

DESTINATION

Down Under

TRAVEL ✿ FOOD ✿ CULTURE

Discover the new Spirit of Tasmania

With spectacular ocean views, fresh open air and Tasmanian cuisine, the Spirit of Tasmania is one of Australia's most beautiful sea journeys. The leisurely cruise between Melbourne, Victoria, and Devonport, Tasmania, crosses the stunning Bass Strait.

The Spirit of Tasmania is now operating two recently revamped vessels between Devonport and Melbourne daily. There are overnight sailings, with daytime crossings also taking place during peak times of the year.

A good selection of accommodation options is available onboard, ranging from ocean view recliner seats for the budget conscious, to luxurious deluxe cabins with ocean views.

You can even bring your own car and have the flexibility of bringing as much luggage as you like.

Facilities onboard include a restaurant and eatery, several bars and deck areas to relax in, a children's playroom and games arcade, cinema and live entertainment as well as a souvenir shop and travel information area.

Prices start from A\$86 (£42) for a day sailing, with overnight cabin accommodation starting from A\$228 (£111).

spiritoftasmania.com.au



The Spirit of Tasmania and (clockwise from below right) the tourism hub, the ocean view recliner seats; a deluxe cabin and the AstroTurf lounge



Words: Liane Voisey Images: Spirit of Tasmania, Mirage Whitsundays, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Kinnon Outback Lodges



Stylish apartments and (below) ocean views at Mirage Whitsundays



Beautiful Mirage

If you want to truly escape to paradise, pack your bags and head to the serene shores of Whisper Bay to take in the panoramic views of Queensland's Whitsunday islands.

Mirage Whitsundays opened its doors to guests in May and offers one, two and three bedroom luxury apartments, waterfront villas and an opulent four bedroom rooftop penthouse.

The Mirage apartments are spacious with a modern and stylish décor, while the three bedroom villas and penthouse both feature private plunge pools for the ultimate escape.

www.miragewhitsundays.com.au

Outback cool

Some serious swag has arrived in Outback Queensland. Pioneer Slab Huts at the Kinnon Outback Lodges complex in the outback town of Longreach take their inspiration from Australian pioneers' huts but with some cleverly incorporated contemporary touches.

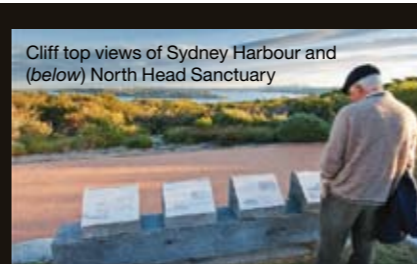
Guests here will find a wrought-iron canopied queen bed, leather chairs, kitchen facilities, TV, air-conditioning and a rustic-themed bathroom with an excellent rain-head shower.

A unique addition is the quirky 'bath terrace' - an outdoor area featuring traditional bath tubs. A stay in a hut here starts from A\$180 (£88) per night.

www.kinnonandco.com.au



The quirky 'bath terrace' and (below) a slab hut at Kinnon's Outback Lodges



Cliff top views of Sydney Harbour and (below) North Head Sanctuary



Harbour heritage

Walking through the pristine heathland of North Head Sanctuary in Sydney's Manly, it can be easy to forget that you're only 11 kilometres from CBD. Here you'll encounter diverse wildlife and flora, fascinating military remains, and stunning views of the city and harbour from the cliff tops. The area is rich in history and a special place for the Aboriginal people, which is why it's worth taking the two-hour self-guided Sanctuary Loops walk to explore many of the highlights.

A fascinating focal point for visitors to North Head Sanctuary is the new state-of-the-art visitor centre, which offers free information brochures and plenty of exhibits about the site's history and heritage.

www.harbourtrust.gov.au

FOODIE HOTSPOT

Four of Australia's best restaurants – Attica (Melbourne), Quay (Sydney), Sepia (Sydney), and Brae (regional Victoria) – have been named in the prestigious *S.Pellegrino World's 100 Best Restaurants* list. The highest ranking restaurant Attica was ranked number 32 for the second consecutive year.

PARK LIFE

A new national park that will be the biggest in Australia is set to be created in Western Australia's Kimberley region after two major mining companies relinquished their rights to mine the Mitchell Plateau in the north-west, a region encompassing spectacular gorges and waterfalls and home to endangered animals.

Going up

Going down

CARB CAFÉS

Melbourne's cafés are getting more specific and following the success of venues dedicating themselves to the art of the scroll, cereal and hot chocolate, Melbourne has now welcomed its first toast café. Crompton Coffee on Victoria Street offers inch-thick slices of artisanal bread slathered in toppings such as ricotta, fig and honey, hazelnut cacao butter and buffalo mozzarella avocado.

REVERSE REVIEWS

Forget TripAdvisor, the Art Series Hotels (www.artserieshotels.com.au) in Melbourne, Bendigo and Adelaide, have been turning the tables and reviewing their guests! Offering travellers the opportunity to prove that they're the perfect guests, any guest who receives five stars wins a free additional night's stay.

roundup

WHALE WATCHING

The 74 islands of the Whitsundays offer the perfect playground for the annual whale migration along Australia's east coast. Ocean Dynamics (www.oceandynamics.com.au) now offers visitors the chance to watch the gentle giants from the

comfort of a privately chartered 60 foot luxury cruiser. Whale watching packages include barbeque lunch, drinks and the opportunity to visit one of the Whitsundays' iconic beaches. Cruises are available for the annual migration season from June to September.

INDIGENOUS CAIRNS

Renowned Cairns Indigenous tourism experience, Tjapukai (www.tjapukai.com.au), has undergone a huge upgrade. Its new 'Night Fire by Tjapukai' program promises to be a big hit with visitors. This entertaining and interactive night-time

experience includes dinner, performances, camp fire stories and culminates with the dramatic lighting of a 40 metre fireball. Other additions at Tjapukai include new theatres and restaurants, as well as a refreshed range of exciting productions, tour options and packages.

48 HOURS IN NOOSA

Noosa is one of Queensland's jewels in the crown, so visit Australia.com for ideas on how best to spend 48 hours here, whether it's a swim at Main Beach followed by a relaxing spa or a walk along Noosa National Park Coastal Walk.

WILDLIFE ADVENTURE

Kangaroo Island Adventure Tours' (www.kiadventuretours.com.au) new five-day tour explores two of South Australia's most popular regions – Kangaroo Island and the Eyre Peninsula. The tours include sandboarding, kayaking, the chance to hand-feed and swim with tuna and shark cage diving.

WINERY EXPERIENCE

The famous Penfolds Magill Estate in South Australia's Adelaide Hills is delivering a world-class wine and visitor experience with its new Cellar Door and Magill Estate Kitchen. The Magill Estate Cellar Door provides a luxurious and refined experience with comfortable private and

open-plan spaces. The Cellar Door is dedicated to wine education through storytelling and artefacts. Magill Estate Kitchen is a 'sister offering' to the award-winning Magill Estate Restaurant, with a more accessible, casual dining environment and a grazing menu built on fresh, local ingredients.



Share your story! If you have you had a wonderful holiday Down Under and want to write all about it for *Australia & New Zealand* magazine, we want to hear from you! Send us your story, and your photographs (at their highest resolution) to editor@australiamagazine.co.uk.

Travel boost

Perfect for families travelling with young children, the Trunki BoostApak is a hand luggage-approved backpack and booster seat in one.

The backpack can be used not only to store toys and games but also as a booster seat when required. Its innovative design saves money on booster seat hire costs, so is ideal for hire cars and taxi journeys when you arrive Down Under.

Booster seats are not only important to ensure that your child is safe and comfortable during a car journey, but UK law requires that all children under 12 years old use a booster seat.

The BoostApak is available in five different style options and prices start from £45. New to the range of Trunki booster seats is the black and white Star Boostapak (£49.99).

We have two Star BoostApaks to give away. Simply email your name and address with 'Boostapak' in the subject head to competitions@australiamagazine.co.uk no later than 30 July 2015.



Images: Trunki, Majestic, Monarch Wildlife Cruises and Tours

Summer lovin'

Perfect for sunny days, the delicate EVC Chardonnay by Peter Lehmann (£12.99, Majestic) is made in South Australia's iconic Barossa Valley region. The Chardonnay boasts a lovely balance of fresh green apple and citrus fruit flavours, making it perfect to enjoy with seafood dishes or chicken salads.

www.majestic.co.uk

Southern photo safari

Monarch's two cruise boats which tour Otago Harbour and (below) a Southern Royal Albatross in flight



A new photographic tour has been launched which offers the chance to get close to the unique wildlife and spectacular landscapes in and around Dunedin, New Zealand's wildlife capital.

Dunedin-based Monarch Wildlife Cruises and Tours guide small groups to photograph the animals and the scenery of the Otago Peninsula, harbour and coast as part of its Southern Nature Photo Safari experience.

The safari is available for up to three people in a four-wheel drive vehicle, and is perfect for keen photographers and nature watchers.

All tours will tie into Monarch's wildlife cruise around Taiaroa Head where Northern Royal Albatross and other species nest, and out to sea where several albatross species, petrels, seals, dolphins and other oceanic animals range.

Tours can also have access to hides on private properties to photograph wading and water birds.

www.wildlife.co.nz