

The Daily Telegraph



The other Australia

THE KIMBERLEY BY AIR
SAILING TO KANGAROO ISLAND
ON SAFARI IN THE TOP END

PLUS
MARK WEBBER'S
TASMANIA ADVENTURE
AND
BILL GRANGER'S
TRAVELLING LIFE

ultratrade

NOVEMBER 2012

the NEXT BIG THING

● A BITE AT THE OPERA

The sail-like Sydney Opera House is the most famous landmark in Australia, but its interior (right) is more of an enigma. The cathedral-like space, a symphony of white birch walls and bushbox panelling, is made almost ethereal by 18 hovering "clouds" – adjustable acrylic rings that direct sound back down to the stage. After a recent overhaul, the acoustics are improved, and a new Tour and Tasting Plate package lets visitors satisfy their curiosity while pleasing their palates. For A\$70 (£45), they can enjoy a guided tour, followed by a three-tier platter eaten alfresco. Sushi, plank-roasted salmon, spring rolls, dumplings, and mini wagyu burgers are on the Asian-style menu (sydneyoperahouse.com).



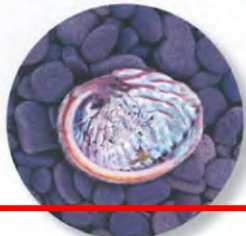
● AN AUSTRALIAN 'BIG FIVE'

We've all heard about Africa's Big Five – lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhino – but what about the Antipodean version? On the Ultimate Ocean Safari, travellers get the chance to snorkel with bluefin tuna (above), swim with sea lions, spot dolphins and whales, and dive with great white sharks – albeit inside a cage. The two-day, overnight trip from Port Lincoln on the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, costs A\$1,500 (about £970), which includes accommodation on the safari vessel, meals, wetsuit hire – and, of course, that cage (adventurebaycharters.com.au).



● SWIM FOR YOUR SUPPER

Fresh, wild abalone extracted from its pewter-like shell (below) is a delicacy in Australia. Now, visitors can catch it themselves off Tasmania's rugged north-west coast, then prepare it for a meal on the beach. Think American clam bake, but bigger, better and meatier. Two-night trips with a diving licence, three snorkel dives, meals, equipment, accommodation and the services of a guide cost A\$1,200, about £775 (wildabalonetours.com).



● INDIGENOUS OWNERSHIP

Canoeing serenely through the ancient sandstone corridors of the Nitmiluk Gorge (left), sculpted over millennia by the Katherine River, is one of the great wilderness experiences on a trip to the Northern Territory. What the area has lacked, so far, is a luxurious property sympathetic to the natural environment. From early 2013, however, visitors will be able to base themselves at Cicada Lodge, located right on the river, about 200 miles south of Darwin. A joint venture between the local Jawoyn people and Indigenous Business Australia, it has 18 breezy rooms featuring paintings by indigenous artists. Aboriginal guides will take visitors to remote rock paintings and swimming holes in the vicinity. Room rates start at A\$322 (about £210) per person per night (cicadalodge.com.au).

● A TASTE OF THE WEST

This month, a new food festival comes to Western Australia with the launch of the Margaret River Gourmet Escape (November 23-25). Among those taking part will be the Australian celebrity chef Neil Perry (far left), who recently extended his Rockpool restaurant empire to Perth, plus such international stars as Heston Blumenthal and Rene Redzepi of Noma in Copenhagen. Events will take place at several venues, but the hub of proceedings – the Gourmet Village – will be the Leeuwin Estate, whose wines include the Art Series (left), set in beautiful countryside among rolling meadows and groves of karri trees. The chefs will stage master classes, Q&A sessions and panel discussions, and demonstrate their skills at pop-up restaurants, with food and wine critics such as AA Gill in attendance. WEXAS Travel (020 7838 5892, wexas.com) offers 10-night packages to Margaret River from £2,805 per person. Festival tickets cost from A\$37/£24 (gourmetescape.com.au).



● SOPHISTICATION FOR SURFERS

At 77 storeys high, the newly opened Sea Temple Surfers Paradise is considerably bigger than even the most monstrous of waves on Queensland's surfing-obsessed Gold Coast. With their sculptural furnishings and floor-to-ceiling windows (above), the rooms and suites are the antithesis of the grungy, sandy-footed surfer image – though beach and ocean are hinted at in the muted colour schemes. A new level of sophistication has arrived on one of the most famous white-sand beaches on the east coast. Rooms from A\$300 (£195) per person per night (seatempleurfersparadise.com).