

TRUE NORTH

Business with purpose

True luxury is experiencing wild frontiers

The remote Kimberley region of Western Australia is the size of California and twice the size of Victoria, with 13,000 kilometres of complex coastline but with less than 40,000 permanent residents. It's one of the world's last true, undisturbed wilderness areas, and one of the most ecologically diverse and pristine places on the planet.

The True North and True North II are purpose-built small expedition ships, with shallow drafts (no longer than 2.5 metres), and equipped with several expedition tenders and an onboard helicopter - and needs no shore-based infrastructure while on adventure. True North Adventure Cruises can access places bigger ships can't - and goes where few, humans have ventured before.

Exploring one of the most remote wilderness areas on the Australian continent aboard True North's signature Kimberley Wilderness Adventures is the only way to reach many of the region's most inaccessible and spectacular sites. The True North carries a maximum of 36 pampered but adventurous guests, guided by a crew of 22. The True North II is a more intimate experience with a maximum of 22 guests and a crew of 16.

It is a light footprint that makes an adventure cruise on board the True North one of the most environmentally sensitive and memorable ways of experiencing a very privileged access to a precious wilderness area.



A portal to preserving wilderness

While the True North is renowned for comfort and style, the focus and true luxury of a True North adventure is in the wilderness experience.

"The True North is our adventure platform, our guests' portal to the heart of wilderness. We venture way beyond the beaten track to where there are no tracks at all, and no other way to get there," explained True North Founder and CEO, Craig Howson, who pioneered coastal adventures in The Kimberley more than 30 years ago.

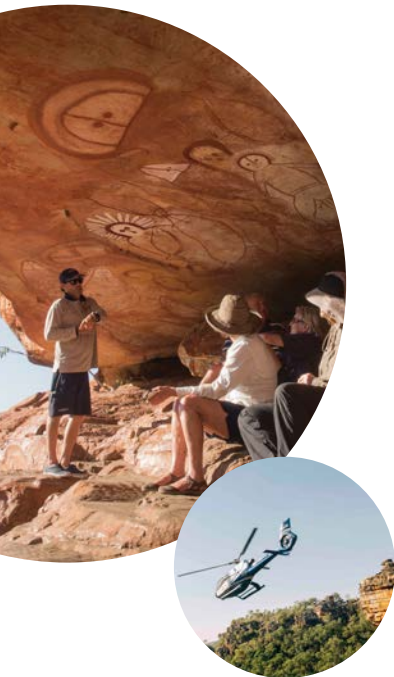
It's in that experience of pure wilderness that guests begin to gain an understanding of the jaw-dropping majesty, the cultural significance and mind-boggling age of the landscape.

"Our experiences are designed to ignite our guests' sense of wonder - and that in turn inspires an appreciation of the importance of preserving wilderness," said Craig Howson.

True North's flexible, activity-based itineraries offer guests a daily choice of experiences including wildlife and bird watching, hiking, fishing, sightseeing in the expedition vessels, picnics and sundowners on the beach, and exhilarating helicopter rides.

This approach defines all the True North itineraries, whether exploring The Kimberley, the offshore islands or south coast of Western Australia, the beautiful but seldom-visited coast of remote South Australia, and even Sydney Harbour and the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales.





Promise of enlightenment

“We believe that information and education are critical if people are to share responsibility for conserving wilderness and culture. Our guests don’t necessarily want to be lectured to, but they do want to be enlightened and inspired,” explained Craig Howsan.

The True North journeys generally includes a naturalist or guest lecturer who, in addition to the highly trained crew and guides, provides relaxed, informative and entertaining commentary and interpretation of the culture, landscape and history of the places visited.

The True North’s lounge features large presentation screens and there is an onboard library. The small group size and high crew-to-guest ratio ensure constant access to knowledgeable guides.

Indigenous art access

In addition to its extraordinary natural attractions, The Kimberley is renowned for its countless galleries of rock art. Featuring Wandjina and Gwion Gwion spirit figure paintings and drawings dating back 17,000 years, the remote galleries are recognised as possibly the world’s oldest art sites.

The True North’s guests have the opportunity to fly by helicopter or hike with guides (some with specialist knowledge of Aboriginal culture) to galleries of perfectly preserved paintings that may have seen few non-Indigenous visitors.

“These activities are conducted on Traditional lands. We show our respect for the Traditional Owners through direct liaison and consultation with the communities whose lands we visit, and through acknowledgement of Country,” said Craig Howson.

“With all the lands we visit on our adventures, we visit only when welcome and we aim to leave only goodwill.”

Engaging with local communities

‘Leaving goodwill’ and supporting remote communities are fundamental tenets of the company ethos.

On the Southern Safari itinerary, this includes working with family-owned tour operators on Kangaroo Island and at Victor Harbor, as well as visiting local vineyards and restaurants in the Barossa Valley. On the Adventure South West itinerary, guests can visit Albany’s historic sites, while in Sydney there are interpretive experiences with Traditional Owners and tours of the Broken Bay pearling facility, as well as many other interactive experiences.

The True North’s cabins and common areas feature landscape paintings by Australian artists including Ingrid Windram, Jacinda Bayne and Andrew Tischler. True North has also developed a partnership with revered landscape painter, Larry Mitchell. As ‘artist in residence’, Mitchell’s works chronicle traditional village life and highlight issues of rising sea levels and climate change at exhibitions around the world.





An appreciation for nature's bounty

Local suppliers also feature on the destination-inspired menu, championing locally sourced, sustainable, organic and uniquely Australian producers.

With strict 'catch and release except for immediate consumption', True North guests have the opportunity to be involved at every stage of the 'ocean to plate' journey. They might contribute to the evening's meal by landing the catch of the day – perhaps a barramundi or King George whiting – or by accompanying the ship's chef to pry black-lipped oysters from the rocks, or to go mud-crabbing. They can then watch the preparation – and enjoy the results.

"Apart from being great fun, these experiences give guests a greater understanding of sustainable harvesting and mankind's connection to the ocean," said Craig Howson.

Giving back

"We, as well as our guests, want our experiences to be not only sustainable but beneficial to others."

True North Adventure Cruises maintains an active and diverse range of philanthropic and environmental projects. Guests and crew are encouraged to deliver donations of clothing, school materials and sporting equipment to remote and underprivileged communities in areas included on the various itineraries.

"We see the very best of nature, culture and community on our adventures. We are constantly aware of the luxury and privilege that is afforded to guests and crew alike, and we aim to do all we can, through our redemption programs, to give back to the land and people we visit."

Other sustainability initiatives (Our mandates)

- The True North + True North II adhere to requirements under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), an international agreement designed to minimise and eventually eliminate pollution of the sea.
- The company contributes to national park and marine reserve programs via license and access fees and provides monitoring and feedback to inform conservation management. The company also collects access fees on behalf of Traditional Owners.
- When visiting wilderness areas, the crew are careful to ensure they leave no trace: that guests do not disturb the flora or fauna or sites of cultural significance, and that no one leaves behind more than their footprints.
- True North Adventure Cruises supports programs that target combatting plastic in the ocean. On board, waste is either processed via the onboard treatment plant, retained for recycling or retained for disposal in an approved waste management site on shore.
- Beyond Australia, the True North has been visiting Sepik River communities for almost a decade and, during this time, has donated more than 2,000 mosquito nets, medical supplies, school supplies, reading materials, clothing and equipment for mending clothes, footwear and fishing gear.

