



## CHARLIE CARLOW, FOUNDER OF ARKABA & BAMURRU PLAINS

FLINDERS RANGES, SOUTH AUSTRALIA & TOP END, NORTHERN TERRITORY

Australian-born – but with a hint of an English accent from his time working in aviation in the UK and South Africa – Charlie Carlow is the founder of Wild Bush Luxury. Two remarkable, and completely different, eco-tourism ventures: Arkaba Conservancy, a former sheep station turned private nature refuge in the Flinders Ranges of outback South Australia; and Bamurru Plains, a wetlands safari lodge near Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory.

At Arkaba, Charlie's vision and dedication saw the rewilding of the property's 24,000 hectares (60,000 acres) of arid land, which had been degraded by more than a century of sheep grazing. The last sheep were removed in 2013, and non-native species, like feral cats and goats, are actively suppressed.

"It takes a lot of effort not only keeping neighbours' sheep out," says Charlie, "but also feral predators and herbivores, to give native species the chance to revegetate the landscape. We were lucky we have a large enough amount of land and team of expert guides and conservationists that we can genuinely do that."

And at Bamurru Plains, guests stay in elevated Safari Bungalows above wetlands teeming with birds and water buffalo. "You can hear and see and almost touch everything that's around you," Charlie says. "There's a mesh screen from ceiling to floor and it goes 180 degrees around the bed, so it feels like you're camping in comfort and are very connected to nature."

Often, particularly at Arkaba, guests don't know they're coming into a conservation story. And hopefully we send them away with a better understanding and enormous appreciation for how tourism and conservation together can deliver such a rewarding experience.

