

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN Travel + LUXURY

March 16-17, 2024 / theaustralian.com.au/travel

5

FASCINATING
CRUISES
ALONG OUR
SHORES

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Wild times on Kangaroo Island

—
New hotels on the horizon

—
Victoria's prosecco valley

—
A higher calling on Lord Howe

—
Ranch dressing in Byron Bay



3 LONG WAY ROUND

Another five-star ship making its maiden voyage down under is Silver Nova, which launched in 2023. It will make Silversea's first circumnavigation of Australia in October next year, a 47-day round-trip from Melbourne that will call at 23 destinations. Accommodating up to 728 guests, Silver Nova has one of the highest crew-to-guest ratios at sea (1:1.3) and is the line's most environmentally friendly ship so far. It also has nine dining options (including the S.A.L.T – Sea and Land Taste – venue) plus 10 gorgeous bars and lounges. In NSW, excursion options include a helicopter ride from Newcastle to the Hunter Valley for a wine-paired lunch. Further north, near Port Douglas, guests see Indigenous fishing and gathering at Cooya Beach, while in South Australia an "ocean safari" around Kangaroo Island gives sea-level encounters with wildlife.

Details: Departs October 14, 2025; from \$99,900 a person, twin-share, for a classic veranda suite.

silversea.com



4 BY THE BOOK

Cunard's Queen Elizabeth is hosting an impressive line-up of illustrious authors for its inaugural Australian Literature Festival at Sea in December 2024. During the five-night cruise from Sydney to Hobart and back, avid readers and aspiring wordsmiths will enjoy lectures, workshops and informal meet-and-greet sessions with writers at the top of their game. Talent from Australia and New Zealand includes Fiona McIntosh, Graeme Simsion, his wife, psychiatrist and co-author Anne Buist, Paul Cleave, Sue Williams, Anita Heiss and Elizabeth Stanley and, from Britain, much-loved author Alexander McCall Smith. Another big first for Cunard – and Australia – is the arrival of Queen Anne in Sydney in February 2025 on its maiden world cruise.

Details: Departs December 11; from \$2679 a person, twin-share, for a Britannia balcony stateroom.

cunard.com

1 THE TOP TEAM

The partnership between boutique Tasmanian expedition cruise company On Board and luxury lodge Saffire Freycinet is a marriage made in heaven. On Board operates expedition outings on the 12-passenger Odalisque III within Tasmania's remote UNESCO World Heritage-listed wilderness area in the southwest and along the east coast, while Saffire Freycinet cossets guests in supreme comfort in the Coles Bay region south of Bicheno. On Board's guides are incredibly knowledgeable about Tasmania's history, geology and wildlife, and onshore experiences are complemented with gourmet dining and beautifully designed staterooms. Coast to Coast Luxury itineraries combine three-night cruises in Port Davey and three-night stays at the award-winning Saffire Freycinet with scenic flights on On Board's private seaplane.

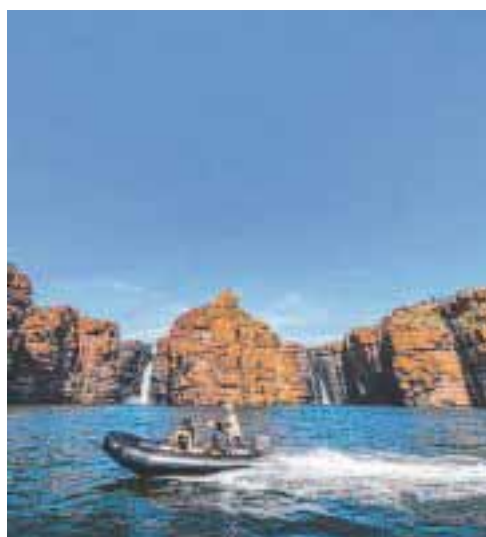
Details: Departs Hobart May 4 and December 7; from \$27,000 a person, twin-share, including seaplane transfers.

onboardexpeditions.com.au

MOST OF THE COAST

The local cruise calendar has some notable new voyages

SALLY MACMILLAN

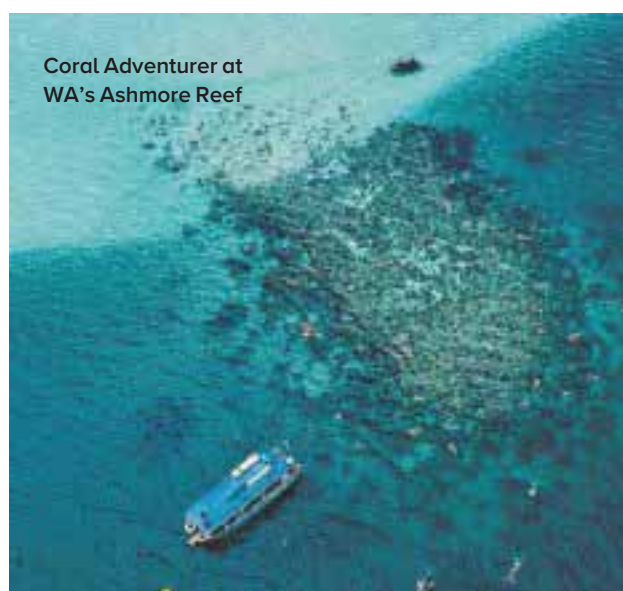


2 WEST IS BEST

Seabourn's latest state-of-the-art expedition vessel, Seabourn Pursuit, is heading to Australia for the first time this year to sail six 10-day voyages between Broome and Darwin from June to August. The ultra-luxe ship accommodates up to 264 guests and is equipped with two seven-person mini-submarines, along with more run-of-the-mill kit such as 24 zodiacs, kayaks, scuba diving and snorkelling gear. A 24-strong expedition team comprising scientists, academics and wilderness experts is on hand to guide excursions and lead daily briefings and presentations. At night, guests are entertained with live music and performances.

Details: A Broome to Darwin sailing departs June 22; from \$14,849 a person, twin-share, for a veranda suite.

seabourn.com



Coral Adventurer at WA's Ashmore Reef

5 WAY TO GO

Responding to strong demand after its 2023 circumnavigation of Australia, Queensland-based Coral Expeditions is launching its second iteration in October next year. Over two months, Coral Adventurer will take 112 intrepid guests to the furthest reaches of our diverse land on a 60-day journey themed "Australia's Coastal Legend". Coral Expeditions is Aussie through and through. Its three ships operate under the Australian maritime flag and are crewed by locals. As well as 48 planned shore excursions, there will be three specially tailored events: a cultural feast and performances in the Torres Strait Islands; a winemaker's lunch with paired wines in Margaret River; and a charter flight to a famous country homestead in outback Queensland. A new culinary program will also link shore excursions and local produce. Experts in fields ranging from marine biology and geology to ornithology and culture will be on hand to lead tours and give guests deeper insights into the remote communities, wildlife and landscapes.

Details: Departs October 17, 2025; from \$86,400 a person, twin-share, for a balcony stateroom.

coralexpeditions.com