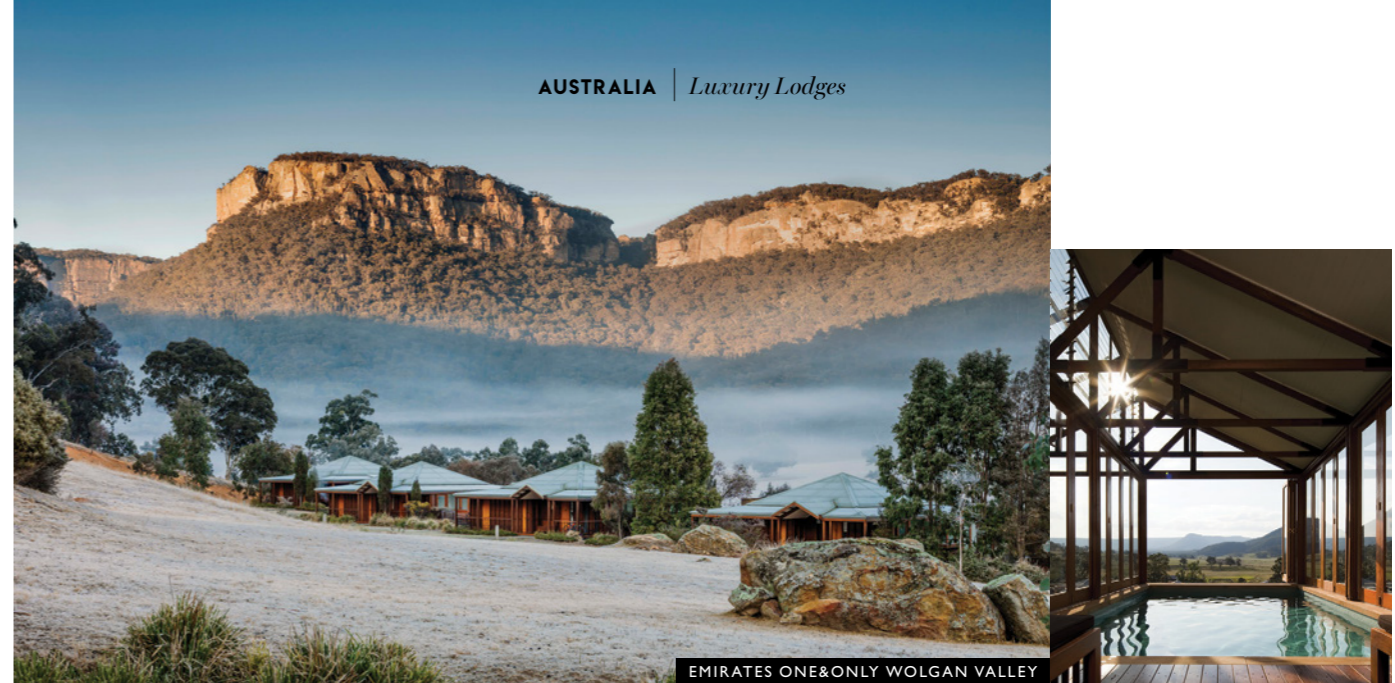


SAFFIRE FREYCINET

SAFFIRE FREYCINET

Prepare to be spellbound. **SAFFIRE FREYCINET** is a true gem, showcasing the raw beauty of Tasmania's east coast. Overlooking three natural icons – the Hazards Mountains, **FREYCINET PENINSULA** and Great Oyster Bay – the luxe lodge provides a very comfortable base to explore some of Australia's most celebrated landscapes. Just 20 private suites are available, offering guests exclusive access to the resort's luxurious facilities as well as individually tailored experiences and service. Culinary delights, including innovative Palate restaurant and the famous marine oyster farm experience, are all a part of the Saffire offering.

PHOTOGRAPHY: KARA ROSENBLUND (QUALIA); JASON IERACE (MT MULLIGAN LODGE INTERIORS); WILSON ARCHER (MT MULLIGAN LODGE TOURS)



EMIRATES ONE&ONLY WOLGAN VALLEY

EMIRATES ONE&ONLY WOLGAN VALLEY

The World Heritage-listed Greater **BLUE MOUNTAINS** is pure bush bliss, and ultra-luxurious Emirates One&Only **WOLGAN VALLEY**, located just two and a half hours from Sydney, puts the area in the well-deserved spotlight. Set on 7000 acres of conservation and wildlife reserve, the carbon-neutral resort combines its quintessentially Australian surroundings with trademark Australian hospitality. Each villa boasts its own indoor swimming pool, fireplace and private veranda complete with sweeping valley views, while a range of activities – including wildlife safaris, nature walks, and horse riding – will take you deeper into this epic environment. Brag-worthy dining and spa experiences also await.

TRUE NORTH

Less lodge and more luxury cruising, **TRUE NORTH** is one of Australia's most revered tourism experiences. Exploring some of the country's most remote and hard-to-access coastal regions, luxury on a True North adventure cruise happens on and off board. A shallow draft means True North's purpose-built fleet can go where other ships can't, giving passengers access to some extraordinary sights, but if the ship can't take you one of the six adventure boats or the ship's helicopter will get you there. The brand's flagship product is its **KIMBERLEY** cruises on Australia's **NORTH-WEST COAST**, which take in the almighty gorges, majestic waterfalls, remote islands and craggy coastline of this awe-inspiring ancient region.

SILKY OAKS LODGE

Newly reopened after a multimillion-dollar refurbishment, **SILKY OAKS LODGE** is once again the last word in tropical eco escapes. Engulfed by the UNESCO World Heritage-listed **DAINTREE RAINFOREST**, this Tropical North Queensland retreat features 40 luxury treehouses which cosset guests in true style, with contemporary furnishings and views across the rainforest or the Mossman River. While in residence you can choose from a roster of singular experiences, from guided rainforest walks to exploring the wonders of the **GREAT BARRIER REEF** – or alternatively, you can just be still amongst the lush, green landscape and do nothing at all.

MT MULLIGAN LODGE

The latest addition to the Luxury Lodges roster, **MT MULLIGAN LODGE**, a wildly scenic 35-minute helicopter flight from **CAIRNS**, sits majestically at the heart of a sprawling 69,000-acre working outback cattle station. The lodge (where the daily changing menu showcases the best locally sourced, caught and grown produce) and accommodation pavilions, each of which looks out to the stunning form of Mt Mulligan, cater to a super exclusive 16 guests. Fill your time with everything from paddle boarding (and platypus spotting) to stargazing to taking part in an actual cattle muster. **A**



MT MULLIGAN LODGE



OVAL HOTEL

THREE STAYS

Hotel Indigo Adelaide Markets

This boutique hotel is a true local experience, from the produce sourced at the nearby food markets to the pink carpets, a tribute to one of the state's most flamboyant politicians. *adelaide.*

hotelindigo.com

Adina Apartment Hotel

These modern apartments provide all the comforts of home. *adinahotels.com*

Oval Hotel

Stylishly retrofitted into the exterior of the legendary Adelaide Oval, this is a unique and luxurious five-star experience. *ovalhotel.com.au*

ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

FLOAT ALONG THE RIVER TORRENS IN A DONUT-SHAPED BOAT EATING BARBECUE, COMPLETE WITH TUNES AND FOOD AND DRINK PACKAGES. BBQBUOYS.COM.AU

A UNESCO CREATIVE CITY, ADELAIDE IS HOME TO BURGEONING FOOD, ARTS AND LIVE MUSIC SCENES – ALL CONVENIENTLY WITHIN EASY REACH OF SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST WINE COUNTRY.

GETTING AROUND

Adelaide's wide streets and green spaces make it a pleasure to walk or cycle around, but there's also an excellent tram system that operates free services within the city and its surrounds, and to the laid-back beachside suburb of **GLENELG**, which takes 40 minutes from the city.

WALK THE CITY

Follow one of four Arts & Culture trails to learn more about Adelaide's creative ambitions. Choose from the Public Art, Live Music, Performing Arts or Design, Architecture and Makers trails; an interactive map can be found at *explore.cityofadelaide.com.au*.

WHERE TO EAT



MIA MARGERITA

AFRICOLA: Helmed by larger-than-life chef Duncan Welgemoed, this multi award-winning restaurant is a riot of color and African flavors. *restaurantorana.com*

RESTAURANT BOTANIC: Located in Adelaide's Botanic Garden, this

fine-dining restaurant, overseen by executive chef Justin James, has had food lovers in raptures since emerging from renovations with a luminous new dining space and a sophisticated degustation menu. *restaurantbotanic.com.au*

MIA MARGARITA: This two-level Tex-Mex-fusion restaurant is a fun dinner and drinks experience, with its extensive menu, zingy cocktails and bright, eclectic interiors. *miamargerita.com*



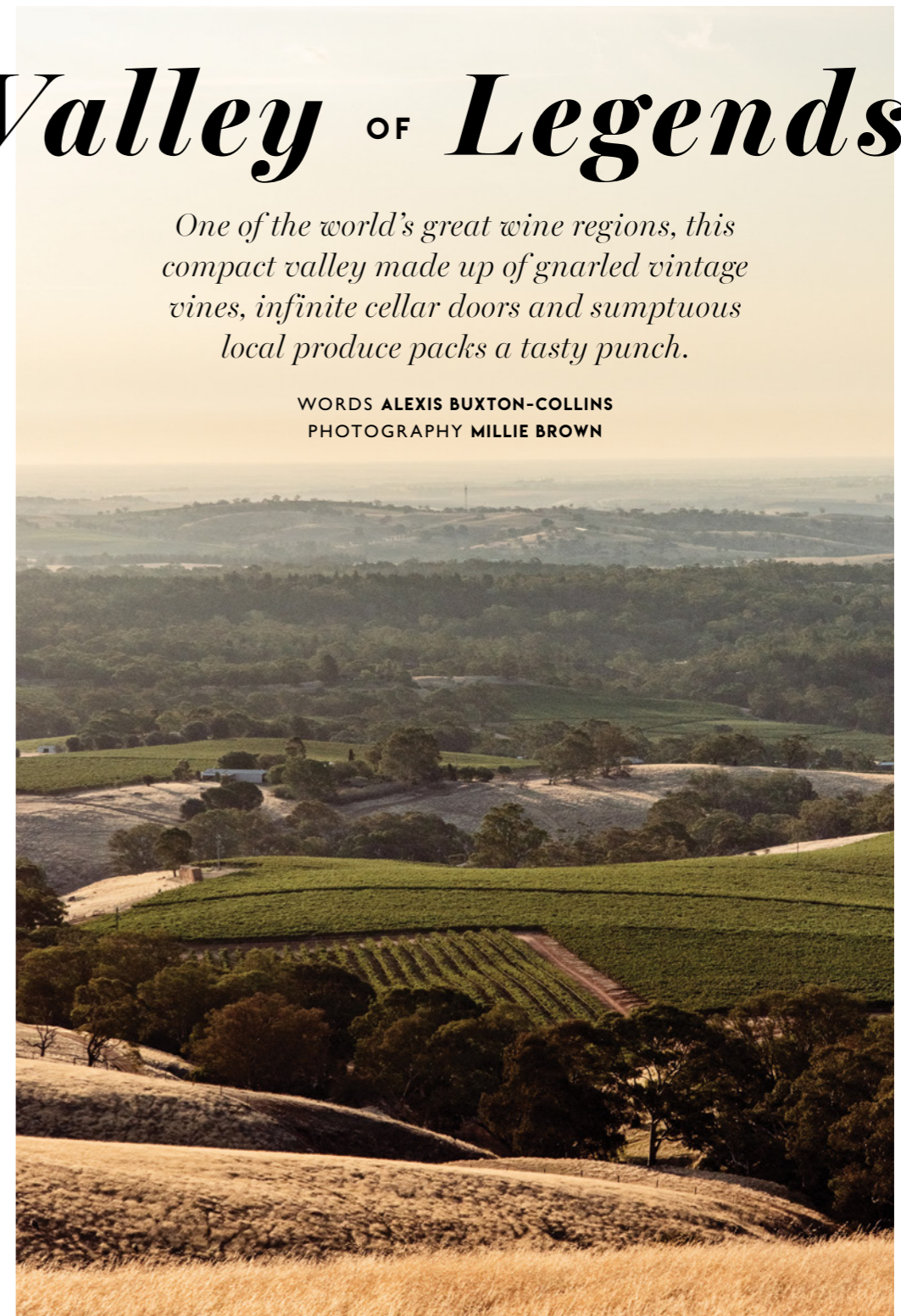
AFRICOLA

Valley of Legends

One of the world's great wine regions, this compact valley made up of gnarled vintage vines, infinite cellar doors and sumptuous local produce packs a tasty punch.

WORDS ALEXIS BUXTON-COLLINS

PHOTOGRAPHY MILLIE BROWN



THIS IMAGE: Overlooking vineyards of the Barossa Valley.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Vine views from Steingarten Lookout; Palms line Seppeltsfield Road; Chief Winemaker Fiona Donald in Seppeltsfield's Centennial Cellar.

From Mengler's Hill lookout, the entire Barossa Valley stretches out invitingly like a wrinkled quilt. Lush vine-covered hills and broad fields of golden grain are stitched together by creek beds lined with ancient river red gums. On the edges of the valley, rosella parrots flit between trees in flashes of crimson and royal blue while thick bushland provides a haven for a range of native wildlife. It's easy to see why early European arrivals thought they'd landed in paradise.

On the valley floor, you can still see the spires of the stone churches they built, interspersed with vast modern winemaking facilities. Today there are more than 150 wineries in the Barossa and though Australia's premier wine region is only an hour's drive from **ADELAIDE**, it feels like another world. This is a place where tradition is as important as innovation and community is paramount. Alongside winemakers, artisanal food producers use time-honored techniques brought over by their ancestors and award-winning chefs take advantage of the natural bounty that has turned this small community of 35,000 people into a thriving food hub.

FINE WINE AND FRIENDSHIP

Early Prussian settlers brought with them the Lutheran religion, a strong work ethic and vines to plant on their mixed farmland. Some of the original

1840s plantings still remain and the gnarled vines are among the oldest in the world. Spicy old vine shiraz (syrah) is the hero variety here and full-bodied reds predominate, though you'll also find honey-colored semillon and rich, creamy chardonnays.

Pilgrimage sites abound, and one of the best takes you to the bucolic **EDEN VALLEY** sub-region. Here, the roads are lined with flowering gums and sheep graze alongside 'roos in vast paddocks dotted with outcrops of ruddy ironstone. Henschke's evocatively named **HILL OF GRACE** vineyard sits in the shadow of the idyllic Gnadenberg Church and produces shiraz for Australia's most iconic single vineyard wine. The nearby cellar door is on the site of the original family winery, and it's not uncommon for visitors to find fifth and sixth generation Henschkes continuing the family tradition.

SEPPELTSFIELD is no longer run by the Seppelt family, but their legacy is visible in an unbroken lineage of fortified wine that stretches back 143 years. Beginning in 1878, the best barrels of tawny from every vintage have been laid down for the enjoyment of future generations. Walk through the **CENTENNIAL CELLAR** today and you'll be engulfed by a cloud of toffee and almond aromas created by the evaporating tawny. The first barrel was matured for 100 years before being tapped, but today it's possible to sample the vintage from your birth year, significant family milestones or any other year that strikes your fancy. ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Gnadenberg Church overlooks the Hill of Grace vineyard; The oldest block of Shiraz vines at Hill of Grace known as the Grandfathers, first planted in 1860.



Lush vine-covered hills and broad fields of golden grain are stitched together by creek beds lined with ancient river red gums. It's easy to see why early European arrivals though they'd landed in paradise.

THIS IMAGE:

Fields of golden grain are a pretty contrast to the vine-covered hills that are commonplace in the Barossa Valley.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The beetroot and gin-cured salmon with apples, horseradish cream and fresh dill from The Farm Eatery; Alfresco seating at The Farm Eatery



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Hentley Farm; The Beast Shiraz 2017 from Hentley Farm's Cellar Door; Hentley Farm's head chef Lachlan Colwill.



At the other end of the spectrum, first generation winemaker Abel Gibson is at the forefront of the “new Barossa” movement. From the house where he lives with his young family, he’s rescuing neglected vines and making wines that challenge the stereotype of robust Barossa wines. Under the **RUGGABELLUS** label, he produces complex, aromatic and thought-provoking blends that express the region’s minerality. Though not a household name yet, it’s a fair bet that one day you’ll find him on the honor roll in this valley of legends.

One name that’s already on that list is **PETER LEHMANN**. Grapes from across the Barossa command a premium, but it wasn’t always so. In the 1970s, oversupply led some wineries to renege on agreements with growers and Lehmann was ordered by his bosses to follow suit. He refused, honoring the handshake agreements he’d made, and eventually lost his job as a result. To thank him for his support, people across the Barossa put downpayments on future vintages so that he could start his own label. Today, the winery he founded works with more than 140 local grape growers and his legacy of fairness (and brilliant winemaking) is still evident in this tightknit community.

TASTE OF TRADITION

Barossa residents have always prided themselves on their self-sufficiency, and that tradition can still be seen in the range of locals who smoke, pickle,

cure and ferment everything they can get their hands on. Homestyle pâtés, preserves and sauces by legendary Australian food identity **MAGGIE BEER** can be found in supermarkets across the country, but the best place to taste them is at her **FARMSHOP**. While you’re there, stay for lunch at **THE EATERY** or attend a cooking demonstration.

For something more humble, head to the **APEX BAKERY** where legend says that the wood-fired scotch oven has burned continuously since it was first lit in 1924. Locals still come in every morning for fresh, slow fermented baked goods and plenty of winemakers will attest to the Cornish pasty’s restorative powers as a hangover cure.

Visit the Saturday morning **FARMERS’ MARKET** and you’ll find local residents rubbing shoulders with chefs as producers sell everything from eggs and vegetables to fine cheeses and whole legs of pork. Some chefs don’t even need to travel that far.

HENTLEY FARM offers a hyperseasonal tasting menu that changes daily as produce becomes available. As much as possible is grown onsite, and after lunch guests can see where it comes from by picking mulberries, visiting the quail hutch or wandering through the onsite herb garden. Neighbors often drop by with excess produce from their gardens, and that generosity is passed onto diners who often find themselves leaving with a jar of freshly made jam or sauce. ▶



THIS IMAGE: A typical Barossa Valley landscape.

HOME AMONG THE GUM TREES

It's easy to visit the Barossa on a day trip from Adelaide, but spending a few days allows you to really understand the heart of the region. With that extra time you can explore a working sheep station at **HUTTON VALE FARM** and meet the seventh generation of farmers when they get home from school. Stay in one of the delightfully restored stone cottages and you can watch the broad boughs of 500-year-old gum trees silhouetted against the rising sun from bed. Even better, listen to the melodious warble of nearby magpies amid clouds of steam from the charming outdoor showers.

At **THE LOUISE**, you can watch the wind ripple the leaves of Peter Lehmann's Stonewell shiraz vineyard next to the spacious suites. The elegant lodge is also home to several dining establishments, where it's not uncommon to run into the winemaker you met earlier that day at a cellar door, or to taste a wine and find the sommelier offering to give you the winemaker's phone number. Because the Barossa is more than just Australia's premier wine region – it's a welcoming community of people who take great pride in what they do. **A**

OTHER SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE REGIONS TO VISIT

McLaren Vale

On the edge of Adelaide's southern suburbs, McLaren Vale occupies an absurdly scenic position between the rolling slopes of the **LOFTY RANGES** and golden beaches ringed by limestone cliffs. 120-year-old vines speak to a long winemaking history, but in recent years they've been joined by Mediterranean varietals that thrive with the maritime influence. Venture through groves of olives and almonds and you'll also find a range of organic and biodynamic wineries turning this into Australia's greenest wine region.

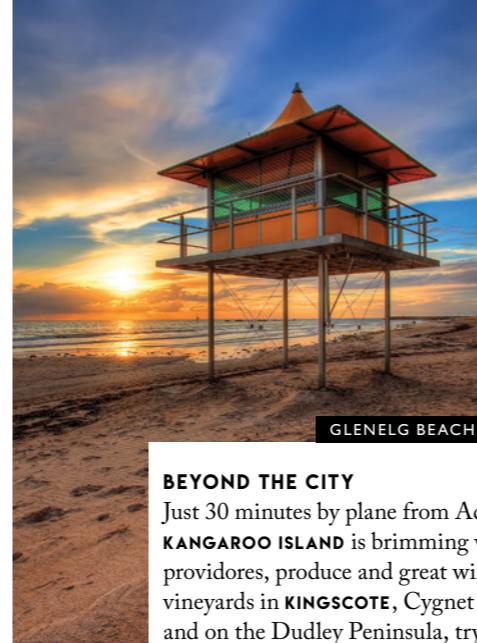
Adelaide Hills

Beginning just 20 minutes from Adelaide's city center, it's easy to visit the Adelaide Hills on a day trip. Sinuous roads wind past orchards, dairy farms and native bushland in this cool climate region that's best known for sparkling wines and elegant pinot noir. The **BASKET RANGE** and **KUITPO** areas are hotbeds of natural wine production and though recent bushfires affected the 2020 vintage, all the cellar doors in the region are still open and even the rustic country pubs boast outstanding wine lists.

Clare Valley

Two hours north of Adelaide, the charming Clare Valley offers a relaxed tasting experience along a stunning 25-mile corridor. The cellar doors are rarely crowded, the farm gate stores are full of locally-grown produce, and vineyards overlooked by magnificent old gums produce outstanding zesty rieslings alongside richly flavored reds. Because of its compact nature, the entire valley can be explored on a cycling trail that passes by most of the region's 50 cellar doors.

ADELAIDE & beyond



GLENELG BEACH

BEYOND THE CITY

Just 30 minutes by plane from Adelaide, **KANGAROO ISLAND** is brimming with providores, produce and great wine. Tour vineyards in **KINGSCOTE**, Cygnet River and on the Dudley Peninsula, try freshly-shucked oysters at American River and sample sugar gum honey at Clifford's Honey Farm. Wildlife attractions include **SEAL BAY**, Raptor Domain and the Kangaroo Island Wildlife Park. tourkangarooisland.com.au

ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT OPTION

Australia's largest annual arts festival, **ADELAIDE FRINGE** is a month-long extravaganza of music, theater, comedy, magic, film and more. The festival, which is now 62 years old, is staged during February and March in venues across the city. adelaidefringe.com.au

ANOTHER GOOD WALK

Adelaide's famous seaside suburb of Glenelg is a true delight to wander. Take the self-guided, 45-minute Historic Glenelg walk to learn about the town's past and to see its most iconic sites. holdfast.sa.gov.au



A UNIQUE STAY

STAY OFF THE GRID IN THE ADELAIDE HILLS AT JUDE, A COSY CABIN SET AMONG 180 ACRES OF BUSHLAND AND CLOSE TO WALKING TRAILS AND CREEKS. CABN.LIFE



ADELAIDE HILLS

KANGAROO ISLAND

FAMILY FUN



TREE CLIMB

ADELAIDE ZOO: Spend a day (or two) here getting to know some of the 2500 animals and 250 species that call this city-center zoo home, including koalas, lions and tigers, and the always entertaining giant panda duo of Wang Wang and Fu Ni. adelaidezoo.com.au

TREE CLIMB: This aerial adventure park is the first of its kind in Australia with 70 obstacles including a zip line, Tarzan swing and trapeze, as well as a kids' course – all conveniently located within Kurangga Park in Adelaide's inner-city. treeclimb.com.au

ADELAIDE DOLPHIN SANCTUARY: Just 20 minutes from the city, this marine park is home to 30 resident dolphins and a 10,000-year-old mangrove forest. Dolphin cruises, kayak tours and stand-up paddleboard hire are available. parks.sa.gov.au



the CONSCIOUS TRAVELER

Every choice we make impacts the planet – especially when we’re traveling. Supporting businesses with a commitment to environmental sustainability is valuable whether we’re at home or exploring someone else’s backyard.

CREATURE COMFORT

QUEENSLAND'S AUSTRALIA ZOO remains in the hands of the family of late 'CROCODILE HUNTER', Steve Irwin. Their dedication to animal conservation stretches well beyond the critters you'll see, in the fur and flesh, during your visit. As well as having an onsite wildlife hospital, the zoo funds conservation projects to help save a range of threatened and endangered birds and animals. australiazoo.com.au



COFFEE BREAK

MELBOURNE has some of the world's best cafes, so why not pick one that goes beyond simply making a good brew. Since 2010, social enterprise **STREAT** has supported over 2000 of the city's marginalized and disadvantaged young people through training and employment. Head to the original cafe, roastery and bakery in inner-city Collingwood to get a full sense of the project. streat.com.au

SOUND SLEEP

Every night you spend at Change Overnight, in **TASMANIA'S** northern city of **LAUNCESTON**, helps to make the world a better place. Australia's first social enterprise hotel donates a portion of what you pay for your accommodation to a local or international cause. This boutique self-check-in hotel has state-of-the-art keyless access to 18 self-contained apartments, two of which are ADA compliant. changeovernight.co

NATURE'S BOUNTY

Ever eaten a magpie goose pie, or tried green ant gin? Something Wild sells a range of Indigenous produce at **ADELAIDE CENTRAL MARKET** in **SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S** capital city, and supplies some of the country's top restaurants. Its fresh, native greens, fruits and game meat – think kangaroo, emu, goat and crocodile – have been harvested by Aboriginal people, in keeping with ancestral traditions. Something Wild was dreamed into being by First Nations man and former AFL (Australian Football League) player, Daniel Motlop. somethingwild

STAR ATTRACTION

A father and his three sons opened Earth Sanctuary just outside the **NORTHERN TERRITORY** town of **ALICE SPRINGS** in 2000, determined to prove to themselves and others they could



MOUNTAIN HIGH

The commitment of Scenic World to sustainability is as awe-inspiring as the views you'll have of the surrounding World Heritage-listed **BLUE MOUNTAINS** from its railway, skyway, cableway, walkways and lookouts. Located in the **NEW SOUTH WALES** town of **KATOOMBA**, an easy 90 minute journey from **SYDNEY**, this third-generation family-owned business is focused on minimizing its carbon footprint and serving as an environmental steward for future generations, and is accredited by Ecotourism Australia as a green travel leader. scenicworld.com.au

create a completely sustainable tourism business. The center offers guided astronomy tours, dining and overnight accommodation. Earth Sanctuary is, as co-owner Tom Falzon puts it, "the ultimate outback location for your space adventure". They are now 100 percent carbon neutral. earth-sanctuary.com.au

ANCIENT ARTS

Owned and operated by Christine Breden and Peter Abbott, members of the local Wanmarra Aboriginal Community, tours at Karrke Aboriginal Cultural Experience in Watarrka National Park in the Northern Territory, are designed to share and preserve their Luritja and Pertame languages and culture. The generous hosts offer up insights into everything from their art to cultural practices to medicinal plants that have been used for millennia. karrke.com.au



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Scenic World's thrilling Scenic Railway; One of 18 apartments at Change Overnight; On a Dreamtime SouthernX tour; An echidna at Australia Zoo; Change Overnight supports the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, which helps conserve sites like Egg Islands Reserve.



DREAM TOUR

You don't really know **SYDNEY** until you've been on a Dreamtime SouthernX tour. "Aboriginal people invite you to come meet us," says its founder Margaret Campbell, who is a proud Dunghutti-Jerrinjah woman. The Rocks Aboriginal Dreaming walking tour is a rich 90-minute introduction to culture designed to help visitors "feel connection to our saltwater harbor environment". dreamtimesouthernx.com

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB BLAKERS (EGG ISLANDS RESERVE); CHRIS GREER (NOHOINER ADVENTURES)

SEAMLESS OUTBACK ADVENTURES

WORDS STEVE MADGWICK

Australia's outback is a welcoming place – home to the world's oldest continuous culture and a mysterious ecosystem of creatures that would be difficult to dream up. Here in the nation's backyard, the dirt glows a magical red until the rains carpet it with wildflowers. And sure, it's a vast place, but there's no need to feel overwhelmed. Getting to "the outback" is actually pretty easy, and usually just a short flight away from most capital cities.

BRISBANE TO BIRDSVILLE

It's difficult to explain Birdsville's significance to first-time visitors. Giving equal credit to the journey and the destination, this remote town – almost 1000 miles inland from the city of Brisbane – is a physical embodiment of the Aussie bush spirit.

At its heart stands Australia's most famous outback pub, **BIRDSVILLE HOTEL**, a veranda-skirted, weathered sandstone building which has been welcoming explorers for 130 years. Spend a night or two here, chatting with the locals

and marveling at the 'Australiana' that binds its interior together – including a ceiling strewn with well-worn Akubra (Dundee-style) hats.

Each year, 6000 pilgrims gather for the **BIRDSVILLE RACES** (birdsvillerraces.com), which is like an unfettered outback Kentucky Derby, and thousands flock in for the world's most remote rock concert (the **BIG RED BASH**) in July, set below the Simpson Desert's largest sand dune. (bigredbash.com.au)

Whether you fly in directly from Brisbane, or tour the whole Diamantina and Corner Country region (outbackaussietours.com.au), Birdsville will open your eyes and heart to the outback.

SYDNEY TO MUNGO NATIONAL PARK

The unearthly landscape of World Heritage-listed Mungo National Park is often compared to something from another planet, but its history is just as interesting. The remains of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man, the oldest Homo Sapiens remains ever found on the Australian continent, were uncovered here, establishing the Aboriginal culture as one of the oldest on Earth.

Despite its otherworldly persona, Mungo is easily accessed via a short 3.5-hour flight from Sydney to the city of **MILDURA**. From here you can join an organized tour, self-drive or take a scenic flight over the spectacular fossilised lake which deposits you at **MUNGO LODGE**'s red-dirt runway. (mungolodge.com.au)

Mungo's centerpiece, the **WALLS OF CHINA**, is another natural treasure worth exploring. Take an **ABORIGINAL DISCOVERY TOUR** from the visitor center (visitmungo.com.au) to see the astonishing surprises that have come from these fragile sand and clay formations – from ancient fireplaces to the bones of long-extinct "megafauna".

Back at eco-friendly Mungo Lodge, browse Indigenous artworks and enjoy a generous meal, before stargazing by campfire light.



WALLS OF CHINA



YELLOW-FOOTED ROCK WALLABY

ADELAIDE TO THE FLINDERS RANGES

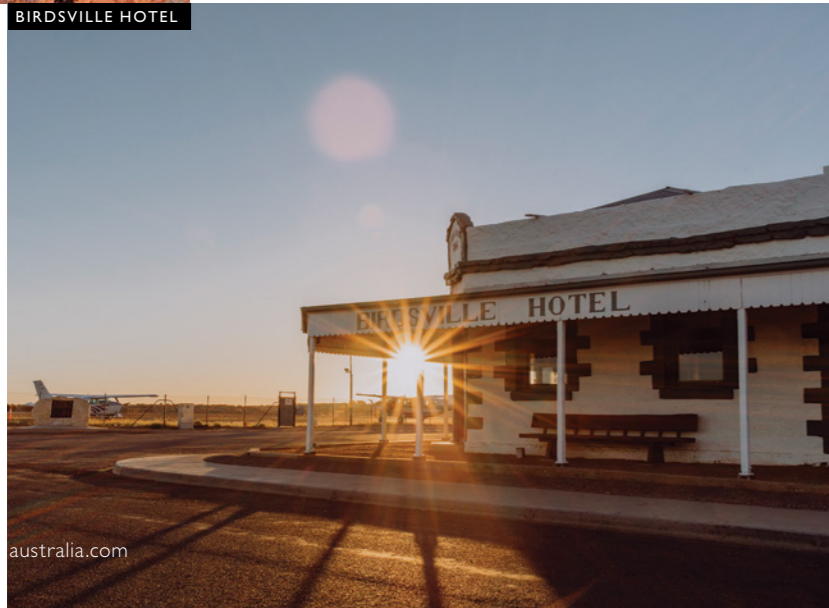
A leisurely trip around the Flinders Ranges' half-billion-year-old rocky peaks is the perfect maiden voyage for outback tenderfoots. Marvel at **WILPENNA POUND**, which looks like a meteor crater but is actually the remnants of a mountain range that once eclipsed the Himalayas. To fully comprehend the 62-mile-wide formation, take a scenic flight over it (wilpenapound.com.au/do/flights) or hike through it on the four-day **ARKABA WALK** (arkabarwalk.com), spending the small hours cozying up in your very own "star bed" (bed under the stars).

"The Flinders", as it's known, is full of quirky stays. Go glamping in a safari tent at **IKARA** (wilpenapound.com.au) or bed down in an eco-villa at **RAWNSLEY PARK STATION** (rawnsleypark.com.au).

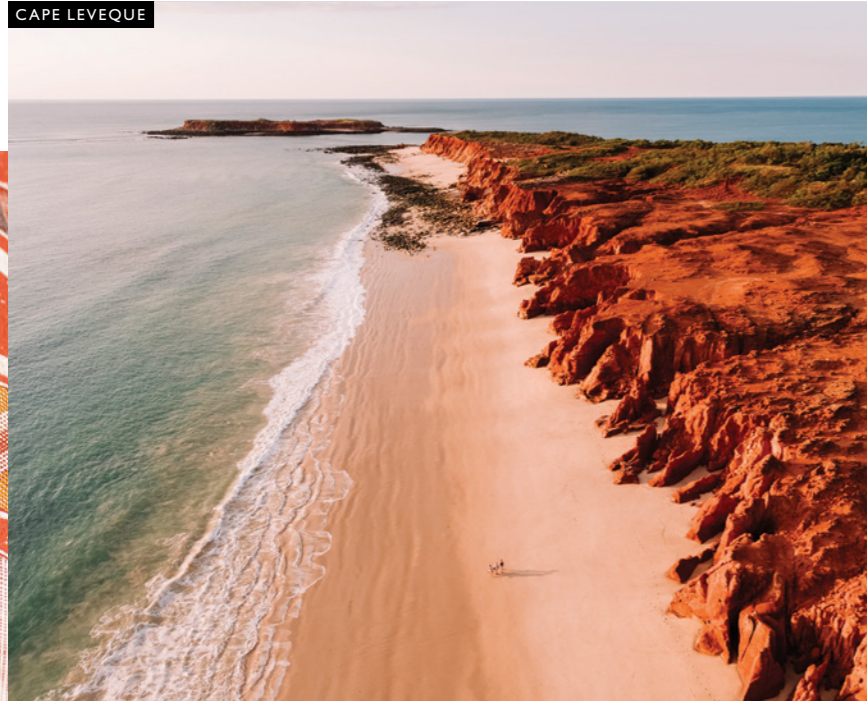
Sample bush food with a twist at classic pub-turned-gourmet-oasis **PRAIRIE HOTEL** (prairiehotel.com.au), where adventurous carnivores can try the Feral Mixed Grill (kangaroo, emu and camel) and sweet-tooths the quandong pie (a tangy-tasting native peach).

A three-day tour departing from Adelaide will give you a good introduction to The Flinders, but a week-long tour will leave you more time to explore vast **LAKE EYRE** and the striking sandstone tablelands at **THE BREAKAWAYS** near **COOPER PEDY**. ▶

BIRDSVILLE HOTEL



CAPE LEVEQUE



KAKADU



GUNLOM FALLS

PERTH TO THE KIMBERLEY

The Kimberley region in Australia’s far northwest is a barely imaginable, insanelly colorful wilderness full to the brim with magnificent contrasts and contradictions.

The short flight from Perth (or Sydney and Melbourne in the ‘dry’ season) lands you in the laidback, frangipani-treed nirvana of **BROOME**. Wander alongside aqua waters (and boutiques) full of pinctada maxima “mother of pearls” and become part of the sunset on an organized camel ride along 13-mile **CABLE BEACH**.

From Broome, it’s easy to explore the culture of the region’s First Nations owners, the Bardi Jawi people, on a tour of the Dampier Peninsula and Cape Leveque, where red dirt and the azure Indian Ocean are separated only by a strip of striking white beach. On Lullumb Tours’ (lullumbtours.com.au) Southern Cross Cultural Walk you will learn about hunting and gathering techniques and forage for a coastal feast.

Inland, the dramatic landscape constantly gives up its secrets: grand gorges, clear freshwater swimming holes and **HORIZONTAL FALLS**. Yet there’s no reason to “rough it”; secluded **BERKELEY**

RIVER LODGE’s (berkeleyriverlodge.com.au)

stunning dune-top luxury coastal villas with open-air bathrooms are accessible by seaplane or helicopter.

KIMBERLEY COASTAL CAMP and **FARAWAY BAY** are other great sea-facing stays.

(kimberleycoastalcamp.com.au; farawaybay.com.au) In East Kimberley, at the homestead on **EL QUESTRO**’s almost 700,000-acre cattle station, you can ease into your outdoor bathtub and watch **CHAMBERLAIN RIVER** flow by, as Hollywood A-listers regularly do. (elquestro.com.au)

Give yourself at least one week here – preferably two – because many more Kimberley experiences beckon: from luxury coastal cruises to one of Australia’s most epic 4WD adventures, the **GIBB RIVER ROAD**.

DARWIN TO KAKADU

Kakadu is more than twice the size of Yellowstone National Park, but its delights lie in the small details of this culturally rich and biodiverse national park. It’s all about getting out there, amongst its spectacular escarpments and lotus-lillied wetlands, just like Paul Hogan did in the classic

Aussie movie *Crocodile Dundee*, which was filmed here.

Take a dip in the natural infinity pools of **GUNLOM FALLS**, or hike up to the cascading waterfalls of **JIM JIM FALLS**. Cruise the tranquil **YELLOW WATER BILLABONG** amongst millions of migratory birds, including the dancing jabiru (stork), and keep your eyes peeled for lurking “salties” (saltwater crocodiles).

Kakadu is best appreciated through the eyes of its Traditional Owners, the Bininj/Mungguy people, with the highlight for many visitors being the Indigenous-led tour of the millennia-old rock art ‘galleries’ at **UBIRR** and other cultural sites.

Kakadu is a three-hour drive from Darwin. Day trips and longer guided tours are available from the city, some with stops at **LITCHFIELD NATIONAL PARK** and **ARNHEM LAND**. For an above-ground perspective, take a scenic helicopter over the park’s wild landscapes. **A**



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THE LANGHAM

THREE STAYS

The Langham
This longtime favorite exudes luxury and offers sweeping views of the Yarra River and city from its Southbank location. langhamhotels.com

W Melbourne
Located on buzzing, colorful Flinders Lane in the heart of the city, all the funky yet luxe W hallmarks are here. marriott.com

Zagame's House
Set in the heart of Carlton in Little Italy (as it's known to locals), this boutique hotel is quintessentially Melbourne with a seriously uber hip vibe. zagameshouse.com.au

ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

SEE THE CITY FROM THE SKY ON A TRANQUIL HOT AIR BALLOON RIDE WITH VIEWS OF THE YARRA RIVER - CHAMPAGNE BREAKFAST INCLUDED, OF COURSE. GLOBALBALLOONING.COM.AU/MELBOURNE

Restoration CENTRAL

WORDS CHLOE CANN
PHOTOGRAPHY BROOK JAMES



FROM PADDOCK-TO-PLATE DINING AND BUCOLIC COUNTRYSIDE TO RESTORATIVE HOT SPRINGS, CENTRAL VICTORIA'S SPA TOWNS PROMISE RELAXATION AND REJUVENATION IN ABUNDANCE.

LEFT: Kayaks on the water at the Boathouse Restaurant.

OFTEN TOPPING LISTS AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST LIVABLE CITIES, AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL CAPITAL OOZES EUROPEAN CHARM WITH A HEALTHY DOSE OF LAIDBACK AUSSIE STYLE.

WALK THE CITY

Explore Melbourne's maze of charming cobblestoned alleyways and arcades on a 1.5-mile trail that starts at **FLINDERS STREET STATION** and weaves its way along caffeine-fueled Degraives Street, street-art filled Hosier Lane, shopping mecca Bourke Street Mall, and ends at **FEDERATION SQUARE**. whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au

GETTING AROUND

Liveried in burgundy and green with gold trim, the heritage City Circle Tram chugs around central Melbourne passing major landmarks like **DOCKLANDS**, Parliament House and "the grand old dame" Princess Theatre. The free service operates in a circular route and even comes with audio commentary. visitmelbourne.com



ATTICA



ATTICA
A bucket list experience, Attica's celebrated tasting menu is inspired by native Australian ingredients made using European techniques. attica.com.au

WHERE TO EAT

CHIN CHIN
A lively Asian restaurant on Flinders Lane that often has lines out the door – because the food really is *that* good. chinchinrestaurant.com.au

CUMULUS INC.
Brunching is a Melbourne institution, and Cumulus Inc.'s comprehensive breakfast selection is a hit with the locals. cumulusinc.com.au





A confetti of green and pink speckle a yellow moon, framed by a white canvas. In the center lies an island of marbled coral-pink, festooned with petals and leaves. It's as pretty as a painting, yet this work of art isn't hanging on the wall; it's sitting on the table in front of me. The pink and green confetti is a medley of native finger lime pearls, house-smoked roe and tiny chive trimmings; the island of coral-pink, a hunk of Petuna ocean trout; and the yellow moon a sunny pool of beurre blanc.

FROM LEFT: Each dish at the Lake House restaurant is as pretty as a picture; Alla Wolf-Tasker, owner of Lake House.



"That looks... something, doesn't it," says my dining neighbor quietly to her friend, eyes widening, admiring the plate. The eight-course degustation at Daylesford's **LAKE HOUSE** is quite something. From warm, golden orbs of brioche topped with delicate white spanner crab meat, on a bed of leaves; to plump king prawns garnished with Lilliputian strands of sea grapes and sprigs of native succulents, each dish conveys the sense of a garden in miniature.

It's easy to confuse food and art here. Both are in abundant supply, and attention-to-detail is as evident on the plate as it is on the colorful landscapes that line the walls – the work of co-owner Allan Wolf-Tasker. A restaurant-cum-hotel-cum-spa with a fresh, cozy air that feels Hamptons-esque, the Lake House has become something of an Australian icon; it's also often credited with kick-starting gourmet regional tourism. But it's far

from a regional anomaly. This pocket of hinterland – comprising **DAYLESFORD** and the neighboring towns of the **MACEDON RANGES**, a 1.5-hour drive from Melbourne – has long attracted creative entrepreneurial types seeking respite from the city and looking to transform their passions into their paycheck. In fact, the Macedon Ranges has more professional artists working in the arts per capita than any other region in its home state of Victoria. A bohemian yet thoroughly upmarket enclave, it's brimful of dressmakers, healers, chefs, distillers, winemakers, painters, sculptors, silversmiths and stonemasons.

PART OF Victoria's Goldfields region, Daylesford and its surrounding towns have gone from boom to bust and back again over the years: from the heady days of the local gold rush in the 1850s and 1860s, which saw the area uncover great wealth and bestowed it with many of the

grand buildings that still stand today, to the stagnation that followed.

"Once the gold dried up it was sort of abandoned," explains Larissa Wolf-Tasker, the woman responsible for the dreamy interiors of the Lake House, and the daughter of its owners, Alla and Allan Wolf-Tasker. "The region was populated with Europeans – Poles, Russians, Swiss-Italians," she notes. "They settled here because it reminded them a bit of Europe, but also because of the price of the land."

When Larissa's parents purchased the then-barren parcel of land that now houses the Lake House in 1979, starting up a business in Daylesford was unimaginable, she says. But the richly fertile volcanic soils on which the region was built turned out to be a gold mine for produce, and today the region has come full circle.

While prospecting for gold is no longer a drawcard, there are plenty of modern-day riches to unearth here – ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Lily pads at Jubilee Lake; A koala spotted on Malmesbury Road on the way into Daylesford; Boats on the water at the Boathouse Restaurant; A view of the jetty at Lake Daylesford.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Lake Daylesford; A cottage sits surrounded by gum trees; A typical country scene in Daylesford; **OPPOSITE:** Relaxing at Hepburn Bathhouse.



rest and rejuvenation chief among them. Known as Australia's spa capital, the region is host to the largest concentration of mineral springs in the country, boasting a glut of spas and bathhouses set amid leafy, bucolic surrounds. At the Lake House spa, nature fuses with nurture. Private timber treetop cabins with plantation shutters and mineral spas are enveloped by lush greenery, a waterfall-fed stream burbles softly below, and sweet birdsong punctuates the near-silence. Inside the four walls of the whitewashed spa, natural light pours in and a soothing palette of blues and greens color the soft furnishings.

It's here that I indulge in a Detox Wrap, which promises to restore my skin to its natural glowing best. Like a carefully choreographed dance, each element of the treatment segues seamlessly into the next. First, a therapist skates over my limbs with a body brush, to encourage circulation. Next, she massages in warm essentials oils with sweeping motions that feel like waves of the ocean rippling across my back. I'm then swaddled like a baby in a cool, thick sage body mask and a sea of towels, head cradled and scalp massaged. By the time I need to get up and wash off the Hulk-colored mask I've been lulled into a stupor, arms and legs quite sleepy.

The union of outdoors and indoors found at Lake House is embodied too at

Like a carefully choreographed dance, each element of the treatment segues seamlessly into the next.

HEPBURN BATHHOUSE & SPA. A historic spa and wellness center where old intersects with new, the original building was constructed in 1895, though today the complex has a distinctly modern edge. Soft, tree-diffused light streams in through tall, floor-to-ceiling windows, and the stark contours of timber and stone lend a zen, minimalist feel.

Drawn straight from the source, the bathhouse's healing waters are rich in magnesium, calcium and silica, relieving muscle aches and pains. Soak in them while taking a private mineral bath surrounded by candles, tracing the mineral deposits they've left on the stone tub with your fingertips; wallow in the warm social baths and try to spy rock wallabies, which bound through the bush outside at dusk and dawn; float in the circular magnesium salt pool and gaze up into blue skies through the mammoth oculus in the roof; and, when your toes are at their pruney peak, bask on one of the sun deck's loungers in your robe while enjoying afternoon tea.

Given the region's eclectic and bohemian personality, there's a number of practices on the alternative spectrum here, too. At **DAYLESFORD HEALING MESSAGE** you'll be greeted by crystals, candles and the fragrant waft of incense and aromatherapy oils. Astrology readings, ear candling and reiki are all part of the offering, but – even if you don't buy into the spiritual side – there are more conventional treatments available as well; just infused with a mystical edge.

"We do a lot of energetic work," explains co-owner Benny Pettersson.

"Because of the experience of our therapists, the energetic work will always come through. We work internally rather than externally; that's a quality all our healers have." I opt for a signature Archangel Aromatherapy Healing Ritual and it's one of the most reinvigorating massages I've ever tried. From the initial dabble in foot reflexology, to the elements of lomi lomi massage and the tapping into pressure points that sends me into an almost trance-like state, the treatment is all about release and flow of energy, whatever bespoke combination of techniques that requires.

AT THE quaint and storied nearby town of **KYNETON**, a small Ayurvedic practice taps into the holistic side of wellness, too. An Aladdin's cave of lanterns, crystals, wall hangings, patterned textiles and brightly painted walls, **MAIAVEDA** is housed within a beautiful flour mill that dates back to the 1860s and oozes character. Just as memorable as the historic building is Marye, Maiaveda's founder, who radiates warmth and openness, and channels positive energy.

"We create a space for our clients," she says, gesturing to the locked front door and noting that the practice phone is switched off. We take a brief meditation and a foot bath prior to my massage, which focuses on the 'marma points', or energy centers, somewhat akin to acupressure.

While the region's many spas and springs afford a compelling antidote to the stresses of the daily grind, it's ▶



ABOVE: A view of the Lake House in bucolic Daylesford.

when coupled with the local slow food movement, the ubiquitous art and the idyllic landscapes that the region begins to outshine its rivals. From the pure, country Victorian air to the deliciously languid pace of life, a strong sense of serenity pervades these foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

Even the single-lane highway between Daylesford and Kyneton feels wholesome and peaceful: small roadside stands purvey pots of pure local honey, hand-painted wooden signs fixed to tree trunks advertise free-range eggs, narrow country lanes lead to wineries, lavender farms and cherry orchards. The winding road itself is postcard-worthy; ghost gums and stringybark trees arch over it to create a sun-dappled corridor. And just like each dish at the Lake House, the flashes of golden paddocks dotted with hay bales and black cows next to the road here could easily pass for a watercolor painting. **A**



THE ESSENTIAL DETAILS

Staying here

A perennially popular country pub with a most convivial feel, **THE FARMERS ARMS** in Daylesford offers hearty food and lashings of atmosphere. Just across the road the pub has small, motel-style art suites featuring an eclectic line-up of paintings paired with minimalist New York loft-style bathrooms. thefarmersarms.com.au

A tastefully restored three-bedroom residence, **KYNETON OLD RECTORY** features large manicured gardens right in the heart of Kyneton. Expect a supply of beautiful local provisions for breakfast and an array of eye-catching art on the walls. kynetonoldrectory.com.au



THE FARMERS ARMS

Eating and drinking here

Stock up on perfect picnic food from **PIPER STREET FOOD CO** in Kyneton, where everything is made from scratch and charcuterie is the star of the show. Owners of this artisanal delicatessen, Bryanna and Damian – a passionate, third-generation chef – also run a cookery school out of the store. piperstfoodco.com



PIPER ST FOOD CO

An old roadhouse reimaged as an upmarket Southeast Asian eatery, **FOOK SHING** is helmed by prestigious ex-Melbourne chef Danielle Rensonnet and features plenty of warm country hospitality, plus some flamboyant interiors to boot. fookshing.com.au

ANIMUS DISTILLERY in Kyneton is a handcrafted, small-batch gin distillery with a sleek cellar-door-cum-cocktail-lounge that offers gin flights as well as cocktails and classic G&Ts. animusdistillery.com

MELBOURNE & beyond



THE 12 APOSTLES

BEYOND THE CITY

Be sure to make time for a trip down to **ST KILDA**, Melbourne's beachside neighborhood and home to a host of excellent waterfront drinking and dining options. An hour from the city center, the **MORNINGTON PENINSULA** boasts beaches, wineries and quaint towns.

ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT OPTION

Melbourne International Comedy Festival (staged during March and April) is one of the largest comedy showcases in the world and features stand-up, cabaret, theater, street performance and more, with venues located across the city. comedyfestival.com.au

ANOTHER GOOD WALK

Lace up your hiking boots for Australia's **GREAT OCEAN WALK**. This 62-mile multiday hike passes along dramatic coastline and remote beaches between Apollo Bay and the iconic **12 APOSTLES**.



A UNIQUE STAY

SLEEP ON THE ROOF OF AN INNER-CITY PARKING STRUCTURE IN ONE OF SIX FUNKY 1970S AIRSTREAMS AT HOTEL. ALL TRAILERS COME WITH A FREE MINI BAR AND ONE EVEN HAS A HOT TUB! HOTELMELBOURNE.COM.AU

FAMILY FUN



ST KILDA PENGUINS

SEE THE ST KILDA PENGUINS: St Kilda is home to a colony of around 1400 little penguins; catch a glimpse of them every day just after sunset at the end of the pier. stkildapenguins.com.au

MELBOURNE MUSEUM: Walk among the skeletons of 17 prehistoric animals, explore the amazing world of insects and spiders, browse more than 300 miniature models, and watch a movie on the largest



LUNA PARK

cinema screens in the world. museumsvictoria.com.au

LUNA PARK: For some old-fashioned family fun, take the kids to one of the world's oldest amusement parks – located on the waterfront at St Kilda. It has 20 different rides and attractions including a rollercoaster, bumper cars, a dragon ship pendulum and a 105-foot tower swing. lunapark.com.au

KANGAROO

One half of the national coat of arms (the other is the emu), the **KANGAROO** is one of the country's most celebrated animals. There are four different species of **KANGAROO: THE RED; ANTILOPINE; EASTERN GREY;** and **WESTERN GREY**. The Red holds the distinction of being the world's largest marsupial; some males stand as tall as six feet and weigh in at 200 pounds.

Fast fact: There are more kangaroos than humans in Australia (roughly 50 million versus 25.7 million), with an estimated 15.8 million red kangaroos alone.

Where to see them: You'll find kangaroos all over Australia. They're social creatures, so chances are if you see one there are more close by. They rest during the heat of the day, so the best time to catch sight of them is at dawn and dusk.



WOMBAT

These chubby creatures live in burrows and emerge at night to feast on a diet of grasses, bark and roots. Consisting of three species – the **COMMON WOMBAT**, the **NORTHERN HAIRY-NOSED WOMBAT** and the **SOUTHERN HAIRY-NOSED WOMBAT** – wombats are an evolutionary wonder: they have a pouch like other marsupials but it faces backwards so that it doesn't fill with dirt when they are digging. And its rump consists mostly of cartilage so that when it retreats headfirst into its hole it is almost impossible for predators to get a grip on.

Fast fact: **WOMBATS' POOP** is shaped like a cube. The theory is that as they mark their territory by defecating, the shape stops it from rolling away.

Where to see them: Wombats thrive in cool, damp environments, so you have a good chance of spotting them in places like **CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK** and **MARIA ISLAND** in Tasmania, **WILSONS PROMONTORY NATIONAL PARK** in Victoria, and the **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**, less than two hours from Sydney.



POSSUM

When you are out and about at night in Australia, whether in the heart of **SYDNEY** or in the wilds of **FREYCINET NATIONAL PARK** in **TASMANIA**, chances are you will catch a glimpse of either a **COMMON BRUSHTAIL POSSUM** or a **COMMON RINGTAIL POSSUM**, the most prolific of Australia's 23 species of possums. With their soft fur and sweet faces, possums are one of the easiest marsupials to spot as they are quite adventurous in the pursuit of food. And if you can't see them, you're sure to hear them; researchers have identified at least 18 different sounds made by possums including screeching, hissing and grunting.

Fast fact: Both brushtail and ringtail possums have prehensile tails, which they use as a type of hand to cling to trees and carry things.

Where to see them: Brushtail and ringtail possums are found all over the country and are easy to spot when feeding at night – just look up.

wild WORLD

Australia boasts a weird and wonderful menagerie of creatures on land, sea and air.

KOALA

When it comes to the Aussie animal most visitors want to tick off their list, chances are it's the **KOALA**. This impossibly cute tree-dwelling marsupial mammal survives on a diet exclusively made up of eucalyptus leaves. The trees are also their home, with koalas spending up to 19 hours a day sleeping in them before waking up to feed at night, making them largely **NOCTURNAL**. While koalas have a pouch like kangaroos, they are more closely related to the wombat.

Fast fact: While they look all chubby and cuddly, koalas have seriously sharp claws and when threatened can run as fast as a rabbit.

Where to see them: Due to the fact that they spend most of their time up trees, koalas can be elusive to spot in the wild. Keep an eye out for them along the **GREAT OCEAN ROAD** and on **RAYMOND ISLAND** in Victoria, and around **PORT STEPHENS** and **PORT MACQUARIE** in New South Wales.

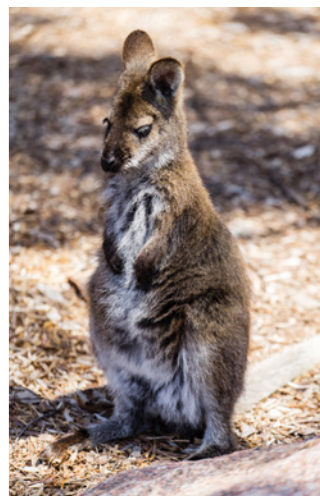


WALLABY

A marsupial cousin of the kangaroo, **WALLABIES** are widely found across the country. Smaller than kangaroos, there are some 30 species of wallaby in Australia including the **ROCK WALLABY**, **SWAMP WALLABY** and the **TAMMAR WALLABY**, all of which hop to get around, tend to be more active at dawn and dusk, and carry their young in a pouch. Unlike kangaroos, however, wallabies are solitary creatures.

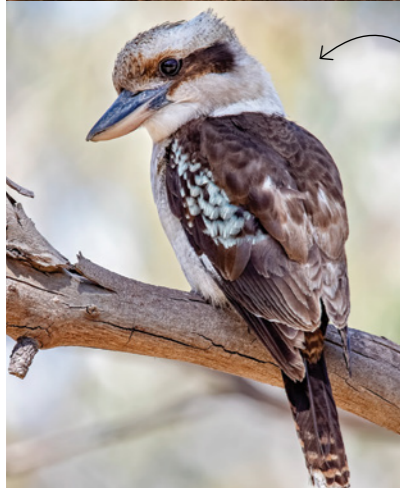
Fast fact: If a wallaby becomes pregnant while she still has a **JOEY (BABY)** in her pouch, she can pause the gestation of the new embryo until its sibling has vacated the space.

Where to see them: Wallabies are widespread and plentiful, which means you are in with a good chance of seeing these delightful little creatures in any of Australia's abundant **NATIONAL PARKS**. ▶





TASMANIAN DEVIL
 Found exclusively on the island state from which it gets its name, this carnivorous marsupial is actually a lot like its *Looney Tunes* cartoon persona, a snarling, irascible whirlwind of teeth and attitude. With a vocabulary of growls, grunts and snarls, they are vociferous (and slightly vicious) when threatened or protecting their food. *Fast fact:* Further cementing its reputation, the **TASMANIAN DEVIL** has the most powerful bite of any animal in the world based on its size. *Where to see them:* As the devil is nocturnal, it is difficult to see in the wild; instead visit the Tasmanian Devil Conservation Park in **TARANNA**, an easy drive from Hobart, **BONORONG WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**, north of Hobart, or **DEVILS@CRADLE WILDLIFE PARK** near Cradle Mountain National Park. 📍



KOOKABURRA
 Australia is home to abundant birdlife, but none is more genuinely wondrous than the **KOOKABURRA**. Also known as the Laughing Kookaburra, this **KINGFISHER** is famous for its loud and clear call that sounds like a hearty belly laugh but is actually a method to warn other birds off its territory. *Fast fact:* Kookaburras are believed to pair for life, so when you see one bird its mate will most likely be nearby. *Where to see them:* Found predominantly on the **EAST COAST**, you will usually hear them before you see them.

ALSO WATCH OUT FOR...



Echidna
 This little egg-laying mammal is covered in sharp spikes and eats a diet largely made of up of ants, hence its alternative name, the spiny anteater. They thrive in all manner of habitats, too.



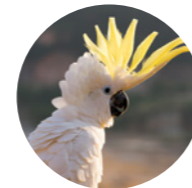
Emu
 The other half of the coat of arms, this flightless bird is the second biggest in the world after the ostrich; they can grow up to 6.5 feet tall. You'll find them across mainland Australia.



Platypus
 One of only two egg-laying mammals in the world (the other is the echidna), the platypus has a duck-like bill, webbed feet, is covered in fur and sleeps 14 hours a day on average.



Dingo
 Australia's native wild dog, dingoes are found throughout the mainland states, including in the Northern Territory, and are known for their characteristic howl.



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
 You'll hear these cheeky native birds screeching loudly during the summer months as they dart from tree to tree or hang upside down from electricity wires.



Quokka
 Native to Rottnest Island in Western Australia, the cuddly quokka is quite possibly Australia's happiest marsupial, whose delightful grin has featured in many a cute selfie and social media post.

In Partnership with Hamilton Island



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
 A qualia pavilion complete with private plunge pool; Breathtaking Heart Reef; Hill Inlet at Whitehaven Beach.



The *ULTIMATE* way to see the Great Barrier Reef

Stay on the doorstep of the reef at Australia's most celebrated resort.

Who doesn't dream of a blue-sky escape to a sand-fringed island of tropical warmth, where palm trees wave and sunsets turn a sapphire sea pink in time for cocktails? Welcome to Hamilton Island, where time slows down and urban stress peels away. Here, the private resort of qualia is a unique expression of Australian hospitality and fine dining, designed with luxury and relaxation in mind.

Hamilton Island is part of the Whitsundays, an archipelago of 74 islands in the azure Coral Sea. Its domestic airport has short, direct flights from Australia's international gateway cities Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, making qualia a great base to explore the Great Barrier Reef. Allow us to inspire you with this ultimate itinerary.

DAY ONE
 Settle into your pavilion at qualia, then stretch your travel legs on a walk: the luxury resort is set in tropical bushland, and tracks around the island flaunt magnificent ocean views. Relaxation at the spa might also call with a warm stone foot therapy or full-body massage.

Later, dine on the tasting menu at Pebble Beach, qualia's fine-dining restaurant, which showcases seasonal and sustainable Australian produce.

DAY TWO
 A discovery helicopter tour takes you to landmarks such as Whitehaven Beach and iconic Heart Reef, which lies in shallow water that shimmers with peacock colors from turquoise to neon blue. Choose a tour where your helicopter touches down at one of these locations. Whitehaven Beach is a regular



on lists of the world's best beaches, where impossibly blue sea fizzles on sand as powdery as icing sugar.

DAY THREE
 A full-day adventure to the outer reef isn't to be missed. Divers and snorkelers alike can enjoy the underwater spectacle of angelfish, shimmering blue-and-yellow damselfish, and the occasional turtle, octopus or manta ray. Enjoy your evening meal at qualia's relaxed-dining Long Pavilion restaurant: just the place for a Negroni or Manhattan followed by pan-roasted scallops, roasted duck breast or fresh snapper.

DAY FOUR
 You can do as much or as little as you like at qualia. Enjoy a gourmet picnic at a secluded beach, head to Pebble Beach for water sports, or play a round of golf on Dent Island. Meanwhile, qualia's luxury skippered motor cruiser, *Palm Beach*, can be privately chartered. Watch sunset aboard as you enjoy canapés and wine, a fitting farewell to this beautiful island.

For more information, visit qualia.com.au

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ELEMENTS

OUT IN THE BAY

Your trip is likely to coincide with an event, such as **FALLS FESTIVAL** (December-January), **BLUESFEST** (April), **SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS** (July), **BYRON WRITERS FESTIVAL** (August) or one of several others happening year round. The **BYRON MARKETS** are held on the first Sunday of every month and are a must-do while you're here. Alongside colorful stallholders selling handcrafted wares, locally grown produce and art of all kinds, you can expect to see bongo players, live music acts, tarot readers and plenty of health potions and elixirs. The same is true of the nearby **BANGALOW MARKETS** (fourth Sunday of each month), although a visit to the historic and charming town center won't disappoint even if it's not market day.

BAY OF PLENTY

The Byron area is a veritable food bowl, making the dining scene in town as vibrant as the produce at the farmers markets (held every Thursday morning). From fine dining to more casual eateries, you won't be lost for where to find your next meal. Book into the award-winning **FLEET** (fleet-restaurant.com.au) in nearby Brunswick Heads for a special dinner, and **HARVEST** (harvest.com.au) in Newrybar for a long lunch. The **BEACH HOTEL's** (beachhotel.com.au) expansive outdoor area overlooks Byron's Main Beach – perfect for sunset cocktails – and you'll find fresh fare with a typically laidback Byron feel at **CHUPACABRA** (chupacabra.com.au), cult coffeeshop **TOP SHOP** (topshopbyronbay.com.au) and **THE BYRON BAY GENERAL STORE** (byrongeneralstore.com).

that live here. Locals invite visitors to unplug, recharge and reconnect with nature. Perhaps one of the nicest ways to experience this is with a beach yoga class. There are plenty to choose from, but **ELEMENTS OF BYRON** offers a complimentary sunrise class to their guests (elementsofbyron.com.au). Alternatively, head into the lush hills behind Byron to have your aura read or meditate in a crystal cave at the **CRYSTAL CASTLE** (crystalcastle.com.au). Or simply check into one of the ubiquitous spas, such as the award-winning **GAIA RETREAT & SPA** (gaiaretreat.com.au).

NATURE'S GIFTS

Byron's overabundance of natural gifts was another attraction for artists, surfers and nirvana-seekers all those years ago. To truly absorb its astounding beauty, rise early to start the **CAPE BYRON WALK** at **CLARKE'S BEACH**. You're likely to spot dolphins as you meander by **THE PASS** and **WATEGOS** beaches and along clifftops. Between June and October, whales are virtually obligated to give you a wave. Once at the famed lighthouse, take the path down to the most easterly point in Australia so you can brag about it later.

Quintessential BYRON BAY

WORDS LARA PICONE

Although the town has grown a lot in recent years, the heart of Byron Bay (Byron to just about everyone) will always beat to the sound of a bongo drum. Before it became the hippie mecca of Australia, Byron was an unassuming, chilled-out coastal town with a slow pace of life. It was this palpable free-living character, not to mention a forward-thinking arts community and perennially sunny weather, which first attracted Australians and internationals alike... and kept them coming.

FINDING YOUR OM

The laidback Byron lifestyle is one that's zealously protected by the people

CAPE BYRON LIGHTHOUSE



HELLO SUNSHINE

THE ISLANDS OFF THE ISLAND OF AUSTRALIA DON'T COME MORE BLISSFUL THAN THE WHITSUNDAYS. THE HARDEST PART IS DECIDING WHICH ONE TO CHOOSE.

When it comes to island paradises, they don't come more idyllic and sun-kissed than the Whitsundays, a collection of 74 tropical islands scattered like confetti across the waters of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, off the coast of Queensland.

While only a handful of the islands are actually inhabited, the ones that are present an irresistible travel proposition, dotted as they are with world-class resorts and offering up sun, sea and sand in abundance.

Hamilton Island is the gateway into this island experience, with daily flights from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns. From there, a collection of luxe island retreats are within easy reach.

Hayman Island (haymanisland.intercontinental.com), managed by InterContinental Hotel Group, is one of world's most iconic private island resorts. A \$79 million refurbishment completed in 2019 saw a collection of new restaurants and bars installed, as well as the three-bedroom Hayman Beach House.

On Daydream Island (daydreamisland.com), a longtime holiday favorite with families, the amazing eco-friendly Living Reef coral lagoon wraps around the resort and includes a stunning underwater observatory.

Both Orpheus Island and Heron Island, meanwhile, pride themselves on their impeccable eco credentials, with guests (only 28 in total on Orpheus Island) able to indulge in familiar island pursuits such as diving and snorkeling, or embrace their inner eco warrior and tour a marine research station. **A**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Swimming the clear waters of Heron Island; Enjoy incredible views from your Daydream Island room; The World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef; Diving the Whitsundays is a mesmerizing experience.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ELISE HASSEY (THE PASS; CAPE BYRON LIGHTHOUSE)

A TALE OF

TWO CITIES

ONCE OVERLOOKED IN FAVOR OF THE BRIGHT LIGHTS AND CULTURAL ALLURES OF SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE, THE QUEENSLAND CITIES OF BRISBANE AND THE GOLD COAST HAVE HAD A SERIOUS INJECTION OF STYLE IN THE LAST FEW YEARS TO EMERGE AS AUSTRALIA'S NEW CAPITALS OF COOL.

WORDS CRAIG TANSLEY

FROM TOP: Sunrise over Story Bridge in Brisbane city; An aerial view of Southport Beach on the Gold Coast.



It wasn't so long ago that fine dining in Brisbane or the Gold Coast was widely perceived as having the choice between salad or fries with your main meal; and culture involved going to a movie on the weekend.

Outsiders referred to Brisbane as Bris-Vegas with tongues firmly-in-cheek, but it was the antithesis of the 24-hour US super-city. Then a funny thing happened; Brisbane turned into one of the fastest growing metropolises in the western world. New five-star hotels, innovative speakeasies and bars, and gourmet eateries opened all across the city, and locals reclaimed the name Bris-Vegas as a badge of pride. It summed up the energy of Australia's new hippest city (everyone from *Forbes* to *GQ Australia* has anointed it Australia's coolest city).

At the same time the Gold Coast – popular since the '50s as the place for families with its offerings of theme parks and family restaurants – has emerged as one of Australia's unlikeliest cultural hotspots (to go with its 35-mile strip of famous beaches), making the Gold Coast and Brisbane the best new double act in Australian tourism.

I grew up here and, after traveling the world, I chose to move back here with my American-born wife. And I'm not

PHOTOGRAPHY: FLORENT ROLLS (STORY BRIDGE); TY SHEERS (SOUTHPORT BEACH)



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Take a seat at Hellenika at The Calile; Felons Brewing Co. at Howard Smith Wharves; Japanese with a view at Yoko Dining; Get a culture fix at Home of the Arts (HOTA) on the Gold Coast.

alone; these days Melburnians and Sydneysiders are moving to Brisbane and the Gold Coast in the thousands each year, and international travelers are flocking here to experience the new cosmopolitan additions and wonderfully Australian laidback pace of life.

WALK THE WALK

The first thing you need to know about Brisbane is that it's the perfect walking city for visitors. Set around a slow-moving river (the imaginatively named **BRISBANE RIVER**), which snakes its way through neighborhoods, parks and the city center, you can walk between the best cultural and entertainment areas with ease.

One such place is **HOWARD SMITH WHARVES**. Located on the edge of the city center, these historic wharves along the Brisbane River, created by the government during the Great Depression to provide jobs, stood silent and neglected for 50 years before recently being transformed into Australia's best new waterside entertainment and lifestyle development.

Here you'll find **CRYSTALBROOK VINCENT**, a hotel carved into the



sandstone cliffs above the river where the works of artist Vincent Fantauzzo feature prominently throughout the property (and lend it its name), and the pool deck is the place to be.

Brisbane's hippest locals gather for craft brews at **FELONS BREWING CO.**, or for cocktails at **MR PERCIVAL'S** – a riverfront bar with a European beach club vibe. The dining choices include the much lauded **YOKO DINING**, with its Japanese izakaya menu, and the contemporary Greek taverna, **GRECA RESTAURANT**, both courtesy of the prolific Gold Coast-born restaurateur Jonathan Barthelmess.

From Howard Smith Wharves, it's ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: The pool deck at Crystalbrook Vincent; Inside Crystalbrook Vincent; The W Store at W Brisbane.



a five minute-walk to the sub-tropical **CITY BOTANIC GARDENS**, 42 acres of landscaped gardens sitting pretty by the river, teeming with wildlife. Amble a little further, heading across the river, to Brisbane's cultural hub of **SOUTHBANK**, home to the country's largest gallery of modern art, **THE QUEENSLAND GALLERY OF MODERN ART**, the **QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE**, the **QUEENSLAND MUSEUM** and the **QUEENSLAND CULTURAL CENTRE**.

CAPITAL OF COOL

One of the most conspicuous indicators of Brisbane's regeneration is the proliferation of new hotels that now dot the landscape. Prior to the arrival of the internationally renowned W brand in Brisbane back in 2018, there hadn't been a new five-star hotel constructed in the city for 20 years. Now visitors can take their pick: **THE W BRISBANE** and the newly opened **THE WESTIN** both position themselves as urban retreats in the heart of the city; The Westin has Brisbane's first swim-up bar and the first **HEAVENLY DAY SPA** in Australia, while W Brisbane's **WET DECK** roof-top bar offers cocktails overlooking the river.

Then there's **THE CALILE HOTEL**. Located in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane's trendiest neighborhood (it's a 10-minute walk from the center of the city), the property has fashioned itself as Australia's first 'urban resort'; it's seven stories of urban chic that's as much South Beach Miami as it is Queensland tropics.

Take up position in a poolside cabana and order a cocktail, or sample award-winning Greek fare at one of Brisbane's best restaurants, **HELLENIKA**.

The boutique stores located in The Calile's lobby (including local favorites **BASSIKE**, **CAMILLA AND MARC**, **BEC AND BRIDGE** and **MISTER ZIMI**) lead out to **JAMES STREET**, a former industrial block in a dodgy part of the city that is now one of Australia's foremost retail and lifestyle strips, with more than 130 specialty stores, art galleries, design showrooms, restaurants and bars – the perfect metaphor for Brisbane itself.

GOLD RUSH

Once you've exhausted Brisbane's myriad delights, it's easy to access the Gold Coast (50 miles south) via train or shuttle. While the region is spread across 35 miles of sparkling coastline, the Gold Coast itself is built on a grid and can be explored by public buses, light rail, taxi or Uber.

The aptly named **SURFERS PARADISE** neighborhood ("Surfers" to locals) has long been the Coast's focal point, and has undergone a trendy transformation, spearheaded by the likes of US bar and restaurant brand **HYDE PARADISO** launching its first foray into Australia in the city (its cocktails are large and its beach views are to die for) and the launch of the Gold Coast's newest cultural district, **HOME OF THE ARTS (HOTA)**. Set on 42 acres of parkland, the development is part of a \$250 million investment

into arts and music on the Coast, with theater, dance, comedy and opera on offer, and a six-level art gallery which opened in May 2021.

The Gold Coast is also now home to some of Australia's most innovative regional restaurants. In the surf village of **BURLEIGH HEADS**, eight miles south of Surfers Paradise, **RICK SHORES** is so close to the waves on Burleigh's world-famous point that the floors are rendered in concrete in order to allow for water to wash through when the tide's extra-high. You can watch local surfers riding the waves as you sample its pan-Asian dishes for lunch or dinner. Next door, millions has been invested into the Coast's first beach club, **BURLEIGH PAVILION**, ▶



THE CALILE HOTEL HAS FASHIONED ITSELF AS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST URBAN RESORT; IT'S SEVEN STORIES OF URBAN CHIC THAT'S AS MUCH SOUTH BEACH MIAMI AS IT IS QUEENSLAND TROPICS.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Mr Percival's at Howard Smith Wharves; Fresh scallops and tarragon butter at Mr Percival's; A neutral palette and gold details dominate the interiors at The Calile Hotel; Poolside at The Calile Hotel.



PHOTOGRAPHY: SEAN FENNESSY (THE CALILE HOTEL)





FURTHER SOUTH IN COOLANGATTA, THE PINK HOTEL MIGHT'VE BEEN LIFTED STRAIGHT OUT OF 1970S-ERA MALIBU



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The bubblegum-pink exteriors at The Pink Hotel; The Gold Coast is home to some of Australia's best surfing beaches; Search out Iku Yakitori Whisky Bar; A Gold Coast beach sunrise; Bon Sol in Burleigh Heads.

with a menu chosen by Michelin-starred chef, Guillaume Zika.

It's the restaurants you have to look for, however, that really epitomise this new sophisticated Gold Coast. I walked past **IKU YAKITORI WHISKY BAR** three times before finding the entrance in an alleyway behind. Inside, Japanese chefs cook over hot Binchotan charcoal. Just south (by bus or taxi), **THE COLLECTIVE AT PALM BEACH** is a buzzing two-story open-air venue that was once the post office, but now houses five-restaurants-in-one (and a cocktail menu with more than 50 choices).

Accommodation options also reflect this subtlety in style. In Burleigh Heads, stay at **BON SOL** (a stunning offering from Brisbane-based design star Anna Spiro), an unassuming '60s apartment block that invokes 1950s St Tropez, complete with beach club service; and further south in Coolangatta, **THE PINK HOTEL** might've been lifted straight out of 1970s-era Malibu.

Down the road at **DUST TEMPLE** in **CURRUMBIN WATERS** (seven miles south



of Burleigh Heads), I order a soy latte as a guitar duo strum amongst an art exhibition in a converted warehouse. A few streets away you'll find Australia's highest-rated craft beer, **BALTER**, created within a trendy brewery set up by surfing champs Mick Fanning, Joel Parkinson, Josh Kerr, and Bede Durbidge and frequented by surfer-types.

With so much to eat, drink and do, it might slip your mind to give due attention to the beaches in this

buzz-worthy region, but you should. The Gold Coast is home to some of the world's most iconic waves (with more surf schools than any other place in Australia), and they also make a heck of a spot for a swim or some sunbathing. Most beaches are just a short walk from all these hip new restaurants, bars, art galleries and cafes, meaning style on the Gold Coast comes served up with plenty of sunscreen. 🌞

PHOTOGRAPHY: MEAGHAN SKINNER PHOTOGRAPHY (GOLD COAST BEACH), TY SHEERS (SURFERS)



SUNSHINE COAST

WITH BREATHTAKING BEACHES, A LUSH HINTERLAND AND SEVEN NATIONAL PARKS, THE APTLY NAMED SUNSHINE COAST IS A NATURAL PLAYGROUND.



WHERE IS IT?
The sunny Sunshine Coast is roughly 65 miles north of Brisbane. There are direct flights to Sunshine Coast Airport from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. You can also travel from Brisbane by shuttle bus, with stops at **NOOSA**, **CALOUNDRA** and **MOOLOOLABA**.

ONE GREAT WALK
NOOSA NATIONAL PARK is home to a 3.4-mile (6.7-mile return) track that traces the coast through rainforest, eucalyptus trees and wildflowers. On this spectacular **COASTAL WALK** you might spot koalas, dolphins, turtles, and humpback whales (in the right season).

BEST BEACHES
We rate **KINGS BEACH** in Caloundra for families, **COOLUM BEACH** for a quieter laidback vibe, **NOOSA NATIONAL PARK** for surfing, and **MOOLOOLABA** for its good looks and energetic esplanade.

TOP THREE SPOTS TO VISIT

NOOSA: A glamorous seaside town with a laidback personality, Noosa promises pristine beaches, dramatic rainforest, boutique shopping, and a stylish selection of restaurants and bars.
MOOLOOLABA: As well as a beachside esplanade bursting with food and shopping options, **MOOLOOLABA BEACH** is a fan favourite; TripAdvisor voted it one of Australia's top 10.
HINTERLAND: A veritable patchwork of lush rainforest, scenic **GLASS HOUSE MOUNTAINS**,

boutique vineyards, and heritage towns come together to form the verdant Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

WHERE TO STAY

MANTRA MOOLOOLABA BEACH is beach-facing and family-friendly. mantrahotels.com
TINGIRANA offers chic beachfront apartments right in the heart of Noosa. tingirana.com.au
SPICERS TAMARIND RETREAT is a luxe stay in the hinterland, ideal for couples. spicersretreats.com

WHERE TO EAT

PIER 33: Perched on the edge of the Mooloolaba Marina, the moored fishing trawlers out front give you an idea of what to expect on the menu: some of the region's freshest and tastiest seafood. pier33.com.au

THE LONG APRON: The dining experience at Spicers Clovelly Estate's award-winning restaurant is a gastronomic journey with hinterland views and French wines to boot. thelongapron.com.au

RICKYS: A Sunshine Coast institution, Rickys has a waterfront location and a seasonal menu showcasing the region's best local produce with a six-course degustation option. rickys.com.au



DOWN UNDER DEFINED

WORDS STEVE MADGWICK

There is no single, defining Australian journey. Why? Because this country and its people are too diverse. Sure, there are constants. We unreservedly love exploring life in our “great outdoors”. We like to take it easy with people who make us laugh, and enjoy our food and wine, which we humbly think is the best in the world. These eight quintessentially Australian journeys take a little from columns A, B and C. Enjoy them – we do!

Our Rock, our heart: Uluru

ULURU IS INTENSELY SACRED TO ITS TRADITIONAL OWNERS, AND AN UNOFFICIAL PILGRIMAGE FOR VISITORS AND AUSTRALIANS ALIKE. FOR SOME, IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE IT TO 'THE ROCK' AND DRINK IN ITS ENORMITY (5.8 MILES AROUND) UP CLOSE, WALKING OR CYCLING ITS PERIMETER. OTHERS APPRECIATE IT FROM AFAR, INSIDE ONE OF THE MOST LUXURIOUS GLAMPSITES ON EARTH: LONGITUDE 131°, OR VIA A SUNSET HELICOPTER JAUNT, WHICH PUTS ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK'S VAST DESERT-SCAPE INTO PERSPECTIVE.



AN 'OUTBACK CRUISE': THE KIMBERLEY

Australians are a humble people, but believe us when we say that the **KIMBERLEY** in Western Australia is one of the world's last great wilderness areas. The best part? You can experience it from the water in laidback luxury from your balcony suite. Starting in carefree **BROOME** on the north-west coast (less than three hours by air from Perth), cruise the vibrant coastline where the aqua Indian Ocean and ocher-red earth battle for your attention. Remote (328-foot-high) **KING GEORGE FALLS** will undoubtedly impress; jump onboard your ship's helicopter to find a picnic spot among its upper rock pools.

THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD (TRIP)

This coast-hugging road trip (starting just outside **MELBOURNE**) swirls you through seaside towns with fairytale names, such as **PORT FAIRY** and **APOLLO BAY**, and past the 150-foot-high 12 Apostles, which rise dramatically from the Southern Ocean. Otway National Park's temperate rainforest begs you to take a hike, with eyes peeled for resting koalas. If you aren't interested in self-driving, private tours and guided walks are readily available options. ▶



HEART REEF: GREAT BARRIER REEF

A private helicopter or seaplane flight to this tiny, heart-shaped composition of coral in the world's largest reef system is a journey you won't soon forget. Board your aircraft from **HAMILTON ISLAND**, one of 74 **WHITSUNDAY ISLANDS** and the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. On the way out to Heart Island, ask your pilot to stop at one of the Whitsunday's most well-known (and pristine) beaches, **WHITEHAVEN**. With Heart Reef seared into your psyche, return to Hamilton Island for a tranquil week in the tropics at a Polynesian-style bungalow or in five-star luxury at qualia resort.

FINE TIMES ABOVE THE VINES: BAROSSA VALLEY

As dawn breaks, soar over this classic Australian landscape in a hot air balloon, taking in the panoramic vineyard views, and toast with a **BAROSSA** sparkling upon touch down. Located just over an hour from the city of **ADELAIDE** and home to more than 150 wineries, including legendary producers **PENFOLDS** and **SEPPELTSFIELD** – not to mention some of Australia's finest restaurants and farmers markets – there's still plenty to do in the Barossa with two feet firmly on the ground.



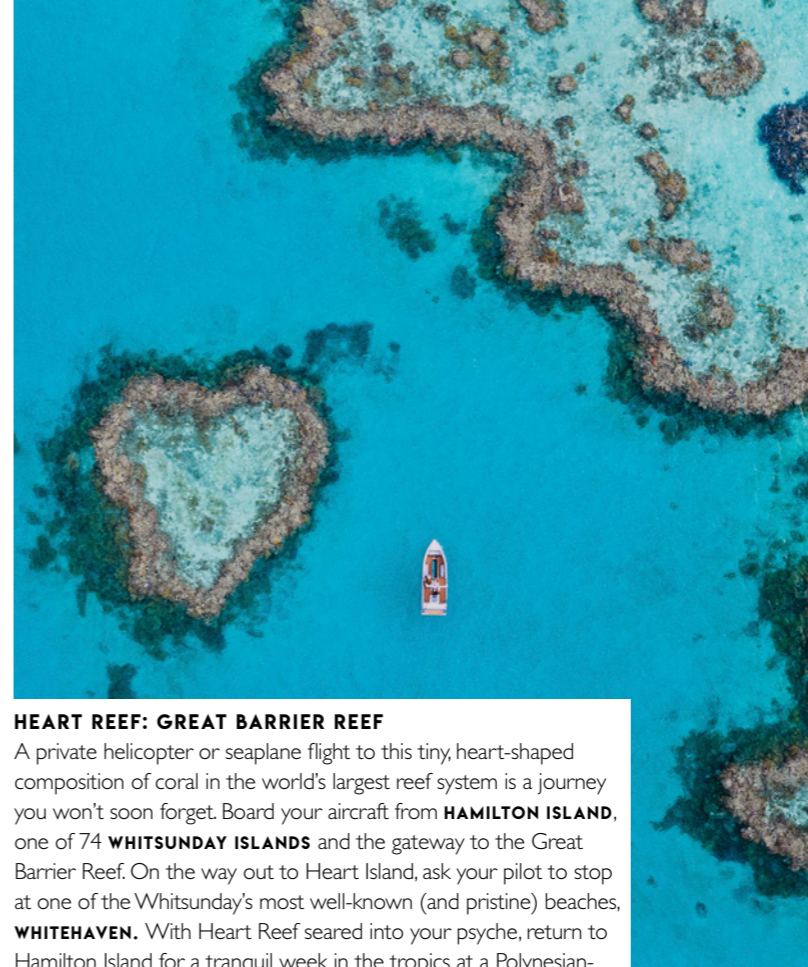
THE GHAN: ON TRACK TO CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

The Ghan's 1,851-mile trajectory covers a spellbinding cross-section of the country, from the bustling laneways of **ADELAIDE** to **DARWIN'S** tropical hues. Unlike **AMTRAK**, this train – whose 90-year heritage celebrates the Afghan cameleers who helped 'build the outback' – is pure Golden Age of Rail.

Simply watch the outback go by in your elegant private cabin, while being waited on by disarmingly friendly Aussies. Or “get off your bum”, as we say, for some quirky excursions, such as visiting underground homes in the Wild West-style opal town of **COOBER PEDY**, taking a leisurely outback day-hike looking for rock wallabies, or exploring the desert landscape from a fitting position atop a camel.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW: SYDNEY

SYDNEY'S sparkling harbor is reason enough to make it the first stop on your Down Under adventure, and there's no better way to see it than from the sky. Seaplanes regularly depart from **ROSE BAY**, taking in the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House, before soaring over the khaki scrubland of **KU-RING-GAI CHASE NATIONAL PARK**. Gently swoop down to the bush-enveloped **BEROWRA WATERS INN** to feast on a seven-course menu of 'modern Australian' cuisine.



A road less driven: The Great Eastern Drive

THE GREAT EASTERN DRIVE MEANDERS 137 MILES UP AND DOWN THE LESS-EXPLORED EAST COAST OF **TASMANIA**. CALL INTO COOL-CLIMATE WINERIES FOR A TASTING PLATE, PICK UP A GOURMET PICNIC BASKET TO GO, AND FIND A DESERTED WHITE BEACH TO LAY DOWN YOUR PICNIC BLANKET. PASS THROUGH SLEEPY TOWNS TO REACH **FREYCINET MARINE FARM**, WHERE YOU CAN SAMPLE 'TASSIE' OYSTERS STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE AND, FINALLY, REST YOUR HAPPY HEAD AT ONE OF THE DESIGN-DRIVEN COASTAL PAVILIONS AT FREYCINET LODGE.



PERTH

AUSTRALIA'S SUNNIEST CITY, PERTH IS AN IDYLIC COMBINATION OF URBAN BUZZ AND COASTAL COOL – HOME TO PRISTINE BEACHES, WORLD-CLASS DINING AND WIDE-OPEN SPACES.

WALK THE CITY

Perth is home to more than 200 public artworks; see some of the city's best on display on the two-hour Art City walking trail starting at **ELIZABETH QUAY**, taking in Kings Square and Cathedral Square and ending at **PERTH CONCERT HALL**. Download the trail map at experienceperth.com.

GETTING AROUND

Travel around Perth for free on a Central Area Transit (CAT) bus. Four different routes operate in and around the city with stops at **KING STREET PRECINCT**, Elizabeth Quay, and Kings Park and **BOTANIC GARDEN**. To travel further, jump on a public bus or the city's trains and ferries.

WHERE TO EAT

SHY JOHN BREWERY AND YUM CHA: A sleek restaurant and microbrewery that brews its craft beers to pair with the authentic Cantonese fare. shyjohn.com.au

ISLAND MARKET TRIGG: This oceanfront restaurant fuses Middle Eastern and Mediterranean flavors, and makes seafood the hero. islandmarkettrigg.com

LONG CHIM: A hip underground restaurant headed by renowned Aussie chef David Thompson and serving up Perth's best Thai street food. longchimperth.com



THE RITZ-CARLTON



THREE STAYS

Tribe Hotel

A top location next to Kings Park (with views to match), Tribe is a modern-luxe, design-led hotel that's both affordable and full of personality. tribehotels.com.au

The Ritz-Carlton Perth

This luxury hotel sits on Elizabeth Quay with views of the Swan River, an elegant restaurant (Hearth) and a day spa. ritzcarlton.com

Como The Treasury

Housed in heritage buildings, this multi award-winning hotel is a charming stay with an excellent restaurant (Wildflower) that serves a farmer-and-forager driven menu. comohotels.com

ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

SEE THE JOURNEY OF THE PEARL, FROM HARVEST TO SHOWROOM, IN THE HEART OF THE CITY BY VISITING THE WILLIE CREEK PEARLS SHOWROOM AT ELIZABETH QUAY. WILLIECREEKPEARLS.COM.AU

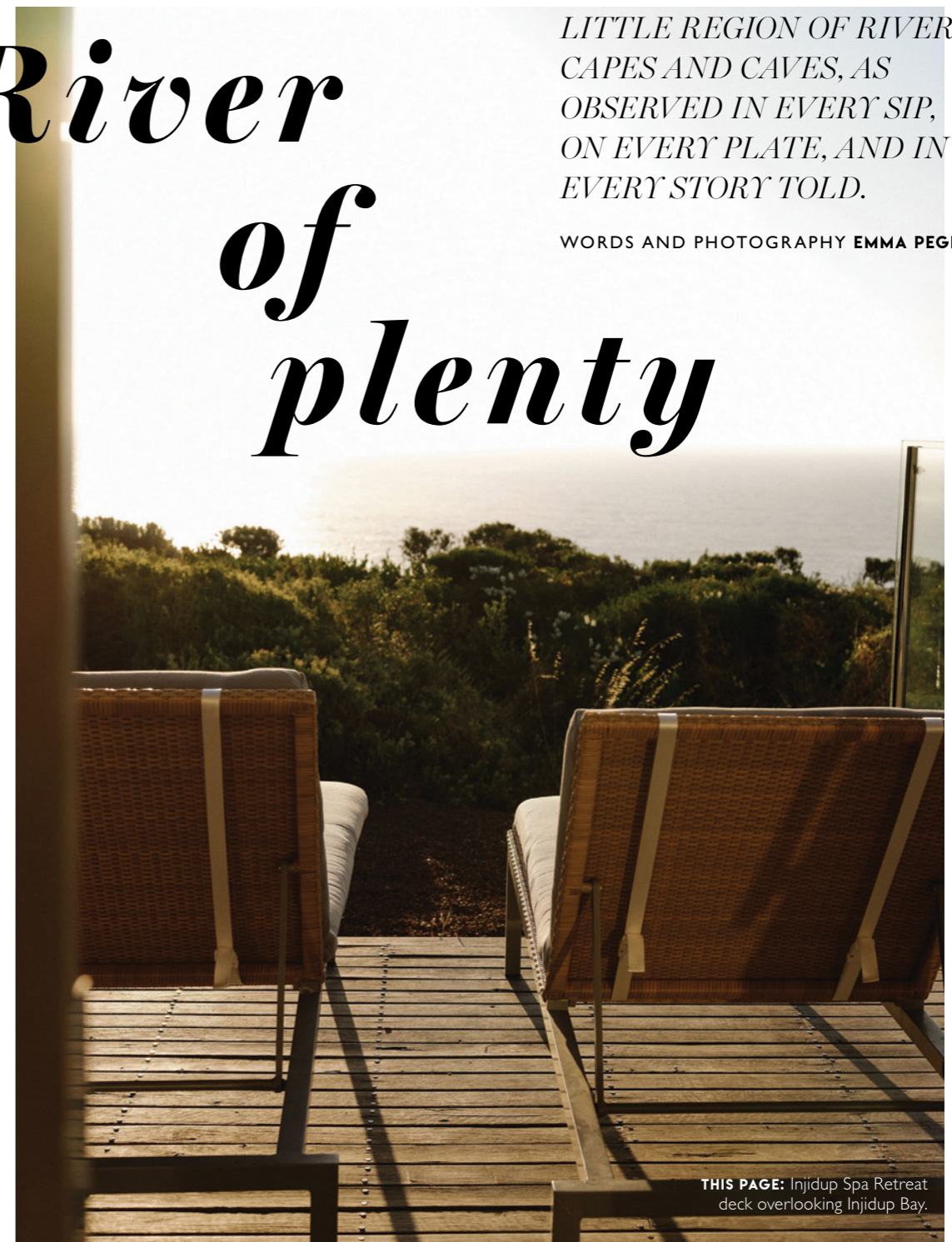
LONG CHIM



River of plenty

CHANGE IS AFOOT IN THIS LITTLE REGION OF RIVERS, CAPES AND CAVES, AS OBSERVED IN EVERY SIP, ON EVERY PLATE, AND IN EVERY STORY TOLD.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY EMMA PEGRUM



THIS PAGE: Injidup Spa Retreat deck overlooking Injidup Bay.

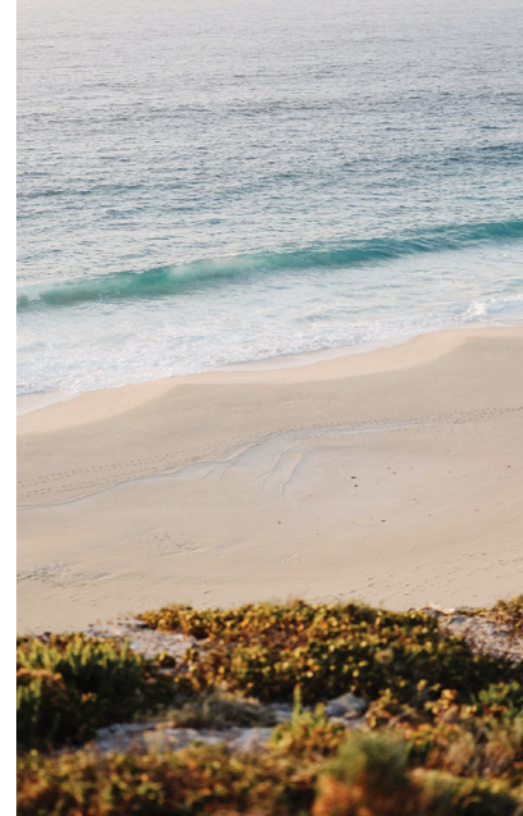
I'm standing in the **MEELUP REGIONAL PARK** on Western Australia's Leeuwin-Naturaliste ridge, looking down over the coastal plain toward the Indian Ocean. It's almost the end of my first day visiting the Margaret River region, and I'm listening to Wadandi man Josh Whiteland describe life here for his people – the Traditional Owners of this part of Western Australia's South West – thousands of years ago. Josh points out the surrounding native flora: yellow banksias like candlesticks, dried-out melaleucas and low-lying eucalyptus still holding their blossoms.

"The rain doesn't stop until the blossom falls," Josh says, fondling the thinning white flowers in his palm. "So, more rain coming."

Josh is a cultural custodian and owner of cultural tourism company **KOOMAL DREAMING**, where he imparts his Indigenous cultural knowledge to visitors through cave and bush walks, stories, and native food and fishing experiences. I've signed up for the **NGILGI CAVE CULTURAL TOUR** to hear Josh play the didgeridoo deep inside a cave, acknowledging the spirits that dwell here. It's late afternoon, and the day's uncharacteristic heat subsides as we descend into the limestone and granite cavern that's typical along this coast. With our small group now alone in the underground chamber, Josh starts playing his didgeridoo and the vibrating sound reverberates around the natural amphitheatre, meeting the silence rather than interrupting it. I experience the onset of the lasting feeling of peace one can find in Margaret River – steeped in this rich Wadandi history and incredible natural environment.

STRETCHING FROM **BUSSELTON** in the north to **AUGUSTA** in the south, the Margaret River region encompasses some 75 miles of pristine coastline. Part of Western Australia's South West, it's recognized as one of only 34 biodiversity hotspots in the world, and one of just two in Australia, thanks to the abundant flora and fauna that inhabit its mosaic of sandy beaches, forests, caves and rivers. Between the area's First Nations heritage and its astounding ecological value, the people living and working here have much to embrace, and much to care for.

Earlier that morning, I met with Vanya Cullen, who celebrated 30 years as Chief Winemaker at **CULLEN WINES** in 2019. One of the region's founding estates, Cullen Wines is an example of benchmark Margaret River cabernet and chardonnay, but also an example of what can be achieved through biodynamic farming. Having championed the practice since the early 2000s, Vanya says her commitment to sustainability ▶



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: A flowering balga along the Cape to Cape Track at Smiths Beach; Josh Whiteland pointing out native flora at Ngilgi Cave; Caves Road running past the Boranup Karri Forest; Golden hour at Injidup Beach; The firewood banksia is endemic to Western Australia; A candlestick banksia near Ngilgi Cave.

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:
 Biodynamic semillon at Cullen Wines; The original Vasse Felix vineyard; Lunch at Vasse Felix; The view over the lake at Cape Lodge.



is owed in part to her connection to the land (she grew up on the property long before the first wines were planted in 1971) and to the legacy left by her wine-legend parents; one that goes well beyond their namesake wines.

“Mum and Dad left this legacy to care about the earth,” Vanya explains. “That’s on top of the energetic history of the Wadandi people, who lived by those principles for tens of thousands of years. To that end, Cullen is now certified

biodynamic and carbon negative, so we have the whole business giving more back to the earth than we’re taking. To see that all come together in my lifetime is amazing.”

The results of Vanya’s efforts to craft quality wines using sustainable practices speak for themselves; the country’s leading wine critic James Halliday awarded her 2020 Winemaker of the Year. But she says the real winner is actually the land and, with many other flagship wineries in the region now in organic conversion, her conviction is starting to spread.

“The dream is to see the whole of Margaret River foregoing synthetic chemicals,” Vanya says. “So it’s really exciting to see so many big wineries in transition.”

From Cullen Wines, I head next door to **VASSE FELIX** for lunch. This is where Margaret River wine started, when Dr Tom Cullity first planted row upon row of cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, malbec and riesling to establish the Vasse Felix vineyard – Margaret River’s pioneering estate – in 1967. Estate sommelier Evan Gill takes me through a tasting of their core wine family: three chardonnays, three cabernets, a shiraz and a sauvignon blanc semillon.

“The heart of Vasse Felix is in our cabernet sauvignon,” he says. We’re seated in the estate’s wine lounge, which overlooks the original vineyard. Gesturing toward the block of ‘cab sauv’, he tells me: “It was sited well.” Cullity based his original plantings on a much-lauded report by Dr John Gladstone, who identified the Margaret River cape as ideal for grape growing. “This is where Gladstone said we should plant.” ▶

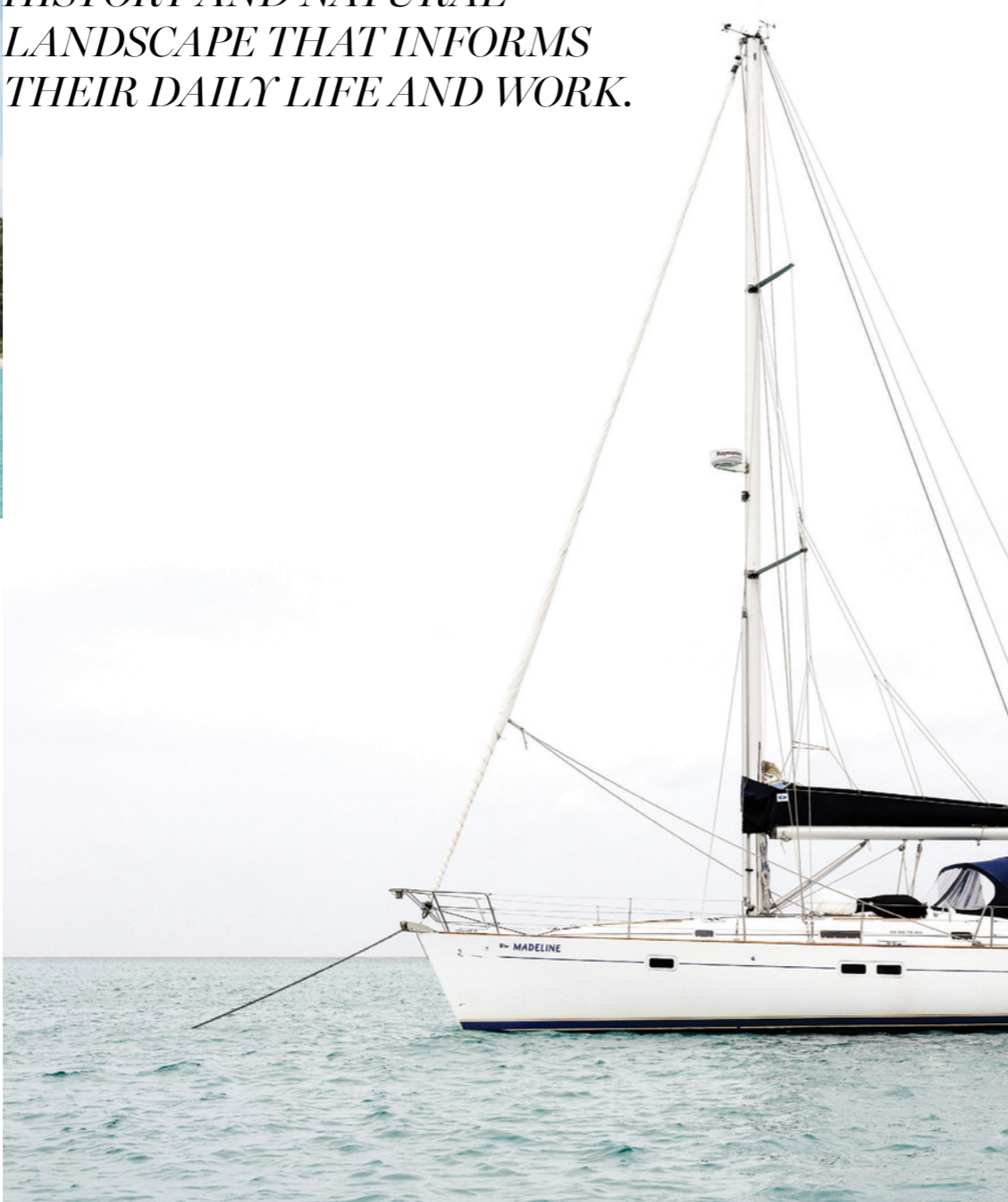


FROM TOP: Sampling the grazing platter at Swings & Roundabouts Winery with Walk Talk Taste; The bar at Wills Domain.

FROM THE WINEWAKER TO THE WALKING FOOD TOUR GUIDE, EVERYONE I MEET HAS A REVERENCE FOR THE REGION'S HISTORY AND NATURAL LANDSCAPE THAT INFORMS THEIR DAILY LIFE AND WORK.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: On deck with Sailing Charters WA; Sailing off the coast of Dunsborough (Meelup); Looking out over Meelup Beach.



FROM TOP: Verandah dining at Arimia; On deck with Sailing Charters WA.



WA's skipper Luke Johnston, who grew up sailing this aquamarine coast with his grandfather and father; and riding fat bikes through the **BORANUP KARRI FOREST** with Cam O'Beirne of **MARGARET RIVER ADVENTURE COMPANY**. Cam details the region's historical timber trade like a memoir, and describes the forest as a medium for connection. I see it again walking the epic **CAPE TO CAPE TRACK** with local **WALK INTO LUXURY** guide Anne Guthrie, who tells stories about exploring the cape's rocky bays and bushlands as a child growing up here in the 1970s. I see it exploring the flavors of main-strip Margaret River with ex-journalist Kellie Tannock of **WALK TALK TASTE**, who seems to overflow with anecdotes about the town's historical and present-day. From winemaker to walking food tour guide, everyone I meet has a reverence for the region's history and natural landscape that informs their daily life and work, and a genuine love for sharing it.

says Evan. "Our wines are a homage to that research."

Today, the estate hosts a restaurant, lounge and cellar door, a wine museum (housed in an original vault) showcasing extensive back vintage wines, and an art gallery – not to mention four vineyards throughout the region that are all **NASAA Certified Organic**. The wine and food produced at Vasse Felix, by chief winemaker Virginia Willcock and head chef Brendan Pratt, is tasty evidence of the same underlying philosophy.

Both visits are a display of the passion that drives those who call Margaret River home. Over the course of my three-day visit, it proves to be a common theme. I see it on a leisurely sail near Meelup in **SAILING CHARTERS**

This means good things for the region's future. At **ARIMIA**, the farm-to-table restaurant in **WILYABRUP** where I have lunch one day, this bright future is now. I dine with owner and farmer Ann Spencer, who looks after 138 acres of almost entirely self-sufficient vineyard and working farm, as well as the off-grid restaurant headed up by chef and business partner Evan Hayter.

Just as the likes of Cullen and Vasse Felix represent the origins of Margaret River wine, Arimia represents the future of its gastronomy. It's another one of the region's wineries undergoing biodynamic certification, already operating with a no-waste principle and farming regeneratively to establish living soils. ▶



ABOVE: Arimia's Char-grilled beets with avocado gel.

They produce their own olive oil and honey, raise their own pigs, farm their own trout and tend a one-acre vegetable garden, with a goal to eventually serve only what's grown on the property.

"It's a full circle thing," Ann explains. "We are producing our own food, in a manner that respects the land we are using, the resulting dish and the diner. I want people to really get the difference between eating good food, and eating here where not only is the food good, but you also know where it comes from."

Between dishes like cured trout with miso and ginger, char-grilled beets with avocado gel, Davidson plum sherbet and fried warrigal, Ann and I talk about Margaret River's natural abundance, and how eating here tells a story. Story is an important part of life in the region. Aside from those born and bred in Margaret River, everyone I meet has a story of how they came to be here; of what life they left behind, deciding there must be more and finding it among the karri and the marri trees, between these three coastlines, among the vines or on a surging wave.

If you visit, you might find that you go home dreaming of one day telling a Margaret River story of your own. **A**

THE ESSENTIAL DETAILS

Getting there and around

The Margaret River region is a scenic three-hour drive from Perth's international airport, or you can fly direct from Melbourne (Tullamarine) to Busselton Margaret River with Jetstar. Arrange Perth airport or in-region luxury transfers with **CAPE CHAUFFEURS**, whose friendly team transport guests around the region in a distinctive fleet of Chryslers. capechauffeurs.com.au

Staying there

Situated in the heart of Wilyabrup wine country in the center of the Margaret River region, boutique retreat **CAPE LODGE** has the look and feel of a private country estate with the amenities of a world-class boutique hotel. It's home to an award-winning restaurant, too, that serves French-inspired cuisine and some of the region's best seafood. capelodge.com.au



SAILING CHARTERS WA



Playing there

KOOMAL DREAMING offers daily cultural tours throughout Wadandi and Bibbulman country in the Margaret River region. koomaldreaming.com.au.

Choose from a range of sailing trips in the turquoise waters of Meelup Regional Park with **SAILING CHARTERS WA**. sailingcharterswa.com

MARGARET RIVER ADVENTURE COMPANY host guided bike tours in the Boranup Karri Forest, with 'micro adventures' and full-day tours designed to reconnect you with nature. margaretriveradventure.com.au

Kellie Tannock's **WALK TALK TASTE** is the only walking food tour in Margaret River township, taking you behind the scenes and into the stories of some of the town's iconic cafes, restaurants and bars. walktalktaste.com

Get out on the Cape to Cape Track with **WALK INTO LUXURY**, who conduct locally guided, all-inclusive Margaret River walks and culinary experiences you won't soon forget. walkintoluxury.com.au

PERTH & beyond

ROTTNEST ISLAND



BEYOND THE CITY

ROTTNEST ISLAND: Perth's very own island escape is just a 45-minute ferry ride from the city. It's a must-do, with 63 beaches and 20 turquoise bays to enjoy, spectacular walking trails, and iconic wildlife including the cute-as-a-button quokka, which is known to take a great selfie. rotnnestisland.com

ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT OPTION

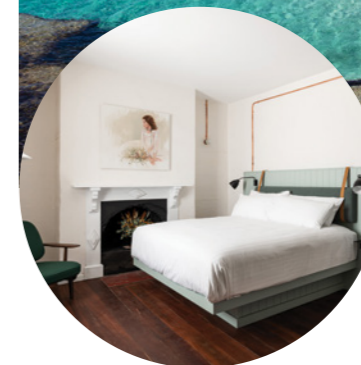
Home to the West Australian Ballet and the West Australian Opera, **HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE** is a much-loved heritage icon, with a design style borrowed from the 19-century theatres of England and Europe. The 1253-seat venue hosts a busy calendar of performances including theater, comedy, film and dance. ptt.wa.gov.au/venues/his-majestys-theatre/

A UNIQUE STAY

WARDERS HOTEL IN FREMANTLE IS MADE UP OF 170-YEAR-OLD TERRACE HOUSES THAT WERE ONCE HOME TO THE WARDERS OF NEARBY FREMANTLE PRISON. [WARDERSHOTEL.COM.AU](http://wardershotel.com.au)

ANOTHER GOOD WALK

The **FREMANTLE** Discovery Trail is a 3.6-mile walk through Perth's historic port city taking in Fremantle Prison, stunning beaches and parkland, past heritage architecture, and along the bustling Cappuccino Strip, Western Australia's first alfresco café area. visitfremantle.com.au



HIRE A BIKE

FAMILY FUN

ROOFTOP MOVIES: During the summer months you can recline on a beanbag with popcorn (and a glass of wine!) for a rooftop movie six levels up in the neighborhood of **NORTHBRIDGE** with the sparkling city lights as your cinema background. rooftopmovies.com.au
CITY BEACHES: Perth has a staggering 19 city beaches and a Mediterranean climate to boot. Try **COTTESLOE BEACH** and Scarborough Beach, which boast good

looks and a buzzy vibe; Trigg Beach, which is consistently good for surfing; or **METTAM'S POOL**, a naturally-formed lagoon with turquoise water perfect for snorkeling.
HIRE A BIKE: Perth is an excellent city for cycling, especially around the **SWAN RIVER**. About Bike Hire offers bikes for adults and children with baby seats, cabooses, tandems, and family quad cycles. aboutbikere.com.au

In Partnership with Destination Gold Coast

Three *AMAZING* Gold Coast experiences that will live with you forever

Make the most of Australia's premier beachside *PLAYGROUND* with these incredible LUXURY EXPERIENCES.



There's no place that embodies the Australian lifestyle quite like the Gold Coast. This beachside haven, just an hour south of the Queensland capital of Brisbane, is the spiritual home of Australian surf culture, as well as offering an enviable lifestyle of high-quality dining, world-class cultural institutions, and miles and miles of some of the most beautiful beaches you have ever seen.

The Gold Coast has long been a hugely popular destination for Australian holidaymakers, with easy access from major centers such as Sydney, Melbourne and Cairns, and experiences on offer that range from water sports and beachside relaxation, to immersion in pristine nature in the nearby hinterland, to luxury hotel stays. The following experiences neatly sum up the high-end offerings in the Gold Coast, with a little something for every visitor seeking the ultimate in Australian beachside lifestyle.

THE LANGHAM, GOLD COAST

This sparkling new hotel is set to become the jewel in the Gold Coast's crown – quite literally, in fact, given the Langham is housed in the prestigious Jewel development in Surfers Paradise.

THE LANGHAM, GOLD COAST, due to open in mid-2022, will redefine the idea of luxury in the Gold Coast, as a modern, innovative property that includes high-end dining, bar and retail facilities, not to mention world-class rooms, suites and residences that command views across the Pacific Ocean and to the glorious Gold Coast hinterland.

This is the first new, absolute beachfront hotel to open in the Gold Coast in more than 30 years, and it won't disappoint. The rooms will all be beautifully appointed, leading examples

FROM LEFT:

Beach strolls with the famous Surfers Paradise skyline; The luxurious Langham Hotel.

of five-star luxury, featuring modern furnishing and high-quality amenities. Facilities for guests of the hotel will include an indoor pool, day spa, gym, sauna, and 24-hour concierge service.

Though there are plenty of restaurants and bars within walking distance of The Langham, on site the hotel will feature **T'ANG COURT**, a high-end Cantonese dining, as well as **PALM COURT**, in which the Langham's signature Afternoon Tea will be served, and the **CORAL MOON** rooftop bar. **26 & SUNNY**, the hotel's laidback cafe, is the perfect spot to grab a coffee or a juice overlooking the beach. In other words, everything you need.



GOLD COAST HELITOURS

Nothing says luxury quite like having a helicopter at your disposal, particularly when you have the chance to explore everything the Gold Coast has to offer. Gold Coast Helitours offers fully customizable charters, unique experiences that will stay with you for a lifetime. The versatility of a helicopter means you can be transported to a whole host of elite locations in the Gold Coast and its surrounding area, from islands to restaurants to wineries to luxury hotels.

Though itineraries can be tailored to suit your desires, Gold Coast Helitours has a few ideas for the perfect day out. Embark on a scenic flight to a secluded island for a picnic prepared and served by a Michelin-starred chef – who, in the case of Frank Meijer, will also be your helicopter pilot for the day. Alternatively, travel to **SIRROMET WINES**, Queensland's largest and most awarded producer, in style with a helicopter transfer straight to the restaurant and cellar door.

Take a scenic tour of the Gold Coast before settling down for a buffet breakfast at the five-star **PALAZZO VERSACE** hotel. You can even skydive from a helicopter here, if that's your thing.

The options are almost endless, limited only by your imagination and the time you have to spend.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

Take flight with Gold Coast Helitours; Glamping at Nightfall Camp; Relax with a massage in nature at Nightfall Camp.



NIGHTFALL GLAMPING

This isn't the Gold Coast you might be picturing. The city is known for areas such as Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, urban hubs with high-rise apartment blocks and beachside locales. And that is a true experience of the Gold Coast. But it's not the only one.

Now, take yourself well away from the skyscrapers and the highways, away from the beaches and from the city entirely. Take yourself to **LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK** in the nearby Scenic Rim, an area named by *Lonely Planet* as one of the world's top 10 regions to visit in 2022. Head deep into the rainforest, where the only sounds are birdsong and bubbling creeks, and the rustle of the wind in leaves.

Welcome to **NIGHTFALL CAMP**, luxury glamping that takes you far away from the trappings and the hassles of modern life. This experience is all about getting back in touch with nature, experiencing the wonder of Lamington National Park,



the pure fresh air and the tranquility of the forest, while also enjoying a few creature comforts. The camp is limited to only eight guests at any time, ensuring privacy, intimacy, and the chance to explore this beautiful area without intrusion.

The custom-designed Nightfall glamping tents seamlessly blend the natural with the luxurious, with timber floors, rain-head showers, organic bedding, and canvas walls that can be rolled up to create a mesh room where the inside blurs with the out. Unique, and unforgettable, much like the Gold Coast itself.

For more information, visit destinationgoldcoast.com



HOBART

THE CAPITAL OF TASMANIA, HOBART IS A CHARMING CITY BRIMMING WITH HISTORY, HUMMING WITH CREATIVITY AND FRINGED BY SCENIC WILDERNESS.

WALK THE CITY

Covering the footprint of the land granted to Reverend Robert (Bobby) Knopwood in 1805, the self-guided **IN BOBBY'S FOOTSTEPS** walk follows the history of Battery Point, Hobart's oldest and most picturesque neighborhood. batterypointwalk.com.au

GETTING AROUND

Downtown Hobart, the waterfront and **BATTERY POINT** are all easily explored on foot. If you want to travel further afield, hop on a public bus.

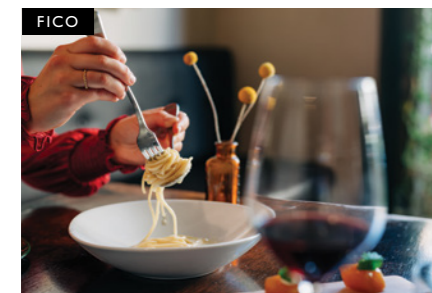
ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

THIS MIDWINTER FESTIVAL ATTRACTS PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY FOR ITS BRILLIANT, BLASPHEMOUS AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING DISPLAYS AND PERFORMANCES. DARKMOFO.NET.AU



DARK MOFO

WHERE TO EAT



FICO

FICO: Fico's impressive shared menu is inspired by the heritage of its Italian owners, but the local Tasmanian produce used is the real standout. ficofico.net

FRANK RESTAURANT: The feasting menu served up at Frank is created with diners upon arrival at this waterfront restaurant, and caters to all tastes. frankrestaurant.com.au

TEMPLO: There is more local and seasonal Tassie produce on the menu at this convivial 20-seat eatery, tucked away in the back streets of the city. templo.com.au



HENRY JONES ART HOTEL

THREE STAYS

The Tasman

Old and new combine to stunning effect at this luxury property. While there, book a table at Peppina to enjoy Italian cuisine with a local twist. marriott.com

Moss Hotel

This boutique hotel resides over two historic buildings and features intimate rooms with original timbers and stone work, and luxurious finishes. mossotel.com.au

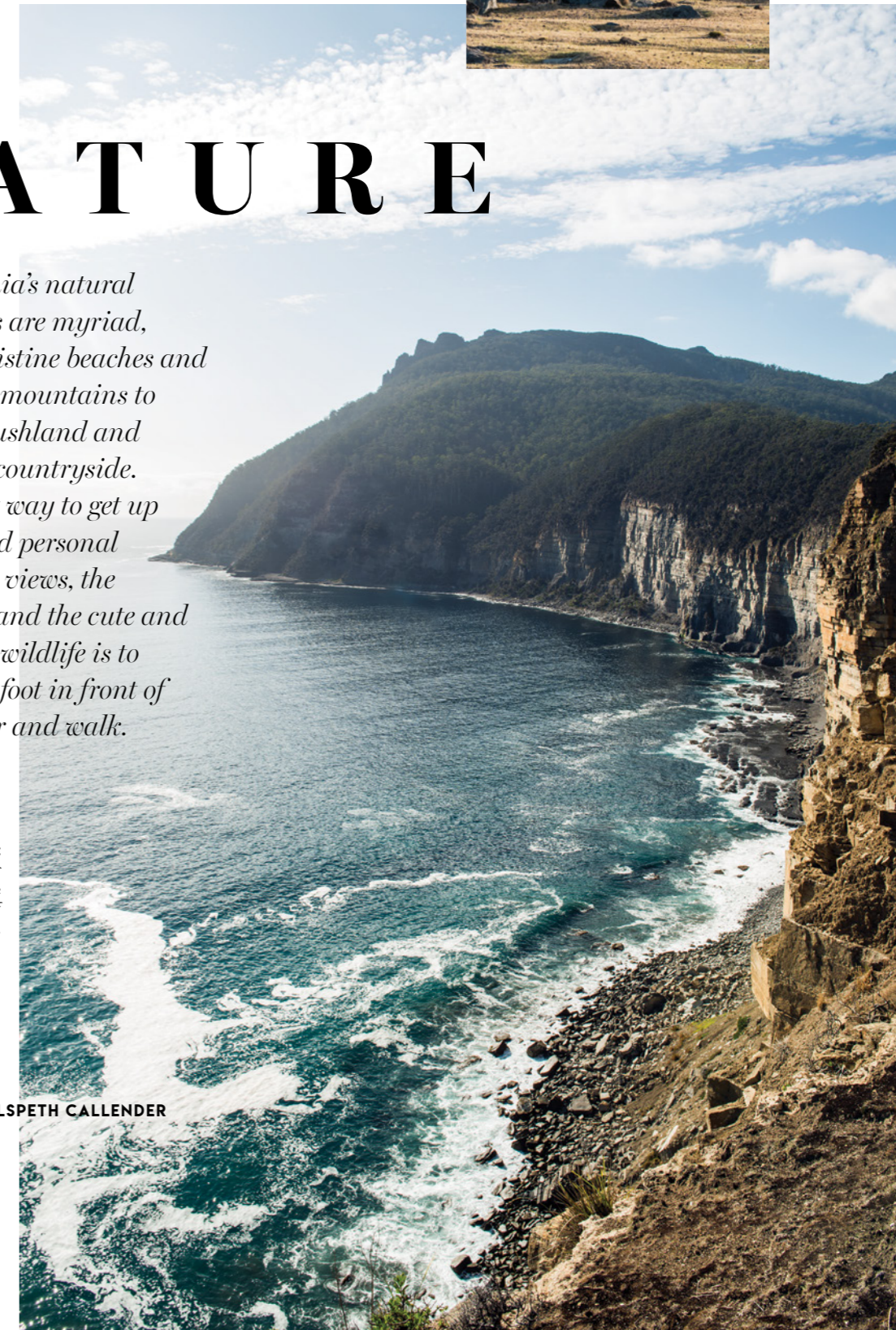
Henry Jones Art Hotel

Australia's first art hotel is housed in a heritage waterfront warehouse and displays some 500 pieces of local art. thehenryjones.com

In our NATURE

Tasmania's natural wonders are myriad, from pristine beaches and soaring mountains to dense bushland and bucolic countryside. The best way to get up close and personal with the views, the history and the cute and curious wildlife is to put one foot in front of the other and walk.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Forester kangaroos near Darlington on Maria Island; The spectacular limestone cliffs of Fossil Bay, Maria Island.



WORDS **ELSPETH CALLENDER**



A plump young wombat grazing on the marsupial lawn is unbothered by the small group of onlooking hikers.

Its tousled coat of summertime fur has distinctly blonde tips, bleached almost white by the strong Australian sun, like the hair of a dedicated, suntanned surfer. A nearby herd of wallabies is jumpier than usual at the sight of humans, and a joey instinctively dives headfirst back into its mother's pouch so only its gangly hind legs are visible.

Surrounding this patch of open grassland is a forest of eucalypts and casuarinas from where wattle birds sweetly call and raucous kookaburras laugh (who knows at what or why). Ancient dolerite peaks rise above the treetops, just begging to be climbed, and two sea eagles circle the rocky outcrops. In the other direction, a white sandy beach seems to stretch on forever, edging a calm bay of turquoise water where dolphins bask and play. Just a few miles away, across a small passage, is the mainland of Tasmania.

This is **MARIA ISLAND** (pronounced *Mariah*, as in *Carey*), a 45-square-mile island off the east coast of Australia's island state of Tasmania. Essentially an island off an island off an island, Maria is considered by many to be the Noah's Ark of Tasmania.



Led by young local guides who know the place like the backs of their hands, the **MARIA ISLAND WALK** (mariaislandwalk.com.au) covers more than 20 miles on foot over four days. Wombats and wallabies are a common sight as are kangaroos, wedge-tailed eagles, swift parrots and native hens (known locally as "turbo chooks"). There is also a healthy population of Tasmanian devils on the island and, despite their name and propensity for vociferous nighttime screeching, the world's largest carnivorous marsupial is no threat to humans.

Maria Island is now entirely designated as a national park without any permanent human residents. In the not-so-distant past, the island was home to the Oyster Bay nation community of Tasmanian Aboriginals who called it *Toarra Marra Monab*. Maria's grimest days were during the 1800s when it was used as a convict settlement. Today, Cape Barren geese patrol the historic convict-era buildings of Darlington like reincarnated prison guards.

Once you've signed up for the Maria Island Walk experience you'll be collected from your central Hobart accommodation, such as the boutique hotel **MOSS**, occupying a historic building on the waterfront at **SALAMANCA PLACE**, and driven to Triabunna for a private boat transfer across Mercury Passage for a barefoot beach landing. Accommodation is two nights in glamping tents and one in a heritage homestead. Fresh gourmet meals are prepared daily by the guides.

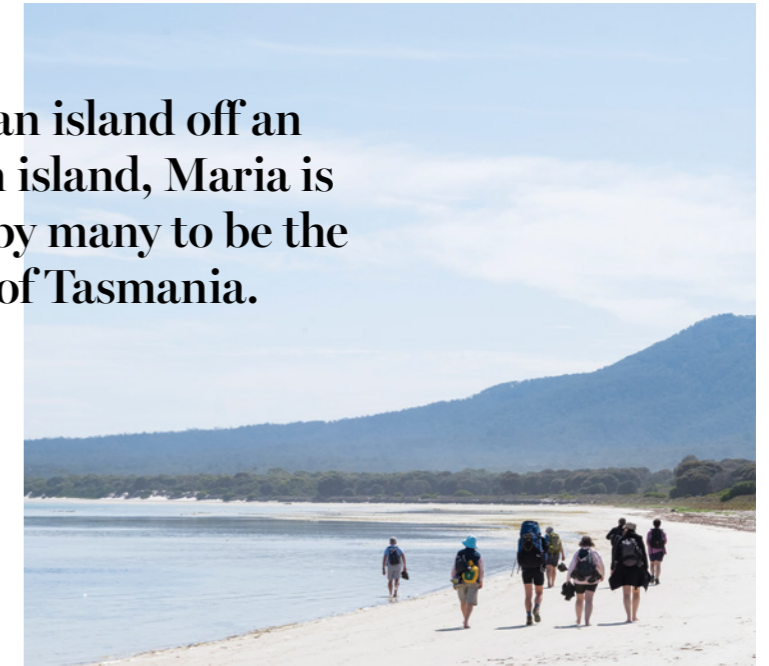
Hiking trails connect Darlington in the north with Haunted Bay in the south. The distinctive 148-foot Bishop and Clerk and 2333-foot Mt Maria are optional peaks to bag; exposed 300-million-year-old fossils can be seen in some of the island's cliff faces. In the colder months of June to August, Maria Island Walk offers a three-day winter hiking experience.

Back across the water on the Tasmanian mainland there are plenty of other walks to keep you on your feet and surrounded by beauty. ▶



PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CREAR (ALL)

Essentially an island off an island off an island, Maria is considered by many to be the Noah's Ark of Tasmania.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: A group on the Maria Island walk; Claire from Maria Island Walk serves carrot and coconut cake; The famous fossil cliffs on Maria Island; Glamping at Maria Island Walk's Riedle Bay standing camp; Wombats on Maria Island; A view of a settler's cottage on the island.



WUKALINA WALK

The moment you step foot on Australia's southern heart-shaped island state you are in the cultural homeland of the palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) people. Here, wukalina Walk is Tasmania's first Aboriginal owned and operated guided walk and you are warmly invited to "takara waranta" – walk with us.

This is a four-day experience in Tasmania's north-east departing from **LAUNCESTON. CHANGE OVERNIGHT**, Australia's first social enterprise hotel, is a short walk from the Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania meeting point or you can easily be collected from a range of other hotels.

The 20-mile walk in **LARAPUNA/BAY OF FIRES** and **WUKALINA (MT WILLIAM NATIONAL PARK)** takes you to places well beyond superficial appreciation of the area's pristine beaches and photogenic orange lichen. Hear creation stories, learn about cultural practices, try bush tucker, stay in award-winning architecturally designed sleeping pods, walk up to 10.5 miles a day and come away with genuine insights into palawa culture and their connection to country.

All meals are prepared using seasonal locally sourced Tasmanian produce, with wukalina Walk running from September to April. wukalinawalk.com.au



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A group near Picnic Rocks on wukalina Walk; The former lighthouse keeper's cottage at Eddystone Point; Relax in the domed huts at the campsite on wukalina Walk; The pavilion at wukalina Walk's campsite.



FROM LEFT: Looking out from Cape Pillar on the Three Capes Lodge walk; The yoga room at Cape Pillar Lodge; Unwinding at Cape Pillar Lodge.



THREE CAPES LODGE WALK

The **TASMAN PENINSULA** has some of the world's most dramatic geology. Its sheer sea cliffs, which in places stand hundreds of feet above the breaking waves of the Tasman Sea, are the tallest in the Southern Hemisphere. Seeing these, on a four-day/three night Three Capes Lodge Walk with **TASMANIAN WALKING COMPANY**, will blow you away.

Setting off from Hobart you'll be transferred to **PORT ARTHUR** for a scenic boat cruise to Denmans Cove. From there, it's less than a three-mile hike to the first lodge where dinner preparations will be underway and there will be wine to drink and more views to admire. The final two nights are in **CAPE PILLAR LODGE**, complete with bathtubs and a massage therapist.

You won't need to carry more than a 20-pound daypack for this 30-mile guided walk in **TASMAN NATIONAL PARK**. The longest day of hiking is 11 miles but it's well worth the effort to be able to climb "the blade" at Cape Pillar. Keep an eye out for eagles and, on a still day, listen out for the seals on nearby Tasman Island barking as they splash around in rockpools. Trips run year-round. taswalkingco.com.au ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CREAR (ALL)



CRADLE MOUNTAIN HUTS WALK

When the first nine walkers set off on Tasmania's newly opened 40-mile **OVERLAND TRACK** in 1931, there was just a haphazard puzzle of rough hunting, mining and stock trails to follow. These days, Tasmania's iconic multi-day track is still not for the faint-hearted but on the Cradle Mountain Huts Walk, with **TASMANIAN WALKING COMPANY**, you'll be comfortably accommodated and well fed.

From Launceston you'll be transferred to **CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK**, which is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. In the afternoon, after you've hauled yourself up the chain rope to an alpine plain above 3300 feet, you can celebrate that the steepest part of the trail is behind you.

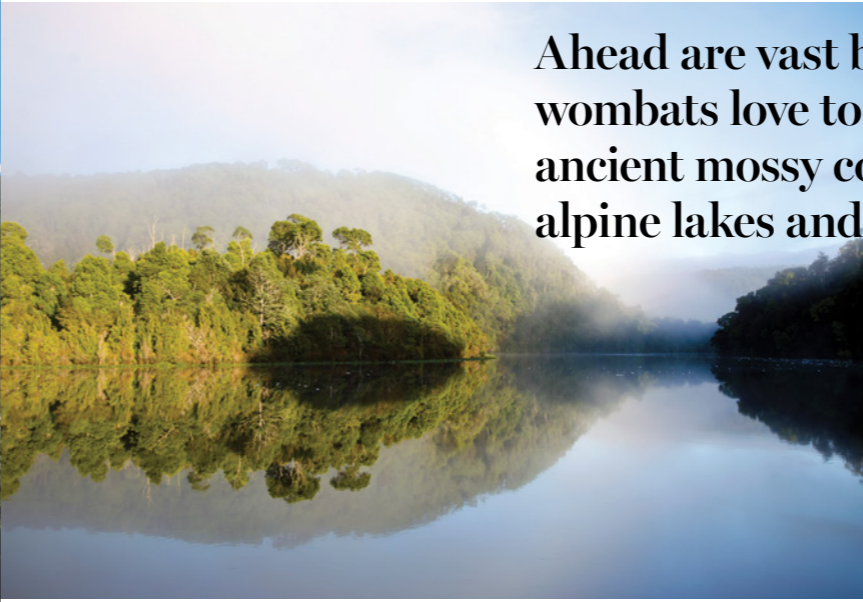
Ahead are vast button grass plains where wombats love to wander, green rooms of ancient mossy cool-temperate rainforest, alpine lakes and icy waterfalls. Daily walking distances are up to 7.5-miles. There's an optional hike up 5300-foot **MT OSSA** for breathtaking views on clear days. Trips run October through to May. taswalkingco.com.au



FROM TOP: Tasmanian Walking Company hut on the Overland Track; Walking towards Cradle Mountain at Marion's Lookout on the Overland Track; The palm-like pandani is endemic to Tasmania.



Ahead are vast button grass plains where wombats love to wander, green rooms of ancient mossy cool-temperate rainforest, alpine lakes and icy waterfalls.



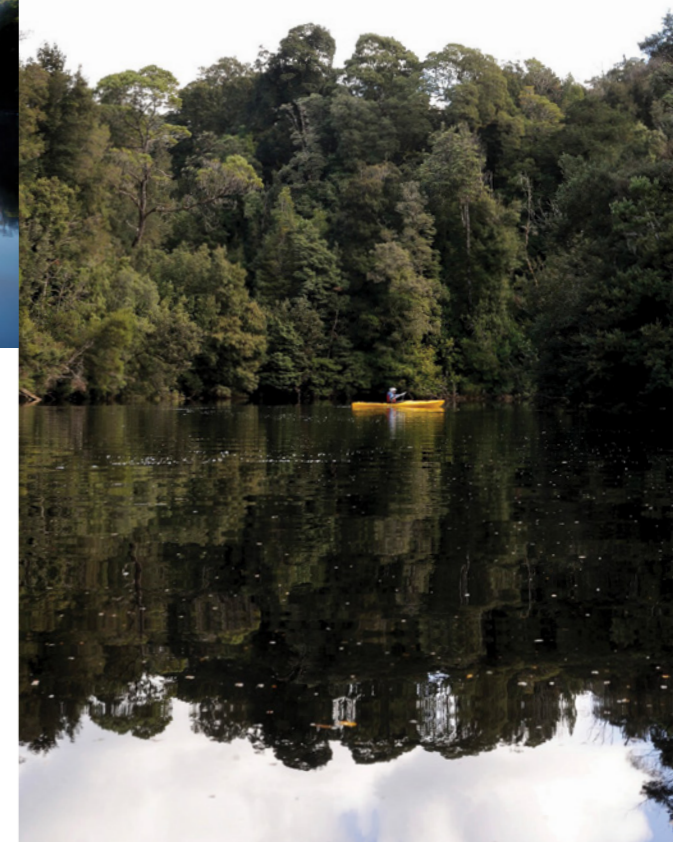
TARKINE RAINFOREST EXPERIENCE

This 1737-square-mile area was named after one of three Palawa groups, the Tarkiner, who freely inhabited it before colonization. The Tarkine contains one of the largest unbroken stands of cool-temperate rainforest in the Southern Hemisphere as well as eucalypt forest, tea tree forest, heathland, button grass plains and tannin-dark rivers.

TARKINE TRAILS will collect you from **LAUNCESTON** and deliver you within a mile of their standing camp, **TIGER RIDGE** (named in memory of Tasmania's extinct thylacine). From there you walk. For four days, hiking no more than a few miles each day, you'll explore the forest around you. You'll feel the sponginess of the leaf littered ground beneath your feet as you learn all about this precious ecosystem, 1200 years in the making.

At your rustic-yet-comfortable base of Tiger Ridge, there's a fireplace and a huge oak table in the longhouse to sit around and share stories, drink Tassie wine and enjoy freshly prepared meals. Safari-style tents are dotted throughout the surrounding forest. Once you hit the sheets, savor the Tarkine's night time soundtrack: total silence. tarkinetrails.com.au ▶

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Pieman River deep in the heart of Tarkine; Paddling the Whyte River near Corinna in the Tarkine; The rainforest walk is famous for its colorful fungi; A regular setting on the Tarkine Rainforest Walk.





FREYCINET EXPERIENCE WALK

This four-day guided walk, on the traditional land of the Oyster Bay nation, takes you to the **HAZARDS** and **WINEGLASS BAY** where the tourists flock, but also into the quiet backblocks of **FREYCINET PENINSULA** in Freycinet National Park.

There are two long walking days and two easy days. On the hardest day you have the choice of an 8.5-mile coastal hike or a more challenging 10-mile trek up **MT GRAHAM** for epic views of the peninsula's natural wonders. There will also be opportunities for fishing, swimming, bird spotting and animal viewing. If you're lucky, you'll see dolphins.

FRIENDLY BEACHES LODGE, only a few hundred feet back from a five-mile-long beach, will be your base for three nights. Called "the invisible lodge", this walkers' haven sits lightly in the environment, concealed until you're close by. The main dining table is made from reclaimed timber and the owner's art collection is displayed on the Tasmanian oak walls. freycinet.com.au



FROM TOP: Wineglass Bay from Mt Amos on the Freycinet Experience Walk; A view of The Hazards from Coles Bay.

HIKING ESSENTIALS

What to pack

You'll receive a detailed equipment list before any guided hike in Tasmania, but here are some pointers to remember before you set off:

CARRY A FULL RANGE OF LAYERS, from lightweight tank tops to a good parka, no matter what time of year you visit. Tasmanian outdoors people call cotton "cold death" because if it gets wet it stays wet in cool and cold conditions. Stick to merino wool and quick-dry sports synthetics.

BRING YOUR SWIMSUIT and a travel towel for spontaneous swims, though don't be surprised if others – even guides – go skinny dipping (it's very Tasmanian).

WEAR STURDY HIKING SHOES OR BOOTS you're comfortable in. Cut toenails short before the hike. Use sports tape to manage blisters.

CARRY A FILTERED WATER BOTTLE, such as a LifeStraw Go Bottle, to replenish your drinking water at lakes and streams.

BRING A DAYPACK suitable in size for your specific trip. A fanny pack won't be adequate for any of them. Fun fact: if you call something a "fanny pack", Tasmanians will blush or laugh as this has a very different meaning in Australia. You can, however, refer to your flip-flops as "thongs" and nobody will bat an eyelid.



KUNANYI/MOUNT WELLINGTON

BEYOND THE CITY

The beautiful **HUON VALLEY** is just 30 minutes from Hobart and home to quaint villages, the **HUON RIVER**, and the soaring **TAHUNE FOREST AIRWALK**. It's also well known for its cideries and cool-climate winemakers – **AGEING BARREL TOURS** runs tours to the region between October and May to sample gourmet wines, ciders, gin, vodka and local cheeses. ageingbarrel.com.au

ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT OPTION

A local icon, the historic **STATE CINEMA** has been entertaining locals for a century. Australian and international films are shown across 11 screens, and during summer there's a rooftop cinema that plays blockbusters with views of the city and **KUNANYI/MOUNT WELLINGTON**. statecinema.com.au

ANOTHER GOOD WALK

The epic 8.8-mile Hobart to the Pinnacle walk climbs 3937 feet from **HOBART RIVULET**, through the city, behind the historic **CASCADE BREWERY** and into the bushland and fern-filled creek gullies of **WELLINGTON PARK**. You'll be rewarded with wildlife sightings and great views. greaterhobarttrails.com.au



CASCADE BREWERY



A UNIQUE STAY

A FORMER STATELY HOME BUILT IN 1847, THE ISLINGTON HOTEL IS ADORNED IN ART BY THE LIKES OF ANDY WARHOL AND PABLO PICASSO AND COMES WITH A VIEW OF MOUNT WELLINGTON. ISLINGTONHOTEL.COM

FAMILY FUN

BONORONG WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: Just 30 minutes north of Hobart, this sanctuary cares for native animals in need, including Tasmanian (Tassie) devils, wombats and koalas. Join the free daily tour or book a close encounter or feeding experience with the friendly critter of your choice. bonorong.com.au

SALAMANCA MARKETS: One of the biggest outdoor markets in the country and a beloved institution in Hobart, Salamanca Markets hosts more than 300 stallholders selling arts and crafts, jewelry, delicious food, collectables and homewares all day long on Saturday. salamancamarket.com.au

ROYAL TASMANIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS: Covering 34 acres, these gardens feature a Sub Antarctic Plant House, a Japanese Garden, as well as more than 6000 species of both natives and exotics. Stroll the many pathways past ponds and landscaped displays, or enjoy a picnic on the lawns. rtbg.tas.gov.au

HOBART
& beyond

ROYAL TASMANIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS





WILPENA POUND

WELCOME to COUNTRY

The histories and cultures of Australia's First Nations peoples stretch back proud and unbroken through millennia, endowing the island continent with a rich legacy that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples share generously with visitors.

Tracing their origins back some 65,000 years, Australia's First Nations peoples can lay claim to being the custodians of the oldest living civilization on Earth, one that has been shaped and informed by cultural practices that have remained largely unchanged through its long history. Experiencing the exquisite traditions and stories of the country's Indigenous peoples while visiting Australia will add a depth of understanding to your journey that no guidebook can bestow.

At the heart of First Nations culture is Country. Australia's Indigenous peoples have a profound spiritual, social and cultural connection to the land beneath them. According to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), "Country is the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity." Protecting and nurturing Country is seen as a responsibility and privilege of custodianship.

First Nations cultures and histories are always best shared by their owners. The diversity, color and beauty of these cultures thrives through art, festivals, and singular experiences that are abundant and easily accessible. Whether spending time in the vast expanses of the outback or in one of Australia's thriving coastal capital cities, seeking out genuine connection with the country's First Nations peoples will inspire your imagination and reward your soul. 📍



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN SYDNEY

FIRST NATIONS EXPERIENCES TO ADD TO YOUR ITINERARY

DARWIN ABORIGINAL ART FAIR Taking place on Larrakia Country each August, this is one of the country's premier Indigenous arts festivals, with over 70 Indigenous owned-and-operated Art Centers and some 2000 artists taking part. It is also a great way to buy art ethically, with 100 percent of sales going back to Art Center communities. daaf.com.au

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN SYDNEY Situated in the heart of Sydney, the gloriously verdant botanic garden is steeped in the ancient histories and culture of the traditional custodians of the land, which are brought to light and celebrated on a range of immersive tours, including the Aboriginal Bush Tucker Tour and Aboriginal Cultural Sunset Tour. rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

LIRRWI TOURISM The Yolngu have been the custodians of Arnhem Land, in the northern reaches of the Northern Territory, for millennia. Setting off on a tour with Lirrwai Tourism allows for genuine interaction with the people and the culture of this pristine and mysterious landscape. lirrwaitourism.com.au

KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST Located in the center of

KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST



Melbourne at Federation Square, the Koorie Heritage Trust is a meeting place for all to gather and learn about the unique stories of Victoria's Aboriginal people. It conducts walking tours through the city with First Nations guides, detailing social and cultural practices both ancient and contemporary. korieheritagetrust.com.au

NGADIKU DREAMTIME WALKS The Aboriginal-owned-and-operated Mossman Gorge Centre, located in tropical far north Queensland, is the starting point for the Ngadiku Indigenous Guided Dreamtime Walk. Led by local guides, the tour begins with a traditional 'smoking' ceremony before heading off along private tracks through cool rainforests to visit culturally significant sites to the local Bama peoples. mossmangorge.com.au

WILPENA POUND RESORT Owned and operated by Adnyamathanha Traditional Owners, Wilpena Pound Resort, located within Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, a five-hour drive from Adelaide, offers Aboriginal cultural tours including the Sacred Canyon-Yura Mulka Cultural Walk, with local Adnyamathanha guides explaining the cultural significance of the canyon and its ancient rock engravings. wilpenapound.com.au

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF WILPENA POUND RESORT; ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN SYDNEY; VISIT VICTORIA/KOORIE HERITAGE TRUST

In Partnership with Sydney Harbour Boat Tours



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Sydney Harbour Boat Tours offers a front-row seat to icons like the Opera House; As well as access to secluded beaches; The harbor is yours to enjoy.



SYDNEY HARBOUR like you've never imagined

Explore the sparkling jewel in Australia's crown with a luxurious private cruise that will take you to places no one else can access.

There's nowhere else quite like Sydney Harbour. This magnificent stretch of water is surrounded by one of the world's most famous cityscapes, punctuated by icons such as the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. But it's also a natural and ecological haven, and brims with culture both ancient and modern. There are watersports to view and enjoy, and there's luxury to be found, even on the water itself.

Sydney Harbour Boat Tours is a unique operation, offering private cruises aboard a luxurious, 37-foot Scandinavian sports cruiser that can take passengers to parts of Sydney Harbour that even locals don't realize exist. Spend half or even a full day on this iconic waterway, and this is what you can expect.

ABUNDANT NATURE

There are few places in the world where you can find seals, whales, penguins and even dolphins all in the one area – and even fewer that are so accessible from a metropolitan area. It's possible to view

all of these animals and more in Sydney Harbour, within six miles of the city centre, aboard Sydney Harbour Boat Tours' high-speed cruiser.

SECRET BEACHES

Here's the thing that Sydney Harbour Boat Tours can do that no other cruise company can: land on Sydney's beaches, take you ashore for a swim, for a stroll through national parklands, and even for a fresh seafood picnic on the sand. That's the access you get with a small private vessel. And, because your skipper knows Sydney Harbour like the back of their hand, it won't just be any beach; you will have access to quiet, idyllic stretches of sand that plenty of people don't even know exist, and are ripe for exploration.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

There's so much more to Sydney Harbour than the well-known icons. Of course, your skipper will get you up close to those big-ticket items, but there will also be the chance to explore the further reaches of this area, the likes of Middle

Harbour, so much quieter and calmer than the main harbor, surrounded by dense bushland: perfect for anchoring up and enjoying a quiet drink.

EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE

This is it, this is the kicker: this experience of Sydney Harbour, this unique and luxurious half-day or full day out? It's exclusive. It's yours to do with as you please. Itineraries with Sydney Harbour Boat Tours are customizable. The boat is private. Whatever your fancy, whatever your whim, you can make it happen. There's nowhere else quite like Sydney Harbour, and it's yours to enjoy.

Book your exclusive Sydney Harbour tour or make an enquiry at sydneyharbourboatours.com



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SYDNEY

WITH ITS SPARKLING HARBOR, BEHEMOTH BRIDGE AND ICONIC OPERA HOUSE, SYDNEY'S REPUTATION PRECEDES IT. BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE TO DO ONCE YOU'VE TICKED THIS TRIO OFF YOUR LIST.

WALK THE CITY

At around 50 miles long, the **BONDI to MANLY** walk starts to the east of the city and finishes on the north shore of the harbor, but can be broken up into smaller legs, and takes in some of Sydney's most picturesque vistas and neighborhoods.

GETTING AROUND

Sydney has an efficient train system, with a circle subway line around the city, and trams that cruise down its main thoroughfare of George Street.

ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

CLIMBING THE ARCHES OF THE HARBOUR BRIDGE - AND STANDING 440 FEET ABOVE THE WATER, LOOKING OUT TO SEEMINGLY ENDLESS VIEWS OF THE CITY - IS A TRULY MONUMENTAL EXPERIENCE.
BRIDGECLIMB.COM

WHERE TO EAT

FRED'S: With its rustic-chic dining room and signature farm-to-table menu, Fred's is the perfect place for a long lunch. The cocktails are great too.
merivale.com

TETSUYA'S: The quality of Tetsuya Wakuda's considered, exquisitely rendered Japanese food makes eating here more than a meal; it's an experience.
tetsuyas.com

FIREDOOR RESTAURANT: Seasonal ingredients are combined with all manner of fire to dramatic and delicious effect at this bustling eatery in Surry Hills.
firedoor.com.au



FIREDOOR



OVOLO 1888

THREE STAYS

Park Hyatt Sydney

A favorite of visiting celebrities, this waterfront five-star property looks out to the Sydney Opera House on one side, and up to the hulking form of the Harbour Bridge on the other.

hyatt.com/park/sydney

The Langham

The Langham is located in the historic Rocks neighborhood, one of the oldest in the city, and nearby to headlining sights and the restaurants of the harborside Barangaroo precinct.
langhamhotels.com

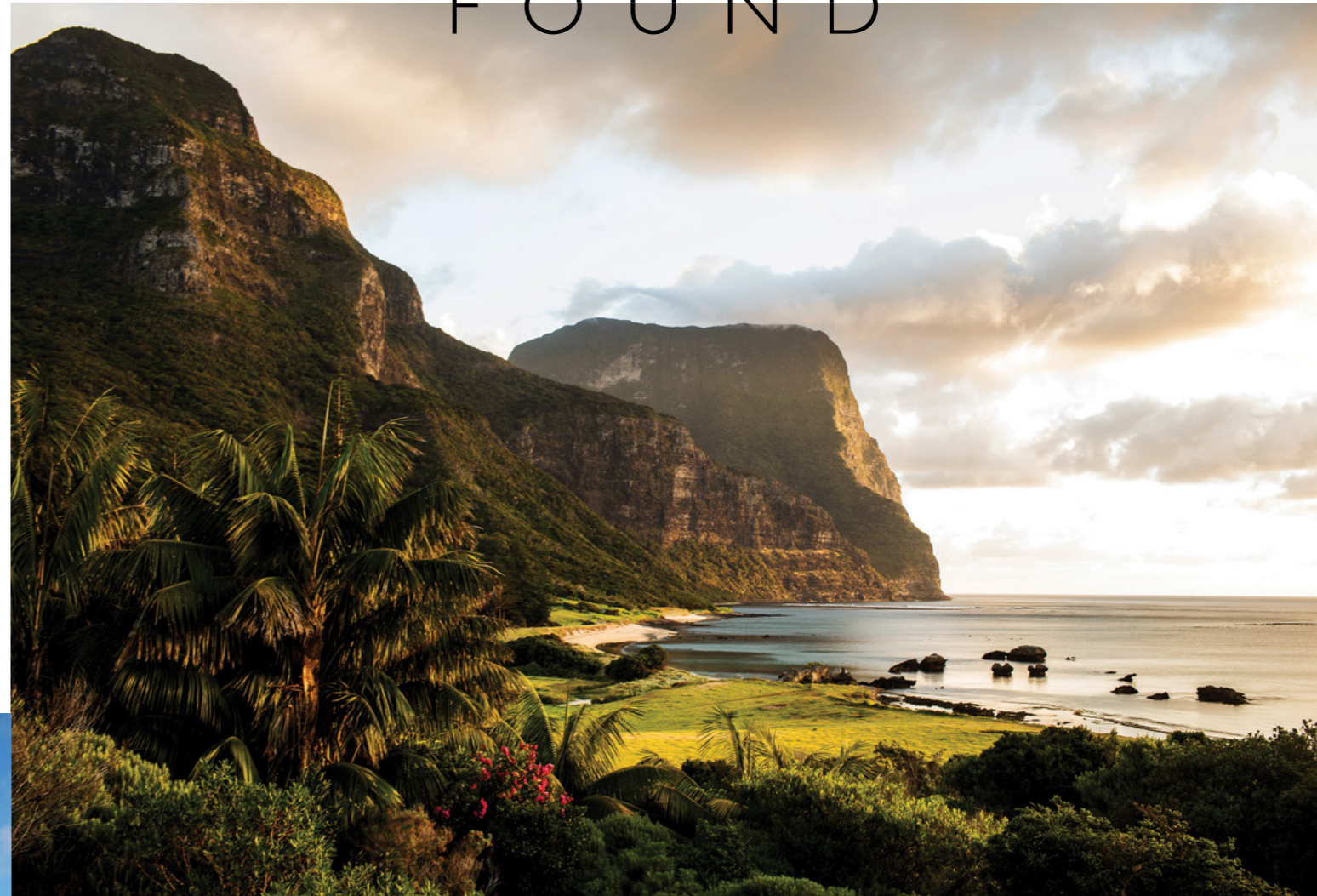
Ovolo 1888

Housed in a heritage wool store, this boutique hotel respects the building's history while still managing to feel seriously hip.
ovolohotels.com.au

SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE



PARADISE, FOUND



PHOTOGRAPHY: KARA ROSENBLUND

A SHORT FLIGHT FROM SYDNEY DELIVERS INTREPID TRAVELERS TO THE UNSPOILT PARADISE THAT IS LORD HOWE ISLAND.

WORDS LEIGH-ANN POW

THIS IMAGE: The hulking form of Mt Gower dominates the lush tropical island landscape.

RIGHT: The island is blessed with white-sand beaches lapped by impossibly blue waters. **BELOW:** Ball's Pyramid juts dramatically from the Tasman Sea.



THE LUSH VEGETATION FRINGED BY PRISTINE BEACHES VALIDATE THE TERM OFTEN USED TO DESCRIBE LORD HOWE ISLAND: PARADISE.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The island is a tropical paradise; Streamlined luxury at Capella Lodge; The lodge sits at the foot of Mt Gower; Stunning views from the pool; The food adds to the luxe experience.



and can be rugged and challenging in parts, requiring the services of a qualified guide. This ends up being a bonus, as along the way you can gain an insight into the unique flora and fauna that proliferates. Alternatively, the walk to **MUTTONBIRD POINT LOOKOUT**, a brisk return hike of just under two miles from the turnoff to the island's modest airport, delivers views to a nesting colony of masked boobies and their downy brown offspring that presents like a Sir David Attenborough nature documentary.

There are less strenuous ways to encounter the island's wildlife at close quarters however. Bicycle is the preferred mode of transport here (be prepared to steer one handed as you continuously wave a cheery hello to everyone you pass), allowing ample opportunity to stop to observe a roll call of birds that busy themselves rooting around in the thick, moist ground cover; the Lord Howe woodhen, the lovely emerald ground dove, and the Pacific golden plover.

Meanwhile, at **NED'S BEACH** on the north-east of the island, the likes of mullet, garfish and kingfish gather around your ankles in search of food when you wade into the clear waters; nutritionally beneficial fish pellets ▶

“You know, Lord Howe is considered the Galapagos of Australia.” It's a bold claim, and one that is made often in the great southern land (see details of Maria Island on page 88 as proof), where the abundance and unique characteristics of its flora and fauna lend themselves to such grand statements. But given that Dave Gardiner, a 40-year veteran of the waters around Lord Howe Island and a typically laconic Australian character (read: not prone to hyperbole), is the one making it, having just spotted a pod of pilot whales bobbing and diving in the distance (at first he assumed they were dolphins, so plentiful are they in these parts), it's easy to give the claim credence.

As he steers his state-of-the-art eco vessel, *ReefN Beyond*, towards the imposing 1800-foot-tall form of **BALL'S PYRAMID**, a towering shard of rock jutting from the blue waters of the Tasman Sea, he reels off the names of the abundant birds that dart and wheel overhead. Killing the engine at the base of the basalt sea stack (the world's tallest), the remains of a giant volcano and caldera formed millions of years ago, Dave encourages everyone into the water in snorkeling gear to experience

more of Lord Howe Island's Galapagos-challenging wildlife: turtles, rainbow runners, violet sweeps.

ISLAND LIFE

Back on land, the dense, lush vegetation of kentia palms, banyan trees and ferns fringed by pristine white-sand beaches validate the other often used term to describe Lord Howe Island: paradise. The UNESCO World Heritage-listed island that sits 373 miles off the New South Wales coast from Sydney is a tropical idyll that is blissfully removed from the ordinary. Cars are used

sparingly, school children attend classes barefoot (shoes aren't part of the official uniform), and there are only 400 privileged visitors allowed on the island at any time.

The landscape of Lord Howe is dominated by the hulking form of **MT GOWER**, so complete is its presence from every corner of the island. Even on clear sky days, the summit plateau, located some 2870 feet above sea level, is often crowned by fluffy white clouds. It presents an irresistible obstacle that many visitors to the island are determined to surmount: the return hike to the top takes roughly eight hours

PHOTOGRAPHY: KARA ROSENBLUND (ALL EXCEPT BALL'S PYRAMID)





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Feeding the fish at Ned's Beach; Mt Gower crowned in fluffy white clouds; Arajilla Retreat sits amongst lush tropical surroundings.



are dispensed in perfect piscine portions from a nearby box.

QUIET LUXURY

Given the luxury of experience offered up on Lord Howe, it's perhaps not surprising that there is a decidedly luxe feel to its accommodation options too.

CAPELLA LODGE, part of the bespoke Baillie Lodges roster that includes Longitude 131° in Uluru, is a sophisticated boutique hotel nestled in the shadows of Mt Gower. Here the emphasis is on streamlined luxury, all the better to experience the island and its simple pleasures without unnecessary fuss or visual noise. Everything here is considered and executed impeccably,

from the subtle yet stylish decor to the delicious food to the relaxed but highly efficient service. And the plunge pool looking out to uninterrupted views is the ultimate Instagram capture.

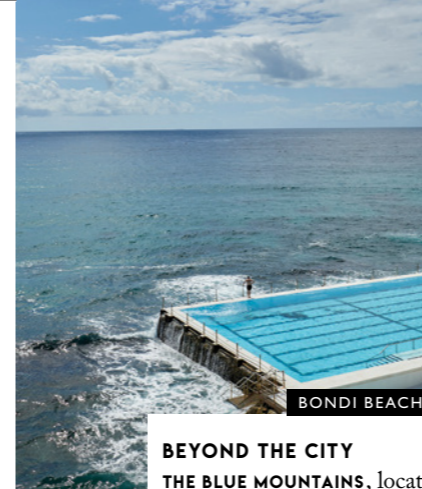
At Old Settlement Beach, **ARAJILLA RETREAT** takes an equally relaxed approach to luxury. Shrouded in lush vegetation, the central open-air lodge forms the heart of the property, a place to gather, eat and relax, while its stylish suites are reached via raised walkways.

The delightful Chef's Cottage at **PINETREES** comes complete with bookshelves lined with beach reads, three bedrooms and a full kitchen so you can indulge in the fantasy of it being your own self-contained holiday house in the Galapagos of Australia. **A**



BE AN ECO WARRIOR

Protecting Lord Howe Island's unique eco-system and enviable way of life is a full time pursuit for many on the island, one that visitors can take part in too. As part of the *Australian Geographic Expedition*, to be held in September 2022, visitors will work with *Australian Geographic* and the Lord Howe Island Board to survey birdlife, marine life with NSW Marine Parks, and possibly do an invertebrate survey as well (pinetrees.com.au/rates-packages/australian-geographic-expedition). Keen twitchers should book their visit to coincide with Bird Week in March in order to take part in organized bird-watching tours with naturalist Ian Hutton (lordhowe-tours.com.au). Participants count and categorize the birds they view, with details added to a central register back on the Australian mainland.



BEYOND THE CITY

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, located an hour west of the city, is an easy day tour or weekend stay option full of stunning scenery, nature walks, and quaint villages. Visit in summer for the temperate climate or during winter to feel the chill nipping at your nose. For the ultimate stay, book into **EMIRATES ONE&ONLY WOLGAN VALLEY**, a luxury lodge in pristine surroundings. oneandonlyresorts.com/wolgan-valley

ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT OPTION

Each year in March and April, Opera Australia decamps to a huge floating stage for **HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR**, an outdoor performance which culminates in a fireworks spectacular with the Bridge and Opera House in the background. opera.org.au

ANOTHER GOOD WALK

Lycra-clad locals flock to the **BONDI TO BRONTE** walk, which snakes along the headlands between the two beachside suburbs, providing stunning views all the way. Visit during **SCULPTURE BY THE SEA** when the route becomes an outdoor exhibition space for 100 sculptures by Australian and international artists. sculpturebythesea.com/bondi



WILDLIFE RETREAT AT TARONGA: The experience of staying at this luxurious, beautifully designed eco-lodge within the grounds of Taronga Zoo Sydney includes privileged access to everything from spiny echidnas to potoroos to koalas within the

guests-only Sanctuary enclosure, delicious meals using sustainably grown local produce and after-hours access to the zoo. taronga.org.au **POWERHOUSE MUSEUM:** This cavernous, hands-on museum is filled with exhibits focusing on science and design, from

an historic steam train to a replica of a space craft. maas.museum/powerhouse **LEARN TO SURF AT MANLY BEACH:** Surfing is a favorite pastime in Sydney; the whole family can learn to ride a board in the waters off Manly, to the north of the city. manlysurfschool.com

SYDNEY & beyond



EMIRATES ONE&ONLY WOLGAN VALLEY



A UNIQUE STAY

THE BOUTIQUE KIMPTON MARGOT SYDNEY IS HOUSED IN A GRAND ART DECO BUILDING AND BOASTS A STYLISH ROOFTOP POOL.

KIMPTONHOTELS.COM



SCULPTURE BY THE SEA

FAMILY FUN

Uluru, Northern Territory

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THERE'S NOTHING
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