Luxury Lodges of Australia MEDIA BACKGROUNDERS: NEWS

# Seasonal Update

# January 2024

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| There’s so much happening across the 19 members of Luxury Lodges of Australia (LLoA), making good news for travellers and media alike. This **Media News and Emerging Trends** is aspringboard for conversations around emerging travel trends plus a roundup of newsworthy developments, new experiences, upcoming events and seasonal promotions from across the collection. | | |
| LLoA Resources | | |
| New!Media and Trade PortalMedia Backgrounders | | * Hot off the presses is our new media and trade portal offering easy access to a comprehensive set of media resources and assets. Access is a simple signup (required for privacy and IP reasons). <http://www.luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/trade-media> Be sure to have a browse and bookmark this page as we will update regularly. * A suite of [media backgrounders](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/trade-media-downloads/#media-backgrounders) includes a roundup of media bites with links to more detail across diverse and current themes including food and wine, environmental and cultural sustainability, First Nations experiences, architecture, art & design, our people and [more](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/trade-media-downloads/#media-backgrounders). |
| Key Travel Trends and Conversation Launch Points | | |
| Southern Ocean LodgeOpened December 2023 On Board Welcomed | | * After almost four years in the planning, design and construction, Baillie Lodges’ flagship property [Southern Ocean Lodge](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/southernoceanlodge/) has reopened on the wildly beautiful south coast of South Australia’s Kangaroo Island. Southern Ocean Lodge’s original architect Max Pritchard and his team have led the recreation of the property and have included all the features guests loved best along with some considered extras. A founding member and leading proponent of all aspects of the Luxury Lodges of Australia DNA, the lodge combines superb location and the timeless features of the original with significant high-appeal new features including the ultra-premium 4-bedroom Ocean Pavilion and redesigned and reoriented suites each offering a bath and fireplace; an expanded horizon pool on the terrace overlooking the Southern Ocean; a newly envisioned Southern Spa sited amongst the coastal wilderness with three treatment rooms, a gym and sauna, outdoor lounging and hot and cold plunge pools. Environmental sustainability is essential to the lodge’s new generation design, with solar and battery power allowing the luxury lodge to run entirely off grid in its remote location. Kangaroo Island’s close-knit community of growers, fishers, winemakers and distillers is excited to welcome visitors with fresh local produce ready to be enjoyed by all. * Purpose-built for exploring Tasmania’s wild and remote frontiers, Odalisque III by [On Board](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/on-board/) is welcomed as the latest ‘floating’ member of the Luxury Lodges of Australia collection. Built and launched in Tasmania by On Board in 2023, Odalisque III is an intimate, expedition vessel (catamaran) that delivers a maximum of 12 guests in seven cabins to some of the farthest reaches of the state’s UNESCO World Heritage-listed wilderness. The signature expedition is a 5 day trip, accessed by sea-plane, to the wild South West of Tasmania to Port Davey. Expedition inclusions encompass daily guided walks, shore excursions & wilderness cruises by tender; tailored itineraries including walking, historic sites, birdwatching, photography, beachcombing, luxury accommodation onboard expedition-vessel Odalisque, expert local crew including interpretive guide, skipper, host and chef, return scenic flights from Hobart to the southwest wilderness via seaplane, all meals featuring gourmet Tasmanian produce, a curated range of local wine, beers, spirits and non-alcoholic beverages. |
| Villas within lodges | | * The ‘[Villa within a Luxury Lodge’](https://emag.lodgelife.com.au/issue-2/lodge-villas), positioned in prime ‘wow’ locations, with all the experiential offerings, hospitality excellence and personalised service and amenities of a luxury lodge is super-appealing for travellers playing catchup on ‘celebration escapes’ and friends and family gatherings. Private luxury villas in the collection include: * Dairy Flat Lodge, Lake House, Daylesford VIC * The House at Lizard Island, Great Barrier Reef QLD * Daintree Pavilion, Silky Oaks Lodge, Tropical North QLD * Dune Pavilion, Longitude 131°, Uluru NT * Ocean Pavilion, Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island SA * Outback Pavilion, Mt Mulligan Lodge, Northern Outback QLD * Private Lodge, Spicers Peak Lodge, Scenic Rim QLD * Jabiru Suite, Bamurru Plains, Top End, NT * The Residence, Cape Lodge, Margaret River WA |
| The Halo Effect Sustainability  Value proposition  Continuous investment | | * Each of the lodges seeks to partner as extensively as possible, often exclusively, with local producers of food and drinks, artists, designers, artists, creators and spa experts as well as local tour operators and tradespeople. The influence of one luxury lodge can have a significant an exponential effect on the economy of the region they are located in.   Across 19 member lodges, all located in unique Australian regions, Luxury Lodges of Australia collectively offers more than 350 experiences of each lodge’s destination, partnering with more than 4000 other small, local Australian businesses. From local specialist guides and tour operators who are experts in their field to suppliers, the small scale, often sustainable or regenerative food producers, fishermen, cheesemongers, winemakers, distillers and brewers who bring a fresh innovative taste of the location to the daily changing menus, to local artists and artisans from all disciplines.  This sustained economic support for suppliers acts as further incentive for small businesses to set up in nearby regional locations, enriching the community and offering a genuine sense of place for visiting guests. The term ‘halo effect’ describes the rich tapestry of experience created for guests that extends beyond just a stay, it’s an intrinsic contributor to the rich, dynamic character of a lodge. A great example is the Lake House in Victoria’s Daylesford spa country, where the restaurant’s exclusive use of local and sustainably produced ingredients led to a proliferation of small and artisan producers, which in turn has contributed to the region’s growth and appeal as a food-tourism destination. In addition, guests are able to visit Dairy Flat Farm by Lake House, their own regenerative farm, to taste, see and learn about provenance, flavour, nutrition and the passion for these suppliers for regenerative, sustainable farming. Guests are connecting with and supporting the local community just by staying at the lodge. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/trade-media-downloads/#media-backgrounders)   * The Luxury Lodges of Australia are each dedicated to the ecological and cultural sustainability of the environments and communities in which they operate. Operating sustainably is essential to the ongoing appeal of a destination and ultimately to the sustained success of the business. More and more, sustainable operation and indeed regenerative impact is a consumer expectation. Travellers are conscious of the impact of their travel on the places they visit, and so [‘travel with purpose’](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/sustainability/) is a principal focus for each lodge. The initiatives in place vary according to the destination, its natural environment, wildlife, community and culture. ‘Citizen science’ opportunities that are both educational and enriching for guests are increasingly popular as guests seek a more active, positive connection with the environment. Visit the dedicated sustainability page with up-to-date information on each of the lodges here: <https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/sustainability/> * As we reflect on the travel trends off the back of the pandemic, geo-political unrest and conflict, and cost-of-living crises globally, 2023 can be seen as another ‘levelling’ year. Travel has been back with a vengeance, but the cost and quality of travel has shocked many. As we look ahead, the value proposition offered by Australia and the Luxury Lodges is compelling. The inclusive rate structures and seamless offering of premium local experiences of the destination, of excellent, local produce-led dining and wines and natural isolation and exclusivity of access to place will once again appeal to those looking to connect with each other, and with the people and places they’re visiting on holidays. * A common theme of each of the 19 LLOA members across its nearly 15-year history is one of continuous innovation and investment. This investment is in response to respond to changes in surrounding physical circumstances like climate, innovation in experience development and deepened engagement with the local community, and in response to evolving traveller trends.   **Recent highlights include:**  - Southern Ocean Lodge - $55 million rebuild, opened December 2023  - Lake House - reface July 2023  - Capella Lodge – seasonal refreshment July 2023  - qualia – guest spaces refurbishment July 2023  - On Board – brand new expedition vessel launched March 2023  - Bamurru Plains - new Jabiru Suites launched March 2023  - The House at Lizard Island - launched January 2022  - The Louise - $3 million glamover, reopened Sept 2022  - Silky Oaks Lodge - $20million refurbishment, reopened December 2021  **Imminent investment highlights:**  - Mt Mulligan Lodge – refurbishment and new spa tent, reopening March 2024  - Longitude 131° – significant soft refurbishment, February 2024 closure.  In the pipeline:  - Cape Lodge – masterplan for a significant refurbishment in development. |
| Lodge UpdatesLodge news and story angle teasers | | |
| Arkaba ConservancyFlinders Rangers, SA | | * Fifteen years down the track as a private wildlife conservancy. The result is a visible change to the landscape and biodiversity of flora and fauna. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/arkaba/business-with-purpose/) |
| Bamurru PlainsTop End, NT | | * Launched in April 2023, Bamurru Plains' new Jabiru Retreat, features two safari bungalows linked by a walkway to a private plunge pool and deck area, and offers king-split/twin beds with swag bedding options for children under 18, making it a perfect hideaway for two couples, multi-gen families, or honeymooners seeking privacy. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/bamurru-plains-new-jabiru-retreat/) * Join Canon Master, Richard I'Anson, as he returns to Bamurru Plains to host his much-loved Top End Wilderness Photo Safari over the dates April 7-11, 2024. Limited to nine places, guests will enjoy a hands-on experience with Richard acting as mentor, as he shares his professional tips on mastering the lens while capturing the beauty of Australia’s tropical Top End. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/top-end-wilderness-photo-safari-richard-ianson/). |
| Capella LodgeLord Howe Island, NSW | | * Capella has welcomed Dennis Tierney as Executive Chef. |
| Cape LodgeMargaret River, WA | | * Stay tuned for master plan for major upgrades and renewal for [Cape Lodge](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/capelodge/). |
| Dairy Flat Lodge  at Lake HouseDaylesford, VIC | | * Dairy Flat Lodge, the stand-alone private villa set a short drive from the revered Lake House in Victoria’s Daylesford spa country, is now formally adopted into the Lake House membership of Luxury Lodges of Australia. Luxury Lodges of Australia Executive Chair Penny Rafferty said, “Now more than ever more, we see that the exclusivity and privacy of a villa or private residence has high appeal for couples, families, multi-generational and ‘skip-gen’ gatherings (grandparents and grandchildren).” [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/welcome-dairy-flat-lodge-by-lake-house/) * New Spa Offering – The Farm Spa Experience. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/farm-spa-experience/) |
| Lake HouseDaylesford, VIC | | * Stay tuned: Lake House is celebrating 40 years of operation and innovation in 2024 – and we will be celebrating their extraordinary code of hospitality, forged over the decades through continuous innovation and tireless pursuit of excellence in hospitality combined with collaboration and community building. Decades of innovation and investment have led to the current highlight which is the regenerative farm at Dairy Flat Lodge. * The Lake House restaurant has been awarded two hats (taking their total to 76 hats and countless other accolades since 1984) in the Good Food Guide Awards 2023 with a score of 17.5/20. “Exacting cooking, luxe linen and gilded service fluctuate in fashion, but the Wolf-Tasker clan’s unwavering dedication to substance, classic style and grow-it-yourself dining means Daylesford’s destination fine-diner is as pertinent as ever…  So, too the unchanging package: that walk-in-cellar packed with hedonistic vintages, the all-seasons lake views, the silken service. Unbeatable, always.” [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/lake-house-two-chefs-hats/) |
| El Questro HomesteadThe Kimberley, WALizard IslandGreat Barrier Reef, QLD | | * A historic partnership announcement at El Questro:  The G’day Group has announced the signing of a historic 99-year Indigenous Land Use Agreement between the Western Australian Government and the Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation (WAC), Traditional Owners of the land on which El Questro Homestead operates. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/el-questro-homestead-historic-land-deal/) * Bookings are now open for 2024/25 season - important to note a new three night minimum stay has been introduced for El Questro Homestead bookings. * The first partnership with Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef took place in October 2022 as the Great Reef Census 3 recruited up to 80 boats departing from Lizard Island’s Anchor Bay to survey the region’s remote reefs [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/lizard-island-partners-with-citizens-of-the-great-barrier-reef/). The team of volunteer citizen scientists returns to the Great Barrier Reef’s remote northerly waters in 2024, with a return partnership with Lizard Island resort. * Esteemed luxury hospitality veteran Mark Leslie has joined [Lizard Island](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/lizardisland/) resort in the role of General Manager, bringing with him global experience across a number of luxury hotel brands. * Two new ‘bolt-on’ packages are now on offer at Lizard Island; a Wellness package from $360 per person which includes a one-hour Spa Treatment in Essentia Day Spa per guest, a morning yoga class in the beachside pavilion, a guided nature walk or hike up to spectacular Cook’s Look, a guided Stand-up Paddleboard or kayak tour around the coral. An Adventure package is also on offer from $856 per person which includes a guided Aqua Darts Tour and a guided nature walk or hike up to spectacular Cook’s Look. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/lizard-island-luxury-lifestyle-packages/) |
| Longitude 131°Uluru, NTMt Mulligan LodgeNorthern Outback, QLDOn Board Southwest Coast, TAS Pretty Beach House Bouddi National Park, NSW qualia Great Barrier Reef, QLD Saffire FreycinetFreycinet, TASSal SalisNingaloo Reef, WA | | * In partnership with the Ernabella Arts Community in the APY Lands, a new series of five Aboriginal artists-in-residence visits in 2024 offers an extraordinary hance to connect with the artists and learn about their life and work. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/artists-in-residence-longitude131/) * The property will undergo a significant refurbishment in February 2024, and close for the month. The lodge reopens on March 1, 2024. * [Mt Mulligan Lodge](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/mtmulliganlodge/) is currently closed for a refurbishment that will include a new addition - a Spa Tent. Plans are also in place to increase the number of Outback Rooms. A perfect accommodation choice for those travelling individually or as a duo, the Outback rooms are situated on the water’s edge of a sparkling eucalyptus-fringed weir and captures the majestic beauty and moods of the 18-kilometre-long sandstone escarpment of Mount Mulligan. The property will reopen on Friday March 1, 2024. * The newest member of the collection, On Board delivers guests to Tasmania’s remote west coast on its premium expedition ship, Odalisque III. On Board’s signature experience is a five-day discovery of Port Davey on the remote Southwest coast, a spectacular region inaccessible by road. Home to a protected marine park, the Southwest National Park and UNESCO Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the vast Port Davey harbour region is one of the world’s few remaining places of raw, untamed beauty and the destination for epic, unforgettable adventures. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/on-board/) * [Pretty Beach House](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/prettybeachhouse/) is delighted to announce the appointment of Melissa (Missy) Lamb as Lodge Manager. Missy has previously held senior positions in some of Sydney’s leading restaurants and hotels including Rockpool and Sheraton on the Park. * Sydney Oyster Farm Tours take guests on an adventure to a working oyster farm for an authentic Australian “ocean to plate” experience on the Hawkesbury River. The experience includes learning to shuck oysters, a boat ride to the oyster farms and a gourmet seafood lunch on the beach with spectacular views [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/activity/sydney-oyster-farm/) * qualia and The Australian Ballet present ‘Pas de Deux in Paradise’ this May, witness exclusive performances of some of Australia’s top dances with an idyllic Whitsunday Islands backdrop. Experience dancing at its finest and a rare insight into the life behind the scenes of The Australian Ballet. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/qualia-showcases-the-australian-ballet/) * Saffire has launched a swag of new experiences including a Whisky adventure at the Waubs Harbour Distillery in Bicheno, a Seafood and Sparkling half-day cruise and a new Coast to Coast Luxury experience in partnership with luxury expeditions operator On Board. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/saffire-freycinet-waubs-harbour-whiskey-distillery-experience/) * Recently won the award for the best Sustainable Luxury Resort in the [2023 Luxury Travel Gold List Awards](https://www.luxurytravelmag.com.au/2023/11/luxury-travel-gold-list-awards-2023-winners/?mkt_tok=NDAxLVVOWi04NDAAAAGPvWQSg2Yyt8sejp9xYaCAN2AwpJ4AeaEuHhK36bDzNGHNPd9WHRuPfdSX42FOXG-i9dyD2Z9A_1aQWnteNeiWMtbgrWxVCOFJmnwM2_BHJKE7KA). [Sal Salis](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/salsalis/)is a role model for partnerships between private sector tourism and National Parks. Established under a lease agreement with Western Australia’s Parks and Wildlife Service, it is one of Australia’s most environmentally-sound tourism properties. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/sal-salis-wins-best-sustainable-luxury-resort/) |
| Silky Oaks LodgeThe Daintree, QLD | | * Silky Oaks Lodge has welcomed Sardinian-born Edo Pitzalis as new Executive Chef. * A new three-night [Rainforest to Reef](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/silky-oaks-rainforest-to-reef-offer/) package includes two bonus adventures of the destination:   + The First Nations Ngadiku Dreamtime walk at Mossman Gorge: a 90-minute Indigenous guided walking discovery of the Daintree Rainforest with return transfers.   + Full day Great Barrier Reef cruise with Sailaway, including lunch, snorkelling and return transfers. |
| Southern Ocean LodgeKangaroo Island, SA | | * Having been razed in the summer bushfires of 2019/20, Baillie Lodges flagship property Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island has now reopened to global acclaim. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/southernoceanlodge/) |
| Spicers Peak LodgeHigh Country, QLD | | * Spicers Peak Lodge has introduced a new helicopter fishing experience with First Nations Guide, Andrew Watego. This incredible Aboriginal Fishing Experience will see guests arrive by helicopter from Spicers Peak Lodge, with a scenic flight to North Stradbroke Island, Minjerribah. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/first-nations-heli-fishing-experience/) |
| The LouiseBarossa Valley, SA | | * Following a $3million makeover under new owners Baillie Lodges in late 2022, The Louise offers guests a ‘backstage pass to the Barossa Valley’ [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/new-look-the-louise-open/) |
| True North  Adventure CruisesThe Kimberley, WA | | * True North Adventure Cruises has added the True North II to its membership of Luxury Lodges of Australia. This second vessel operates a very similar path to True North, with a more intimate experience for up to 22 guests. Featuring expedition tenders, on-board helicopter, combined saloon/lounge, dining salon with a ‘boardroom’ setting, sundeck, outdoor bar deck and a dedicated sports deck, True North II is purpose-built for coastal exploration, including the upper reaches of shallow river systems. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/lodges/truenorth/) |
| Our PeopleOn the move | | |
|  | * Sonya Smith has swapped the rainforest for the wineries, switching [Baillie Lodge’s](https://baillielodges.com.au/) properties from Silky Oaks Lodge to take on the role of General Manager at The Louise in the Barossa Valley. * Cape Lodge has welcomed a new General Manager, Tristan Jahme from El Questro Homestead and a new Head Chef, Adam Robson Chew. [More](https://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au/news-offers-events/new-chefs-head-culinary-team-at-cape-lodge/) * Bamurru Plains welcomes new General Manager Matthew Bowden along with a new Head Chef, Matthias Beer. Matthew and Matthias had previously worked together at El Questro Homestead. | |

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