



Clockwise from far left: Longitude 131 lodge at Uluru; WA's Kimberley region; a pavilion at Qualia on Hamilton Island; the oyster experience at Saffire Freycinet lodge; exploring the Mount Mulligan weir in Queensland.



1. Mt Mulligan Lodge, QLD

The wide brown land of sweeping plains and ragged mountain ranges is the hero at this outback retreat, located on a private 28,000-hectare property, 160 kilometres north-west of Cairns. Immerse yourself in the landscape - without compromising on creature comforts - by checking into an airconditioned Outback Tent with king-sized bed and ensuite, or sign up for an Outback Suite with a separate lounge, an outdoor bathtub and a fireplace if you want to turn up the luxe factor. Spend the day fishing, hiking or kayaking on Mount Mulligan weir, and evenings savouring chef-prepared meals featuring seasonal produce from nearby Atherton Tablelands. *From \$1320 per night per couple (minimum two nights); mountmulligan.com*

2. Saffire Freycinet, Tas

With a sinuous high ceiling that rises and falls much like the Hazards mountains in the distance, the foyer of Saffire Freycinet is a stunning feat of design. Completing the picture are the floor-to-ceiling windows that magnificently frame the surrounding landscape. And it doesn't stop there. Each of the 20 beautifully appointed contemporary suites at the lodge, located in the Freycinet National Park about 2.5 hours' drive from Hobart, make the most of the setting with vast windows. Experiences range from a guided

Lap of luxury

Australia's breathtaking landscapes and luxury lodges are a match made in travel heaven. By Akash Arora

walks with glimpses of the iconic Wineglass Bay to an oyster farm where you can feast on fresh molluscs knee-deep in water. *From \$2500 per night per couple (minimum two nights); saffire-freycinet.com.au*

3. Longitude 131, NT

From a distance, the "tents" at Longitude 131 may look like tiny seashells in the middle of an endless red expanse. But look closer and you'll discover the 63-square-metre lairs, with sweeping high tent-like ceilings, are the last word in opulence, thanks to spacious ensuites and private balconies with daybeds. But the ultimate luxury here is the uninterrupted views of Uluru from your king-sized beds. Not to mention, once-in-a-lifetime experiences such as dining under the stars, and immersive sunrise and sunset tours of Uluru and Kata Tjuta. *From \$4200 per night per couple (minimum two nights); longitude131.com.au*

4. El Questro, WA

The sunburnt orange cliffs - soaring above the tranquil Chamberlain River against the backdrop of crystal-clear Western Australian skies - are the setting of El Questro lodge, where rooms range from Cliffside Retreats to those with views of the gorge. But perhaps the most unique thing about this lodge is, unlike other properties featured in this story, it offers pocket-friendly options, too - from safari-style tented cabins (from \$350 per night) to camping sites. *Luxury rooms from \$1995 per night; elquestro.com.au*

5. Qualia, Qld

Want to explore Queensland's world-renowned Great Barrier Reef from a luxurious pad? You can't look past Qualia, perched on the northernmost tip of Hamilton Island. Check into one of the sprawling 90-square-metre Leeward Pavilions, with separate

lounges and private terraces offering sunset views, or settle down in one of the even larger Windward Pavilions, with outdoor showers and plunge pools. Explore the Whitsundays by day, and executive chef John Kennedy's menu of gourmet meals by night. Just don't forget to book a treatment at the heavenly spa. A Hawaiian warm-stone lomi lomi massage would be our pick. *From \$1745 per night per couple (minimum two nights); qualia.com.au*

6. Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley, NSW

If the sandstone walls, polished timber floors and stone fireplace of the One-Bedroom Heritage Villa - the entry-level "room" of One&Only Wolgan Valley - don't leave you speechless, its temperature-controlled seven-metre-long indoor pool will. And here's the clincher: while the pool's floor-to-ceiling windows beautifully frame the escarpment views, the design of the standalone villas means no one from outside can look in at you. Except, of course, for a curious kangaroo. And don't even get us started on chef-prepared meals that you can have morning, noon and night at the high-ceilinged dining room of the lodge, located three hours' drive west of Sydney. *From \$3060 per room per couple (minimum two nights); oneandonlyresorts.com/wolgan-valley*