

# TRAVEL

## GREAT SOUTHERN LUXURY

Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island (KI) was recently judged fourth top hotel in the world in the Travel + Leisure 2014 World's Best Awards. *The Adelaide Review* discovers what all the fuss is about.

BY CHRISTINA SOONG

Like many South Australians, I've visited Kangaroo Island with family and friends. We've clambered over the aptly named Remarkable Rocks, gotten up close and personal with sea lions and fur seals, and feasted on the justly famous KI marron (freshwater crayfish), cheese, Ligurian honey, oysters and wine.

But my recent visit to the island was a significantly different experience: yes, I did all of the usual tourist things, but as part of a media group hosted by Southern Ocean Lodge, I did it in magnificent style.

Built six years ago by Baillie Lodges, Southern Ocean Lodge feels both modern and timeless in design. Seen from nearby clifftops or Hanson Bay below, the 21-suite lodge seems to hug the land like a sleeping blue-tongued lizard. It's a stunning and environmentally sensitive achievement by acclaimed Adelaide architect, Max Pritchard.

It's the attention to detail that impresses. The immensely sophisticated but comfortable decor. The handmade plates by Sydney ceramist



Photos: Christina Soong

Malcolm Greenwood. My spacious suite and freestanding bath with beach views. The signature toiletries by Li'tya using sustainably wild harvested Australian ingredients. The soothing music always playing in my room when I return. The complimentary bar fridge stocked with excellent wine, juices, artisan cheese and snacks. The environmentally friendly fire in my suite lit every night, by unseen hands.

Nothing but nothing has been overlooked here. Even the toilet roll holder – a tan, hand-stitched leather strap – is special.

We spend the next three days sightseeing, eating and drinking. We enjoy four of the Lodge's signature experiences: Wonders of KI, which covers Cape du Couedic lighthouse, Remarkable Rocks, Admiral's Arch and a fur seal colony; Canapés and Kangaroos, which is exactly how it sounds; Seal Bay, a visit to Australia's third largest colony of Australian sea lions, and the Coastal Clifftop Trek, which offers striking views down the coast.

After long days spent exploring the rugged beauty of the island, it's a relief to return to the sheer luxury and warm hospitality of the Lodge at night.

We are introduced to some of the fine wines in the Lodge's impressive cellar over nightly pre-dinner drinks and canapés. After drinks we move into the adjacent dining room for dinner. The food at Southern Ocean Lodge is exceptional: chef Tim Bourke clearly loves his work. His food is elegant and well balanced, showcasing the fabulous local produce and native plants found on the island.

For serious food lovers, Southern Ocean Lodge hosts a one-week guided KI Food Safari with daily excursions to some of island's best food and wine producers each August. Barossa legend Maggie Beer and chef Mark Best (Marque) were this year's Safari Leaders.

### SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE

Kangaroo Island  
[southernoceanlodge.com.au](http://southernoceanlodge.com.au)

**Price:** Packages start from \$2,700 per person twin share for four nights including all dining, premium beverages, mini bar, and all signature excursions. KI Food Safari packages start from \$7,350 per person twin share for seven nights, including the return Regional Express (Rex) flights between Adelaide and Kingscote, all KI Safari excursions, KI Food Safari kit and standard inclusions. Getting there: a 20-minute flight from Adelaide Airport via Rex. For self-drive excursions, catch the 45-minute Sealink ferry from Cape Jervis on the mainland to Penneshaw on KI.

As a KI Food Safari teaser, Tim Bourke takes us on a one-day tour of the island. We visit Island Pure (artisan sheep's cheese), KI Fresh (free-range geese), Island Beehive (organic honey), The Islander (the Australian winery of French winemaking royalty, Jacques Lurton), Parndana Campus (aquaculture) and boutique distillery, Kangaroo Island Spirits (KIS). It's enormous fun getting to know the producers and sampling their products.

On the morning of my departure I book a one-hour massage at the Lodge's spa. I am something of a massage aficionado and this one, conducted by a serene, softly spoken therapist, is up there with the best.

Just like Southern Ocean Lodge.

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