

Australia's best luxury resorts and lodges

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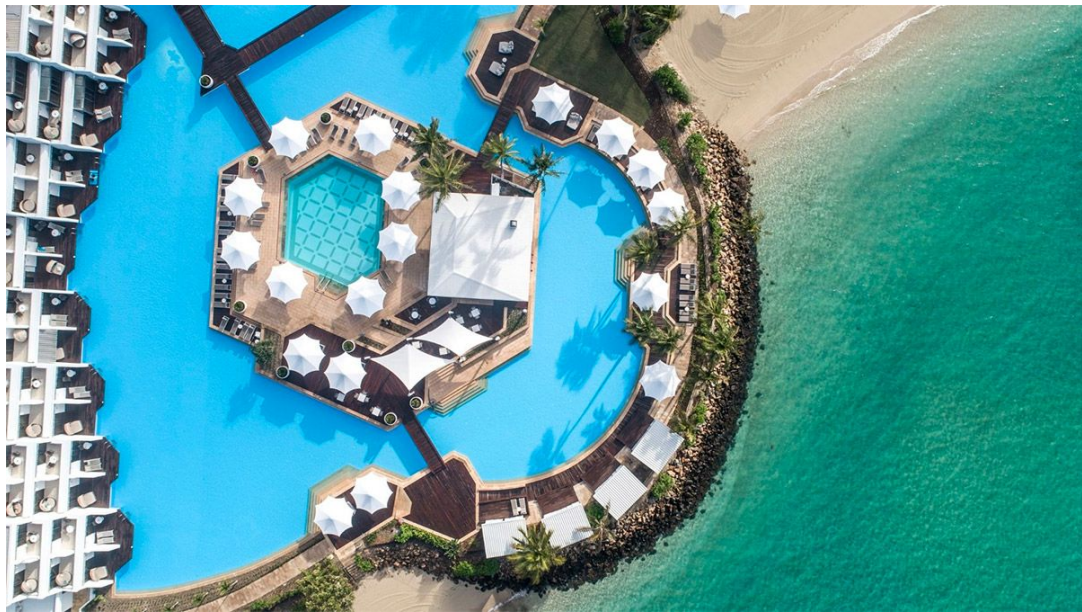
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Australia's best luxury resorts and lodges

These glamorous escapes are sure to reach the top of your Down Under wish list.

By Chris Ashton, April 21 2022

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Derfection is hard to achieve, but Australia's tantalising mix of high

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it's a challenge worth undertaking.

Because, when the quality is this good, it has to be celebrated.



Capella Lodge looks out to the towering Mounts Gower and Lidgbird.

In no particular order, these are some of the best resorts and lodges in Australia.

In this article:

- ▶ 1. Saffire Freycinet - Coles Bay, TAS
- ▶ 2. Orpheus Island Lodge - Great Barrier Reef, QLD
- ▶ 3. Longitude 131° - Yulara, NT
- ▶ 4. Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley - Blue Mountains, NSW
- ▶ 5. Jackalope - Mornington Peninsula, VIC
- ▶ 6. Capella Lodge - Lord Howe Island, NSW
- ▶ 7. Mt Lofty House and Sequoia Lodge - Adelaide Hills, SA
- ▶ 8. Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef - Cape Range National Park, WA

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- ▶ [12. InterContinental Hayman Island Resort - Whitsundays, QLD](#)
- ▶ [13. Berkeley River Lodge - Kimberley, WA](#)
- ▶ [14. Qualia - Hamilton Island, QLD](#)
- ▶ [15. Hazelwood Estate - Scenic Rim, QLD](#)
- ▶ [16. Niramaya Villas & Spa - Port Douglas, QLD](#)
- ▶ [17. El Questro Homestead - Kimberley, WA](#)

1. Saffire Freycinet - Coles Bay, TAS

Discreetly nestled alongside the sweeping curve of Great Oyster Bay, [Saffire Freycinet](#) has racked up an enviable list of awards since its 2010 debut. Best luxury hotel in Australia, best luxury hotel in the South Pacific... we could devote an entire article to it. But not today.

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A sweeping view of Great Oyster Bay, enjoyed from the Saffire lounge.

Designed by Circa Morris-Nunn Architects, the organic, stingray-shaped main building houses an exclusive day spa, restaurant and lounge, with 20 suites radiating before it like an approaching wave. The experience is all-inclusive too.

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Saffire Freycinet is designed to enhance its location, not dominate it.

Complimentary activities such as guided hikes and kayaking allow you to venture behind the beauty, with signature experiences like a half day cruise to Wineglass, gourmet quad bike tour and shucking oysters fresh from the sea are also available.

2. Orpheus Island Lodge - Great Barrier Reef, QLD

Welcoming just 28 guests in 14 rooms, villas and suites, [Orpheus Island Lodge](#) is one of the Reef's most exclusive hideaways. Part of the Northern Escape Collection, it boasts a hatted restaurant, pampering day spa, and an inviting infinity pool that mirrors the Coral Sea.

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Orpheus Island sits amid 1,000 hectares of beautiful national park.

Given its remote location, getting to the private island is an adventure in itself, with a 30-minute helicopter journey from Townsville taking you high above the coral-studded sea.

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The view from one of the North Beachfront Suites at Orpheus Island Lodge.

On arrival, guests can slip into island time with all-inclusive gourmet meals and an assortment of fine wines, beers, and spirits, together with use of water sports equipment and a daily Orpheus experience, from romantic chef picnics to sailing and snorkelling tours.

3. Longitude 131° - Yulara, NT

In the remote, fiery heart of Australia's Red Centre is an international icon, a destination which rises above the desert and continues to lure travellers in droves. Next door is Uluru.

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A bird's eye view of Longitude 131°, with sacred Uluru beyond.

Longitude 131° is a resort experience without rival. A sanctuary with 15 luxurious tented suites and a premium Dune Pavilion, each angled to afford views of its monolithic neighbour, and a signature dining experience lit by subtle flames and a canopy of stars.

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One of 15 luxury tents at Longitude 131°.

Whether admiring indigenous artworks and enjoying the view in your air-conditioned tent, gazing at the night sky in a swag on your deck, or listening to the distinct sounds of the desert, the resort aims to offer guests a unique connection with the landscape and its heritage.

4. Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley - Blue Mountains, NSW

Australia punches well above its weight in the luxury resort stakes, yet there's one name that makes it onto every 'best of' list without fail: [Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley](#). And yes, it deserves every bit of the praise it receives.

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Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley is nestled within the Greater Blue Mountains.

Set on a 2,800-hectare nature reserve, amid the rustling grassland and olive-green forest of the Blue Mountains, the resort boasts 40 freestanding one-, two- and three-bedroom villas, each with a private pool and cosy fireplace designed for late-night chats over a bottle of red.

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The resort's Country Kitchen is a celebration of local produce - and location.

Emirates One & Only is a love letter to regional Australia. More than just a nice place to rest your head, immersive activities run to its core. Think horseback rides and wildlife spotting tours, private picnics and lazy, long lunches designed around the chef's market finds.

5. Jackalope - Mornington Peninsula, VIC

If we were to sum up **Jackalope** in one word, it would be 'daring'. This Mornington Peninsula escape is as whimsical as the mythical rabbit with antlers from which it takes its name. It's a bit like MONA on the mainland.

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A 7-metre Jackalope sculpture stands watch over the hotel's courtyard.

Set amid the 11-hectare Willow Creek vineyard, the avant-garde hotel was a collaborative affair from some of Australia's top creatives.

A fusion of art and hospitality, with monochromatic rooms (lairs), it combines a 143-year old homestead with a modern 46-room hotel.

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Doot Doot Doot restaurant is illuminated by thousands of twinkling lights.

Among its noteworthy features are a seven-metre jackalope sculpture in the courtyard, a black 30-metre infinity pool and spa, and an intimate restaurant lit by a cloud of 10,000 lightbulbs that change intensity to mimic bubbling that occurs during wine fermentation.

6. Capella Lodge - Lord Howe Island, NSW

Lord Howe Island is exclusive by design, yet [Capella Lodge](#) raises the exclusivity stakes even higher, with just nine tropically-furnished suites – including the stunning Lidgbird Pavilion and Capella Suite.

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Wake up to an unforgettable view from the Lidgbird Pavilion.

Part of the Baillie Lodges family, which also includes Silky Oaks Lodge in the Daintree, it aims to offer guests a connection to the local culture and history, its art and natural heritage, and local food and wine sourced from regional producers.

Rates are mostly inclusive, with breakfast and dinner, an open bar with premium wines and spirits from 6pm, selected in-suite bar, and island airport transfers all part of the deal. For lunch, it's encouraged to explore some of the local offerings.

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The mouth-watering menu at Capella Lodge is a celebration of local produce.

Australia's very own 'treasure island', Lord Howe features a heady mix of pristine beaches, lush rainforest, and rugged mountains, not to mention incredible coral reefs. Ball's Pyramid, just 20kms offshore, is largely considered one of the top dive sites in the country.

7. Mt Lofty House and Sequoia Lodge - Adelaide Hills, SA

A leisurely 15 minute drive from the hum of downtown Adelaide, [Mount Lofty House](#) and its sister property [Sequoia Lodge](#) are two of the best resorts in South Australia. And with four world-class wine regions nearby, they're a fantastic base for wine lovers too.

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The entrance to Sequoia Lodge at Mount Lofty House.

Entered via a long drive with a vineyard on the left, trees ablaze in autumn colours on the right, Mount Lofty House is a throwback to a grander time. Character-filled rooms with four-poster beds, the three-Hatted Hardy's Verandah Restaurant, and a day spa are just the start.

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One of the grand Garden View rooms at Mount Lofty House.

Its newest addition, Sequoia Lodge, is an adult's only retreat with just 14 suites. Part of its ethos is to connect guests to the land and its people through a range of curated experiences during the stay. Each enjoys access to a private lounge with a heated plunge pool and gardens, as well as the facilities of Mount Lofty.

8. Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef - Cape Range National Park, WA

Low-impact luxury alongside the world's largest fringing reef. [Sal Salis](#) is a place where you can while away the hours in your hammock, stroll 50m down to the beach and be surrounded by a rainbow of marine life, and then feast on five star food and wine.

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Low impact luxury on the edge of Ningaloo Reef.

Featuring 16 off-grid glamping tents, the all-inclusive experience includes meals, an open bar with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, and national park fees, together with complimentary kayaks, snorkel gear, guided wilderness activities and more.

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Fine food and fabulous wine are part of the Sal Salis experience.

If you're lucky enough to visit Sal Salis during the annual whale shark season from mid-March to July, there's also an opportunity to swim with these slow-moving, gentle giants of the sea.

9. Crystalbrook Byron Bay - Northern Rivers, NSW

Byron Bay has had quite a journey, from whaling town to hippie haven and now playground for the rich and famous. One thing that thankfully remains unchanged is its striking natural beauty.

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Crystalbrook Byron Bay is designed to make you feel a part of nature.

Crystalbrook Byron Bay, formerly known as Byron at Byron, has been designed to complement that beauty, with each of its 92 newly-revamped suites feeling connected to the forest outside. If you're keen to get closer, a meandering boardwalk will lead you through the resort's 45 stunning acres.

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One of the newly-refreshed Treetops Suites at Crystalbrook Byron.

Dining venues Forest Byron Bay, Verandah and Blue Pool Bar are also on hand to take your tastebuds on a locally-infused journey, with a core of Crystalbrook's 'responsible luxury' ethos seeing at least 80% of produce sourced within three hours of the resort.

10. Bamurru Plains - Kakadu National Park, NT

On the edge of the Northern Territory's most famous national park, [Bamurru Plains](#) from Wild Bush Luxury is an immersive safari lodge with 10 rustic-chic bungalows, each designed to showcase its breathtaking natural setting and the prolific bird and wildlife that calls it home.

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Wildlife and wonder come together at Bamurru Plains.

Visiting Bamurru Plains is like a BBC wildlife documentary brought to life, so don't be surprised if you 'hear' the voice Sir David Attenborough narrating as you explore the extensive property.

A mecca for photographers, guests can experience a range of activities, from airboat safaris across the Mary River floodplains to relaxing crocodile-spotting cruises, open-top safari drives in search of wild buffalo and brumbies, and a whole lot more.

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The Kingfisher Suite allows you to feel connected with the world outside.

More than a celebration of the great outdoors, guests can indulge too, with gourmet canapes and sundowner drinks, and a menu which heroes native ingredients – think kangaroo skewers, crispy barramundi with finger lime salsa and quandong ice-cream.

11. Spicers Peak Lodge - Southern Downs, QLD

Spicers Retreats is a collection of boutique hideaways dotted throughout Queensland and New South Wales. Their flagship, [Spicers Peak Lodge](#), is dramatically set amid 8,000 acres in the Scenic Rim, only two hours drive (or a 1 hour chopper ride) from Brisbane.

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Spicers Peak Lodge is the flagship of the Spicers Retreats family.

Dining is an essential part of the experience, with two-Hatted restaurant The Peak – which uses premium, local produce wherever possible – its signature venue. For something a little more romantic, a private picnic with a view can also be arranged.

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Indulge with a gourmet picnic prepared by award-winning chefs.

Whether you choose to stay in a light-filled suite or standalone lodge high up on an escarpment, you have access to the resort's infinity pool and outdoor spa, as well as the purpose-built Spa Anise, complimentary yoga classes, and a network of scenic hiking trails.

12. InterContinental Hayman Island Resort - Whitsundays, QLD

Emerald islands, white sands, and luxury resorts spilling to the water's edge... the call of the Whitsundays is impossible to resist. [InterContinental Hayman Island](#) is one of the region's most celebrated resorts, and it has some impressive technology behind it.

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Pacific Restaurant delivers a feast for the eyes, as well as the stomach.

Designed to be as sustainable as possible, with environmental initiatives guests likely don't even notice, the award-winning hideaway houses 168 rooms across three wings – Beach, Pool and Lagoon – together with two exclusive residences perched on the hilltop.

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The Three Bedroom Hayman Beach House is its star guest room.

All-day fare at Pacific, handmade pastas and tapas at Amici, and zesty Asian flavours at Bam Bam are a few of the culinary options available. If you want to take it up a notch, dinners under the stars, gourmet picnics, and a group dining experience where you can go behind the scenes in the kitchen are also on offer.

13. Berkeley River Lodge - Kimberley, WA

It's often said that reaching your destination is half the fun of going on holiday. For guests heading to [Berkeley River Lodge](#), truer words have never been uttered, with the resort only accessible by air from the town of Kununurra in northern WA.

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Getting to Berkeley River Lodge is an adventure worth undertaking.

The property's small and scattered retreats each feature a king bed and private open-air ensuite, along with a freestanding bathtub inviting guests to literally bathe in the Kimberley moonlight. Balconies overlook the Timor Sea lapping the shoreline, further accentuating the sheer remoteness of your environment.

By day, guests can indulge in the area's ancient Indigenous history and culture outside their door, with daily activities including river cruising and visits to secluded rock pools and waterfalls - a perfect way to cool down with river swimming not possible due to abundant local crocodile populations. Other activities include scenic helicopter flights and guided nature walks.

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This remote Kimberley resort is a world away from care.

After the sun sets, guests can indulge in some rich flavours at Dunes Restaurant with evening degustation menus complementing the daily a la carte breakfast and lunch offerings.

14. **qualia** - Hamilton Island, QLD

At the northernmost tip of Hamilton Island, **qualia** regularly graces lists of Australia's best hotels and resorts. It's the benchmark by which almost all others are measured, with impressive rooms, intuitive service, and mouth-watering dining, plus a sleek day spa to match.

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In the evenings, the pool 'Pebble Beach' is transformed into qualia's fine dining restaurant.

No matter which room type you choose, a Leeward or Windward Pavilion or the secluded Beach House, they all offer exceptional views of the Whitsunday islands and Coral Sea. If we had to pick though, the Windward Pavilion would be the one.

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Inside the gorgeous Windward Pavilion with private pool.

While staying you can snorkel from the beach, enjoy gourmet picnics, lick your lips with a 'Talk and Taste' paired dining experience, or just relax and soak up the sunshine by the pool.

15. Hazelwood Estate - Scenic Rim, QLD

What do you get when you combine a premium wagyu beef farm with a 'polo club and a five star retreat? [Hazelwood Estate](#). Set on 75-acres outside Beechmont, in the Scenic Rim of southeast Queensland, it's a new experience that's quickly making a name for itself.

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Sunset over The Paddock Restaurant at Hazelwood Estate.

Each of its chic pavilions and cabins feature a cosy fireplace, private deck and deep bath angled to enjoy views of rolling hills, with the estate's restaurant and bar The Paddock is its social hub. A unique 'wagyu tasting cellar door' is expected to open soon.

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Inside one of the Luxury Pavilions at Hazelwood Estate.

Visitors are well placed to explore the Gold Coast Hinterland's scenic walking trails, with the neighbouring Lamington National Park a must-see, or can choose to relax with a pampering treatment at the Spa by Hazelwood Estate.

16. Niramaya Villas & Spa - Port Douglas, QLD

Tucked away in a corner of Port Douglas is one of its hidden treasures. Surrounded by leafy, tropical gardens, amidst the tranquil aromas of calming frangipani ponds, is the beautiful, Balinese-inspired [Niramaya Villas & Spa](#).

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Niramaya Villas & Spa is like a taste of Southeast Asia

Suited as a private couples hideaway or a group retreat, villas range from one to five bedrooms, each designed as an oasis where the weight of the world can be left behind. Each villa boasts tranquil gardens and a heavenly private pool.

Port Douglas is enveloped by two World Heritage sites: the Daintree Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef. Niramaya offers daily opportunities to explore both with activities including reef snorkelling and island cruises or guided 4WD forest adventures.

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At the resort's heart is a elegant poolside restaurant.

If culinary experimentation is more your speed, the resort also offers daily visits to local farms with the head chef to taste locally-grown and caught produce as a sumptuous BBQ lunch.

17. El Questro Homestead - Kimberley, WA

The exclusivity of [El Questro](#), deep in the wild Kimberly, cannot be understated. Perched on the edge of Chamberlain Gorge and River, the remote retreat caters to just 20 guests at a time – and only during the dry season, as it becomes inaccessible when the annual rains arrive.

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El Questro Homestead is set alongside the mighty Chamberlain River.

Homestead accommodations are truly stunning, with striking features such as private decks and even a cantilevered bath overlooking the gorge in the Chamberlain Suite. Catering to guests 16 years and above, the resort includes gourmet meals daily, as well as a selection of wine, beer, basic spirits and sparkling wine (for the adults, that is).

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This outdoor bathtub is the perfect way to indulge after a day exploring the outback.

Throughout their stay, guests have access to complimentary activities designed to help them connect with their surroundings. These include helicopter flights above the mystical mountain ranges, serene river cruising, wildlife watching, exclusive access to nearby thermal springs, and guided walks.

Additional reporting by Matt Lennon

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