

September 2017

# ENDEAVOUR

THE MAGAZINE FROM AUSTRAVEL, EXPERTS IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & SOUTH PACIFIC



## *8 Aussie wildlife encounters*

Get up close to Australia's native animals

### **A day in the life**

Meet Robert, the owner of Tasmania's Pennicott Wilderness Journeys

### **A place to remember**

To celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, we share our most memorable travel experiences

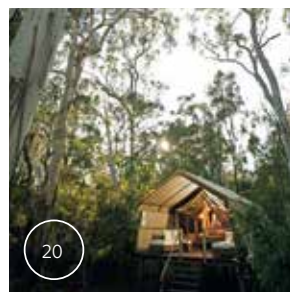


# Welcome to ENDEAVOUR

## the magazine by Austravel



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## Welcome to our 40<sup>th</sup> birthday edition

How time flies! It feels like yesterday that I walked into the office for my first day at Austravel. After 16 years here, I'm so proud of what we've achieved, especially the five consecutive British Travel Awards! It's a real tribute to our Travel Designers who are extremely passionate about what they do best – creating incredible tailor-made holidays. As the Australasia travel experts, it's our job to keep crafting fantastic holidays and exciting itineraries so you can explore these spectacular countries. Forty years on, we're still inspiring our customers to experience something new, whether that's a Great Barrier Reef cruise or a luxury escorted tour around New Zealand. So I hope you enjoy our 40th birthday special edition and find some amazing ideas for your next Australasia adventure. Remember, we're always on hand to chat through your holiday plans, simply call us on 0808 278 2299\*.

Karen Joyce  
General Manager



Our magazine is named after HMS Endeavour, the first seagoing vessel to reach the east coast of Australia in 1770, when Captain Cook went ashore at what is now known as Botany Bay.



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# WHAT'S HOT

A round-up of the new and exciting things you can do and places you can stay across Australasia. Oh, and did we mention, it's our birthday!

## Austravel turns 40

Over the following pages discover Austravel's journey from a small shop front on Pipe Lane in Bristol, to the award-winning specialist tour operator it is today. Hear from Austravel's founder, John Kennedy, and take a look at some of our favourite travel memories on page 12.



### Blue Mountains with Great Southern Rail

From April 2018, Great Southern Rail are offering a new all-inclusive Blue Mountains off-train excursion on their Indian Pacific journey. Disembark the train at Mount Victoria and explore the Blue Mountains to your heart's content. With morning tea included, you can spend the whole day soaking up the natural sights of this spectacular national park before continuing on to Sydney by local train where your luggage will be waiting.

**3 nights from £1,710 per person**  
Based on selected travel  
Apr 2018



### New routes

It's now even easier, and quicker, to fly Down Under. Earlier in the year Qantas launched its 17-hour direct flight from London to Perth. Plus, new domestic routes from the Australian airline include flights to Kangaroo Island from Melbourne and Adelaide, making it even easier to reach this wildlife-laden island. You can now also fly direct from Singapore to the nation's capital, Canberra, with Singapore Airlines. Another great place to begin a self-drive holiday.

London to Perth from £825 per person

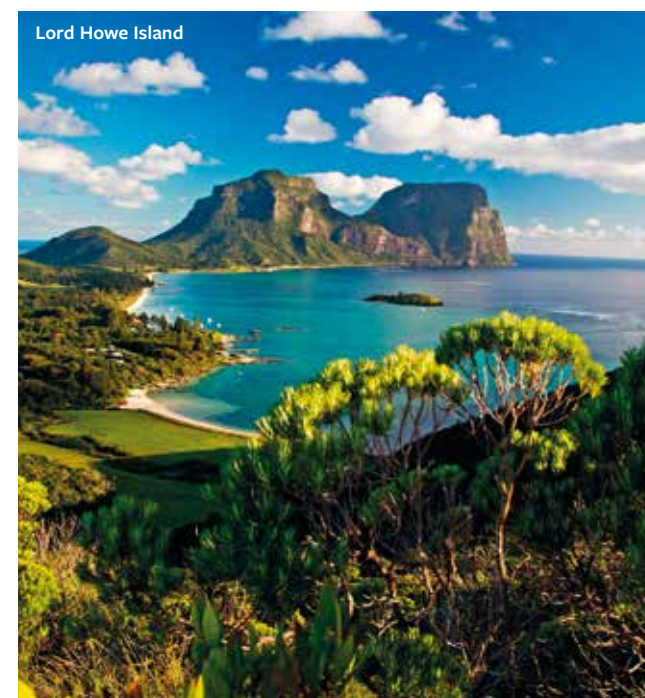
London to Canberra via Singapore from £755 per person

Based on selected travel 2018

### Hikers' delight

The Seven Peaks Walk on magnificent Lord Howe Island becomes the first Partner Walk in the Great Walks of Australia. This five-day walk takes guests via pristine beaches to the sub-tropical forests of Mount Gower. While, the newest member of the Great Walks of Australia's Signature Collection, the Murray River Walk, offers you the chance to explore Australia's greatest river, The Murray. This four-day walk combines guided walking with peaceful cruising aboard a modern houseboat, your accommodation for the duration of this unique hiking adventure.

Call our Travel Designers to find out more





## Western Australia goes to Hollywood

Move over California, it's Western Australia's turn in the spotlight. This year, the state is set to play host to two major films and a television series. Wonderful Unknown – a comedy-drama about an American housewife trapped in a failing marriage who embarks on a road trip across the Australian outback – is due to be filmed in Kununurra, El Questro Wilderness Park and along the Gibb River Road. The other film is a screen adaptation of Tim Winton's award-winning novel, Dirt Music, with a rumoured cast to include Russell Crowe and Rachel Weisz. Keep your eyes peeled.

12 nights from £2,629 per person

Based on selected travel 2018



El Questro Wilderness Park

## Tropica Island Resort, Fiji

Located on Fiji's Malolo Island, this adults-only island escape has just undergone some exciting new upgrades. Boasting seven new Tropical Pool Suites each with their own front balcony, personal plunge pool, private courtyard and outdoor shower. Plus, the addition of plunge pools to six of their Beachfront Bures, Tropica is devoted to giving their guests the most relaxing Fijian experience imaginable.

4 nights from £919 per person  
Based on selected travel  
Mar 2018



Tropica Island Resort

## DISCOVER AUSTRALIA ESCORTED TOUR

Explore more with the experts

This 20-day APT Premium escorted tour covers Australia's most famous sights. Spot incredible wildlife and experience the culture as you travel in comfort across Australia from Perth to Sydney. The perfect option for first time visitors who want to see as much of the country as they can, without the stress of organising the journey.

### The APT difference:

- APT's friendly, knowledgeable local guides and tour directors will share their passion for the country they call home
- 'Insider Experiences': unique sightseeing activities, memorable interactions with local people and gastro experiences included at no extra cost
- Handpicked accommodation: each hotel and resort included has been tried and tested by APT's experts
- The perfect balance of inclusions and leisure time



### What's included:

- Return scheduled flights from London Heathrow
- All flights and transfers within Australia
- Highlights include Uluru (Ayers Rock), the Great Barrier Reef and Australia's iconic cities
- Travelmarvel Tour Director, plus local guides in select locations
- A range of special excursions and events
- 17 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 feature dinners

### TAKE ME THERE

20 day Discover Australia escorted tour

Prices from £5,289 per person

Saving £100pp

Includes flights. Based on selected travel

Mar 2018

For a range of escorted touring options with APT visit [austravel.com/apt](http://austravel.com/apt)

# 40 years of Austravel

Here at Austravel we've been creating holidays to Australasia for 40 years – and it all began with an Australian student who had a love for his home country and a passion for travel.



With a business degree under his belt, John Kennedy from Melbourne opened Austravel's first store on Bristol's Pipe Lane in late 1977. Today, we're proud to be the number one specialist travel company to Australasia with a string of awards to our name. We believe it's the expert destination knowledge and unique travel experiences we offer that make our holidays so memorable.

Over the coming pages, discover more about Austravel's story, read John Kennedy's interview on the company's humble beginnings and we share some of the team's most memorable experiences.



1977 1978 1985 1987 1988



John Kennedy opened the first Austravel shop in Bristol's Pipe Lane.

Sold the first trip to Australia after placing a £60 advert in the Daily Mail.

Austravel's London shop opened on Saville Row, followed by stores in other major UK cities.

The first US shop opened in Manhattan, New York. Austravel went on to have 11 US offices and one in Toronto.

Austravel secures a deal with Britannia to start charter flights to Australia.



1997 2000 2014 2017

John Kennedy sold the business back to Thomson Travel.

Thomson becomes part of TUI UK and as a result Austravel joined Travelopia (formerly known as Specialist Holiday Group), the world's largest collection of specialist travel brands.

Tourism Australia chose Austravel to be the first tour operator partner for their TV campaign.

To date, Austravel has won the British Travel Awards' 'Best Holiday Company to Australasia' five years in a row and have been shortlisted this year too.





# Meet John Kennedy Founder of Austravel

## **Q. So tell us how it all began? How did Austravel start?**

Well, I arrived from Melbourne in 1975 to do an MBA at London Business School. As part of my course I had to complete a consulting exercise and I chose to evaluate the profitability of the Thomson-owned Lunn Poly travel agent chain. Thomson offered me the chance to pilot some of my recommendations. In December 1977 I set up office in Pipe Lane, Bristol and here Austravel, with its distinctive Sydney Opera House logo, was born. I started with one ex-Thomson employee and Austravel just kept on growing. Twenty years later we employed over 300 people in 21 offices in the UK, Germany, USA, Canada and Australia.

## **Q. Why Australia?**

Having travelled widely in Australia I knew there were so many remarkable things for visitors to see. The 1986 film *Crocodile Dundee* put the country in the spotlight and the

Australian Tourism Commission was also pumping out funds to marketing partners such as Austravel to get people interested in travelling 'Down Under'. Many Brits had friends and relatives living in Australia too, so gradually the word spread about the amazing value for money a holiday to Australia promised to be.

## **Q. How has travel to Australia changed over the last 40 years?**

There's now a far wider range of airlines and route options. You can stopover in fascinating places like Singapore, Dubai or Hong Kong. Then once you're there, Australia has really invested in its tourism. The service is fantastic, it's so easy to get around and the food e.g succulent seafood and top wine – is simply superb, wherever you go.

## **Q. What was your biggest Austravel success?**

Launching a major UK, whole plane, charter flight program to Australasia using Britannia

Airways 767-300 aircraft. Over a ten-year period we flew to Perth, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Darwin, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Coolangatta, Brisbane, Cairns, Auckland and Christchurch. Flying our own planes to Australia was a real turning point for the company.

## **Q. What makes Austravel so special for its customers and to you personally, too?**

We always received such positive customer feedback on the depth of our knowledge about Australasia. We would try to send all staff on an educational trip every year to ensure they explored a range of in-destination experiences – training that is still a core part of the company today. It's this specialisation and expertise that really helps staff match itineraries to customers' needs.

## **Q. Who were the most memorable people you ever booked on a trip (if any)?**

We sent minor Royals on a luxury Great Barrier Reef island




Turquoise Bay

holiday and received a letter of thanks on Buckingham Palace letterhead!

## **Q. How do you think travel to Australia will change in the next 40 years?**

Flight times will reduce substantially – from March 2018 Qantas will fly nonstop from London to Perth. I think sampling Australia through virtual reality will also become popular but hopefully most people will still want to experience the real thing. There's no substitute for the country's natural beauty and iconic sights.

## **Q. If you could choose to go back to one place in Australasia again and again, where would it be and why?**

Western Australia's Turquoise Bay, just south of Exmouth, where you can find pristine coral reefs in warm, crystal-clear water immediately off the white-sand beach. Complete isolated relaxation in unspoilt nature. Perfection! 



Turquoise Bay



# A place to remember Australasia

From the iconic sights to the hidden gems tucked away off the beaten track, our Travel Designers reminisce about the incredible places they have been and experiences they've had across Australasia. It's these precious travel memories that we use to create truly remarkable holidays for you. Here, we share some of our favourites and hope they inspire you to have unforgettable travel experiences too.

## Hiking in Cradle Mountain National Park

Tasmania

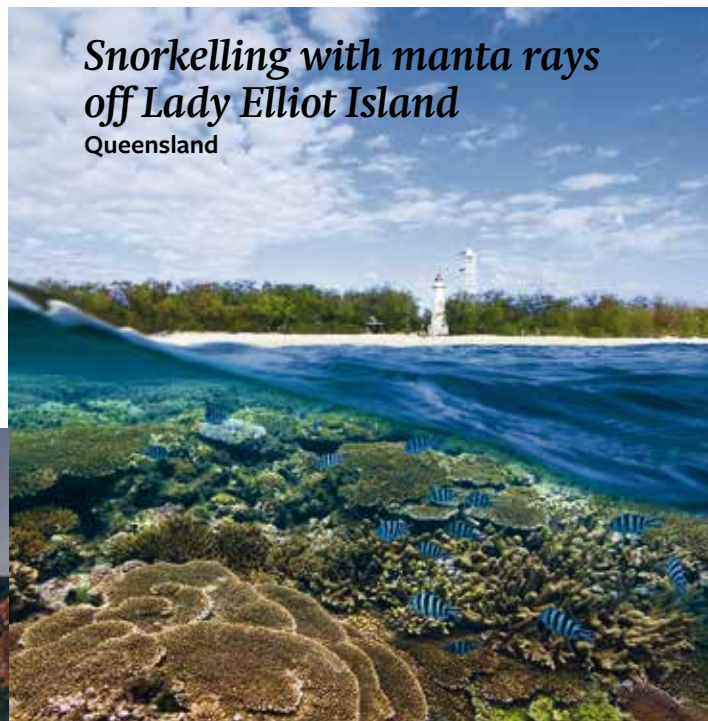


*"Tasmania is a really special place if you ask me. There are endless walks and hikes you can do, but one that I think is particularly amazing is the Dove Lake Circuit. At six kilometres long, it's a relatively easy walk, but you see so many different types of scenery – forest, lake-side beaches, rugged granite slopes and the glass-like waters of the lake itself. All of it is just stunning."*

MIKE, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## Snorkelling with manta rays off Lady Elliot Island

Queensland

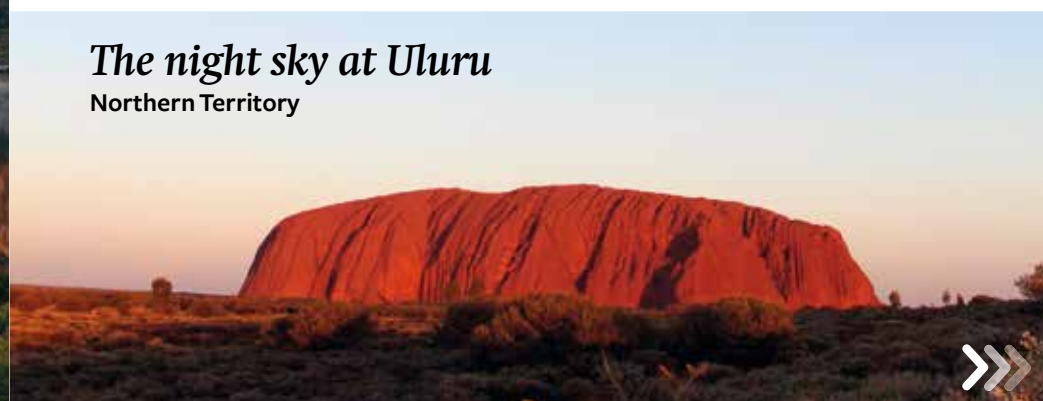


*"I'll always remember Lady Elliot Island. One of the few islands in the Great Barrier Reef where you can snorkel straight off the beach without having to book a boat excursion. I got to swim in crystal-clear waters with the most amazing marine life, unspoilt coral and even turtles. It's also the home of the manta ray and I feel so lucky to have swum with these gentle giants. Nothing quite prepares you for getting so close to a creature that's about four times your size!"*

SUE, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## The night sky at Uluru

Northern Territory



*"One of my most memorable experiences was sleeping under the stars in a swag (that's a sleeping bag to us) at Uluru (Ayers Rock). The stars in the Red Centre are phenomenal as there's literally no light pollution here. After a BBQ meal I tucked myself into my swag and did some stargazing before falling asleep. It's an experience I'll never forget."*

VICKI, TRAVEL DESIGNER





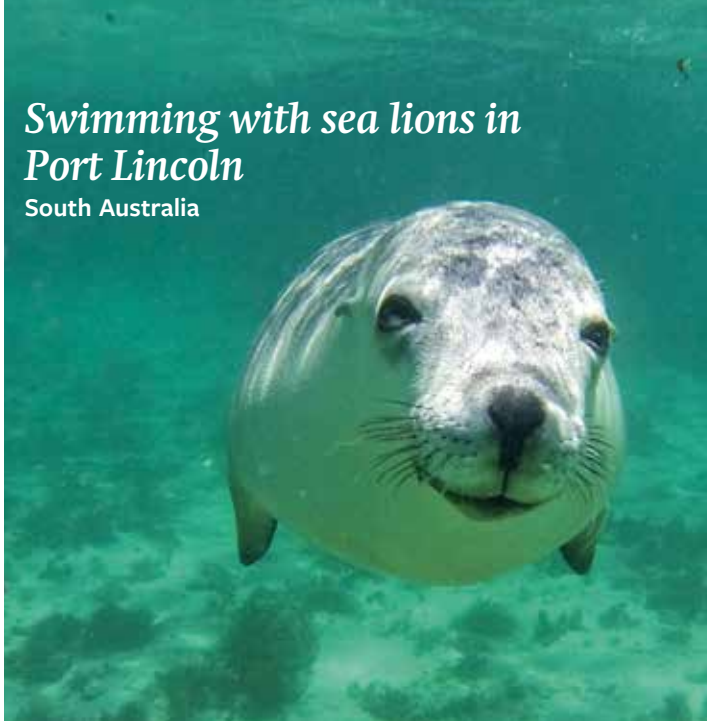
*"I did a few really fun things in Port Lincoln on the Eyre*

*Peninsula, but swimming with sea lions is definitely one of the best things I've ever done. They're just like puppies in the water; they actually swim up to you and play with you, so that was an absolutely incredible experience."*

PAUL, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## Swimming with sea lions in Port Lincoln

South Australia



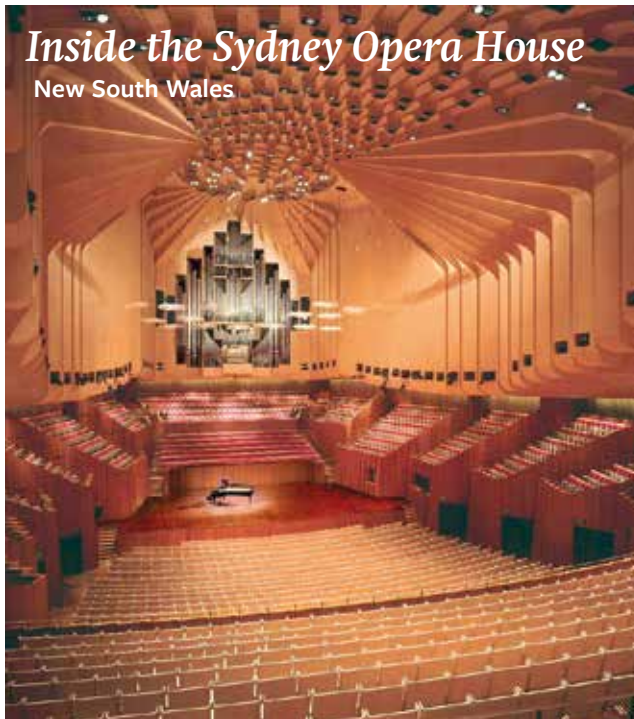
*"As impressive as Australia's most famous building is from the*

*outside, it's actually inside that really wowed me. I've been inside twice, and the tour guides are fantastic, they really bring the Sydney Opera House story to life. Both times we were fortunate enough to see the ballet being rehearsed, and were told that it's really unique for it to be on during a tour. But going inside is definitely something I'd recommend to everyone."*

TOM, TRAVEL DESIGNER

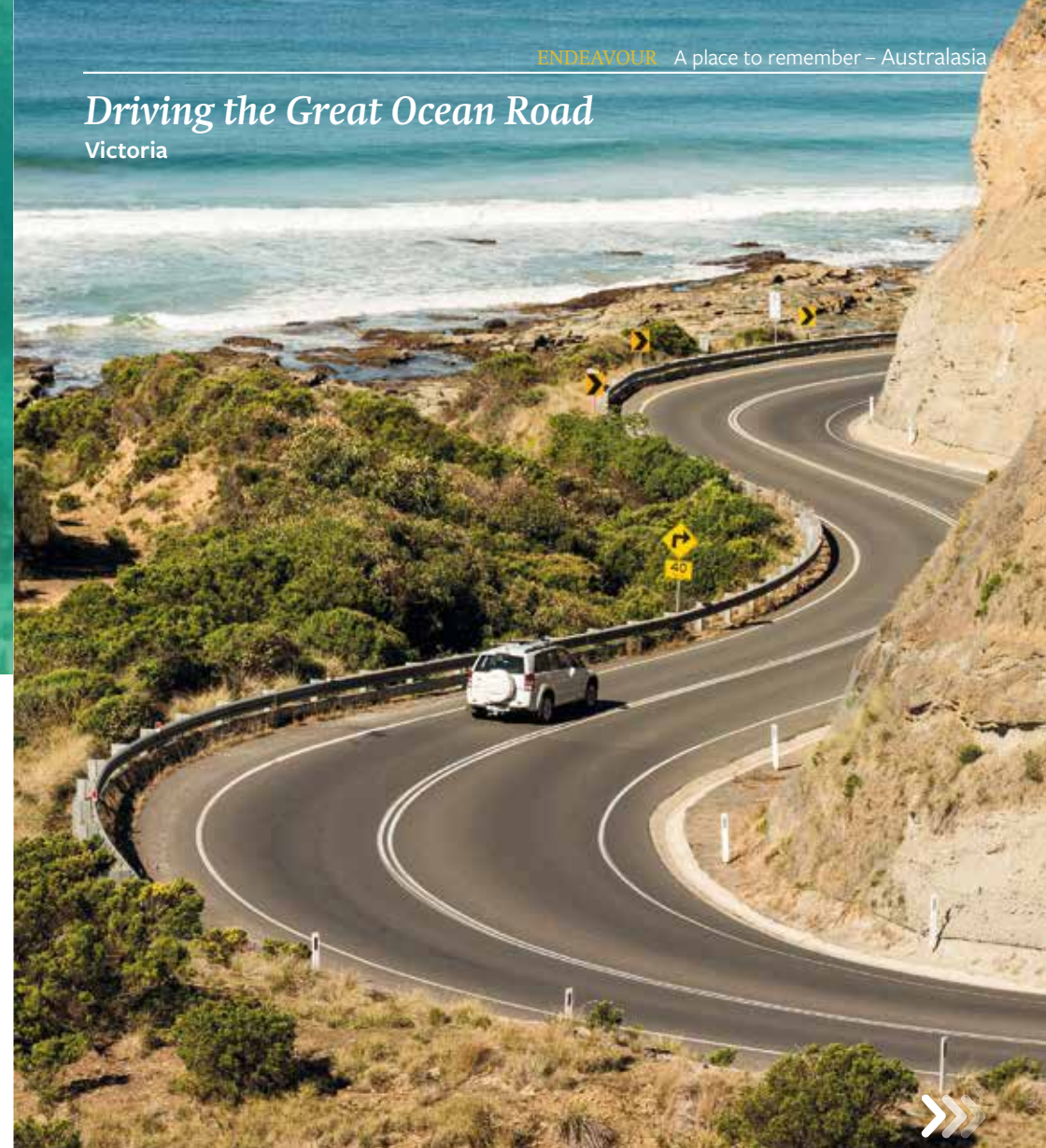
## Inside the Sydney Opera House

New South Wales



## Driving the Great Ocean Road

Victoria

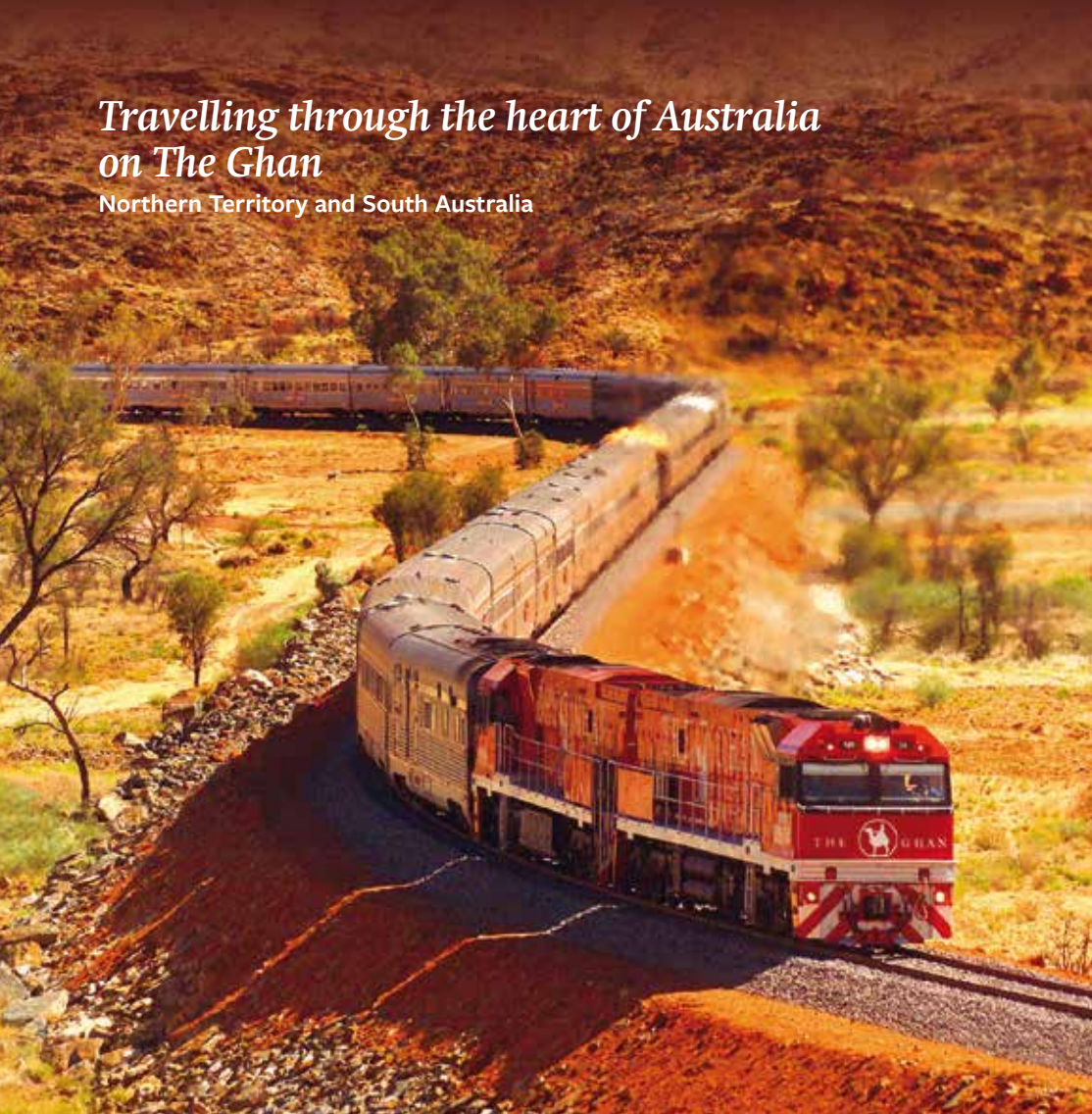


*"The most epic road trip I've ever done. Around every corner of the coastline, there's another breathtaking view. The road hugs the coast in places, and at others, you're driving through the dense forests of Great Otway National Park. Luckily I wasn't driving for all of it, and had my face glued to the window most of the time. They don't call it the Great Ocean Road for nothing."* DAVE, TRAVEL DESIGNER



## Travelling through the heart of Australia on The Ghan

Northern Territory and South Australia



*"I was lucky enough to go on The Ghan rail journey last year. The whole trip was fantastic, but the best night for me was our off-train excursion to the Telegraph Station in Alice Springs. It was a magical evening with a stargazer pointing out all the amazing constellations and the night ended with music playing, roaring campfires, fantastic food and everyone from the train – all different age groups – mingling together. It was a really lovely night and just one of the unique experiences and surprises along the way. You really are transported to the golden era of train travel."*

LUCY, TRAVEL DESIGNER



*"I love a good sunset and they don't get much better than on the*

*coast of Western Australia. One of the best I've seen has to be at Monkey Mia. The sunset is stunning from the beach (where the resident dolphins regularly swim up to the shoreline), but it's even better from the water. I took a cruise from the jetty just as the sun was going down, and the colours and reflections from the sky were simply amazing. A real pinch yourself moment for me."*

MIKE, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## Watching a spectacular sunset

Western Australia







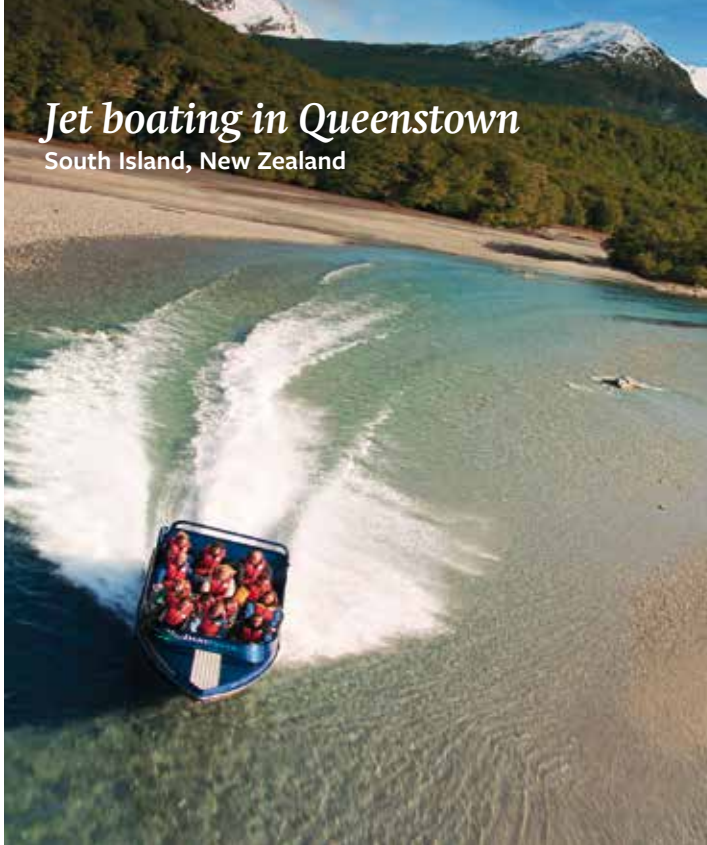
*"I do like a bit of action and adventure, and there's no better place*

*for it than Queenstown. One trip in particular that sticks in my mind was the Dart River Wilderness Safari. We started with a nature walk through the forest, then jumped on a jet boat back down the river. The ride was so much fun. At some points the jet was even able to navigate through as little as four inches of water. It's great because we got to see areas you wouldn't usually be able to get to in a normal boat."*

MATT, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## Jet boating in Queenstown

South Island, New Zealand



*"Aitutaki in the Cook Islands has to be one of my favourite places. It's a really beautiful lagoon and totally unspoilt. The views on the flight when you come in are just breathtaking, especially if you get a window seat. It's a sight I'll never forget. Plus you get a complimentary pineapple juice for the journey!"*

SUZANNE, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## Flying to the island of Aitutaki

Cook Islands



## Visiting Hobbiton™

North Island, New Zealand



*"It's exactly like in the films! Whether you're a Lord of the Rings fan or not, there's something magical about this place. You get to explore The Shire, and actually walk around the hobbit holes and gardens. Make sure you try one of the exclusive ales at The Green Dragon Inn too."*

JAMES, TRAVEL DESIGNER

## YOUR FREE AUSTRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Have your own memorable Austravel experience. Choose a hand-picked excursion\* to add to your next Australasia holiday with us. Find out more at [austravel.com/experience](http://austravel.com/experience).

\*Ts&Cs APPLY.



# Somewhere special

A collection of Australasia's most extraordinary places to stay.



## Spicers Hidden Vale

Describing itself as an 'uncomplicated escape', Spicers Hidden Vale is exactly that. Set on 12,000 acres of Queensland bush, this country retreat does comfort and unbridled luxury the good old-fashioned way. Choose charming cottage accommodation complete with a large lounge and fireplace – most offer stunning uninterrupted views of the Lockyer Valley and mountains beyond. Alternatively, the resort's hotel-style suites all boast their own verandas or balcony, perfect for peaceful evenings

watching the changing colours of sunset. For those looking for relaxation, there's the day spa and lagoon-style swimming pool. Plus, there's plenty to keep you active too, including horse riding, archery, mountain biking and hiking to name a few. One thing you're sure to find at Spicers Hidden Vale, is an authentic regional experience with a warm country welcome.

**1 hour drive from Brisbane**

**2 nights from £255 per person**



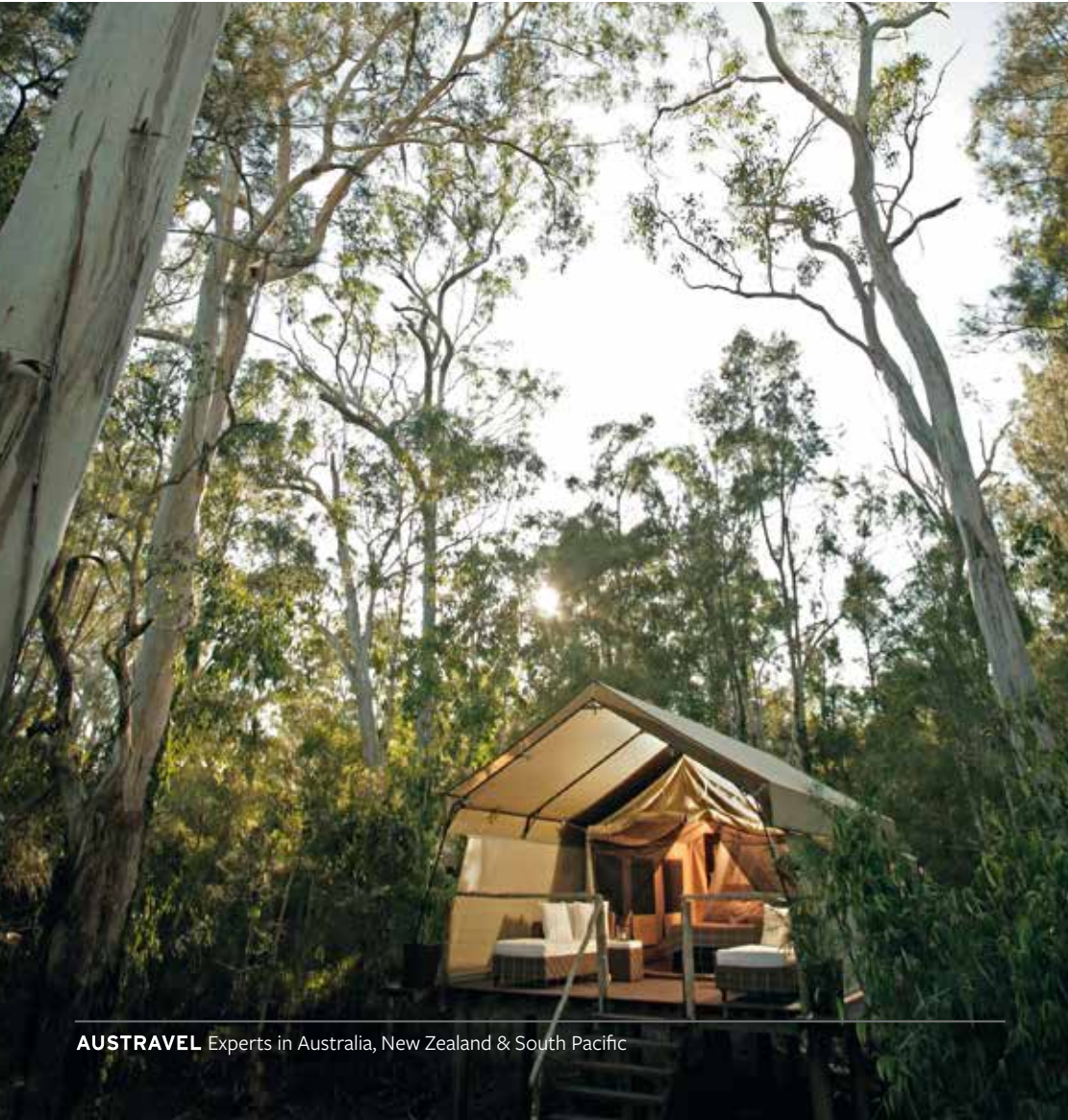


## Paperbark Camp

Fall asleep to the night-time chatter of the rainforest – this is an eco-camping experience like no other. Nestled amongst the soaring eucalypt trees, Paperbark's 12 safari-style tents offer eco-chic accommodation in a relaxed, natural setting. All tents have wrap-around verandas, full insect screening and solar-powered lighting. You can even spot birds and kangaroos as you enjoy a hot shower or bath

from your private en-suite. With the beautiful Jervis Bay a short cycle ride away, there's plenty to do in the area from bush walking, kayaking, swimming and snorkelling. If you're looking for somewhere to switch off and get back to nature, Paperbark Camp is the place.

**2 hour drive from Sydney**  
**2 nights from £246 per person**



## Cape Lodge

Located in the heart of the magnificent Margaret River wine region, Cape Lodge is a country estate-style hotel surrounded by manicured parkland, lakes and its own eight-acre vineyard. Boasting 22 romantically secluded rooms, a quaint two-bed cottage and a private luxury residence, this quiet escape is also renowned for its award-winning restaurant

and incredible 14,000 bottle wine cellar. Plus, with the famous neighbouring wineries of Vasse Felix, Cullen and Moss Wood, Cape Lodge is the perfect place to stay if you're looking to discover the region's outstanding food and wine.

**3 hour drive from Perth**  
**2 nights from £309 per person**



## Hidden Lodge

Tucked away on the banks of Lake Wakatipu, this luxurious suite-only B&B is a haven for guests to relax and enjoy the serene natural surrounds. Though just minutes outside bustling Queenstown, it feels a million miles away. Each of the luxurious suites offer mesmerising views of the lake, The

Remarkables and Cecil Peak. While inside the rooms, elegant decor is complemented by locally-crafted Kiwi furniture. Claudia, the lodge manager, has a gleaming reputation of her own – an outstanding host and her breakfasts are said to be the best around.

**10 minute drive from Queenstown**

**2 nights from £389 per person**







# Dear Austravel...

Austravellers, Nikki and her husband David, share their memories from their wonderful holiday on Australia's east coast.

We made our first trip to Australia together several years ago to meet up with a group of friends, some of who we hadn't seen for 25 years! We've been back for a few visits since, but this time round we were travelling to Sydney to meet my daughter's fiancé and for a holiday. (I was also celebrating a big birthday – but I won't say which...)

We fly with Singapore Airlines every time we visit. They always provide a comfortable journey with great in-flight service and quality meals – very important on a long-haul flight.

We also usually spend a few days in Singapore which is a brilliant city to stopover in – loads to see and do for everyone. While there, it was a special birthday for me and so I wanted to have breakfast with the orangutans at Singapore Zoo (aka the 'Jungle Breakfast with Wildlife' experience). It was an absolutely amazing

experience and they get so close. Well worth the early start!

We arrived in Sydney and had a lovely few days sightseeing, shopping and wandering around Darling Harbour and The Rocks. We also had some amazing breakfasts in Australia; people tend to meet up in the mornings for breakfast, just as much as they do for evening meals. Speaking of which, we ate at some lovely restaurants including Aqua Dining which is right by Harbour Bridge and at the top of Sydney Tower for their 360-degree dining experience offering fantastic views of Sydney and beyond. Well worth a visit, but I recommend pre-booking.

For the next part of our trip we rented a car on a one-way hire for a fortnight to explore the east coast. North out of Sydney, we travelled up to the Blue Mountains. We absolutely loved Leura with its quaint shops and cafés, and of course the

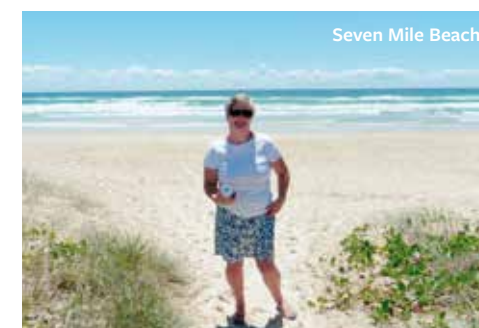
## Nikki's holiday highlights:

- Breakfast with the orangutans at Singapore Zoo
- Sydney Tower's 360-degree dining experience
- The quaint town of Leura in the Blue Mountains

views of the Three Sisters were amazing too. Port Macquarie was our next stop where we visited the Koala Hospital, followed by Nambucca Heads and on to Coffs Harbour where we stopped for morning coffee at the city's Surf Lifesaving Club. Other stop offs included Yamba and beautiful Byron Bay, before we arrived at the charming coastal town of Cabarita Beach where we met up with our friends for four nights.

Following a busy few days of catching up, we flew back to Sydney for Christmas. Australia has a superb internal flight network so it was easier to fly back down the coast. Needless to say, Christmas is not as commercialised or manic as it is in the UK. A lot of places and attractions are still open so there's loads to do.

Overall, we stayed in a range of accommodation. Australia does self-catering apartments extremely



well and has a lovely selection of B&Bs, although we did treat ourselves to a couple of magnificent hotels too.

We have used Austravel three times, every time the quote has been fantastic and service, simply excellent, so have returned without question.

All staff have been professional and friendly. They make the whole process so smooth, even giving us a quick call a few days prior to departure. Twice now we've had Julie as our Travel Designer who always goes that 'extra mile' for you. We would have no hesitation in recommending Austravel to anyone wanting a trip Down Under.

**If you'd like to share your Austravel travel stories and photos with us, please email us at [share@austravel.com](mailto:share@austravel.com). We'd love to hear from you! 📧**



# A VIEW WITH A ROOM

Longitude 131°

Located in the heart of Australia, Longitude 131° overlooks the country's best-known natural icon, Uluru (Ayers Rock). Sitting atop scorched-red dunes, these safari-style private tents are the epitome of five-star luxury. Wake up to impressive, uninterrupted views of the sacred monolith. Open your floor-to-ceiling glass doors and enjoy the sunset against this spiritual desert landscape before curling up in swags on the outdoor bed to witness the star-studded outback sky. It's easy to see why this was the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's accommodation of choice when visiting the Red Centre.

## ADD TO MY TRIP

**3 nights from £2,425 per person**

Based on selected travel Mar 18



# Travellers' tales

## 6 days in the Islands of Tahiti

The 118 exquisite atolls of the Islands of Tahiti are an eight-hour flight south west of Los Angeles; the perfect exotic addition to any trip Down Under. Here, Destination Manager Katie, shares her island escapades.



### Day 1 & 2: London to Tahiti and Moorea

"Landing on the main island of Tahiti at 5am to an announcement that it was already 26°C certainly took the edge off the long journey. After a quick freshen up we ventured into the city. Stalls piled high with oyster-shell jewellery, weaved bags and carved wooden statues sat next to mountains of freshly plucked pineapples, plantains and enormous tuna steaks – we'd found the marketplace. After a delicious lunch of Mahi Mahi with vanilla sauce washed down with a Hinano beer, we made the short walk to the ferry terminal for a 30-minute journey across the calm Pacific waters to the spectacular volcanic silhouette of Moorea. Undoubtedly the less famous sister of Bora Bora, Moorea's empty paradise beaches and almost perfect snorkelling make you feel like you've uncovered a local secret, despite the handful of large resorts scattered around the island. After a dip in the pool and dinner at the Hilton Moorea's Aii Vahine Restaurant, the realisation hit that we hadn't slept for 48 hours, so the sight of a bed was most welcome. After a few more Hinanos, of course.

### Day 3: Raiatea and Le Taha'a


Waking in luxury to the gentle lapping of water and the view of the turquoise Pacific far outweighed my fear that I would drop something between the gaps of the deck into the water below. Returning to Tahiti we jumped on the 40-minute flight to the small island of Raiatea (get a window seat if you can!) and from there picked up a boat bound for Le Taha'a. The impossibly clear lagoon waters was our first sighting of Le Taha'a. We wandered around the edge of the motu (a Polynesian reef islet), crossing waist deep water to reach a coral bank. Here, we kitted up, and George, the local guide, demonstrated a superman position while telling us that under no circumstances should we do anything except float. As the current drifted us back down towards the resort, I witnessed some of the most vivid coral I'd ever seen. After this exhausting floating session, we devoured a sumptuous dinner of swordfish tartar at Le Vanille Restaurant, while enjoying the uninterrupted views back out to Taha'a Island. What a day!

### Day 4: Raiatea and Vahine

Next morning we arrived by launch to the jetty at Raiatea. We soon located Dave, our tour guide, by listening out for the sound of him blowing a conch shell trumpet to welcome us. Though only a short hop from Tahiti, Raiatea felt like the real Polynesia. Lush green mountains, crystal-clear lagoons, rows and rows of hibiscus hedges, and cheery locals. First stop was Anapa Pearl Farm, home to over 100,000 black-pearl oysters. After roughly 18 months and a meticulous selection process, these oysters produce some of the most beautiful pearls in the world. The jewellery they make is worth thousands of dollars. In the afternoon, we made our way across the lagoon to Vahine Private Island Resort. Perched on the edge of a lagoon, the resort's nine exclusive rooms ooze instant relaxation. The perfect place to recharge our batteries before moving on to Bora Bora.

### Day 5 & 6: Bora Bora

Bora Bora did not disappoint. The view from my overwater bungalow at Le Meridien was simply picture perfect; the tip of Mount Otemanu blanketed by the last traces of the dawn fog. Not to mention the colourful fish swimming beneath the glass floor, and the not so traditionally Polynesian smell of bacon drifting over the lagoon. We started the day at the turtle sanctuary – a fantastic place where marine biologists coach turtles that have been attacked by wild dogs, mistakenly caught by fishermen, or have become disorientated after hatching, back to ocean fitness for their release. After lunch, Manu, a wild-haired local, picked us up for our lagoon cruise and took us for a snorkel in the coral gardens off Marara Island. Crushing bread rolls in our hands we were soon surrounded by what seemed like hundreds of tropical fish, from sergeant major fish with their regimented stripes, to trumpet fish and playful rays. It was the perfect end to our time in these extraordinary islands.

While my stay in the Islands of Tahiti was a whistle-stop research tour, I would recommend spending two to three days on each island to really get a feel for each one." 



Hilton Moorea



### WHAT OUR EXPERTS SAY...



*"We followed the locals to a market café serving freshly cooked mahi-mahi with vanilla sauce. If the locals are eating there, you know it's going to be good food!"*

KATIE, DESTINATION MANAGER

### TAKE ME THERE

11 days

**Prices from £5,399 per person**

Includes: 1nt Le Meridien Tahiti, 3nts Hilton Moorea, 3nts Vahine Private Island Resort, 2nts Le Taha'a Island Resort, 2nts Le Meridien Bora Bora. Flights and transfers.

Based on selected travel Mar 2018



Turtle sanctuary



Black pearls



# 8 Aussie wildlife encounters

From cute and cuddly to the mighty giants of the ocean, Australia is hard to beat for its wonderful wildlife experiences...



## Kangaroos

Kangaroo Island, South Australia

If there's one place you are guaranteed to see kangaroos (plus koalas, rare Australian fur sea lions and plenty more native animals), it's Kangaroo Island. Take a 4WD tour around the island and spot them skipping across the green pastures in their mobs, or if you're lucky, catch a female kangaroo with her joey grazing at the side of the road. From wallabies to the larger red kangaroo, there's over 60,000 marsupials on the island so you're bound to meet a fair few of them.

**Kangaroo Island self-drive tour**  
2 nights from £399 per person

## Saltwater crocodiles

Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory

Meet the prehistoric rulers of Australia's Top End; the fearsome saltwater crocs - or 'salties' as the locals call them. A cruise along Kakadu's tranquil Yellow Water Billabong is certainly a relaxing experience, until you spot the two yellow eyes poking above the surface of the water. If you're lucky, you can also find these big boys on the river banks basking in the sun, before they slip silently back into the water for their next meal.

**Kakadu National Park day tour**  
from £149 per person



## Koalas

Raymond Island, Victoria

Head to Victoria's south coast for some of the best koala spotting around. Jump on the ferry from Paynesville, around a four-hour drive from Melbourne, and hit Raymond Island's Koala Trail. The clearly marked trail takes 20 minutes to walk and leads you among the gumtrees. Don't forget to keep your eyes up: these cute creatures are probably snoozing above you, or you may even be lucky enough to have one cross your path.

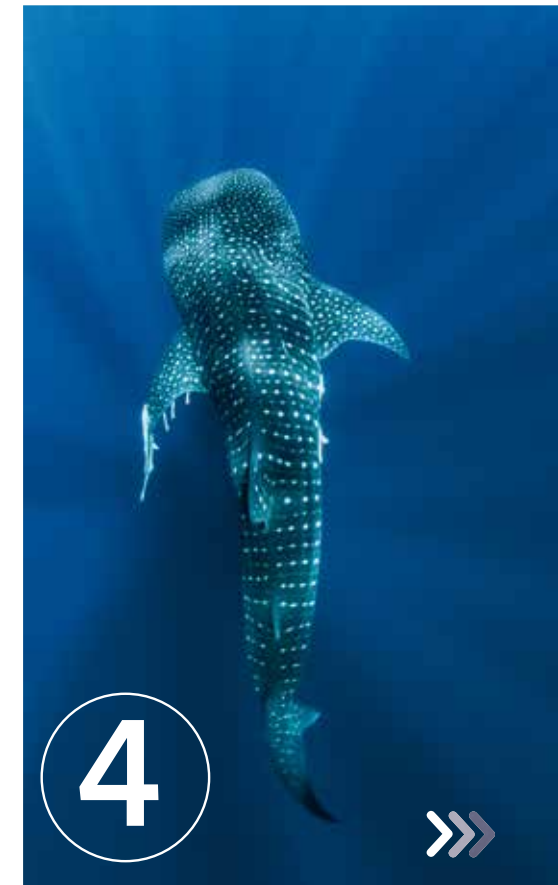
**Raymond Island self-drive tour**  
(on the 7 day Sydney to Melbourne coastal drive)  
from £559 per person

## Whale sharks

Exmouth, Western Australia

There's certainly something fascinating and thrilling about swimming in such close proximity to the largest fish in the ocean - the whale shark. Reaching up to 18 metres long, it's an extraordinary experience meeting this endangered marine creature and fortunately for us, they're vegetarians. Western Australia's Coral Coast is one of the best places to get up close to these gentle giants. So head to Exmouth between March and September, and choose to snorkel or scuba dive alongside them.

**Exmouth Dive Centre whale shark swim from**  
£259 per person







## Tasmanian devils

Hobart, Tasmania

A shy and elusive character, the Tassie devil is the island state's most famous native animal. Rarely seen out in the wild due to their declining numbers, you can have an up-close encounter at one of Tasmania's fantastic wildlife sanctuaries which nurture injured or orphaned devils before releasing them back into the wild. One in particular is Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary where you have the opportunity to go on an exciting night tour to feed the sanctuary's nocturnal residents.

**Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary night tour from £65 per person**

## Turtles

Great Barrier Reef, Queensland

Along with many other marine friends, you can find these graceful creatures gliding around the Great Barrier Reef. If you like your wildlife experiences paired with a bit of adventure, then an outer reef dive trip is for you. The colourful coral of Agincourt Reef off the coast of Tropical North Queensland is home to many varieties of turtle, including the green and loggerhead variety.

**Quicksilver Outer Barrier Reef day tour from £149 per person**



## Humpback whales

Sydney Harbour, New South Wales

A whale watching cruise on Sydney Harbour is an extraordinary opportunity to see these giants on their annual migration between the months of May and November. Southern right whales, orcas and minke whales all visit Sydney's coastline, but it's the humpbacks that come in great numbers. See them showing off with breaches, tail slaps and even a sneaky wink when they pop their head out the water. If you're really lucky, catch sight of new mothers with their calves in tow.

**Whale watching cruise from £65 per person**

## Quokkas

Rottneest Island, Western Australia

Have you ever seen such happy little creatures? Found only in Western Australia, you're almost guaranteed a quokka sighting on Rottneest Island off the coast of Perth. These cute, inquisitive marsupials are certainly accustomed to island visitors and don't mind posing for the odd 'selfie'. However, Rottneest authorities prohibit touching or feeding them so it's best to give these adorable natives a little space.

**Discover Rottneest Island day tour from £115 per person**







## EXPLORE THE WORLD'S LARGEST AQUARIUM

One of the seven wonders of the natural world and a national treasure, the Great Barrier Reef is a must when visiting Queensland. Whether you choose to get wet or stay dry, Quicksilver enables all ages and swimming abilities, even non-swimmers, to discover an exotic array of marine life while snorkelling, diving or cruising.

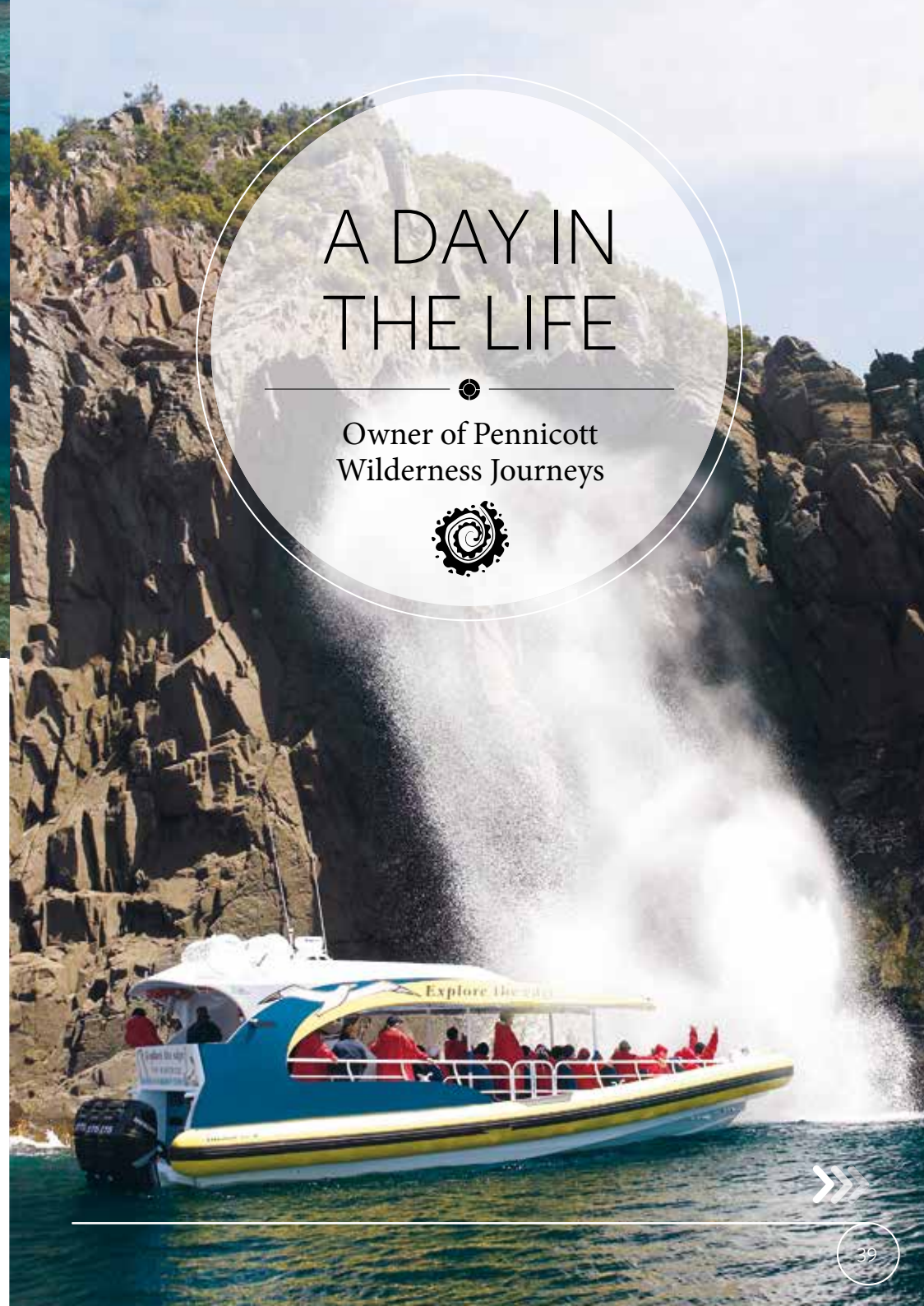
### Quicksilver Outer Barrier Reef Cruise

Perfect for first time visitors or those short on time, travel on a high-speed, air-conditioned luxury catamaran, to their floating platform on the Agincourt Reef. Dive and snorkel in a kaleidoscope of colourful coral gardens, or stay dry and explore the Great Barrier Reef from Quicksilver's semi-submersible vessel and underwater observatory.



### ADD TO MY TRIP

Quicksilver Outer Barrier Reef day tour  
Prices from £149 per person



## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Owner of Pennicott  
Wilderness Journeys







## Robert Pennicott

### Occupation:

Owner and manager of Pennicott Wilderness Journeys

### Location:

Cruises leave from Hobart and Port Arthur, Tasmania

Robert Pennicott and his family founded Pennicott Wilderness Journeys in 1999. Since then, this eco-friendly family venture has won many tourism awards and strives to create a legacy of conservation for the environment and local community while showcasing the wonders of Bruny Island and the Tasman Peninsula. Here, Robert shares his passion for the beautiful place he calls home.

### Q. What steered you towards your profession?

As a former fisherman of Tasmania's southern waters, I used to take a lot of friends fishing with me and they loved the drama of this place. It blew them away. That's what gave me the idea for the business. It was a natural progression from fishing to showing off this beautiful coast. I went from catching fish, to catching people... you can only talk to crayfish for so long!

### Q. What does a typical day on the job involve?

Every day is different. Some days I'm at the helm skippering one of our five tours. Other days I'm representing the company at board meetings, giving key note speeches at events or in meetings with my fantastic team.

### Q. What's your favourite part of where you live and work?

What's not to love about Tasmania! We have the freshest air, cleanest water, best produce – not to mention the amazing seafood and friendly people.

### Q. What's the most enjoyable aspect of your job?

The early mornings and witnessing the first light of the day – the cliffs glow. We see great wildlife all year round and at any time of day. Every day out on the water is a new adventure.

### Q. What's the most challenging aspect of your job?

The weather. We do our best to work with it but sometimes we have to cancel. Most of our guests will come back another day or switch to our land based tour of Bruny Island – Bruny Island Traveller.

### Q. What do people experience when going on your tours?

Guests will experience an award-winning eco cruise in the rugged and remote parts of southern Tasmania. The magnitude of the cliffs, deep sea caves, peculiar rock formations and the unique, inquisitive wildlife will blow you away!

Bruny Island Cruise



### Q. What is the most memorable experience you've had on the job?

When my daughter Mia was two weeks old, I showed her to two wild dolphins while on a tour. They came right up to the boat within inches and stared at her. A couple of weeks later the same dolphins physically nosed their baby to the side of the boat as if to introduce it, as I had done previously with my baby. I cried.

### Q. Who is the most interesting person you've met on the job and why?

This is a hard one. I meet so many interesting people every day. My family and staff continue to encourage me to think outside the box. I do a lot of philanthropic work through my foundation, the Pennicott Foundation, and I feel privileged to meet many inspirational conservation pioneers.


### Q. When you're not working, what do you do on your days off – what are your other interests?

You wouldn't believe this (or maybe you would!), but on my days off I take my family and friends on a boat to a secluded bay and gather abalone, crayfish and fish. This was the inspiration for the Tasmanian Seafood Seduction Journey where your catch is turned into a delicious seafood feast. Lunch doesn't get fresher than that.

Tasmanian Seafood Seduction



### Q. If you could give one reason why people should take one of your cruises, what would it be?

The serenity. Leave behind the hustle and bustle of the big cities. Everything in Tasmania is so close, you can be 30 minutes outside Hobart and find yourself standing on a secluded white-sand beach or spotting sea eagles on the River Derwent. The nature, right here on the doorstep, never ceases to amaze me. 

## ADD TO MY TRIP

**Bruny Island Cruise**  
from £135 per person

**Bruny Island Traveller**  
from £100 per person

**Tasmanian Seafood Seduction Journey**  
from £439 per person



# “We must visit soon”

If saying these words is an all too regular occurrence, isn't it about time you did visit? Combine catching up with your loved ones with having a holiday of a lifetime. Your hosts may have plenty of ideas for things you can do during your stay, but why not whisk them off on one of these tours or mini getaways? It'll be a little holiday for them too! Just let our Travel Designers know if you want to add people on to part of your booking and they'll do the rest.



## Catching up in:

### Brisbane

Lazy afternoons spent at South Bank's lagoon pool followed by an al fresco meal on Eagle Street Pier, that's what reunions in Brissy (as the locals call it) are all about. What's more, with the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast so close by, Brisbane has easy access to some of Australia's best beaches.

#### Top tours and weekend breaks from Brisbane:

- With its blend of beach, lush hinterland and boutique shopping, Noosa is the perfect weekend getaway
- Feed wild dolphins and snorkel shipwrecks on a day trip to Moreton Island
- To the cooler climes of Lamington National Park for a stay at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat – the ideal place to reconnect

### Sydney

A city where there's always something going on, not to mention lots of iconic sights to see. If it's your first time in Sydney, of course you need to tick off the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge. But remember, there's plenty to see just outside the city too.

#### Top tours and weekend breaks from Sydney:

- The pure white shores of Jervis Bay for a weekend camping adventure
- The Blue Mountains National Park where wildlife and walking tracks await
- Explore the harbour – even your local companions can't get sick of cruising these beautiful waterways

### Melbourne

New trendy restaurants and cafés are popping up all the time in Melbourne. There's sure to be some fantastic just-opened eateries that your hosts are yet to try. In particular we recommend Long Chim – a Thai street-food diner, perfect for family feasting.

#### Top tours and weekend breaks from Melbourne:

- The Yarra Valley with its gorgeous green farmland dotted with cellar doors
- Melburnians flock to the beaches of the Mornington Peninsula on sunny weekends, why not join them?
- Visit pretty Port Fairy or another of the Great Ocean Road's quaint little seaside towns

### Adelaide

Encircled by green parklands with the Karrawirra Parri (River Torrens) running through the heart of the city, Adelaide does outdoor gatherings to a tee. Whether it's a big family picnic or watching a cricket match at the Adelaide Oval – enjoy this city's great outdoors.

#### Top tours and weekend breaks from Adelaide:

- The rugged outback of the 540-million-year-old Flinders Ranges
- The lesser-known vineyards and breweries of the McLaren Vale with Off Piste 4WD Tours
- Kangaroo Island (aka the 'zoo without fences') for a weekend filled with wildlife encounters

### Perth

From the tranquil gardens of Kings Park to the laid-back Cottesloe Beach, there's so many great places to hang out in Perth. Regular visitors will also be surprised at how much this ever-growing city has changed in recent years. New shops, new restaurants, lots of new things to do and see.

#### Top tours and weekend breaks from Perth:

- Cycle from bay to bay around exquisite Rottnest Island, and meet the cute resident quokkas
- Venture off along Margaret River's multi-day Cape to Cape Track for awesome coastal views
- See the mars-like rock spires of the Pinnacles in Nambung National Park



# 72 HOURS on the Sunshine Coast

Few self-drives can compare with what Queensland's Sunshine Coast has to offer. Wildlife: yes. Impressive scenery: certainly. Beautiful beaches: some of the best. Here's how to make the most of three days on this sunny coastal route.

## DAY 1

### Morning

If you're starting your Sunshine Coast road trip in Brisbane, then the first leg of your drive is going to be a breezy one. It's a mere hour's drive up the Bruce Highway to your first destination, Steve Irwin's Australia Zoo. We recommend getting here early; the zoo is a popular attraction and weekends can be especially busy. But it's all worth it. Kangaroos, koalas, echidnas, you name it, this is the place to see all Australia's native animals in one place. Plus, there's lots of other amazing animals too including elephants and giraffes in the zoo's massive open-range Africa exhibit. One must-see is the famous Crocoseum with its action-packed Wildlife Warriors show at noon every day. Don't miss it!

### Afternoon

Australia Zoo is huge so you will need most of the day to see as much as you can. When you're ready to head off, there's one final stop to make before you check in for the night. On the drive up, you'll probably have noticed the volcanic peaks of the Glass House Mountains to the west. As you drive back down Steve Irwin Way, veer off onto Beerburum Woodford Road to join the Glass House Mountains Lookout Circuit. Time it right and you may even reach the Lookout Point at sunset; one of the best times to see these mighty formations in all their glory.

### Where to stay:

Glass House Mountains Eco-lodge



Glass House Mountains



Rainbow Beach



Mooloolaba prawns



Noosa National Park



## WHAT OUR EXPERTS SAY...



*"If you're on the Sunshine Coast, take a trip to Australia Zoo in Beerwah. A great day out for all the family (big kids included), you can feed kangaroos and get your photo taken with a koala, or if you're feeling brave, you can even hold a python!"*

SUE, TRAVEL DESIGNER





## DAY 2

### Morning

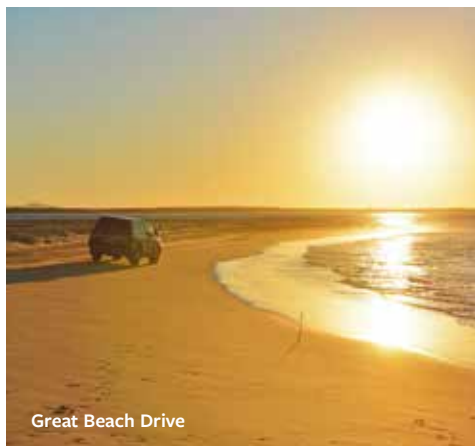
Today is your relaxing beach day. Begin your drive up the coast, stopping off at whichever golden sandy beach takes your fancy. We recommend Mooloolaba for its buzzing beachfront esplanade. With a plethora of alfresco cafés and eateries, it's also the perfect place to stop for lunch. Plus, as one of Australia's safest and most family-friendly holiday beaches, it's no wonder Mooloolaba finds itself voted one of TripAdvisor's 'Top Ten Australian Beaches'.

### Afternoon

Arrive in Noosa, one of Australia's most fashionable and glamorous beach towns. Surrounded by stunning beaches and lush hinterland, there's plenty to keep you occupied for the afternoon. Venture off along one of the coastal tracks in Noosa National Park; hit the designer boutiques of Hastings Street or embark on a wilderness cruise into the Noosa Everglades. For tonight's dinner, while there's an endless choice of delicious cuisine, we recommend the Noosa Boathouse. A great place for seafood lovers to try the local oysters, prawns and barramundi, while overlooking Noosa River and hinterland.

### Where to stay:

Peppers Noosa Resort & Villas



Great Beach Drive

## DAY 3

### Morning

It's an early start today as you're off on a Great Beach Drive 4WD tour up Australia's Nature Coast. With a unique combination of both beach and bushland, this eight-hour adventure takes you along 70 kilometres of stunning scenery to Double Island Point. Stop offs throughout the day include Carlo Sandblow, Rainbow Beach, Red Canyon, Honeymoon Bay and Natural Rainforest. One of the tour's highlights also includes exclusive drive access to Double Island Point Lighthouse where you'll be blown away by the 360-degree views from Noosa up to Fraser Island. If you're visiting between June and October, you may even spot whales migrating along the coast. Lunch is served at Rainbow Beach Surf Club with breathtaking views across the Pacific Ocean.

### Afternoon

As you head back down the coast, your local tour guide will take you to more of the coast's best-kept secrets. Just remember to let your guide know if you'd like to stay a little longer in one place; it's totally up to you. For your final evening in Noosa, why not treat yourself to a special end-of-trip dinner in a beachfront setting. Sails Restaurant holds the mantle as one of the best restaurants in Noosa. With 180-degree views of Laguna Bay, soak up the last of the holiday vibes accompanied by a glass from their award-winning wine list – one of the largest wine collections in Australia. It really is as luxe as it sounds! 🍷

### Where to stay:

Peppers Noosa Resort & Villas

### ADD TO MY TRIP

**3 days Sunshine Coast self-drive**

**Prices from £489 per person**

Includes: 1nt at Glass House Mountains Eco-lodge, 2nts at Peppers Noosa Resort & Villas, Australia Zoo admission, Noosa River Everglades BBQ cruise and Great Beach Drive 4WD tour.

Based on selected travel Mar 18



## TRAVEL IN STYLE WITH EMIRATES

Emirates fly 17 times daily from the UK to Dubai, offering convenient onward connections to Australasia. On-board, passengers can enjoy world-class service, regionally-inspired gourmet cuisine and over 2,500 channels of entertainment – plus phone, SMS and email connectivity from every seat.



### Economy Class

Enjoy the latest entertainment, stay connected to everything you love and savour flavours from around the world. Fly Emirates and experience a whole new class of Economy.

### Business Class

Stretch out and relax in Emirates Business Class. Match your chef-prepared meals with award-winning wines or fine champagne and vintage port, then socialise in the Emirates A380 Onboard Lounge.

### First Class

Retreat to a quiet space with personalised service designed around you and delivered right to the door of your very own Private Suite. Fly Emirates First Class and experience new heights of luxury.





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