Australia

While some things have remained constant in the land Down Under—the exuberant hospitality, the otherworldly scenery—there's now a fresh energy spreading across the country. New experiences and hotels have opened up less-frequented destinations. Innovative chefs and winemakers are putting a global spin on native ingredients. And though there's no denying it takes some time to get there, the recent addition of direct flights from Chicago, Houston, and London is making the journey easier than ever. Read on for immersive, T+L editor-curated trips for every state—and enough inspiration for a lifetime's worth of Aussie adventures.

One of Australia's thrilling sights: Hutt Lagoon, which gets its pink hue from algae. See it on a road trip along Western Australia's Coral Coast.

SEAN FENNESSY

MAPS BY MAY PARSEY

DESTINATION OF THE YEAR AUSTRALIA

From far left: Echo Point Lookout, near the Three Sisters rocks; a cable car over the Blue Mountains; the dining room at Raes on Wategos hotel, in Byron Bay.

New South Wales

Natural Instincts

In the lush Blue Mountains and windswept Byron Bay—two vastly different but equally beautiful corners of New South Wales—determined residents are fighting to preserve the wilderness.
By Tony Perrottet

I FOUND MYSELF LOST in Blue Mountains National Park, and I hadn't even left my hotel. For the first hour in the Hydro Majestic Hotel, a sumptuous Art Deco warren about 90 minutes west of Sydney, my hometown, I wandered wide-eyed from one theatrical setting to the next, taking in the glass-domed lobby and quirky murals from the 1920s that depict both medieval knights and outback safaris. But even amid the Gatsbyesque flourishes, it was the sweeping vistas of the Megalong Valley, considered the Grand Canyon of Australia and a key part of the Blue Mountains' 3 million-plus acres of forest, that were the most captivating. Looking out at the atavistic expanse—which was, as the name promised, bathed in azure eucalyptus haze—I expected a pterodactyl to sweep into view.

The property, which spans more than half a mile along a rugged cliff edge, was the perfect starting point from which to explore a part of New South Wales that figures large in Australians' vision of our vast, untamed continent. The first European settlers saw the raw terrain as an intimidating barrier, and it took 25 years to find a route through its labyrinthine bushland after Sydney was colonized in 1788. But in the Victorian era, "the Blueys" became the country's first vacation destination—the Adirondacks of the antipodes.

PETRINA TINSLAY

PETRINA TINSLAY

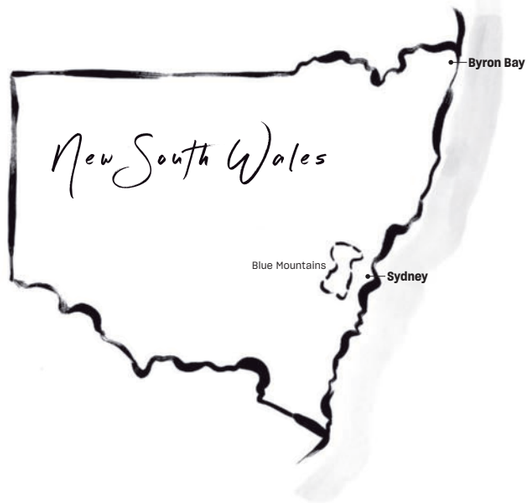
Sydneysiders in search of fresh air and open spaces began visiting its villages, with their odd English-sounding names such as Blackheath and Medlow Bath, where the Hydro Majestic was built. (In fact, explorer Captain James Cook gave the state its Anglocentric name, New South Wales, in 1770 because he thought its coast looked like the soggy shores of Wales.) Guests used the elegant hotels as launchpads for day hikes into pristine valleys, where the endless ancient forests were framed by sandstone cliffs and filled with kangaroos, wallabies, and iridescent cockatoos.

With such rich wildlife, it figures that the Australian conservation movement was born here in the early 1930s, when a group of bushwalkers raised money to buy their beloved Blue Gum Forest—situated within the now-national park's Grose Valley—to save it from logging. "It shows

Laura Brown's Sydney

"When I return to my hometown, it feels like I exhale a long-held breath. The more years I've been away in New York (18 now), the more I crave that feeling. It's the funny-sounding birds at Sydney Airport on a bleary early morning after a 15-hour flight from California. That singular "koo-koo-ka-ka" of a kookaburra is the kind of Australian-ness that exists nowhere else. We're a still-young country of settlers, ever reconciling itself with its indigenous owners, and now in possession of one of the most multicultural populations on earth.
We have some of the best Thai curry you'll ever eat (and you'll most likely find it at a casual hole-in-the-wall), local wine that has a sprightly elegance and is delivered with no pretension, and always-excellent coffee that's topped with a heart-shaped froth. The walks around Sydney Harbour expand your lungs with fresh air. Jasmine and frangipani bloom all year long. The common greeting of "Owzitgoing?" (Cut to writer, weeping from homesickness, wondering why she left.) The blessing and the curse of Australia, for us expats, is its distance. Its total uniqueness. But what will lure me back one day is its heart. And a green curry. Fresh mango. And my mum. Not in that order."

— *EDITOR IN CHIEF,*
INSTYLE (*@LAURABROWN99*)



what individual action can do," said environmental activist Chris Darwin, the great-great-grandson of Charles Darwin, when I met him in his home in the foothills. "They created the seed of the national park, and it remains an inspiration."

A few days after arriving, I channeled those feisty bushwalkers of the past and set out along the same trails that have been used for generations—first, a brisk descent to the iconic Three Sisters, a trio of crooked sandstone fingers that rise from the bush, then a three-hour trek into the Grose Valley, a route that was restored in 2017 and offers an instant immersion into the wild. Deeper in the Blue Mountains lie resorts that blend their eco-cred with luxury—none better than the award-winning Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley, which places as much weight on projects like planting 200,000 native trees as it does on comforts like private plunge pools and elaborate tasting menus.

▲ *Surfers at Tallows Beach, in Byron Bay.*

PETRINA TINSLAY

The health of the natural world looms large in the Aussie psyche, as global warming has made the continent a bellwether of climate change. On my trip, the green messaging began in New York, where I moved in 1990. Aware that long-haul plane trips are part of the problem, Australia's national airline, Qantas, has developed the aviation industry's largest carbon offset program, with the funds going to environmental initiatives including replanting rain forests along the shore opposite the Great Barrier Reef to block fertilizer runoff from farms. This year, Qantas also broke new ground by offering frequent-flier miles to passengers who purchased offsets, and last May, it operated the world's first "waste-free flight," from Sydney to Adelaide, where every in-flight item was reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Even more ambitious: Qantas aims to cut its waste output by 75 percent by the end of 2021.

To complete my crash course in Aussie conservation, I hopped on a short flight north of Sydney to the Blue Mountains' alter ego: Byron Bay. This once-remote surfing town not only boasts one of the most flawless beaches in New South Wales but also sits on the edge of a caldera where tropical and subtropical rain forests meet. Byron first achieved its place in Down Under mythology as the country's hippie capital, filled with New Agers who wanted to devote themselves to crystals, yoga, and mind-altering substances. Then, in the late 1970s, when its idyllic hinterland became threatened by logging, the town's radical energy seized newspaper headlines. It soon became the jumping-off point for protesters from all over Australia, who sabotaged chain saws and lay in front of steamrollers.

Byron has mellowed since then. Now it's best known as a home for Hollywood star and native son Chris Hemsworth. But as I drove into town, I found its hippie essence intact: the hand-carved wooden sign at the town entrance exhorts visitors to CHEER UP. SLOW DOWN. CHILL OUT. and is followed by a flashing alert: BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR KOALAS—THEIR HABITAT IS DISAPPEARING. I checked in to a legendary boutique hotel called Raes on Wategos. It was the barefoot-beach answer to the Hydro Majestic, a gleaming white villa that, in 1994, was converted into a luxury inn with a vaguely Moroccan flair and is now freshly renovated. The seven-suite property is where the gods would go on vacation—or at least Keith Richards and Tom Cruise, both former guests. I opened my wraparound patio so I could be lulled by the crashing surf, then followed a coastal trail for 10 minutes to an open-air café, spotting humpbacks and dolphins cavorting along the way.

There I met local rangers Liz Dorgan and Matt Wiseman, who gave me a rundown of how the conservation struggles of the had 70s led to the creation of a network of national parks in the rugged country around Byron, an area loosely known as the Northern Rivers. "It's a biodiversity hot spot," Dorgan enthused. "The caldera rises 3,600 feet, so you've got these spectacular escarpments, huge waterfalls, and, thanks to the rich volcanic soil, rain forests with rare trees like Antarctic beech." They pointed me to the most accessible taste of raw wilderness for a day hike: Minyon Falls, in Nightcap National Park.

After a 90-minute drive past rural stores selling handmade red-velvet pants and local organic teas, I was bouncing along an unpaved mountain road through a tunnel of ferns and vines. Minyon Falls surges 330 feet over a cliff that was once part of an ancient volcano, and hiking down to its base led to a natural swimming pool filled with crystalline water, perfect for a purifying dip. The ascent was more of a workout, but just as Victorian hikers in the Blue Mountains would have retreated to the Hydro for high tea and scones, I headed back to Byron to settle into one of the casual restaurants with patios overlooking the Pacific. At sunset, no music was needed: it was enough to listen to the waves and watch the humpbacks at play.

The Hydro-Majestic Hotel: hydromajestic.com.au; doubles from $110. Raes on Wategos: raes.com.au; doubles from $570. Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley: oneandonlyresorts.com; doubles from $2,047. T+L A-list advisor Cassandra Bookholder (cassandrab@camelbacktravel.com; 602-266-4000) can coordinate a trip connecting all three.

LOUISE DENTON/COURTESY OF NTMEC

Northern Territory

A Brighter Vision

Almost three decades after his first visit to the Northern Territory, famed British artist Bruce Munro explains why he's returning with "Tropical Light," a bold, eight-sculpture installation in the capital city of Darwin. *As told to Siobhan Reid*

IN 1992, I ROAD-TRIPPED from New South Wales to the Northern Territory with my wife, Serena, who was then my fiancée. The 10-week-long, 2,500-mile journey proved to be hugely formative. It was the wet season, and we were camping. There was so much heat and humidity it was like being in the Caribbean. We spent our time taking pictures of the breathtaking sunsets and walking from one end of Darwin to the other.

The city struck me as a unique place. It's an urban area surrounded by the jungle and the sea, so while you have one foot in civilization, you also feel like you're on the edge of the world. I was

▼ Water Towers, *one of Bruce Munro's site-specific installations in the Northern Territory.*

really inspired by the city's fingerprint and wanted to spotlight its fascinating history, landscape, and climatic conditions, which are unlike anywhere else in the world. For "Tropical Light," I decided to bring those ideas together through eight site-specific works scattered across Darwin's central business district and waterfront. A 1½-mile path connects the works, allowing visitors to experience different parts of the city as they discover the sculptures, all of which are inspired by the areas they inhabit. Some are informed by Darwin's history, others borrow from natural motifs like trees, birds, and sunsets.

Telegraph Rose, for example, was constructed out of 700 vertically oriented fishing rods laid out in the form of Sturt's desert rose, the Northern Territory's emblem. The sculpture also features a sound recording of the first international Morse code message—a nod to Darwin's history as the first Australian city that could send and receive international communication. Another work, *Green Flash,* is inspired by the eponymous phenomenon, wherein the sun appears to turn green for a second or two before sunrise or after sunset. At dawn and dusk, the sculpture of 2,500 illuminated bottles morphs through an array of colors, flashing green for the briefest of moments. Like the real thing, you have to keep your eyes peeled, or else you'll miss it.

Munro's "Tropical Light" will be on view until April 30, 2020.

SEAN FENNESSY

Western Australia

On the Wild Side

Even in a country known for its vast swaths of pristine land, the Coral Coast—a remote, 800-mile stretch of Western Australia that fringes the Indian Ocean—is in a league of its own. And the best way to experience it is to get behind the wheel. *By Kevin West*

THE THREE-MILE-LONG stretch of white sand dunes at Lancelin rises abruptly from the coastal scrub, a sugar bowl tipped onto shag carpet. Ninety minutes north of Perth via a dawdler's highway called Indian Ocean Drive, you can sandboard down their 45-degree faces. But on the first morning of my road trip to Ningaloo Reef, a haven for whale sharks and manta rays off the North West Cape, I wasn't going to be that easily diverted. The itinerary I'd printed out indicated a lunch stop an hour ahead, so I held steady for rock lobster in Cervantes, a flyspeck town farther up the coast.

Twenty minutes later, another set of sugar dunes appeared on my left, followed shortly by a paved road that cut back toward the Indian Ocean, now brightly visible on the horizon. This time it occurred to me that the point of a road trip is not necessarily the destination. I swung left toward

◂ *Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef, a lodge consisting of 15 safari-style tents at the top of the North West Cape.*

the rich iodine smell of beached seaweed and, at pavement's end, met a woman walking her dog through a settlement of corrugated-metal shacks. She must have been 80, lean and sun-toughened, and she pulled my handshake toward her with a grandmother's sweetness.

"Where you going?" she asked. Ningaloo Reef, I said.

"Why you going there? Why not stay here? It's paradise."

Here turned out to be Wedge, a lost-in-time squatters' settlement where Annie McGuinness has lived for 45 years. She insisted I stay for tea, cake, and sausage rolls and to meet her neighbors, both named Chris. Afterward, she gave me a SAVE WEDGE bumper sticker and fussed about useless modern improvements—like the paved road that had led me to her. "It took all the adventure out of getting here," Annie said as she walked me back to my truck.

With all due respect to Annie and her pioneering spirit, I found there was still plenty of adventure to be found along Western Australia's sparsely settled Coral Coast. The route for my weeklong drive connected several distinct subregions, each with its own flavor. Indian Ocean Drive, north of Perth, led to quiet surfside communities and national parks. The Midwest, centered around Geraldton, held wildflowers, whale-watching, and the heritage of early European settlement. Shark Bay's unspoiled marine habitat and stark landscapes lived up to its UNESCO World Heritage designation. And finally, the North West Cape beyond Exmouth was a place where snorkelers can set off from empty beaches.

Along the way, the spectacular scenery varied from Wedge's white-sand beaches to the red coastal cliffs at Kalbarri and rippling wheat fields in Greenough. The people I met were friendly and gentle, and each day's drive held long stretches of empty road. "There's nothing to see," a regular visitor from Perth told me about the eight-hour leg from Shark Bay to Exmouth. "It's beautiful." I understood what he meant. The entire week was like time travel back to the good old days, when a scenic place might still be uncrowded, unhurried, and uncommercialized, like Baja in the 1960s or California's Central Coast a generation before that.

"Most foreigners don't know about this region, most Australians don't know about this region, and most Western Australians don't know about this region," said an Aussie on his way back to Perth from Coral Bay. "It's unspoiled."

Driving the Coral Coast in 829 Spectacular Miles

DAY 1
Fremantle to Jurien Bay
Fly in to Perth to rent a car, but don't miss Fremantle, a historic port city 30 minutes southwest, before setting off for rock lobster and fries in Cervantes. In between, stop at Nambung National Park to see Pinnacles, an eerie assembly of limestone monoliths.

DAY 2
Jurien Bay to Geraldton
On the way to Geraldton, mountainous dunes in the Southern Beekeepers Nature Reserve give way to Lesueur National Park and historic Central Greenough. The Pioneer Museum tells the story of the displacement of the area's Aboriginal communities.

DAY 3
Geraldton to Kalbarri
Linger in Horrocks, a charming beach town with a nostalgic general store that doubles as a café. Stop by Instagram-famous Hutt Lagoon, a salt lake turned intergalactic pink by a rare, saltwater-loving algae, before reaching the tiny fishing village of Kalbarri by dusk.

DAY 4
Kalbarri to Shark Bay
In the morning, drive three miles down the coast to Mushroom Rock. Stop at a natural bridge carved by fierce surf and wind. The road inland through Kalbarri National Park passes endless stands of wildflowers lit up in shades of pink, yellow, and white.

From left: A family outing at Shell Beach; cliffs plunge into the Indian Ocean at Kalbarri.

From left: A shrub-lined road near Shark Bay; a camper parked in Cape Range National Park, on the North West Cape.

SEAN FENNESSY

DAY 5
Dirk Hartog Island
This sheep station turned national park, accessed by ferry, offers wilderness camping as well as a full-service campground. If you have a few days to relax and enjoy the island, stay three or more nights at the six-room Eco Lodge on the beach.

DAY 6
North West Cape
The midpoint of the last day's drive is Western Australia's fruit bowl, Carnarvon, where stands sell organic papayas. Halfway up the Cape, Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef's tents sit on the ocean's edge, where wild cockatoos flock at dawn and sea turtles nest on the beach.

WHERE TO STAY
In Fremantle, check in to the **National Hotel** *(nationalhotel fremantle.com.au; doubles from $125)*. **Jurien Bay Tourist Park** *(summerstar.com.au; doubles from $85)* is steps from the beach. The **Gerald Apartment Hotel** *(thegerald.com.au; doubles from $155)*, in Geraldton, has ocean views.

Gecko Lodge *(geckolodge kalbarri.com.au; doubles from $130)*, is near downtown Kalbarri. On Dirk Hartog Island, book at the **Eco Lodge** *(dirk hartogisland.com; three-night packages from $670 per person)*. **Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef** *(salsalis.com.au; tents from $1,145)* is a set of luxury tents in Cape Range National Park.

Triple Play

A trio of notable hotel openings is helping to make Australia's northeastern state a destination in its own right.
By Kendall Hill

The fire pit at Mount Mulligan Lodge, a new property in the north Queensland outback.

QUEENSLAND HAS DEFIED its laid-back reputation lately with a flurry of hotel activity—more than a dozen new ones or renovations have opened in less than two years, in locations ranging from the tropical Whitsunday islands to cattle ranches near Cairns to the glimmering skyline of Brisbane. Resorts bordering the Great Barrier Reef have undertaken initiatives designed to address recent coral bleaching and restore the reef's health through marine-biologist-led projects in which guests can participate. It's paid off, and the state is now a popular option for second- and third-time visitors to the country looking to experience all the best parts of Oz in one go. To do just that, build an itinerary around a trio of stunning hotels—one amid the urban energy of the country's third-largest city, one on the reef, and the last in the iconic outback.

THE CITY HOTEL

The Fantauzzo, Brisbane
Long eclipsed by Sydney's glamour and Melbourne's sophistication, Queensland's capital is now shining far brighter thanks in part to a $130 million revival of its once-dilapidated Howard Smith Wharves, on the Brisbane River. At their heart is this hotel, named for the Australian portraitist Vincent Fantauzzo, seven of whose hyperrealist paintings hang in the foyer. Backed by steep cliffs, with the cantilevered Story Bridge overhead and the Brisbane River just beyond the entrance, there are spectacular views from almost any vantage point (including the rooftop bar Fiume and the adjoining infinity pool). It's the perfect perch from which to take in the downtown skyline. *artseries hotels.com.au; doubles from $195.*

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF ESCAPE

InterContinental Hayman Island Resort
From Brisbane, it's a two-hour flight north to Hamilton Island, then an hour-long sail on the resort's sleek catamaran (sparkling wine and Coral Sea whale sightings included) to reach this reimagined tropical getaway. It's located on Hayman Island, one of the most northerly of the Whitsundays, a postcard-worthy archipelago of 74 islands. The landmark 726-acre property is back after a $90 million rebuild following the devastation of Cyclone Debbie in 2017. Hugging the base of a natural amphitheater of jungle-clad hills at the edge of the island's lagoon, the resort is divided into three wings, one of which overlooks Hayman's famous one-acre saltwater pool. Anchored between the mainland and the UNESCO World Heritage–listed Great Barrier Reef, the InterContinental resort minimizes its impact on fragile marine environments by reducing food waste, recycling wastewater to nourish the lush landscaping, and banning plastic water bottles and miniature amenities. *ihg.com; doubles from $500.*

Louis Tikaram's Brisbane

"As a chef, I find this region so inspiring—we have some of the best produce and seafood in the world. Passion fruit, lychee, mangoes, the local Moreton Bay "bugs" (sweet-fleshed crustaceans), huge mud crabs, and reef fish are all delivered just a couple of hours after being picked or caught."

— *CHEF AT THE FORTHCOMING BRISBANE RESTAURANT STANLEY (STANLEYRESTAURANT.COM.AU)*

JASON IERACE/COURTESY OF NORTHERN ESCAPE

JOHN LAURIE

THE OUTBACK ADVENTURE

Mount Mulligan Lodge
The 11-mile long conglomerate-and-sandstone escarpment known as Mount Mulligan is the star attraction of this new lodge set on a 69,000-acre working cattle station in the north Queensland outback; it glows like an ember in the first light of day. Primarily solar-powered, Mount Mulligan Lodge comprises eight pavilion suites of red gum timber and corrugated iron facing a waterway and the eponymous mountain. Its indigenous name is Ngarrabullgan, and it has defined some 40,000 years of history for the original inhabitants of the region. A three-hour drive or 40-minute helicopter ride from Cairns, the lodge offers complete serenity amid the sunburned soil. Quarterly herding of the ranch's 1,400 head of Brahman cattle gives guests the chance to see Australian cowboys in action. There are also tours of abandoned mining townships, ATV adventures, and kayaking on the weir, where wallabies like to cool off on warm afternoons. At night, the sky is covered by a canopy of stars over the ranch, which appear closer, brighter, and more abundant than you've ever seen. *mountmulligan.com; doubles from $1,150, all-inclusive.*

The Arts Centre Melbourne, with its striking 531-foot spire.

The New Culture Capital

Victoria

While it's sometimes overshadowed by the sunshine and hedonism of Sydney, Melbourne has staked its place as the country's leader in the arts. A dive into the city's dynamic creative scene offers a glimpse of the innovations taking place. *By Kendall Hill*

A 19TH-CENTURY mechanical trade school flanked by public housing towers might seem an unlikely setting for artistic revival, but Melbourne's visionary urges are not easily bound by convention. The **Collingwood Arts Precinct** *(capmelbourne.org),* opening in February, is a trio of three-story buildings that were left derelict when classes ceased 10 years ago. They will soon be open to the public, and home to a thriving community of potters, painters, and sculptors; a public radio station; a band rehearsal space; artist-run galleries;

and the **Social Studio** *(thesocialstudio.org),* a nonprofit incubator for refugee- and migrant-founded fashion labels. There's a restored Keith Haring mural from 1984 depicting a giant caterpillar, a café for refueling, and acrobats, too—Australia's leading troupe, **Circus Oz** *(circusoz.com),* is based here.

The debut of Collingwood is indicative of the city's boundary-pushing arts scene—one that started in the 1990s with graffiti-covered alleys, seemingly endless numbers of independent galleries, and the kind of public art projects that simply don't exist anywhere else in Australia.

Over in Southbank, a neighborhood lining the Yarra River, you'll find the city's traditional cultural heart represented by a collection of high-profile institutions. With its Eiffel-inspired steeple, the **Arts Centre Melbourne** *(artscentre melbourne.com.au)* is the continent's largest, and busiest, performing-arts space. Beside it is the **National Gallery of Victoria** *(ngv.vic.gov.au),* Australia's most visited art venue. But even this illustrious compound is getting a shake-up: last year, the **Buxton Contemporary** *(buxton contemporary.com)* opened on the campus of the Victorian College of the Arts. Exhibitions have included a survey of national identity, imagined by a group of Aussie artists like Ali Gumillya Baker, Callum Morton, and Siying Zhou. And the NGV is preparing a third Southbank campus, NGV Contemporary, which will be Australia's largest gallery of contemporary art and design when it opens in 2025.

Fashion designers at the Social Studio, in Melbourne.

Eddystone Point Lighthouse sits on the Larapuna headland.

Krakani Lumi, a lodge on the Wukalina Walk, takes inspiration from traditional structures.

FROM LEFT: JOHN LAURIE; ROB BURNETT/COURTESY OF TOURISM TASMANIA

ROB BURNETT/COURTESY OF TOURISM TASMANIA

Tradition Rekindled

A pioneering hike guided by the Palawa indigenous community affords travelers a deeper, more nuanced perspective on Tasmania. *By Tony Perrottet*

AS I PICKED MY WAY along the crashing surf line, weaving among boulders tinted orange from a striking lichen called Xanthoria, I stumbled across strange natural treasures, like the exoskeleton of a seahorse, as translucent as a sliver of Greek marble, and enormous heads of seaweed decorated with delicate bulbs. It was stunning even by my own Aussie-raised standards, but that wildness is precisely Tasmania's appeal. Then my guide, an Aboriginal elder named Clyde Mansell, pointed out mysterious formations poking through the brush: shell dumps created by his ancestors centuries ago.

"They said we Palawa were all wiped out," Mansell told me, referring to the brutal frontier war conducted in the early 19th century by British soldiers and settlers against his people, the first Tasmanians, who had lived in isolation along these shores since the land bridge to the mainland flooded some 10,000 years ago. "Well, they sure bloody tried. Obviously," he added dryly, "they were mistaken." I'd first learned about the decimated Palawa population as a schoolboy in Sydney. A woman known as Truganini, believed by many to be the last full-blooded Tasmanian, died in 1876, and white officials argued that the race had become extinct. But there were mixed-race survivors on outlying islands and in sealing camps who carried on the community's customs.

I had met Mansell and other elders at the Aboriginal Elders Center, in Launceston, where I was outfitted for a new four-day hike called the Wukalina Walk, which they had created along the heart-shaped island's northeast coast.

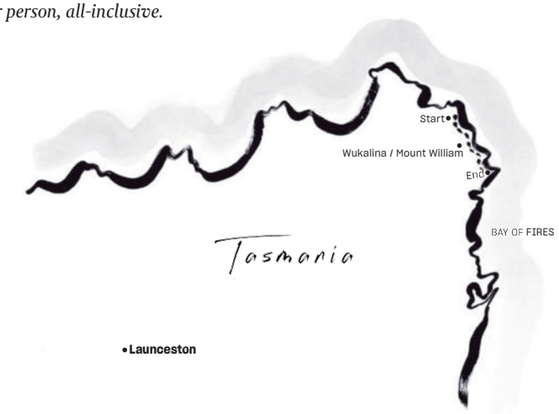
The most ambitious entry in the Australia-wide boom in indigenous tourism, the walk represents a movement over recent years to acknowledge—and hopefully go some way toward repairing—past colonial wrongs. Today, every government meeting or cultural gathering begins by recognizing that the event is occurring on Aboriginal land. It may sound like lip service, but it indicates a striking shift in the attitudes of the dominant Anglo-Australian society.

Before embarking on the journey, Aboriginal guides wave smoking eucalyptus branches over visitors as a cleansing ceremony and perform a ritual "Welcome to Country," an address that pays respect to the local indigenous groups. Shortly after, Mansell and I hiked the shoreline while wallabies bounded nearby. The biggest surprise came when we meandered 100 yards from the beach to Krakani Lumi, a chic wooden eco-lodge. "Fifteen years in the making!" Mansell said proudly. The elegant main structure, with a hemispherical indentation that echoes the shape of Palawa huts, serves as an amphitheater. Guests sit in a semicircle around a campfire, listening to guides tell stories and learning ancient crafts. Five cozy cabins of the same style dot the bush nearby.

Hiking along the coast the next day, I thought the bone-white sands and aquamarine waters looked closer to Bora-Bora than Tasmania, whose winds blast straight from the icy Southern Ocean. The most awe-inspiring stretch, the Bay of Fires, takes its name from the British explorer Tobias Furneaux, who passed in 1773 and saw Aboriginal campfires flickering in the bush. Back at the lodge, we sat down to barbecued scallops, kangaroo meat, and damper, a bowling-ball-size lump of flour and water roasted over a flame into a delicious bread.

I spent the final night at the Eddystone Point Lighthouse, which has a set of granite cottages on the Larapuna promontory that were originally built for keepers and their families in the late 19th century. Today, the Victorian-era rooms have been kitted out with luxe beds and decorated with Aboriginal paintings. That evening, I returned to the headland to imagine the campfires that once burned here. It had been a rare privilege to be with the Palawa and glimpse how they're reviving their ancient culture in modern Australia.

The Wukalina Walk is offered September through April; wukalinawalk.com.au; four days from $1,690 per person, all-inclusive.



DESTINATION OF THE YEAR AUSTRALIA

South Australia

Eat, Drink... And Drink Again

A new generation of winemakers and chefs has helped Adelaide shake off its staid reputation. Now it's leaping ahead as the country's most accessible dining destination. *By Kevin West*

From left: Skillogalee, a winery and restaurant in the Clare Valley; beets, buckwheat, and egg at the Summertown Aristologist, in the Adelaide Hills.

ADELAIDE'S APPEAL is immediate: the capital of South Australia combines the good life of wine country with a big city's energy and variety. It's as if Napa Valley's Yountville had a million-plus residents; a major university; a giant, historic food hall; and a culinary legacy shaped by 150 years of immigration from Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. That sense of discovery and surprise carried through during my weeklong tasting tour of the area, which included the wine regions of the Adelaide Hills, the Barossa Valley, and the Clare Valley—places renowned in Australia for their Riesling and Shiraz, and all an easy drive from Adelaide. I realized that everything I thought I knew about Australian food and wine was either incomplete or out of date, and in the end, I took away an impression of multiplicity—multiple cuisines, grape varieties, soil types, wine-making techniques, and endemic ingredients. As a vineyard region, it's the land of a thousand appellations. Ecologically, it's a meeting of the sea and the outback, and its agricultural heritage is deeply rooted for such a young nation, yet forward-looking.

FROM LEFT: JOHN LAURIE; JOSIE WITHERS

ADELAIDE

The city's culinary reputation has been on the rise after decades of eclipse by Sydney and Melbourne, thanks in part to the influx of a new creative class priced out of those places. Pre-dinner drinks could start with natural wines at **Hellbound** *(hellboundwinebar.com)* or gin cocktails at **Pink Moon Saloon** *(pinkmoonsaloon.com.au).* Jock Zonfrillo continues to lead the fine-dining scene with **Orana** *(restaurantorana.com; prix fixe from $200),* a celebration of native Australian ingredients like foraged Tasmanian mountain peppers. And the city's global influences shine at **Africola** *(africola.com.au; entrées $7–$26),* an African barbecue joint, and **Parwana** *(parwana.com.au; entrées $9–$18),* which serves soulful renditions of Afghan staples like *ashak,* a chive-stuffed dumpling.

ADELAIDE HILLS

Many of the notable wineries of the Adelaide Hills—**Jauma** *(jauma.com),* **Lucy Margaux** *(lucymargauxwines.com),* **Commune of Buttons** *(communeofbuttons.com.au)*—aren't easy to visit, as they open their doors to the public only periodically. But you will find them on the lunch menu at the **Summertown Aristologist** *(thesummertownaristologist.com; small plates $10–$17),* where shared plates of locavore cooking are served under hanging light fixtures made from glass demijohns. Up the road in Uraidla, winemaker Taras Ochota tucked a brick oven into a deconsecrated chapel for his informal pizzeria, **Lost in a Forest** *(lostinaforest.com.au; pizzas $13–$24).* Both restaurants have become de facto tasting rooms for local wines.

BAROSSA VALLEY

Small plots of ancient Shiraz vines are the area's emblem and main source of prestige, as are its ambitious tasting-menu restaurants. At Seppeltsfield winery's stylish restaurant, **Fino** *(fino.net.au; prix fixe from $32),* the focus is on regional produce—one dish of flowering broccoli rabe evoked the blooming canola fields I'd seen on my drive. Nearby, indie winemaker Abel Gibson makes gorgeous Riesling and Shiraz under the label **Ruggabellus** *(ruggabellus.com.au).* Two miles south, Tom Shobbrook, one of the leaders of the region's natural-wine movement, runs **Shobbrook Wines** *(shobbrookwines.com.au)* amid a pastoral landscape punctuated by eucalyptus trees. The Barossa Valley also has the finest hotel in wine country, the **Louise** *(thelouise.com.au; doubles from $400),* which has a regal avenue of Canary Island date palms flanking the approach.

JONATHAN VAN DER KNAAP

Staffers at the Summertown Aristologist.

CLARE VALLEY

If the Barossa is like Napa, then the Clare Valley is akin to Sonoma: an adjacent region with a cooler climate, more-idiosyncratic winemakers, and great scenic beauty. The man who put the Clare Valley on the map is Jeffrey Grosset, founder of **Grosset Wines** *(grosset.com.au),* who continues his meticulous work with Riesling grapes. Ten miles north, the winery restaurant at **Skillogalee** *(skillogalee.com.au; entrées $13–$34)* is in a charming 1851 farmhouse serving wonderful, homey dishes such as pumpkin soup with thyme. And in a place where white wines have typically dominated, reds are now trending. Second-generation vintners Damon and Jono Koerner of **Koerner Wine** *(koernerwine.com.au)* were named Australia's 2019 Young Guns of Wine on the strength of their lighter reds made from Grenache, Sciacarello, Sangiovese, and Malbec.

Abel Gibson's Barossa Valley

"The combination of mineral-rich soil and warm, sunny days followed by cool evenings means the Barossa is a wonderful place to make wine. Many of us have traveled the world, but always seem to return home. I love the mystical nature of the landscape. It feels resilient."

— *WINEMAKER, RUGGABELLUS (RUGGABELLUS.COM.AU)*