

Destination



PHOTOGRAPHY: VISIT VICTORIA

The Art Deco glory of The Royce, which opened in March after a lavish refurbishment, is one of Melbourne's many highlights.



LUXURY AWAITS

As your superyacht docks in one of Australia's many destination ports, your mind soon turns to where to find a seven-star hotel experience. Never fear. A select number of superlative new offerings promise the perfect sojourn, writes **Nicole Lenoir-Jourdan**.



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY PARK HYATT

There's a huge resurgence of luxury hotel openings in Australia, with almost 6,000 new rooms due to be launched in 2023. From luxury hotel chains such as the Ritz-Carlton to smaller boutique brands like Capella, travellers to the Great Southern Land will have a range of impeccable choices.

In more good news, daily rates should also become lower as these hotels come online, especially in Melbourne and Sydney. And it's not just hotels that are opening – there's also an avalanche of new dining options, from five-star restaurants to gastropubs, all jampacked into the first half of this year. If ever there was a time to experience this great land, it's now.

Harboured desires

Let's begin with Sydney. Most people do. If you're after convenience, the mooring at Campbells Cove (approximately AU\$3,000 per day) is directly outside the Park Hyatt Sydney and offers unobstructed views of the Opera House.

Revel in the 350-square-metre Sydney Suite with an outdoor terrace boasting Sydney Opera House and harbour views. While the hotel is not new, the one-hatted restaurant is now led by culinary director James Viles, who previously owned the two-hatted Biota in Bowral.

Top: Overlooking the Opera House and Sydney Harbour, the Park Hyatt offers real wow factor. **Above:** The newly opened Sofitel Spa in Darling Harbour is the perfect spot for a bit of pampering.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ANNA KUCERA

Spanning more than 800 metres over two floors, the Penthouse has 360-degree views from its 88th-floor perch, taking in Sydney Harbour to the Blue Mountains.

Viles and Brian O'Flaherty, his head chef, have together won the coveted hat for the Dining Room. The harbour views are an unmissable backdrop to Viles's sustainable

menu. Think southern rock lobster with a Tasmanian pepper sauce or a Rangers Valley wagyu with marinated oyster mushrooms as some of the premium options. Dessert is playful with a cherry-ripe coconut ripple and a baba with burnt pineapple custard. There are also starter bites of Sydney rock oysters or truffled potato chips with hot sauce.

While the Park Hyatt has an undeniable wow factor, there's one even more exclusive offering on the same side of Sydney at the Crown Residences at One Barangaroo. At the time of writing, the AU\$100-million Penthouse can be rented for around AU\$50,000 a night.

Spanning more than 800 metres over two floors, the Penthouse has 360-degree views from its 88th-floor perch. Taking in everything from Sydney Harbour to the

Blue Mountains, the Penthouse is fully integrated into the Crown Sydney, which includes 24-hour concierge, valet parking and access to the gym and tennis court.

The Penthouse has its own pool, but you can also access the private residents' pool with serviced cabanas. Plus, there's a six-star spa to compete with the newly opened Sofitel Spa in Darling Harbour and the incredible Darling Spa at the Darling Hotel.

Sydney is also home to the newly opened Capella Sydney, which has a 235-square-metre suite with views of the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Sydney skyline. The public spaces are adorned with commissioned and collected artworks, and are worth a walkthrough if you're in the CBD. For those who like to be in the heart of the action, the Capella is close to the designer stores of Elizabeth and Pitt Streets and just a stone's throw from an abundance of high-level dining experiences.

Vying for a well-earned place on the luxury Sydney stage is the soon-to-arrive W Sydney. Located within The Ribbon building designed by acclaimed local architects Hassell, W Sydney rises above the roadway to hug Darling Harbour with its dramatic curvilinear shape, forming a spectacular gateway to the city.

Stepping across the threshold, guests encounter a design experience like no other, shaped by interior designers Bowler James Brindley. Every level unfolds its own story at W Sydney, shaping a guest journey that's anything but ordinary.

On W Sydney's uppermost level is an oasis with an entirely different, high-energy vibe. WET DECK is arguably the beacon of the hotel, with its commanding views over Darling Harbour and its colourful, 30-metre infinity pool.

Inspired by the sleek lines of a superyacht, Level 29 symbolises what lies beneath the waterline, embracing the colours and textures of the sea. In the pool, a series of jellyfish created in Italian glass mosaic tiles



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY BARANGAROO



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY TIMOTHY KAYE

Above: The Premier Harbour Bridge Suite at Crown Towers Sydney radiates opulence and style.

Left: The Capella Sydney is in the heart of the action in Sydney's CBD.

Below: The new W Sydney is a design experience in itself.

inject a larrikin hallmark into the much-coveted setting.

If you're overawed at the new lot of accommodation in Sydney, don't even look at the enormous list of restaurants that are opening. There's St Siandra at the Spit in

Mosman, Petermen from the duo behind Saint Peter at St Leonards, Brasserie 1930 in the Capella Sydney, Longshore in Chippendale, Palazzo Salato in the CBD, and The Charles Grand Brasserie and Bar in the CBD just to name a few.



PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY W SYDNEY

PHOTOGRAPHY: DIANNA SNAPE



Queen Vic

The rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne is not to be underestimated, and it comes as no surprise that Melbourne will not be outdone. Several luxury brands are making their mark here, including Le Méridien, which has just opened its doors.

Boasting a stunning pool deck with a view of Parliament, Fitzroy Gardens and the city skyline, Le Méridien Melbourne marks the brand's reintroduction to the Australian market. Standing proud behind its iconic Art Deco facade, the 12-storey property features mid-century-inspired interiors and subtle nuances to its halcyon heritage.

Located on levels 64 to 77 of one of four skyscrapers that make up the city's flash new urban mixed-use project West Side Place, The Ritz-Carlton Melbourne just opened in March and has been referred to as the Southern Hemisphere's tallest hotel. With dramatic views on all sides, this much-anticipated opening has 257 luxury guest rooms and suites as well as conference and event facilities, a signature restaurant, destination bar and wellness facilities.

The Ritz-Carlton Suite, one of the city's largest, spans the length of the building and

Once the original home of Rolls-Royce in Melbourne, this 1920s gem has been restored to its Art Deco glory, complete with a 14-metre-high marble fireplace in the lobby and a 2-metre-wide chandelier.

boasts a separate living and dining room, private pantry, walkthrough wardrobe and in-room sauna. Club Level suites offer access to a signature Ritz-Carlton Club, a private sanctuary to work, rest or play while experiencing the most elevated personalised service and curated culinary journeys throughout the day. Thoughtful touches such as a towel imbued with seasonal native fragrances presented on arrival are hallmarks of the Club.

The Royce, which also opened in March, has undergone a lavish refurbishment.

Left: Le Méridien Melbourne and (below) The Spa at The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne. Opposite (top to bottom): The Royce, Melbourne; Ardo in Townsville; Villa Aman, Port Douglas.

Once one of Australia's most prestigious automobile showrooms and the original home of Rolls-Royce in Melbourne, this 1920s gem has been restored to its Art Deco glory, complete with a 14-metre-high marble fireplace in the lobby lounge and a 2-metre-wide chandelier.

The hotel offers 96 rooms and suites, many of which offer balconies with views of Melbourne's CBD and Shrine of Remembrance. There's also all-day dining in the Showroom Bar, along with breakfast in the Conservatory and private events in the Library and Ballroom.

Found deep within the vibrant heart of Melbourne's many famed laneways, Ovolo Hotels has launched the stylish Laneways by Ovolo and the elevated taphouse Amphlett House. Offering a big personality, look forward to an eclectic inner-city stay infused with a rebel spirit.

Bursting with creative flair, Laneways by Ovolo is a colourful nod to Melbourne's spray-painted streets. With 42 Memphis-inspired rooms tailored to the weekend adventurer and corporate crusader alike, it's the perfect spot for travellers to slip on some sneakers and hit the cobblestones, or maybe catch a show in the city's thriving theatre district.

Laneways by Ovolo elevates their already unique offering and personal touches with reimagined public spaces and rooms by Australian interior designers Luchetti Krelle. Plus, there's an all-new, drinks-on-tap experience spearheaded by two of Australia's hospitality finest – Andrea Gualdi, co-founder of Maybe Sammy, awarded The Best Bar in Australasia 2021 by The World's 50 Best Bars, and much-loved Melburnian and celebrated chef Ian Curley.

Up east

In Queensland, there are several openings for superyacht owners to get excited about. First is the announcement by the owners of Orpheus Island Lodge that they will be opening an even more exclusive island residence. Pelorus Private Island will have just four cabins and can only be reached by helicopter or yacht. The residence will be reminiscent of the Queensland beach house, with luxurious appointments.

Offering coral gardens brimming with colour, sandy white beaches and a lush

verdant hillside, the private hideaway will be serviced by a dedicated team. Whether snorkelling or diving the pristine fringing reef accessible directly from the beach, cruising the Great Palm Island Group on an Iguana 31 amphibious yacht, fishing for the most sought-after reef species in the world, or indulging in a gourmet picnic on a secluded beach, guests will be spoilt for choice when staying at this slice of paradise. Set to open at the end of 2023, it will be the perfect place to escape your mainland worries.

Also soon to be completed is the AU\$88-million luxury resort coming to Townsville, Ardo. It will no doubt be the perfect mainland stay before skipping off to the reef, and is the latest addition to the Morris Group's offering, which includes the neighbouring Ville Resort-Casino and the Northern Escape Collection, known for Orpheus Island Lodge.

The Ville CEO Michael Jones notes, "Ardo will bring a new level of luxury accommodation to North Queensland with 132 sprawling rooms and suites, casual and fine-dining restaurants, a day spa and a rooftop pool deck and bar. This will join the Ville's current restaurants, bars, casino and resort accommodation to offer a complete entertainment precinct in Townsville."

In Port Douglas, Private Collection by Spicers welcomes Villa Aman. Nestled in the treetops amidst the peaceful surrounds of Flagstaff Hill, Villa Aman offers 180-degree panoramic views. Where the ocean meets the rainforest, this holiday hideaway has four bedrooms, four bathrooms, a magnesium



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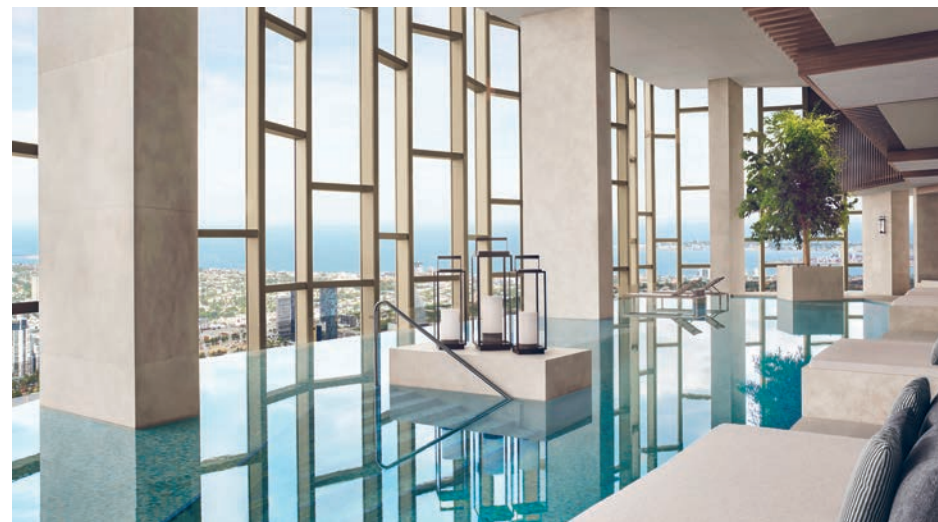
PHOTOGRAPHY: MORRIS GROUP

Where the ocean meets the rainforest, this hideaway has four bedrooms, four bathrooms, a magnesium swimming pool, spa and a number of outdoor entertaining areas, with tranquil ponds.

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Featuring stunning artwork, generous sofas and beautiful furnishings, the stylish refurbishment of this architecturally designed home in the Spanish coastal style was completed in August 2022.

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY THE RITZ-CARLTON MELBOURNE



PHOTOGRAPHY: PRIVATE COLLECTION BY SPICERS



PHOTOGRAPHY: LANGHAM GOLD COAST



PHOTOGRAPHY: QUEENS WHARF BRISBANE



An hour's drive from Brisbane in the heart of the Scenic Rim, Private Collection by Spicers has also opened Mount French Lodge. With four luxuriously appointed suites for a maximum of eight guests, enjoy fireplaces in each suite, a swimming pool, lawn tennis and walking trails. The heart of the property is the Great Room with its sweeping views across the valley to the mountains.

Brisbane is set to become one of the hottest spots for travellers leading up to the Olympics and beyond, so stay at one of three luxury hotels at the Queens Wharf Complex.

The Star is scheduled to open before Christmas, and the six-star Rosewood hotel is slated for 2024. This multi-billion-dollar development covers more than 12 hectares of CBD land and is perfectly positioned for shopping, restaurants and entertainment – in short, everything a yachtie might seek in the increasingly vibrant capital of Queensland.

The newest hotel on the Gold Coast is the luxurious Langham, which officially opened at the end of 2022. Its restaurant, T'Ang Court, has already been awarded one Chef's Hat. A signature feature is the Chuan Spa – set in a peaceful oasis, the range of divine

This page (top to bottom): The Langham is the Gold Coast's newest hotel; Brisbane's Queens Wharf offers three luxury hotels; the all-new Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island.

treatments is guided by the five elements of wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

The best room in the house, however, is the Chairman's Ocean Suite on the 20th floor. The palatial suite is opulent in every way, from the marble bathroom to the panoramic views and the cloud-like beds. It's a place you'll want to lay your head for more than a few nights.

South by west

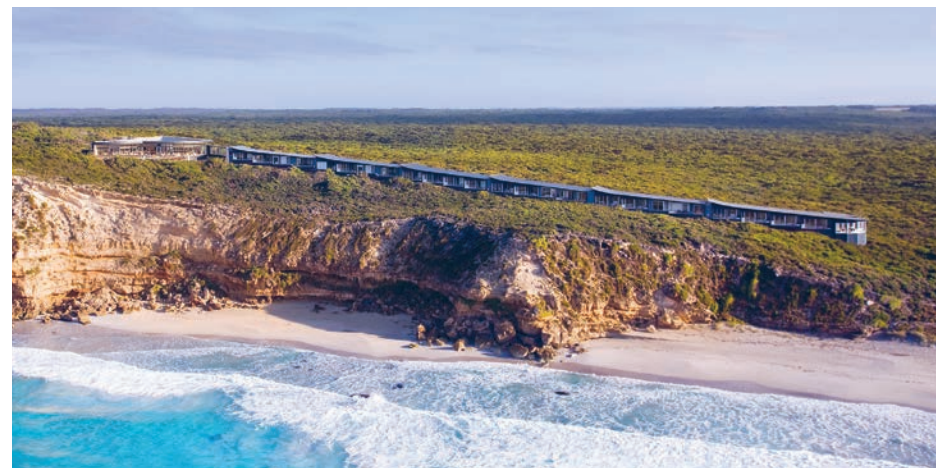
The latest addition in South Australia is the new iteration of Southern Ocean Lodge, which bears a similar footprint to its award-winning original. Complete with views of the Southern Ocean and a string of luxurious guest suites easing along the coastline, this decadent South Australian outpost is most definitely worth the trip.

Combining contemporary design, world-class dining and a personal connection with nature, Southern Ocean Lodge celebrates the resilient spirit of Kangaroo Island, its wildlife and its community. The Baillie Lodges flagship property reopens in December 2023.

Finally, Western Australia and Tasmania have both launched luxury offerings since 2020, including Samphire on Rottnest Island in WA and the divine Como The Treasury in Perth. In Tasmania, check out The Tasman and the Hotel Verge in Launceston.

There's no doubt 2023 is set to be a rewarding year if you're after new and exciting abodes. Choices abound, and with them come hotel spas for high-level pampering, chef-hatted restaurants for high-level tasting, and shopping galore for high-life accoutrements. What could possibly tempt you more? [Q](#)

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PHOTOGRAPHY: SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE