

ARKABA

Business with purpose

A Conservation-led Legacy on One of Australia's Most Beautiful Outback Properties.

Since 2009 Wild Bush Luxury's dedicated team has transformed Arkaba Station in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia from an ecologically-degraded sheep station into a 60,000-acre thriving private wildlife conservancy.

"We've implemented successful conservation programs aimed at reversing the effects of 150 years of livestock grazing, restoring the natural habitat and protecting rare and endangered species on one of Australia's most beautiful rural properties," explained Wild Bush Luxury founder, Charlie Carlow.

"To walk at Arkaba is to take a journey through 500 million years of geological time, tens of thousands of years of Aboriginal history and two centuries of European settlement. And to see the Australian landscape with new eyes."

"We envisioned a symbiotic partnership between tourism and conservation to restore and preserve this ecologically significant Australian landscape. It is hugely satisfying to see that our conservation work has become an important ingredient in our guests' experience."



Conservation at Work – Environment and Wildlife

By 2013, all sheep stock had been removed from the property. Since then, conservation programs – some in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service – have focussed on feral species eradication, and on revegetating and rehabilitating the ancient yet fragile landscape.

Using both aerial and ground-based control methods, over 3000 feral goats and hundreds of foxes and feral cats have been removed and the rabbit population has been greatly reduced. This has eased the destruction of native vegetation and, in turn, the competitive grazing pressure on native animals.

This work has already yielded exciting results, with the re-establishment of two flourishing colonies of near-threatened Yellow-footed Rock wallabies, the sighting of a hitherto regionally-extinct Brush-tailed possum and a Western Quoll – extinct in South Australia for 100 years – on the property.

With the removal of feral predators, ground-dwelling birds (Owlet Nightjars, Stubble Quail) have seen a marked resurgence, with a dramatic increase in fledgling survival rates, and at least 10 'new' native bird species have been reported at Arkaba.

Arkaba's wildlife is now prolific, with Australia's three largest macropods (Red Kangaroo, Western Grey Kangaroo and Common Wallaroo) and echidnas all regular sightings, as well as a general increase in existing native bird, mammal and reptile populations.

Since the removal of sheep, native grasses are also re-establishing and Red Gum saplings are reappearing along creeks, halting the erosion of slopes and watercourses. Extremely long-lived plant species such as Narrow-leaved Emu Bush are recovering, and the widespread emergence of pioneer vegetation species – Acacia Victoriae in particular – is now taking hold and supporting the steady, long-term re-colonisation of the landscape with native species.

Inspired and united by this conservation story, Arkaba's staff – field guides, chefs and housekeepers alike – share with guests their passion for the landscape and its wildlife. They invite guests to actively participate in conservation work such as tracking and identifying species, and use habitat, geology and behavioural cues to genuinely immerse guests in the story of the bush.



Cultural Heritage

A focus on cultural heritage sees interpretive walks with an Adnyamathanha Aboriginal elder, and careful conservation of the heritage 1851 Arkaba homestead and woolshed. Both buildings have been lovingly restored, complete with interior décor and artwork by renowned local wildlife illustrator, Rosemary Woodford-Ganf.

Arkaba's field guides offer guests an inspiring experience, illuminating the land's living history from its ancient rock formations and Ediacaran fauna (the earliest forms of multi-celled life on earth!), through tens of thousands of years of Aboriginal habitation; tracing the tracks of European explorers and the trials and tribulations of the pastoralists; to the modern-day rehabilitation of the natural environment.

Our Legacy

"Our strongly held belief is that tourism should help foster conservation of our natural and cultural heritage." says Charlie Carlow.

"The prime motivation behind what we do is to open the hearts and minds of our guests through the activities our guides conduct within this incredible environment, for our guests to reconnect with the land and see the landscape in a new light, with deeper understanding."

"Guests come to immerse themselves in the bush landscape and end up becoming part of Arkaba's conservation story. Once you start engaging in the environment - once you start being a part of it - you want to stand up for it. One thing guests take away from Arkaba is a deeper understanding of the challenges Australia faces in protecting its natural environment and our vital role in safeguarding it."

Other Sustainability Actions (Our Mandatories):

- Each aspect of our properties, from energy usage to waste disposal; our choice of linen; recycling of bottles (we filter our own water and do not use plastic mineral water bottles) and our use of eco-certified cleaning materials has been carefully planned to minimise our impact on the land. We are constantly reviewing and improving our strategies.
- Our significant investment in solar power at our properties is aimed at minimising our carbon emissions.
- Each swag camp on the property was built in a natural clearing and swag decks and bathrooms are raised from the ground, with native bush providing natural cover. There is no electricity in the camps, and light is provided by camp-fire, lanterns and rechargeable torches.
- We work with up to 50 local businesses, from commissioning local artists to exclusively sourcing food and wine from South Australian producers such as Shaw & Smith, Jim Barry and Sevenhill Cellars, and employing local service providers in our remote local community.
- After several consecutive years of drought, Arkaba Homestead is taking a sustainable approach to its landscaping efforts, embarking on a journey to take its immediate surroundings back to its indigenous roots. Read our landscaping design blog to learn how the garden provides another medium through which Wild Bush Luxury and Arkaba carry out their mission to not only conserve the local environment but to inspire, educate and reconnect guests with the bush.
- Arkaba is a global leader in using luxury tourism to facilitate conservation work and is a member of The Long Run Initiative, a small collection of the world's very best examples of sustainable tourism in action.

