

# HOME. NZ

**FASHIONABLE INTERIORS**  
KAREN WALKER'S TOP SPOT  
CATWALK COLOURS  
HELEN CHERRY AT HOME

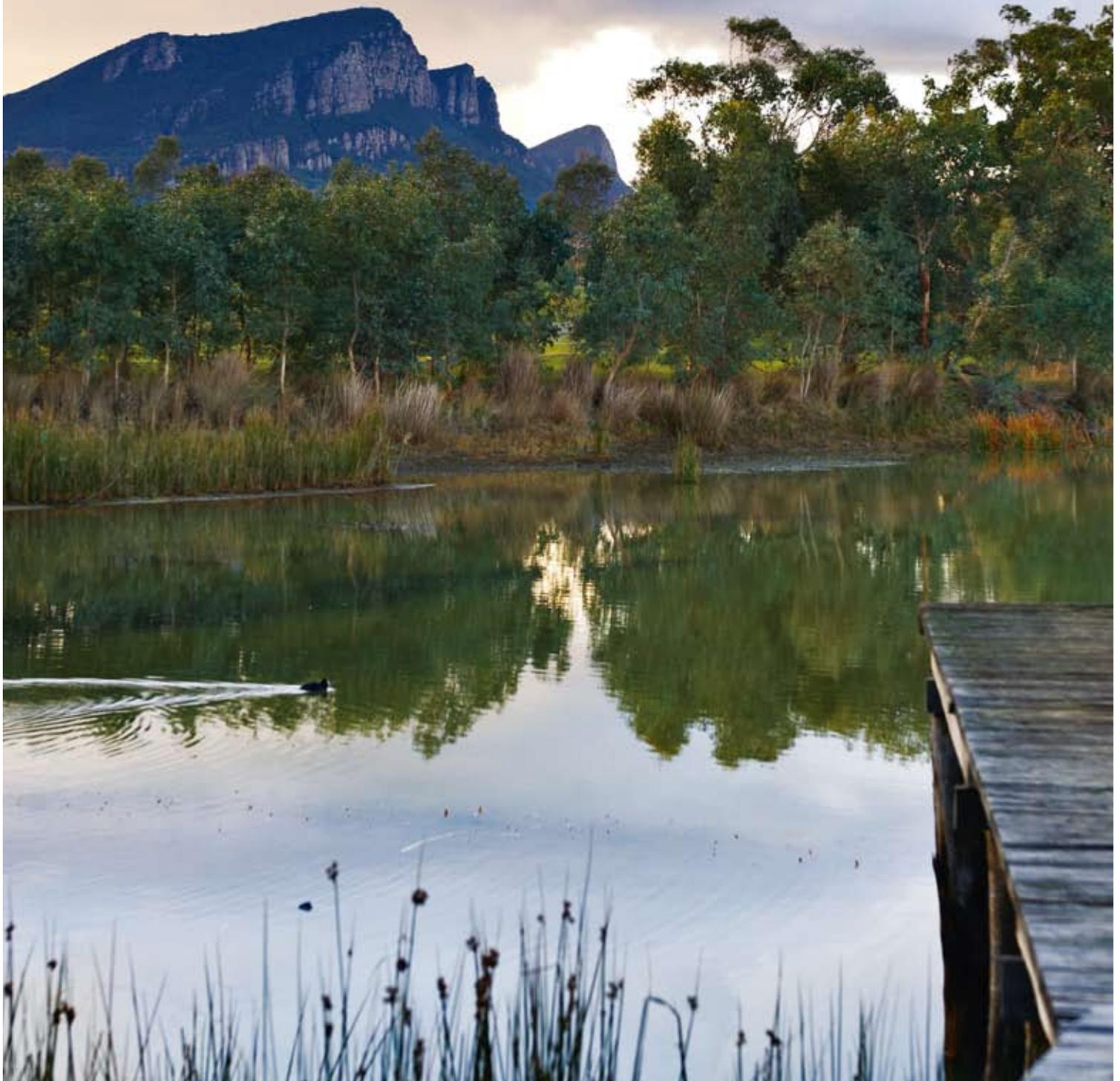
## Brighten Up

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**TRAVEL** FIVE UNIQUE AUSSIE RETREATS  
**DESIGN** NEW OUTDOOR FURNITURE  
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# TRAVEL

Boutique travel gurus Mr & Mrs Smith present five of the most luxurious, remote resorts in Australia.



## SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE

### Unspoilt nature and unadulterated luxury await at this luxury lodge on South Australia's Kangaroo Island.

TEXT DAVID GRANT

The local at the airport car rental asked where we were heading. "Southern Ocean Lodge," I replied. "Lucky bastards," he said. Ten minutes later, driving through the rolling hills, our serenity was shattered by some crazy hoon tooting and flashing his headlights. Was it a demented yokel going all *Deliverance* on us? Nope, it was the car-rental guy, pulling alongside at 80km an hour

and shouting out the window that we'd left the Kangaroo Island map on his counter. "You'll need it," he yelled, flapping it out the window more dangerously than Paris Hilton's eyelashes on spring break. Given that there's only two main roads on the island this seemed unnecessary, but it came to reflect the unique, nothing's-too-much-trouble character of the place.

Now with map, we continued through a spookily sexy

forest and were suddenly upon the lodge. Bounding down the walkway came manager Ben, who gave Mrs Smith and I the sort of heartfelt welcome we'd expect at a mate's place. His mesmerisingly sweet wife Louise helped with the bags. Marcus parked the car. Ree offered cold towels and the chef waved from the kitchen. We'd been there two minutes and already we knew everyone.

The lodge doors opened to the limestone-wrapped Great Room and its IMAX-sized view. Before us were craggy cliffs dropping to beaches as white as Brad Pitt's smile (and just as shallow) and lapped by the porn-star-eye-shadow-blue waters of the Southern Ocean. A glass of champagne and a salmon finger sandwich later, we trailed down the long corridor (we later dubbed it *Dead Man Walking* for its length and the nightly journey to an abundance of food), past rooms named after various local shipwrecks until we reached ours, Vale. "Went down twice in one night," Ben said. "If only," I thought.

Among the many enticements in the Southern Ocean Lodge suites: terrace spas and IMAX-sized views of craggy cliffs dropping to beaches as white as Brad Pitt's smile, lapped by the Southern Ocean (above). The open-plan bar in the Great Room next to the restaurant is a curved wonder. There's not just a spectacular view to drink up for free; there's also a premium cellar list that includes Penfold's Grange, Bollinger and Henschke's Hill of Grace (right).



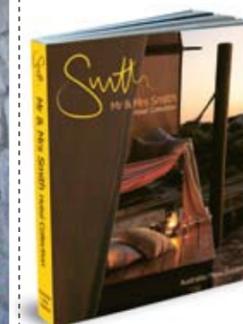
Located at Hanson Bay on Kangaroo Island's southwest coast, the lodge is set back from a cliff, with each of its 21 suites positioned for an incredible, unfettered view of the pounding surf below. Nearby, Seal Park and Flinders Chase and Kelly Hill national parks provide world-class wildlife experiences.



#### EDITOR'S NOTE

We're delighted to bring you this special travel section in collaboration with Mr & Mrs Smith, the travel company that started in London and produces books full of informed, independent and witty reviews of boutique and luxury hotels with expert input from their Melbourne HQ. In this section of the magazine, we've chosen five Australian resorts to recommend to you. All of them stand out for their luxury, individuality, and above all, their unique sense of place. Just as importantly, all of them have been independently reviewed by Mr & Mrs Smith's crack team of tastemakers. They're also featured, along with a host of other properties, in the newly released book, *Mr & Mrs Smith Hotel*

Collection: *Australia/New Zealand*. Available now in all good bookstores, this boutique-hotel bible is perfect for anyone planning a short, sweet getaway or a longer escape. Given the reputation they've built for hunting out the chicest retreats in the world, we're delighted to welcome Mr & Mrs Smith to this part of the planet. And don't forget, you can get a free copy of the *Mr & Mrs Smith Hotel* Collection: *Australia/New Zealand* by subscribing now to this very magazine (see the offer on p.62). Enjoy this special section, and start planning your holiday now.  
Jeremy Hansen  
Editor, HOME New Zealand



Our room, an Ocean Retreat, was like a luxe beach shack, open-plan with endless windows. The timber bed rested on a cosy carpeted floor, which segued into heated limestone then a huge bathroom and Pavarotti-sized rain shower. Down a few steps was a generous lounge room complete with books, music, home-made lamingtons and an eco-fire. This was a room designed by someone who not only has great style, but also lives like a normal person.

Even at the fanciest-schmanciest hotels, the food can be blah, but that night at dinner Mrs Smith and I thought we'd discovered the world's greatest unsung chef. Matthew Upson's food was simple and honest, impeccably

cooked with an inspired imagination. No request was too great. Mrs Smith didn't feel like steak so they did her a fish. I didn't feel like a soufflé so they did me a 1960s-style Milo and ice-cream – and then asked me if I'd like them to mush it up! Even worse, I let them.

We were also surprised to find just how much of the menu came from the island: honey from the local Ligurian bees, lamb from a farm up the road, greens from the market garden over the hill. When I said I wanted the barramundi, I assumed it would be an import, but our waiter explained that the local high school had established a barramundi farm. The under-rated benefits of living somewhere where there's not much for kids to do...

Up early the next day, I read the in-room book about our shipwreck, and gazed out the window at two eagles nesting in our midst. I'm not really a wildlife junkie, so when I wound up the platypus bath toy, I thought that was probably as close to nature as I'd get. At that moment, in the waves right outside, I saw two pods of frolicking dolphins. I immediately woke Mrs Smith who sprang out of bed and onto the terrace. "Where?" she cried. "Near that whale?" She wasn't joking.

Like the lodge itself, Kangaroo Island is all about the environment, so we'd organised a morning tour to see it all, including the Henry Moore-like Remarkable Rocks, a seal colony, a 'rare breeds'

Head chef Matt Upson conjures a five-course tasting menu or four course à la carte employing local South Australian produce and wine. Anglers can hand over their day's catch for filleting and cooking by the restaurant staff.

TRAVEL



The super-private Osprey Suite is the pick of the rooms and features jaw-dropping views and a freestanding oval handmade stone bath with a cocktail of local salts to choose from (above). On chilly evenings, eco fires, soft fabrics and woven rugs afford environmentally-friendly cosiness (below).



farm and a truly extraordinary native bush garden. Again, everyone was so unbelievably friendly and happy to see us. It was like *The Stepford Wives*, but with more dirt. After lunch on the deck it was time to rub the city out of my neck. The spa, on a nearby cliff, delivered a serene massage using local eucalyptus oils that began with an Aboriginal Dreamtime technique and a welcoming cleansing of smouldering gum leaves in a bowl. I was initially sceptical, but it was performed with such soul that I was completely converted.

Over sunset drinks in the lounge, the staff's real pride in the place shone through. One knew the guy who carved the sculpture, another knew the names of all the wildflowers out the window. Lovable nerds, all of them, but real people and that was the secret for making us feel so at ease. Back in the room we slipped into the alpaca slippers and snuggled up with chunky woven rugs. The whole place is just so frigging tactile. Then there are all the tiny details that make it perfect, even in the smallest room: the leather toilet-roll holder, mood lighting and timber shelves complete with glass sculpture and a 1974 copy of *Dinkum Aussie Dummies* with the inscription "Happy birthday darling Kaye, love Nanna." This is as special a place as I've stayed in Australia, a new benchmark in how a hotel should not only look, but also feel. The staff made it lovable, the rooms made it liveable and the island made it memorable. As we were leaving, I annoyingly triple-checked with Mrs Smith to see if we had everything. "No," she replied. "I'm going back to steal the hair dryer. Best hotel hair ever." She was joking ...ish. •

#### SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE ON KANGAROO ISLAND

ROOMS 21 suites from AU\$1,800–\$3,600, including all meals, drinks, activities and airport transfers. CHECK-OUT 10.30am, but flexible subject to availability. Check-in 2pm. FACILITIES Spa, plunge pool, wine cellar, library lounge, mountain bikes. In rooms: free WiFi, sound system with MP3 input, minibar, L'TYA toiletries, outdoor terrace, day-bed. CHILDREN Only kids over six years old allowed. Extra beds can be provided for AU\$350 if a child shares a suite with two adults. ALSO There's a minimum two-night stay. Multi-night packages are available, incorporating day-spa treatments, room upgrades and private island charter tours. IN THE KNOW There are five grades of rooms: top dog is the Osprey Suite, followed by the 11 Flinders Suites with dreamy day-beds for terrace chilling, and the five Ocean Retreats with fabulous freestanding tubs. HOTEL BAR The open-plan Great Room offers a spectacular view and cellar list. Alcohol is included in room rates. DINING Eat inside in the soothing restaurant or outdoors on the viewtastic deck. Any of the six window-side seats lets you soak up that incredible view. On a warm night, try the sea-air-kissed terrace. ROOM SERVICE Light snacks are available on request including soup, local cheese, charcuterie and fruit plates. DRESS CODE Organic linen separates in soothing neutrals will blend well with the photogenic lodge backdropped by nature. LOCAL KNOWLEDGE Take a trip to nearby Seal Bay to meet its sea lion colony or opt for a Kangas & Kanapés sunset session, where you can sip bubbly while you eyeball those bouncing critters.