

THE AUSTRALIAN 

# TRAVEL+ LUXURY

JUNE 21-22, 2025

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QATAR-VIRGIN  
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FLIGHT

## 50 WINTER GETAWAYS

Great escapes from coast to  
coast, outback to beach

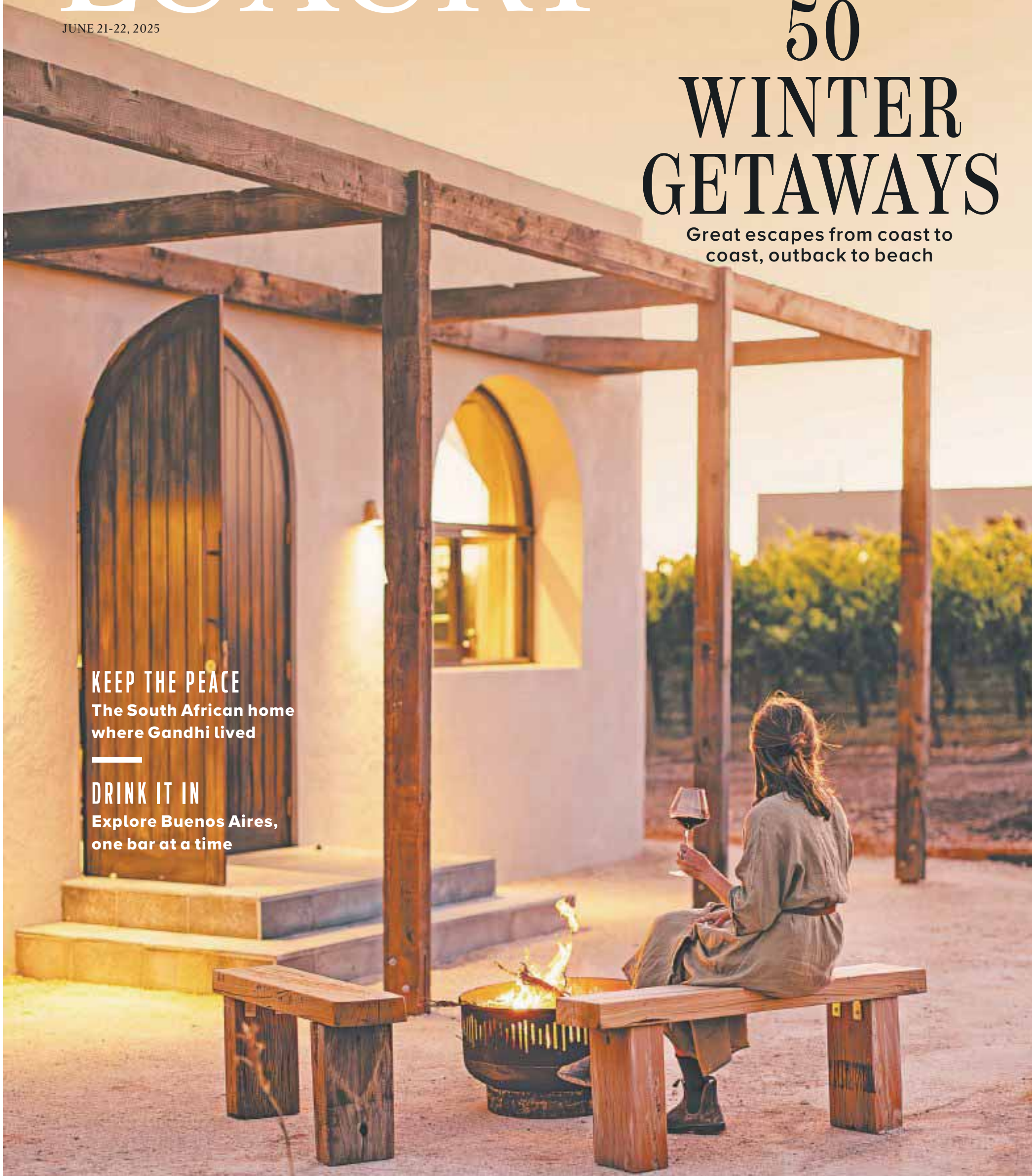
### KEEP THE PEACE

The South African home  
where Gandhi lived

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### DRINK IT IN

Explore Buenos Aires,  
one bar at a time





Whether you embrace the cold or seek to escape it, Australia is blessed with abundant places to go this season. Here are 50 enticing options

# WINTER WANDERS

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NSW

Sydney

The NSW capital might be considered the ultimate Aussie summer destination but its allure remains strong across the cooler months. Bondi Beach swaps bikinis for beanies during a two-week festival (July 5-21) replete with theatre, comedy and live music, ice-skating rink and ferris wheel. You can get your skates on, too, at the Darling Harbour Winter Festival (July 6-21), which features a program of adventure films plus DJ beats. Choose a hotel with a top-notch spa for the perfect defrost – The Langham, Crown Sydney, Capella and QT Sydney hit the spot.

[visitnsw.com](http://visitnsw.com)

Northern Beaches

It’s a dream fit: whale-watching from a balcony of the historic Jonah’s hotel at a Sydney beach named for the cetacean (with a headland that resembles one). June-July-early August is the peak time for the northern migration of the humpbacks from cold southern

waters to the warmer Pacific, with mums and their calves returning south in October-November. Jonah’s, a hospitality mainstay at Whale Beach since the 1920s, offers stylish “Hamptons meets French Riviera” accommodation and top-notch dining.

[jonahs.com.au](http://jonahs.com.au)

Riverina

The window seat of a guestroom at Gundagai’s Flash Jacks, boutique lodgings in a converted 1888 convent, is perfect to nestle in the winter sun. But there’s much to explore in this town, roughly halfway between Sydney and Melbourne on the Hume Highway and a place at the heart of Aussie folklore. Think: dog on a tucker box, tracks to the Murrumbidgee River and a visit to the restored Niagara Cafe, an Art Deco gem. Pencil in Sunday roast lunch at Three Blue Ducks, Nimbo Fork Lodge.

[kimoestate.com](http://kimoestate.com)

South Coast

Berry, a heritage village two hours’ drive from Sydney, is the perfect spot between the green



Wilga Station near Bathurst, main; The Donut Van in Berry, South Coast, above





rolling hills and the sea. More than just a break on the way to Jervis Bay or the Southern Highlands, the town has been a foodie destination since the Berry Donut Van started serving hot jam and cinnamon donuts in 1974. Customers have been queuing regularly outside Milkwood Bakery since 2012, with its pies, sausage rolls, croissants and sourdough bread worth the wait. There are restaurants, pubs and a weekly farmers market – perfect for stocking up for a weekend away at the retro Berry View hotel or one of the multitude of holiday rentals in the area.

**airbnb.com**  
**theberryview.com.au**

## Hunter Valley

The state's best-known wine-growing area, a hop northwest from Sydney, shines year-round. Aside from the attraction of cellar-door visits, food is a parallel focus, including award-winning chefs presiding over restaurants set amid the vines. For a gourmet gallivant, consider chef Troy Rhoades-Brown's Muse at Hungerford Hill Wines. Other highlights include farms specialising in the likes of llamas or lavender. Hide away at The Cedars, a broad estate with five fully equipped villas at Mount View in the Hunter's southern realms.

**cedars.com.au**

## Central Tablelands

The city of Orange in the central west blends country charm with sophisticated shopping, wineries and dining. For retail therapy consider the brightly hued fashion and home-ware at Jumbled, the eclectic collection at Mary & Tex Curious Emporium, and designer labels at Cint Boutique. Wineries making their mark in the region include Rowlee, Printhe Estate and Borrodell. Find fine dining at Luccetta and the Peacock Room or stock up on supplies from the bulging shelves at the Agrestic Grocer. Stay in the self-contained Sona, a smartly renovated former bank that sleeps 10 in the nearby village of Molong.

**sona-molong.com.au**

You can have fun practising your fire-master skills at Wilga Station, a picturesque 81ha sheep farm just 12 minutes' drive from Bathurst. Two hilltop stays – one a grass-roofed couple's retreat with a newly installed outdoor bath and shower, the other a five-bedroom, Australiana-infused getaway fashioned from a corrugated-iron shearing shed – include wood-burning stoves. Wander down to the willow-lined creek or strike out for Mayfield Garden near Oberon. Afterwards, enjoy lunch at The Rockley Pub where celebrity chef owner Matt Moran just might be working the floor.

**wilgastation.com.au**

## Snowy Mountains

Located halfway between Jindabyne and Thredbo resort on the Alpine Way, Tinkersfield puts you in the heart of the Snowies, surrounded by pristine bushland. The ski slopes are a short drive away but the mountains remain accessible to those who favour more leisurely pursuits. Take Merritts Gondola up to a hut for a Bavarian-style feast or ride the Alpine Coaster. Further afield, browse the outdoor stores in Jindy, sip schnapps at Wildbrumby Distillery or take a drive to the historic hamlet of Dalgety. Tinkerfield's six cabins can accommodate two to 11 guests, with cosy interiors featuring wood burners, clawfoot baths and kitchen facilities – no need to brave the cold if you don't want to.

**tinkersfield.com.au**

## Outback

Winter is outback season – in other words, it's the optimal time to explore Broken Hill, where summer temperatures wilt even the hardest visitors. The Silver City's most luxe digs are in the south end of town, on the airport side of the monolithic mullock heap and across the road from the retro Bell's Milk Bar. Don't drop your lime spider when you first crack open the door to Broken Hill Outback Church Stay. The Romanesque former house of prayer features a jaw-dropping, double-height, all-white living area.

**brokenhilloutbackchurchstay.com**

## New England

The sense of arrival is magnified when guests



Jonah's at Whale Beach, above left; Tinkersfield in the Snowy Mountains, above; Sona, Molong, left; Gabarraa near Tenterfield, below

refurbished for the perfect winter getaway. Deep baths and in-room dining by a new chef add to their allure. A recently opened wine bar, stocked with more than 1000 bottles, creates a laid-back gathering place. From here, explore the rainforest tracks onsite or use the retreat as a reward after tackling the new 42km Gidjulum Gulganyi trail in the Tweed-Byron hinterland. For more placid pursuits, head to Tweed Regional Gallery, where Ben Quilty's portrait of Margaret Olley is showcased.

**crr.com.au**

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Adelaide

Sydney doesn't have a monopoly on clever urban light displays. The South Australian capital's Illuminate festival (July 2-20) blends technology, art and music, sending luminous visions across landmark buildings. Firepits create toasty meeting points for drinks and street food at Base Camp in the laneways district. The Botanic Garden will be transformed by the lasers and projections for Night Visions; top off the evening with a specially designed menu at Botanic Lodge. Meanwhile, Hundreds of drones will take to the sky for a one-off performance at Adelaide Oval on July 18. For a stay with French flair, try the Sofitel.

**sofiteladelaide.com.au**

clap eyes on the arresting landscape surrounding the off-grid Gabarraa, 15km from Tenterfield. Flames are already warming the hot tub, and wine begs to be poured. Gabarraa means "sacred stone" in the language of the Gamilaraay people, and granite formations dot the 60ha property. Do little but watch the morning mist rise, or a lot, exploring the surrounding national parks, mountain biking and stargazing. Private yoga, massages and picnics from Stonefruit bar can also be arranged.

**gabarraaluxuryescape.com.au**

## Tweed Region

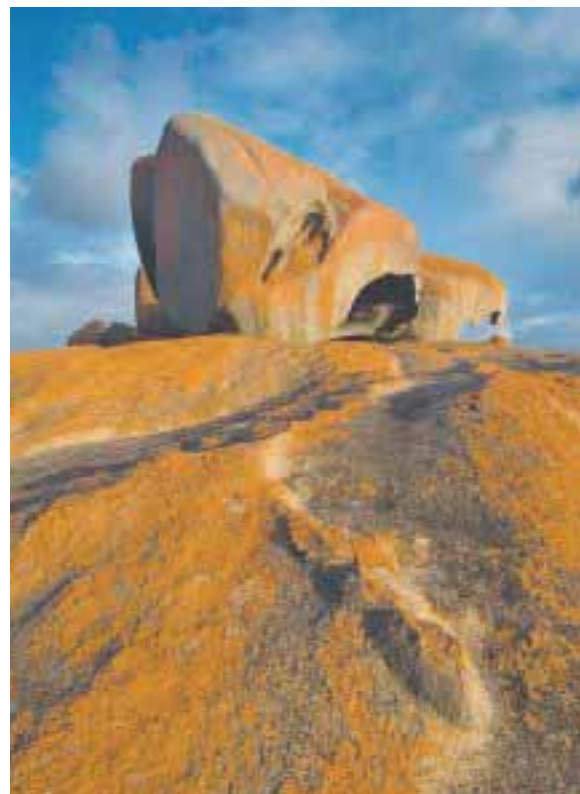
Set within the Gondwana rainforests, the adults-only bungalows and lodges at Crystal Creek Rainforest Retreat have been elegantly



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# COVER STORY



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## Kangaroo Island

Nature eclipses all else on this magic isle, from the 500 million-year-old wind-gouged granite formations known as the Remarkable Rocks in Flinders Chase National Park to the colony of basking seals at Admiral's Arch, dozing koalas at Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, and sturdy sealions lolling at Seal Bay Conservation Park. Book an adventure with Kangaroo Island Touring Co. Drop into Kangaroo Island Wool on the northeast coast to stock up on merino garments and accessories. Snuggle down at Southern Ocean Lodge on the rugged southwest coast.

[baillielodges.com.au](http://baillielodges.com.au)

## McLaren Vale

Winter is the best time to taste the spoils of McLaren Vale's diverse geology, when vines are lush and green. Pair wine and art in one of Rare Earth Retreats' three hilltop villas.

Named Stone, Clay and Slate for the stratum beneath, the off-grid abodes have been crafted with bespoke pieces by JamFactory artists. Outdoor baths overlook the Willunga basin, while interiors feature French linen, local coffee and curated artworks. Set on the grounds of Mollydooker Wines, stays include a premium tasting, with chef Luca Guiotto available to prepare a private six-course feast.

[rareearthretreats.com.au](http://rareearthretreats.com.au)

## Barossa Valley

The cooler months in the Barossa call for a crackling log fire and glass of red, and there are plenty of cellar doors to fit the bill. Throw in a little slice of Provence and winter blues are soon banished. At Le Mas, in the heart of the valley, Geraldine Frater-Wyeth runs a chic four-room hotel, fringed by some of the world's oldest grenache vines. Dinner courtesy of executive chef Ryan Edwards is a

standout. The food has a French flavour, naturellement. As does most everything else – Hermes unguents, creaking armoires and breakfast pastries. Wine and gin are estate grown; juice is freshly squeezed from the orchard; the rose jam made by Geraldine's elegant mother Marie-France. Electric bikes stand at the ready for a spot of touring along a 40km trail.

[lemasbarossa.com.au](http://lemasbarossa.com.au)

## Flinders Ranges

This is walking season in the ancient Flinders Ranges. Mornings are crisp and megawatt sunsets set the rocky ramparts aflame. Sometimes a cloud waterfall spills from Ikara-Wilpena Pound. The iconic Arkaba hosts one of Australia's best guided walks. Bush dinners are served at linen-dressed tables by the campfire. Elevated swags are snug and warm. And velvety night skies are so low you can almost

touch the stars. Expect plentiful wildlife, profound silences and cinematic landscapes. And if there have been winter rains, the normally dry riverbeds may be running – a special treat. [experiencearkaba.com](http://experiencearkaba.com)

## Eyre Peninsula

Reasons to visit the remote Eyre Peninsula in winter? Oysters. The country's finest are at their plumpest in the colder months. And the chance to play Robinson Crusoe on a private island only a short ride from Port Lincoln via amphibious vehicle. Phase one of the \$50m off-grid Rumi resort sits side by side with a rewilding of the 180ha Louth Island (phase two is set to open year's end). Come to fish, kayak or sail. And twitch. The birdlife is wonderful: eagles, Cape Barren geese, rock parrots, pelicans, quail, sometimes little penguins. An outing to Coffin Bay to don waders for a feed of just-shucked oysters is a must. [rumionlouth.com.au](http://rumionlouth.com.au)

## Coonawarra

From Mount Gambier airport it's a 40-minute drive north to Coonawarra, the historic wine region known for its heroic reds and 25 snug cellar doors. Many big names have vineyards here, including Penfolds and Yalumba, but it's family-owned wineries such as Redman and DiGiorgio that offer the warmest welcomes (tours at the latter end with homemade meatballs and tastings straight from the barrel). For families, nearby Naracoorte Caves are a trove of prehistoric fossils, from giant wombats to whales. Stay vine-side at Yalumba Menzies Retreat.

[yalumba.com](http://yalumba.com)

## TASMANIA

### Hobart

The longer the night, the better chance you will have of catching the nation's ultimate light show, the Aurora Australis. Compared with its northern hemisphere counterpart, Australia's display is subtler and more fleeting, so getting far south and away from all ambient light is vital – therefore Tasmania. While Cradle Mountain and Stanley Nut have their moments, seasoned aurora hunters like spots nearer to Hobart, such as the south-facing lookout at Goat Bluff on South Arm Peninsula. For accommodation as stunning as the sky itself, check in to The Point, an architectural marvel just up the road from the bluff.

[thepointtasmania.com](http://thepointtasmania.com)



From top left: emus at Arkaba in the Flinders; bath time at Le Mas, Barossa Valley; Remarkable Rocks on Kangaroo Island; canapes at Rumi, Eyre Peninsula



## West Coast

There's nothing quite so raw as a Tasmanian west coast winter. Flanked by rainforest and fronting Macquarie Harbour, Risby Cove, Strahan's best boutique hotel, stands on the site of the old Risby Bros sawmill, which mowed through a mountain of Huon pine in the early 1900s. Life isn't so harsh today; in-suite saunas and cedar hot tubs stand where sawblades once swashed, while underfloor heating and bioethanol fireplaces fend off the winter chill. The 12 newly renovated suites feature Tasmanian hardwood, polished stone and thoughtfully curated local art. Fill your days cruising the Gordon River or riding the West Coast Wilderness Railway.

[risbycove.com.au](http://risbycove.com.au)

## East Coast

Winter is a seductive time for the little penguins of Bicheno, because that's when the males prepare their nests, ready to beguile the females. But all penguins use this time to recover after the effort of constant time in the ocean, and after a drop in numbers last summer the population is thriving again. Outings with Bicheno Penguin Tours start just after dark at a rookery on rehabilitated farmland and along paths lit in a penguin-friendly spectrum. The trio of slick two-person chalets that comprise Sea Stacks, just north of Bicheno, are named for the minerals – feldspar, mica and quartz – that combine to form the east coast's granite.

[seastacks.com.au](http://seastacks.com.au)

## Coal River

Richmond is home to the nation's oldest stone span bridge. Reaching Prospect Country House, which featured in the TV series Deadloch, involves rattling over another picturesque bridge to reach the front door. At the 1830s Georgian mansion, move into the upstairs suite or one of 10 contemporary courtyard rooms. Nurse a whisky from the honesty bar while toasting your tootsies by the fire, play chess in the formal garden, search for black swans, cycle into town, or settle in for an in-house dinner.

[prospectcountryhouse.com.au](http://prospectcountryhouse.com.au)

## Launceston

Start your foodie weekend with Du Cane Brewery and Dining Hall. Set in an old camping store, it's perfect for pizza and a beer tasting paddle. Next, rug up and climb the Zig Zag Track into Cataract Gorge where the South Esk River tumbles to the Tamar. In a former flour mill turned Launceston icon, Stillwater restaurant serves fine produce matched with Tassie tipples. Retire upstairs to your room at Stillwater Seven and enjoy a cosy breakfast in bed, including freshly baked croissants.

[stillwater.net.au](http://stillwater.net.au)



From top: The Point near Hobart; penguin at Bicheno; Gordon River cruise from Strahan; West Coast Wilderness Railway; Ovolo Nishi Hotel in Canberra



## ACT

### Canberra

The National Gallery of Australia's latest exhibition is a meeting of minds; the interconnection between ground-breaking European painters of the 20th century and Australians who soaked it all up and brought it back to our shores. Drawn from the impressive Museum Berggruen collection in Berlin, Cezanne to Giacometti (until September 21) presents avant-garde visions of those two icons, plus Picasso, Matisse, Braque and Klee, in the company of Australia's Russell Drysdale, Grace Cossington Smith and Dorrit Black. The quirky rooms of Ovolo Nishi are a gentle 40-minute stroll away, across Lake Burley Griffin.

[ovolohotels.com](http://ovolohotels.com)

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VICTORIA

Melbourne

North of the Yarra River has long been the place to be in Melbourne, with Fitzroy and Collingwood filled with interesting shopping, dining and culture. Add a cool hotel and a bathhouse that has been so successful it's being exported to Sydney, and the district's cool credentials are confirmed. The StandardX opened in 2024 and has become a hipster hangout with its rooftop bar, panoramic views and Thai restaurant Bang. It's only a few minutes' walk from the original Lune Croissanterie and a couple of blocks to Collingwood's Sense of Self, a communal bathhouse with sauna, cold plunge, hot mineral pools and a day spa. It is the perfect place to spend a wintry afternoon before heading to Smith or Brunswick street for a drink.

**standardx.com**

The NGV has restoked the fire for its 2025 Winter Masterpieces blockbuster with French Impressionism from Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (until October 5), an exhibition that had stalled due to the pandemic. Anchoring a display of more than 100 iconic works from the likes of Renoir, Degas and Pissaro will be a set of 16 canvases by Claude Monet charting 30 years of painting in Paris, Normandy, the Mediterranean and, naturally, his beloved Giverny. Bed down in South Yarra at The Lyall, with its suitably Parisienne balconies.

**thelyall.com**

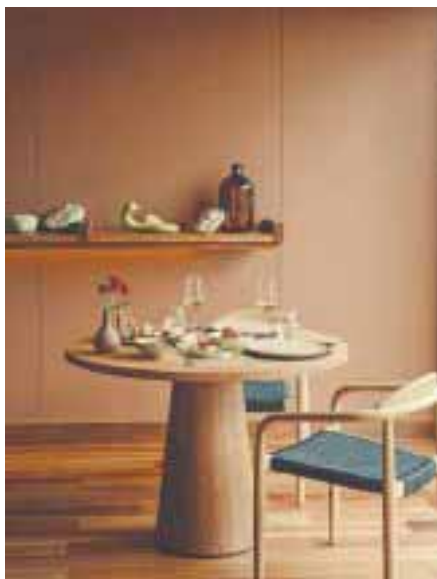
Sawmill Treehouse in the High Country, top right; whale off Phillip Island, above right; Barragunda Dining, right; Sense of Self spa, below

Mornington Peninsula

Melbourne's summer playground loses none of its lustre in winter, when the focus turns to indoor pursuits such as fine dining. Standout eating experiences include Tedesca Osteria, Brigitte Hafner's rustic-luxe restaurant where fire-grilled menus hinge on the harvest from Tedesca's biodynamic gardens. There's a similar reverence for local produce at the 40-seat Barragunda Dining where most ingredients come from the surrounding 400ha estate. Check into art and gastronomy-obsessed Jackalope and book a long lunch at Rare Hare, one of Victoria's most popular country bistros.

**jackalopehotels.com**

Truffles are harvested year-round on the Mornington Peninsula but winter's black truffles are the most revered, so grab your gumboots and follow Maddie the English springer spaniel on the hunt for this delicacy at Red Hill Truffles. Jenny McAuley has 2500 hazelnut trees on her property, about half of which yield these rich pickings. There are tastings and truffle pizzas or have lunch at a local restaurant making the most of the product. New for



winter 2025 are cooking classes. Warm up with a glass of red by the fire at Lindenberry Red Hill, a Lancemore hotel.

**lancemore.com.au**

Grampians

The central highlands spa country is Victoria's antidote to winter. Picture wood fires, European streetscapes, refined eating and bathing in mineral-rich baths. The 150-year-old Hepburn Bathhouse is closed for renos (spa treatments including massages and facials are still available), so head instead to The Mineral Spa, an adults-only affair in Hepburn Springs. Refuel on sophisticated fare at Bar Merenda, The Surly Goat and the Farmers Arms Hotel, and take a room at the century-old Hotel Bellinzona.

**bellinzona.com.au**

High Country

Holiday homes in the High Country often reflect the region's rural heritage, with rustic cattlemen's huts, converted tobacco kilns, cute cottages or country homesteads. Sawmill Treehouse is the total opposite; a modern and ultra-minimalist "Japandi" bush retreat that is small, serene and almost surreal in its simplicity. Located at the foot of Mount Buller (with a drying room and storage space for ski gear), the self-contained cabin is clad in Corten steel and lined in Tasmanian oak, with luxe kitchen appliances and a full-length window where you can watch the birds flutter or snowflakes fall. Pure mountain zen.

**sawmilltreehouse.com**

Officially part of the High Country, the border town of Rutherglen is famous for its fortifieds, especially the nectar-like muscat, but also worth discovering for new-age wines and excellent dining. Spend a fruitful weekend scouting Main Street wine bars such as Thousand Pound and Grace and eating extremely well at Jones Winery or at Bonnie (casual) or Kin (fancy) at the circa 1864 All Saints Estate. Rutherglen embraces midwinter with the Dark Side of Wine Festival (August 8-17) of bonfires and wine events centred around hero varietals. Stay at the revived Victoria Hotel in the town centre.

**victoriahotelrutherglen.com.au**

Yarra Valley

Winter is ideal hot-air ballooning time, primarily because colder air is more stable, but also because you don't have to get up so early for the dawn lift-off. And the view, especially in the Yarra Valley, is more spectacular, with the rolling green hills scored by the sharp dark lines of dormant grapevines. There's a good chance of spotting kangaroos on the hour-long flight, and Global Ballooning can pack-



age it with breakfast at the renowned vineyard Balgownie Estate, which has standard rooms and deluxe suites overlooking the expansive grounds.

**balgownie.com**

Phillip Island

Migration paths along our southern coast in June and July offer stirring wildlife encounters, not only with humpback and southern right whales (and maybe orca) but dolphins and birds. The headlands of Phillip Island and the Bass Coast are navigation markers for the whales, so there are many land-based vantage points, but get closer on whale-watching cruises from Cowes, Rhyll or San Remo, with raucous Australian fur seals also thrown into the mix. The marine giants are in the spotlight between July 11 and 13 at an island festival incorporating science, conservation, film and art. Stay local at Five Acres, a working farm that has three cute cabins for two overlooking Western Port Bay.

**fiveacres.com.au**

Gippsland

English artist JMW Turner's compelling landscapes have inspired artists across the world for centuries, and Turner & Australia at Gippsland Art Gallery in Sale (until August 24) brings together works from generations of local artists who've followed his path. The highest echelons of Australian painting are represented, including Glover, von Guerard, McCubbin, Roberts, Streeton, Beckett and Rees, shown alongside Turner works held in Australian public galleries. Weekday tickets include free tours at 11am. Stay 30 minutes away in the little lakeside cabin at Mewburn Park Retreat, just outside Maffra.

**mewburnpark.com.au**



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NORTHERN TERRITORY

Uluru

Running anywhere in the red centre in summer is unthinkable. In July, however, when average daily temperatures hover around 18C, dipping close to zero overnight, jogging becomes a much more palatable proposition. The Australian Outback Marathon attracts runners to the nation's spiritual heart on July 26 for an event that features full and half marathons plus 11km and 6km fun runs. Routes traverse red dirt tracks, unsealed roads and sand dunes, and whether you're a spectator or a participant, the scenery promises to be spectacular. Ayers Rock Resort has a range of accommodation to suit all budgets. Our pick? Sails in the Desert with its grove of silvery gums and Ilkari restaurant. [ayersrockresort.com.au](http://ayersrockresort.com.au)

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane

It's manta ray season all year long in the waters surrounding Lady Elliot Island but it reaches fever pitch in winter. For those pressed for time, Emporium South Bank in Brisbane offers the chance to snorkel with squadrons of

the graceful giants, wrapped up in a two-night Reef & Retreat getaway. Pairing a pampered stay at the hotel, guests are then flown to the eco island resort for an action-packed day, with glass-bottom boat tour, guided snorkelling, fish feeding and a tropical buffet lunch. [emporiumhotels.com.au](http://emporiumhotels.com.au)

When the British & Irish Lions descend on Brisbane for two matches (July 2 and 19), guests at the new Queens Wharf Residences will have their home away from home sorted. There are more than 200 well-appointed apartments in the tallest tower of the Queen's Wharf Precinct, delivering river and botanic garden views, plus in-room amenities by Elysia Wellness Retreat. Footy fever or not, it makes for a chic city stay, with a new public art trail to wander, a wine lounge, sauna and steam room. [minorhotels.com](http://minorhotels.com)

Tropical North QLD

Swap the southern chill for the swaying palms and lagoon pools of the Sheraton Grand Mirage in Port Douglas, home base for Australia's premier tropical food festival. At Taste Port Douglas (August 7-10), guests can mingle with master chefs, join cooking classes and walk off indulgent meals along golden sands. Highlights include the Long Lunch series beneath

the sprawling canopies of poinciana trees in Market Park, and the theatrical Flames of the Forest fire show set deep in the Daintree Rainforest. Festival packages are available. [marriott.com](http://marriott.com)

After three seasons in the Med, the 41m Benetti superyacht MY Northern Escape has been relocated to Cairns. During the winter months, migrating dwarf minke and humpback whales add an extra layer of excitement to tailored itineraries. Most requested is a five-to seven-night journey from Cairns to Lizard Island, with stops to dive or snorkel the Ribbon Reefs. Or kick things up a notch with the new Outback to Ocean package, connecting Luxury Lodges of Australia member Mt Mulligan Lodge with a bespoke Morris Nautical Charter and a stay at Orpheus Island resort or the ultra-private and chic house on Pelorus Island. [morrisnautical.au](http://morrisnautical.au)

Gold Coast Hinterland

It's hard to think of an Australian hot tub with a more surprising view than that of the one cleverly perched at the edge of Verandah House Country Estate, Mount Tamborine. The cedar tub offers not only a magnesium soak but a glimpse of distant Gold Coast skyscrapers. Life here is a world away from the Glitter Strip. Think cheeky king parrots eyeing your breakfast, crackling in-room fireplaces and an onsite barrel sauna. It's enough to attract celebrity guests such as actor Jude Law. [vhcountrystate.com.au](http://vhcountrystate.com.au)

Scenic Rim

Just over an hour's drive from Brisbane, Spicers Hidden Vale is well known among foodies. They flock to the rural retreat's Homage restaurant for languid lunches starring local ingredients such as Marburg emu and Too-woomba beef (request a table on the deck with its striking views overlooking the infinity pool and mango tree). Fully relax by overnighting in a heritage cottage or contemporary cabin with a soaring stone fireplace and outdoor bath on a secluded deck. Say hi to the kangaroos that pop by to graze the lawns. [spicersretreats.com](http://spicersretreats.com)

Sunshine Coast Hinterland

On a working farm in Kin Kin, Mayan Farm pairs pastoral charm with quiet luxury just 40 minutes from Noosa. Four new rammed-earth villas sit gently on the land, two with outdoor spas, two welcoming pets, all with views that overlook Kin Kin Creek and tucked away from the bite of westerly winds. Days unfold slowly here: a pottery class, horse riding, perhaps a long lunch prepared by a private chef. As evening falls, smoke drifts from the outdoor kitchen with six grills and a pizza oven. [mayanfarm.com.au](http://mayanfarm.com.au)

K'gari/Fraser Island

Winter on the Fraser Coast brings a rare kind of magic. Migrating humpback whales don't simply cruise by; they stay and play in the warm waters of Hervey Bay. From mid-July to late October, Fraser Island Boat Charters of-



Verandah House Country Estate, top left; Sheraton Grand Mirage, Port Douglas, top right; Spicers Hidden Vale, right; Australian Outback Marathon at Uluru, left







Oystercatcher holiday house in Margaret River, left; glamping at Sal Salis, right; Shinju Matsuri Festival, Broome, below; Magnetic Island, bottom



fers private, skippered multi-day sailings aboard luxury catamaran K'gari Breeze, with tailored itineraries and seafood caught fresh each day. Guests can expect up-close encounters with the cetaceans, the chance to swim alongside them, and to be lulled to sleep by their songs captured by the onboard hydrophone. [fraserislandboatcharters.com.au](http://fraserislandboatcharters.com.au)

### Magnetic Island

It's always summer on Magnetic, the modest Queensland island off the Townsville coast where national park meets the Great Barrier Reef. Balmy winters signal the onset of whale



season – watch them fluking from the beach at Geoffrey Bay – but koalas, rock wallabies and rich birdlife are year-round attractions. Choose from two dozen beaches, four towns, myriad hiking trails and watersport options including half and full-day outings aboard the sailing yacht Pilgrim. To stay, Best of Magnetic has a choice selection of villas, apartments and houses.

[bestofmagnetic.com](http://bestofmagnetic.com)

### Torres Strait

It's just a two-hour flight from Cairns but Horn Island, entry point to the vast Torres Strait archipelago in our far north, feels a world away from the rest of Australia. Base yourself on nearby Thursday Island/Waiben, home to the Gab Titui Cultural Centre, military sights and the nation's most northerly pub. For lofty views take a scenic heli flight with Nautilus Aviation over the tip of the continent. Strait Experience can organise one to three-day adventurous itineraries ex-Cairns. Stay at the self-catering Island Villas.

[islandvillas.com.au](http://islandvillas.com.au)

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Perth

WA Museum Boola Bardip is hosting an exclusive exhibition from June 28 until February 22 next year – Terracotta Warriors: Legacy of the First Emperor. The display comprises more than 225 Chinese artefacts, including

warrior figures that were buried with emperor Qin Shi Huang for 2000-plus years. After your culture fix, stroll along the new Boorloo Bridge, a car-free link between Point Fraser and Victoria Park via Heirisson Island. Stay at the refurbished Pan Pacific Perth and you'll be perfectly positioned between these two attractions.

[panpacific.com](http://panpacific.com)

### Kimberley

Winter in Broome, the Kimberley's main hub, is a joy, when the stormy monsoon gives way to sunny skies. The Shinju Matsuri Festival of the Pearl (August 23-September 7) celebrates the town's multicultural pearling roots, with First Nations, Chinese, Japanese and Malay heritage woven through colourful events. Highlights include an outdoor ball, a street parade featuring a Chinese dragon, and a long-table dinner on Cable Beach. Stay at recently renovated Moonlight Bay Suites beside Roebuck Bay and Matso's Brewery.

[moonlightbaysuites.com.au](http://moonlightbaysuites.com.au)

### North West Cape

It's the ideal time to visit Ningaloo Reef near Exmouth, with temperatures mild and the region's notorious winds easing. Grab your mask and snorkel and slide into the turtle-filled lagoon, or join a boat tour for the chance to swim with a lingering whale shark, or even a migrating humpback. Prefer to stay dry? Hike through the extraordinary gorges of Cape Range National Park. Splurge on glamping at

Sal Salis, just steps from the reef, or check in to Mantarays Ningaloo Beach Resort in town.

[salsalis.com.au](http://salsalis.com.au)

[mantaraysningalooresort.com.au](http://mantaraysningalooresort.com.au)

### Margaret River

The renowned wine region offers wintry gastronomic delights. Start with Voyager Estate, joining an in-depth tour of the organically grown vineyards, and linger over lunch in WA's regional restaurant of the year. Vasse Felix is the oldest vineyard here, and it includes a fascinating wine museum. In Margaret River town, book a table at De'sendent for its high-end tasting menu showcasing the finest local produce. Check in to the Oystercatcher, a swanky holiday house sleeping 12 with views of Margaret River's pounding surf break.

[privateproperties.com.au](http://privateproperties.com.au)

### Rottneest Island

Picture Rottneest Island and you'll probably see photogenic quokkas and salty visitors cycling between beaches. But winter is special here too. Without the compulsion to swim, there's more time for history. Start with Indigenous Noongar culture at the Wadjemup Museum before boarding the Captain Hussey historic train to Oliver Hill. Join a volunteer guide to tour the wartime 9.2-inch naval gun and underground tunnels. Stay at the new Wadjemup Lodge, featuring restored heritage or new poolhouse rooms with views of salt lakes.

[thelodgewadjemup.com](http://thelodgewadjemup.com)