



# Wild Island

*The Hazards mountain range in Freycinet National Park.*

Adventure into  
Tasmania's untamed  
beauty with  
**Ignacio Maza.**



**B**ecause I live in New York City, my idea of heaven is remote, uncrowded, and wide-open landscapes. Yin needs yang. Tasmania, which checks all the boxes, has been on my radar for years. Australia’s southernmost, smallest, most mountainous state is a heart-shaped island roughly the size of Ireland but with only 10 percent of its population. I’ve long wanted to soak up the region’s natural beauty and pristine vistas, spot Tasmanian devils and wallabies, jump into frigid waters, stay in small, authentic hotels, and meet the famously friendly locals of “Tassie”—their affectionate nickname for the island. I recently got my chance, and it was everything I had hoped for, and so much more.



## The East Coast: Informal and relaxed, not unlike a Mediterranean resort

After days of overcast skies in Tasmania’s highlands, the sunny weather and navy-blue waters of the Freycinet Peninsula were a welcome tonic. This is also the land of the Hazards mountain range, described by the officers of the French Baudin expedition of 1802 as “high granitic mountains that rise sheer from their base.” Shortly after arrival, I walked to Richardsons Beach and dove into the clear Tasman Sea. Much colder than I’m used to, it was a shock to the system, but still refreshing. The Freycinet Peninsula is Mecca for outdoor adventures. I enjoyed a half-day kayaking adventure with my fearless guide Val, who showed me hidden gems along the coast. The following day, I hiked to the lookout of Wineglass Bay, perhaps Tasmania’s most recognized landmark. Admiring the perfect crescent of white sand against pink granite peaks was a thrill—like encountering a famous Rembrandt in person after seeing it in countless books. Another rare treat? Having the mile-long Coles Bay all to myself for a peaceful walk at sunset.

*Opposite: The Tasmanian devil is found exclusively in Tasmania. From top: A forest trail in Overland Track; Wineglass Bay along the East Coast.*

## The Northwest: Imagine the Scottish Highlands, without the castles or kilts

This region is the home of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park, a nature reserve that’s over 3,000 feet above sea level and covers about a quarter of Tasmania’s surface. The weather forecast for this corner of the world: unpredictable. In the words of my all-knowing resident guide, Stan, “Expect four seasons in one hour,” and he was spot on. Within that amount of time, I went from a rain jacket to a fleece and gloves to just a T-shirt. It rained intermittently, but I still walked the perimeter of Dove Lake, a well-marked four-mile trail with stunning views of waterfalls, Cradle Mountain (when the clouds permitted), and a tranquil rainforest under a canopy of dense moss known as the “forest ballroom.” I loved the glacial lakes, alpine grasslands, and rivers with tannin-stained waters. Armed with resolve and following Stan’s directions, I also hiked a portion of the Overland Track, Australia’s famous trail that takes days to complete. I marveled at indigenous trees like the King Billy pine, with a lifespan of over 1,000 years, and the Tasmanian Deciduous Beech, whose leaves turn red in autumn—a novelty in Australia, where trees typically shed only their bark. A lasting memory: spotting wallabies and pademelons on my morning walk to breakfast at Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge.





## The Southwest: One of Australia’s last frontiers

There are no roads that take you to this rugged, remote, and pristine wilderness. For decades, the only places to stay were in a rustic tented camp or on your own boat. That changed in 2023 when Pieter van der Woude launched On Board’s Odalisque III, a purpose-built catamaran that’s part of the Luxury Lodges of Australia collection—and now the best way to experience Tasmania’s untamed Southwest. Pieter is a remarkable entrepreneur who has lived many lives: search-and-rescue specialist, diver, explorer, businessman. I was privileged to have him as skipper on my cruise from Bathurst Harbour, along with master guide Peter Marmion, Tasmania’s celebrated writer, trekker, and photographer. “This region weaves a magic on people,” Marmion told me. And after just one outing, I wholeheartedly agreed. We explored temperate forests of Melaleuca, Eucalyptus, and precious Huon pine trees. We hiked to the summits of quartzite mountains, wandered along deserted beaches, cruised up rivers on a small skiff, and jumped into the ocean for a bracing shot of energy. On the last night of our cruise, we were rewarded with the Aurora Australis—a dream come true for me. I found the desolate immensity of this area to be haunting and powerful, and gained a deeper appreciation for it by learning about the explorers, whalers, and loggers who traveled through the region ages ago, along with the Indigenous Needwonnee communities who lived here for millennia. This cruise with On Board reminded me of being in Antarctica: unpredictable, spectacular, and governed by the wind and tides. All I had to do was let go, knowing I was in the most able hands.

## Hobart: Culture, nature, and cuisine

Tasmania’s capital and Australia’s second oldest city is everything New York City is not: small, manageable, and easy to navigate. My favorite neighborhood was Battery Point, where I was charmed by the 19th century homes sitting so close to one another, each with a distinct architectural style. I walked the length of Salamanca Place, the historic sandstone warehouses lined with bars, galleries, shops, and restaurants. On Saturdays, Salamanca comes alive with countless stalls selling everything from fine art to fresh produce. I am a museum goer, so I visited the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to view its superb survey of the island’s history and culture, as well as the MONA (Museum of Old and New Art), where I found some of the exhibitions surprising and intense. Hobart is also a great “base camp” from which to explore the region with easy day trips. Two recommendations: First, the Port Arthur Historic Site, a former penal colony and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site—a must-see to understand Tasmania’s history. I learned the site was considered escape proof and held thousands of prisoners, some as young as nine years old, from 1830 to 1877. Also, be sure to visit the nearby town of Richmond. Just north of Hobart in the Coal River Valley region, it’s a hub of quality vineyards and superb produce with a storied past. My one regret is that I did not make it to the top of Mount Wellington for the fantastic views. Next time.

As I headed to the airport on my last day in Hobart, I noticed a slogan on many of the license plates: “Tasmania: Explore the Possibilities.” Sound advice indeed. 🍷

➡️ **C’day, Tasmania.** Ready to plan your adventure? Visit our agency website found on the back cover and enter **OFFER M30245** or call or email us for more.

*Clockwise, from top left: Ignacio Maza in Tasmania’s Southwest region; the Port Arthur Historic Site; Bathurst Harbour in the Southwest; Hobart Harbor; a sculpture outside the MONA in Hobart.*



MIDDLE ROW IMAGE: EMILIE RISTEVSKI, TOURISM TASMANIA



## Where to Stay

**Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge**, located near the entrance of Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park, is the best, and most convenient, choice for adventures in the Northwest region. Stay in a cozy cabin overlooking mountains and forests, just steps from the main lodge’s restaurants, spa, and roaring fireplaces.

When visiting the East Coast’s Freycinet Peninsula, I have two suggestions. First, **Freycinet Lodge**, which is the only resort within Freycinet National Park. This local institution is the area’s de facto living room. There’s an open-air atmosphere, easy access to two beaches, and freestanding cabins or modern Coastal Pavilions. A short drive away is **Saffire Freycinet**, easily Tasmania’s finest resort and a member of Luxury Lodges of Australia. Saffire’s bold design, spacious suites, and soaring glass windows with views of the Hazard mountains blew me away. I found the dining and service first-rate, and the ambience elegant but never stuffy. Wow factor: Visiting the resident Tasmanian devils at the resort’s nearby conservation project.

In Hobart, I loved two especially unique hotels in the harbor district. On the waterfront: **MACq 01**, a former shipping warehouse, with the stories of notable Tasmanians displayed on the 114 doors of the property’s guestrooms. Across the street: **The Henry Jones Art Hotel**, a former jam factory that exhibits and sells Tasmanian artwork throughout the hallways and public spaces. Don’t miss dinner at Landscape, the hotel’s award-winning restaurant and site of one of my favorite meals.