

# THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN Travel + LUXURY

MAY 27-28, 2023

## THE SNOW REPORT

Which Australian resort is right for you?

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DEPARTURE LOUNGE

# All in the name of field research



SUSAN KUROSAWA

A recent feature on harvest trails (T+L, May 13-14) based on seasonal produce has had me salivating for strawberries. Not just any strawberries but the biggest, plumpiest ones imaginable. It's not a stretch to say that strawberries are worshipped in Japan for more than just taste. To be considered on the scale of excellence are the perfection of a "nicely pointed shape", balance of "sweet and sour" and dramatic jewel-like colours. I once fronted up at The Ritz-Carlton Osaka's Splendido restaurant for a strawberry-themed feast. A masked mannequin with fairy-like wings and layered skirts was stretched across the buffet table, seemingly suspended over the pink fantasia of macar-

ons, jellies, cakes and tarts. There are more than 300 "registered" varieties of strawberries in Japan, including white, says my friend Akemi, and berry fever grips the land from (roughly) January to May and fields are full of pickers.

It does make me wonder what lesser types might be unregistered or lacking in credentials. But changing weather patterns across the world can make such festivals and prime tourism seasons unpredictable. For example, mid-June to mid-July is lavender time in Provence so there's a gloriously fragrant window of opportunity. The town of Valesole holds a harvest festival on the third Sunday of July, and Sault follows in mid-August. Early July is your

best bet but it's now a "moving target" as my French-Australian mate Jean-Guy would say. I guess you just get one good shot.

Which heralds the truth that nothing is certain in Nature so let's spare a thought for tour operators whose selling points are based around seasonal attractions. The latter is always the goal on safari in Africa so imagine the stress for rangers taking out guests when there's not a trace of the Big Five to be spotted. This is where the so-called Little Five come into their own. Hail the rhino beetle, buffalo weaver, ant lion, leopard tortoise and elephant shrew, their names mimicking famous namesakes. Not real compensation, but kind

of neat and fun. What to do on a truffle hunt when there's no trace of the precious bounty? Again, in France, pop open the picnic basket and spread truffle pate on fresh baguette and pop open a bottle of red. Works a treat.

Now back to Japan where the island of Shizuoka accounts for about 40 per cent of the national green tea crop and the very low yields from producers such as Sayama are revered for their rarity. Just like the finest wines, in fact. Best served with a side shot of appreciation and a cheer for all those farmers and producers and tourism stalwarts who brave the elements and uncertainties to nourish our hearts and souls.

Heroes, all.

IN THE NEWS

**Queensland's Caravan and Camping Supershow** is on at Brisbane Showground, Bowen Hills, June 6-11. Caravan and RV rentals are fuelling sector growth via "try before you buy" sharing communities such as Camplify and interest from younger travellers. [caravanqld.com.au](http://caravanqld.com.au)

**Dusit Hotels & Resorts** has three new openings. In Bangkok, ASAI Bangkok Sathorn, with co-working spaces and all-day dining options, has launched, along with super-chic 179-room dusitD2 Samyan. Next up, in early June, is the group's first venture in Japan, the sleek ASAI Kyoto Shijo. [dusit.com](http://dusit.com)

South Australian wineries have scored highly in the 2023 Great Wine Capitals Awards, while the global crown for Innovative Wine Tourism Experiences goes to **Grapes for Good**, a tourism partnership between six leading Langhorne Creek wine producers and Zoos SA to support conservation of endangered species at **Monarto Zoo**. [greatwinecapitals.com](http://greatwinecapitals.com)

Reflections Holiday Parks now has 28 dog-friendly members in NSW, including at **Red Rock** on the Coffs Coast north of Sydney. The operator has also just opened six premium cabins at **Massy Greene** at **Brunswick Heads**, on the upper North Coast, for pooch-free patrons. [reflectionsholidayparks.com.au](http://reflectionsholidayparks.com.au)



Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay parlayed 15 minutes at the top of the world into a lifetime of fame when they reached the peak of Mount Everest on May 29, 1953. Many attempts had been made to conquer the 8849m mountain, now shared between Nepal and Tibet (China), before the lanky New Zealander and the Nepali-Indian mountaineer "knocked it off", as Hillary reportedly said afterwards. More than 6000 people have climbed since, from 13-year-olds to octogenarians. Recently Nepali sherpa Kami Rita, 53, beat his own record with a 27th ascent. Tragically, there have been more than 300 deaths, including that of Australian Jason Kennison, 40, who lost his life during the descent, on May 19. [nationalgeographic.org](http://nationalgeographic.org)  
JILL ROWBOTHAM

DEALS OF THE WEEK



TRAVEL + LUXURY

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**GOURMET GALLIVANT**  
BAROSSA VALLEY, SA

The Louise's exclusive two-night Yalumba Wine Weekend package features a five-course degustation menu at the property's Appellation restaurant, hosted by Yalumba chief winemaker Louisa Rose; guided tour of the Barossa Farmers Markets; and hosted lunch at Yalumba Wine Tank with a menu by Mark Godbeer, executive chef of stablemate Baillie Lodges property Silky Oaks Lodge. **Fine print** Two nights June 23-25, with breakfasts plus dinners with matched wines; from \$3600 for two in a Stonewall Suite. [baillielodges.com.au](http://baillielodges.com.au)

**EARLYBIRD BONANZA**  
ASIA

Travelmarvel's 2024 escorted Asia holiday program comes with earlybird savings for bookings on 11 itineraries through India, Sri Lanka, South Korea and Japan. Options include rail and land, plus river cruising, a new 15-day Great Rail Journey of South India and Kerala, and a 20-day Lower Ganges, Golden Triangle and Mumbai cruise-rail. **Fine print** Save from \$1400-\$2600 a couple until Feb 29, 2024, until sold out. Great Rail Journey from \$4195 a person twin-share, includes \$1400 saving per couple. [travelmarvel.com.au](http://travelmarvel.com.au)

**FESTIVAL FROLICS**  
SYDNEY

Four Seasons Sydney, in ringside harbour position, is going all out with Vivid Sydney celebrations. There's a Glow Party (with face paint, neon and DJ beats) at Grain Bar (on the weekends), vibrant new menus at Muse Kitchen & Bar, and Bubble Dogs (hot dogs to go) served from a wood-fired grill Fridays-Sundays 6pm-9pm on the hotel's front driveway. **Fine print** Overnight Vivid Sydney package with buffet breakfast and Vivid-themed amenity, from \$490; valid to June 17. [fourseasons.com](http://fourseasons.com)

**SEA AND TELL**  
ADVENTURES AHOY

Hurtigruten Expeditions is offering up to 30 per cent off all departure and itineraries between April 23, 2024 and March 18, 2025. This includes Antarctica, Alaska, Greenland, Galapagos and the British Isles, aboard state-of-the-art small ships with teams of specialist lecturers and guides. Single supplements for solo travellers are waived on selected 12-day round trips from Bergen. **Fine print** Discount is available for all new bookings made by August 31, 2023, unless sold out prior. [hurtigruten.com.au](http://hurtigruten.com.au)

Send Deals of the Week to [travel@theaustralian.com.au](mailto:travel@theaustralian.com.au)