

TravelToday

SPRING 2024





Cruising the beautiful Kimberley. (Submitted)



Breathtaking views.

Our Kimberley quest

By Damian Morgan

In an era where digital connectivity brings even the most distant places into the main-stream, making unique experiences harder to find, the Kimberley Quest stands as a hidden treasure, offering the thrill of undiscovered adventure and luxurious comfort in a remote wilderness.

The Kimberley is one of the last true wilderness areas on Earth, a place where nature remains largely untouched. Yet accessing this rugged beauty does not mean sacrificing comfort as The Kimberley Quest masterfully blends the thrill of venturing into the unknown with the amenities and service of a five-star hotel. As we stepped aboard from Broome's iconic Cable Beach, greeted by a welcoming crew with a cocktail in hand, we knew we were in for something special.

This luxury cruise through the remote Kimberley region of Australia is not just a trip it's an experience that redefines what adventure travel can be. Having embarked on this journey in July with my wife and an extended group of family and friends, it's clear that the Kimberley Quest sets the gold standard for those who seek both exploration and comfort in their travels.

But what truly sets the Kimberley Quest apart is its crew. The professionalism and expertise they bring to the table whether it's the skipper's deep knowledge of the region's tricky waters, the botanist's insights, or the deckhands' ability to guide us to the best fishing spots and wildlife encounters ensures that every moment of the journey is rich with discovery. They don't just take you on a cruise; they immerse you in the very essence of the Kimberley, a region that remains a mystery to most of the world.

One might wonder if the luxury element of the Kimberley Quest could detract from the authenticity of the experience. After all, isn't adventure supposed to be rugged and uncomfortable? The answer, as we discovered, is a resounding no. The Kimberley Quest proves that you can experience the raw power of the Horizontal Falls, the breathtaking views from a helicopter over Montgomery Reef, and the ancient stories told through Indigenous rock art all without giving up a hot shower, a gourmet meal, or a comfortable bed at the end of the day.

And it's this balance that makes the Kimberley Quest truly exceptional. In an industry where luxury often means detachment from



Some of the friendly staff (Submitted).



Crew member Liam and guests after a swim.



A quiet moment. Damian and Amanda Morgan on deck.

the environment, this cruise does the opposite. It brings you closer to the region and the raw beauty of the elements that defines it, all while ensuring that your journey is as comfortable as it is awe-inspiring. Whether it's a visit to the forlorn settler's graves on Sheep Island or the lush hanging gardens of King Cascade, every sight and sound on this journey is en-

hanced by the knowledge that you're not just observing the Kimberley you're experiencing it in a way that few others ever will.

As travel continues to evolve, experiences like the Kimberley Quest remind us of what's truly important: authentic connections with the places we visit, guided by those who know and love the land. The Kimberley Quest is not

just a cruise; it's a model for the future of adventure travel, where luxury and exploration are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary aspects of a well-rounded journey.

For those who seek to explore the world's last frontiers without compromising on comfort, the Kimberley Quest stands out as a shining example of how to do it right.



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Ticking off the bucket list

We all have bucket list locations we'd like to visit sometime in the future whether it be overseas or here in Australia.

While the list is long for the Northern Hemisphere for me, it's considerably shorter here in our own country – it mainly consists of the North of the country – Northern Western Australia and into the Northern Territory.

Reading Damian Morgan's story about his Kimberley Quest and then speaking to the amazing people at Tourism Western Australia reminded how much Broome and the Kimberley Coast are on my list of places to go.

It's not that I haven't been to WA – 23 years ago my husband and I filled the back seat of our car with toys, playdough and a two-year old and drove to Western Australia. It's a trip (despite being carried out a scary time in the world – 911 occurred while we were in Margaret River and the demise of Ansett sent us scrambling for a flight to join our train-freighted car at the inlaws place in Adelaide) that gave me a love for the state.

And while Damian's trip and a couple of eye-opening stories on European Cruises, the Basque Region in Spain and trips to

Antarctica and the Arctic showed me where I haven't been strangely an interview with new Great Australian Walks co-host Suzie Youssef reminded where I have and what I love to do. Walking is such an amazing way to see a place, but it was kind of surprising to find that I'd actually done at least part of nine of the ten walks that the second series of the SBS show highlights. And again reminded me it's time to head into the Northern Territory (that was the one I'd missed). There series, which explores the locations as well as the history and stories of the place, also made me want

to go and revisit places I love.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Travel Today as much as we did putting it together, and that you get plenty of new ideas - whether it be skiing in New Zealand in Spring, checking out the Sunshine Coast or enjoying some of the best spring festivals in Queensland and beyond.

Tania Phillips
Travel Today

TravelToday

EDITORIAL
Tania Phillips Journalist
E: tania.phillips@StarNewsGroup.com.au

ADVERTISING
Andrew Guiver Group General Manager
E: andrew.guiver@TodayNewsGroup.com.au
M: 0408 483 479

Michelle Gibson Advertising Sales Executive
E: michelle.gibson@noosatoday.com.au
M: 0413 608 678

Donna Collier Account Manager
E: donna.collier@todaynewsgroup.com.au
M: 0456 765 091

DEADLINES 2024 - 2025
Summer 2024
Publication week starting: 2nd December 2024
Advertising Booking: 1st November 2024
Autumn 2025
Publication week starting: 17th March 2025
Advertising Booking: 14th February 2025
Winter 2025
Publication week starting: 16th June 2025
Advertising Booking: 16th May 2025

Published by Ipswich Media Pty Ltd
Publisher: Damian Morgan
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Joyfully looking for those little quiet moments

In a world filled with noise and chaos, Lonely Planet invites readers (and travelers) on a journey of tranquillity with their latest release, "The Joy of Quiet Places."

It's a chance to switch off the phone and immerse in the restorative power of solitude exploring 60 of the world's most serene spaces, with an additional 120 ideas for quiet places to visit.

Whether seeking reflection in a remote water hole near the Fitzroy River in the Northern Territory, experiencing the 'quietest square inch in the United States' Doubtful Sound (or 'Place of Silence'), each destination offers a unique opportunity for introspection and rejuvenation.

"At Lonely Planet, we understand the importance of finding moments of peace amidst life's chaos," Lonely Planet's Snr Director, Sales and Marketing Chris Zeiher said.

"With 'The Joy of Quiet Places,' we aim to guide travellers to destinations where they can slow down, reconnect with nature, and experience the transformative power of silence."

Featuring expert insights and practical advice, this comprehensive guide empowers readers to connect with quiet places in a

meaningful way.

From a quiet boat trip, a silent bike trail, an empty coastline, a peaceful corner in a busy city or a Zen moment in a healing forest, each unique destination promises to uplift and inspire, reminding travellers of the profound joy and wellbeing found in moments of stillness.

"Our writers scoured the globe to curate a collection of quiet places that resonate with readers from all walks of life," Chris added.

"From natural wonders to manmade sanctuaries, each location invites travellers to pause, breathe, and immerse themselves in the beauty of their surroundings."

"The Joy of Quiet Places" also offers readers insightful stories highlighting the history and significance of each place, personal accounts from writers in the "My Quiet Joy" panel, practical information on how to get there and accommodation options."

Selected quiet Australian and New Zealand destinations include:

Cape Leveque, Western Australia – a quiet place of indigenous culture (page 55)

Dunlop Grasslands Nature Reserve, ACT and Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park – quiet grasslands (page 71)

The Sir John Gorge (Banjay) Fitzroy River, Western Australia- a calming and remote Kimberley water hole (pages 244-247)

Doubtful Sound (Patea) in New Zealand's South Island – a fjord known as the 'place of silence' (page 248-250)

Maria Island, Tasmania and Haast River, South Island New Zealand- two renowned quiet water destinations (page 251)

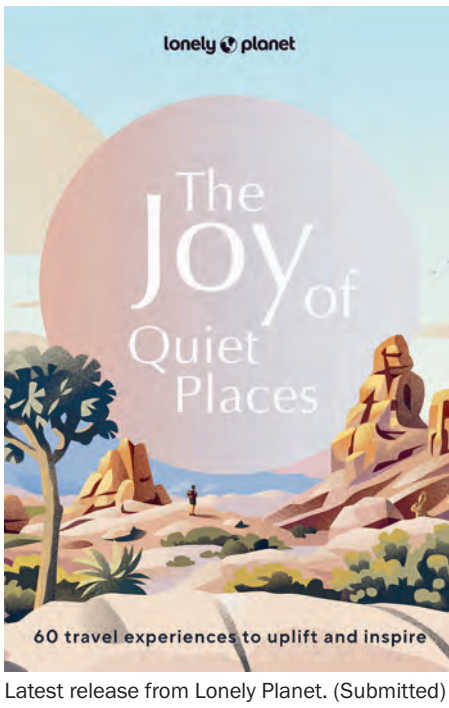
Tarkine (Takayna), Tasmania- pristine and prehistoric landscapes (page 258-60)

Waimangu Volcanic Valley, Rotorua, New Zealand- a spiritually significant valley (page 264-266)

Mt Tarawera and Te Wairoa, Rotorua, New Zealand 267- quiet places near Rotorua (page 267)

Turn down the volume and join Lonely Planet on a journey of serenity and discovery while disconnecting from the hustle and bustle and reconnect with the peaceful beauty of the world that surrounds us.

Lonely Planet's "The Joy of Quiet Places," \$44.99 RRP. Available at shop.lonelyplanet.com.





Gina Chick communes with nature.



A scene from The Cape to Cape walk in WA.



Susie on the Riesling Trail.

Breathing out

By Tania Phillips

Imagine being paid to visit some of the most beautiful places in Australia and talk to fascinating people along the way.

New co-presenter of SBS' Great Australian Walks, Susie Youssef (Deadloch, The Project) admits she is still pinching herself that this is her life now.

On the back of the success of Great Australian Walks with Julia Zemiro, Great Australian Walks has returned to SBS with a brand-new series - only this time beloved comedy legend Julia Zemiro (Fisk, RockKwiz) is sharing her step counter with two additional presenters: comedian Susie and inaugural Alone Australia winner Gina Chick.

The show features 10 spectacular new walks with each episode inviting viewers to slow down and join either Julia, Susie or Gina on an intimate journey of discovery as they soak in the sights, sounds and stories that define Australia. Walks featured in series 2 include: Cape to Cape Track (WA), Snowies Alpine Walk (NSW), Beechworth (VIC), Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (NT), Bruny Island (TAS), The Bay Trail (VIC), Wadjemup/ Rottnest Island to Fremantle (WA), Wilpena Pound (SA), Bathers Way (NSW) and The Riesling Trail (SA).

For Sydney girl Susie that meant strapping on her now tax deductible shoes and heading to Victoria and South Australia.

"We truly have one of the most beautiful and diverse landscapes and I pinched myself a couple of times," Suzie, who was a big fan of the show before being asked to do it, said.

"There's a moment in Beechworth when I'm up at a look-out with an incredible woman called Megan Carter and just looking out over the amazing view. I got light-headed and thought this is nuts, I could never have imagined in a million years that this is where my path would take me - it was breathtaking.

"And it was amazing that someone would pay me to do it, all my shoes are tax deductible now, I love it. It's really why SBS made the show, they just wanted me to please my tax accountant at some point and for that I'm very grateful."

Susie said she loved to walk (something that she was reminded of during lock-down) and being part of the show took her places she may never have thought of going.

"I didn't get to choose the walks, we had a few discussions about a few places that I might have been before that could be good to do again but I got to do new places," Susie explained.

"I got to do the Bay Trail in Melbourne from St Kilda to Brighton area (Albert Park was where we began), and then we went up to Beechworth in Victoria.

"They were all so good, but Beechworth was an amazing walk - the people and the place and the history, it was just gorgeous.

"The next two walks that I did were both in South Australia.

"The first was the Riesling Trail in Clare which was gorgeous and there was a bit of wine involved, which I would never object to on a walk, and then we finished with the most challenging but the most spectacular walk



Breathing out at Wilpena Pound, South Australia. (Supplied)



Julia Zemiro has shared her step counter with comedian Susie Youssef (Deadloch, The Project) and inaugural Alone Australia winner Gina Chick.



Part of Susie's eye-opening journey through Ikara Flinders Ranges National Park.

at Wilpena Pound which is Ikara/Flinders Ranges National Park. I've never ever done a walk like that before."

Suzie said she hoped that the show would encourage other people to go and enjoy what the country had to offer or just to breathe out for a little while and escape into the beautiful landscapes vicariously.

"Walking is a nice way to see a place," she said.

"During lockdown it became one of those things that was a life line for me. I've always been a walker but I noticed so much more then - especially if you're doing the same walks again and again because we didn't have



On the beaches of Southern Western Australia on the Cape to Cape walk.

the chance to get out and go other places.

"You kind of notice your neighbours garden and what changes are there. Different places opening up and closing down, people moving in and out. It's so different to going for a long drive where people are focused ahead. With walking you're looking up and around and you can take your time with it. There is no rule to where you go."

While Beechworth was her favourite place, she described her visit to Ikara Flinders Ranges National Park as "both breath-taking and breath giving" a true moment to breathe out.

"You can do bits and pieces of trails," she said.



Julia breathing out with John Butler around Margaret River - his connection to where he lives is strong and his Watturu Chant stays with you long after Julia walks on.



Suzie visits Beechworth.



The famous and fabulous Beechworth Bakery - a great and very necessary stopping spot on any trip to the region.



Original host and Executive Producer Julia Zemiro in WA.

"I don't think the show is setting the challenge to get out and do all the walks that we've done.

"I think it's saying if this sparked any sort of inspiration for you and you feel inclined - look at what this incredible and beautiful country and this incredible landscape has to offer. "Honestly, we could make this show for the next 50 years and we would never do all the walking tracks in Australia."

The brand new series of Great Australian Walks premiered on Thursday 22 August on SBS and SBS On Demand with episodes are continuing weekly.

Enjoying the Kimberley Coast experience

Cygnets Bay Pearl Farm, Dampier Peninsula. (Tourism Western Australia)

The Kimberley is one of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring regions in the world, an area where billions of years of rock formations have been left behind in the stunning natural landscape.

With breathtaking beauty at every turn, this fascinating region offers plenty of ways to uncover its best-kept secrets – from an Aboriginal walking tour through the World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park, home to the Bungle Bungles' dramatic sandstone karsts, to an iconic sunset camel ride along Cable Beach in tropical Broome (Rubibi), or a scenic flight over the turquoise tidal waters of the mighty Horizontal Falls.

It's a region that is on many Australian's bucket list – but where to start?

While many of us plan to pack up a camper and take off on the Grey Nomad trip of a lifetime one day – it's not the only way to see that spectacular region.

There are plenty of awe-inspiring wilderness adventures to take from Broome (Rubibi) – which is just a plane flight away – with breathtaking beauty at every turn.

ECO BEACH

Head south past the picturesque coastline of Roebuck Bay (Yawuru Nagulagun) to the unforgettable Eco Beach Wilderness Retreat, around 130 kilometres from Broome. Make the most of your day with an ocean swim or dip in the infinity pool with its endless horizons. Relax in sought-after hammock hangs on the beach after an a la carte lunch, or revel in an unforgettable Mud and Bubbles experience with healing mangrove mud. Extend your stay overnight in dune-top villas or garden eco



Red Sun Camels Cable Beach, Broome. (Tourism Western Australia)

tents in this pristine Kimberley environment.

JAMES PRICE POINT

Marvel at the azure waters and the picture-perfect Kimberley coastline when you head just 50km north of Broome for a perfect day out. Drive atop spectacular red cliffs that loom over pristine white sands of the warm Indian ocean. Pack a picnic and spend a peaceful day swimming and relaxing, just like the locals do.

BEAGLE BAY

Located around 130 kilometres north of Broome, Beagle Bay is one of four Aboriginal

communities on the Dampier Peninsula north of Broome. It's home to the Nyul Nyul people who've existed in this rugged but pristine coastal environment for thousands of years. It's also home to the Beagle Bay Sacred Heart Church.

LOMBADINA

Revel in natural wonders at Lombadina (196 kilometres north of Broome), on beautiful Thomas Bay. Relax on white sandy beaches, catch a fresh feast of mud crab, or take a kayak tour and spend time snorkelling in waters

abundant with sea life. You can even join a 4WD tour to see the ancient footprints. The new Djarindjin campground on sealed Cape Leveque Road has modern facilities and a communal firepit.

CYGNET BAY

A further 20 kilometres north of Lombadina is the Cygnets Bay Pearl Farm, accessible year-round on a sealed road. Pearl Farm tours give an insight into how pearls are cultivated and a visit by boat to Waterfall Reef appears to defy logic as it "rises" from the ocean on a receding tide. Stay overnight in the new glamping tents on the bay, and enjoy the licensed restaurant that overlooks it, complete with infinity pool and tastings of pearl meat.

WILLIE CREEK PEARLS

Get the complete pearl experience, from the history of pearling in Broome, to modern pearl farming and jewellery manufacture. Less than 40 kilometres north of Broome, join the the Willie Creek Pearl Farm Tour to cruise Willie Creek's sapphire waters and view live Pinctada Maxima oysters suspended in their natural environment amongst the native flora and fauna.

HORIZONTAL FALLS

The surging waters of Horizontal Falls must be seen to be believed. Prepare for an unforgettable adventure amid hundreds of islands that make up the Buccaneer Archipelago. This natural tidal phenomenon serves up breathtaking viewing options. Witness the unique rush of water that squeezes through narrow cliff passages from a seaplane, scenic flight or helicopter; or board a jetboat ride through the falls.

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Heading to the far west

Dreaming of heading to Western Australia? Now's the time to experience the romance of the open road on an epic adventure across Western Australia's captivating landscapes.

Start in Perth, Australia's sunniest capital and a thriving cultural hub. The city's natural attractions and imaginative dining scene make it an idyllic introduction to any trip.

Head south for dramatic coastlines dotted with welcoming wineries and ocean-side walking trails. Out east, there is a chance to immerse in the outback charm of Kalgoorlie (Karlkurla) or journey through seasonal wildflower fields.

Up north, the rugged beauty of the Kimberley and the marine wonders of World Heritage-listed Ningaloo Reef (Nyinggulu) await.

Western Australia's iconic landscapes can be explored by car over a few days, a few weeks or more – line up a playlist and prepare for an unforgettable adventure.

For the perfect road trip head to the Tourism Western Australia Website for trails to drive and places to go and amazing things not to miss.

Here are some things coming up and happening now to get the trip planning started.

Wildflower season:

Western Australia is a botanical enthusiast's dream. It's home to more than 12,000 species of wildflowers, 60 per cent of which can't be found anywhere else in the world.

These bring a spectacle of colours and scent that attract thousands of people every year.

Generally, wildflowers will begin to show off their dazzling blooms in June in the north of the State; extending through to November in the south.

There's a number of trails to choose from – some will take you a day or two, others will be week-long adventures. And to see amazing varieties of WA's native species put Perth's Kings Park on the must-visit list.

WA Events:

Planning a trip to WA why not plan your trip to coincide with some of the amazing festivals and sporting events the state is set to host in coming months.

WA plays host to an incredible range of world-class cultural, arts, sporting and culinary events each year, with several exciting new major events coming to Perth in 2024.

The inaugural EverNow festival lit up Perth last year with five nights of sound, light and fire, and is set to return from October 3 to 7, during the Noongar season of Kambarang. The multi-sensory festival celebrates WA's rich Aboriginal culture and breathtaking biodiversity.

WA's newest homegrown culinary event has recently been announced, taking place on Wadandi (Saltwater) country from November 14 to 17. Pair'd Margaret River Region will showcase the uniqueness of the world-renowned wine region and tantalise taste-buds with a blend of incredible local produce paired with wines harvested from local vines.

In a global exclusive, acclaimed Australian



Coalseam Conservation Park. (Tourism Western Australia)



Lions Lookout, Korung National Park.



Kings Park and Botanical Garden.



Wildflowers, near Perenjori.

street artist Rone is bringing his immersive art experience to Perth. Running from 1 July to 30 September 2024, the TIME • RONE exhibition will take over 12 rooms at The Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA), with brand-new spaces specifically for the WA exhibition, two new mural works exclusive to Perth, plus sensory bar and dining experiences.

In WA's South West region, Australia's largest destination film festival CinefestOZ will return to the Margaret River Region from August 31 to September 8; and in the Kimberley, Broome's (Rubibi) annual Shinju Matsuri (festival of the pearl) returned in 2024, celebrating the town's unique multicultural and pearling history from August 17 to September 1 (one worth putting on the calendar for a future trip).

For sport lovers

Perth has also been confirmed as the host of the inaugural HoopsFest event - Australia's largest basketball festival. From 19 to 22 September 2024, Perth will exclusively host all opening round matches of the Australian National Basketball League (NBL) season, the preseason competition for the Women's NBL, plus the Under 18s Club Championships, alongside supporting events such as Australia's largest sneaker culture festival, Sneakerland.

The West Test will then return to the award-winning Optus Stadium – voted Australia's Best Stadium in the 2023 Stadium Awards – with Australia taking on archrivals India from November 22 to 26 in the opening Test cricket match of the summer.

On the sporting calendar for 2025, Perth will once again host the Australian leg of the

HSBC SVNS (formerly known as HSBC Rugby World Sevens Series) in 2025, following its success in 2024. The Australian-exclusive global rugby event will take place in January at Perth's rectangular stadium, HBF Park. The British and Irish Tour will return to Australia for the first time in 12 years for a festival of rugby across the country. The 2025 tour will kick off in Perth on June 28, with Perth team Western Force hosting the visitors at Optus Stadium.

Other standout events to keep an eye on for 2025 include the annual FRINGE World Festival (January 17 to February 16, 2025) and Perth Festival (February to March, 2025), which both deliver a vibrant program of live music, theatre, visual arts, comedy, dance and family friendly events throughout Perth's festival of summer.

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A place to relax, unwind

August to October is the perfect time to visit Central Australia – the weather is great and there are plenty of events on to keep visitors busy, from the iconic Henley on Todd in August to the Red Centre Nats in September and the Masters Games in October – there is something for everyone.

For the sporting minded there is the Larapinta Trail to conquer, and hundreds of kilometres of mountain bike tracks.

For the arts and music lover there will be the Desert Song Festival and Bush Bands Bash both on in September and a multitude of art galleries in town.

Download the full events schedule on the discovercentralaustralia.com website.

And any time of the year there are fortnightly markets with crafts, food, jewellery and more, the amazing Alice Springs Desert Park and Reptile Centre, the scenic West and East MacDonnell National Parks, history galore with the Royal Flying Doctor Museum, Central Australia Museum, Connellan Aviation Museum, National Road Transport Museum and Old Ghan Museum.

Now is the time to plan a trip, but remember there is so much to do at least a week is needed to do it all justice. Call Wintersun Cabin and Caravan Park now to make a booking.

Located just two kilometres north of the city centre, the park provides convenient access to all the amazing sights of Alice Springs and its surrounds – whether guests choose to drive themselves or take a guided tour. The park is neat and clean with lots of shady trees offering a place to relax and unwind.

Find them:

- 1 Stuart Highway, Alice Springs
- Northern Territory 0870
- Email: wintersun@wintersun.com.au
- Phone: (08) 8952 4080



The wide leafy streets of the Wintersun Cabin and Caravan Park in Alice Springs.

NT road trip continues

The big Million Dollar Road Trip NT promotion to entice visitors to the Northern Territory is set to end at the end of September.

The promotion is aimed at local and interstate travellers and has been aimed at bringing in means more support for local businesses and work opportunities for Territorians. It has been offering self-drive travellers who visit and explore the NT between May to September 2024 a chance to win \$1 million cash from the Caravan Industry Association.

The Territory's tourism drive market is worth over \$860 million to the economy – which contributes to local jobs and businesses across the NT.

Self-drive travellers who stay at a participating caravan park in the NT, visit a local NT Visitor Information Centre, or make a

purchase with a participating tourism experience or attraction in the Territory, will have the chance to win the major prize of \$1 million cash, or runner up prizes including \$10,000 cash plus a \$500 fuel voucher or one of 19 x \$500 fuel vouchers.

The Territory Labor Government has partnered with the Caravan Industry Association of Australia offering self-drive travellers who visit and explore the NT between May to September 2024 a chance to win \$1 million cash from the Caravan Industry Association.

The Million Dollar Road Trip NT – which is done through a partnership between the Tourism NT and the Caravan Industry Association of Australia – runs until 30 September 2024 and aims to reach over one million Australians and deliver 5,000 unique competition entries.



NT campaign wraps up at the end of September.



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Canberra in full bloom

Lovers of all things floral, art, music and entertainment, it's time to plan a trip to Canberra and get ready to experience Floriade, Australia's Biggest Celebration of Spring.

This year's theme, "Art in Bloom," promises a kaleidoscope of colour as one million blooms transform Canberra's Commonwealth Park into a vibrant canvas of creativity from 14 September to 13 October.

In keeping with the theme, visitors have the opportunity to unleash their inner artist and take part in painting, sketching, photography, floral design and bonsai workshops to create their very own masterpiece.

It is a chance to visit the gallery on site and be inspired by the work of local and national artists, attend fascinating talks, browse the market stalls and wander through the beautiful flower beds with designs influenced by interpretations of architecture, painting, music, literature, sculpture, and film.

Australia's favourite gardener Costa Georgiadis will be gracing the Floriade main stage on Saturday 28 September as part of this year's jam-packed program. The much-loved Dogs' Day Out is also returning on Sunday 13 October and promises an adorable day of dog-specific retail vendors and programming.

There is also a chance to take home a piece of Floriade and support local charities at the Great Big Bulb Dig on Monday 14 October.

Along with a vibrant program of free entertainment, there are not to be missed special ticketed family friendly events in the new Ka-

zador Tent including 'A Kind of Magic,' 'Circus Extravaganza' and 'Dr Hubble's Bubble Show'.

Layout the picnic rug and relax with a tasty bite to eat and a delicious local beverage. From mouth-watering Italian by Occasioni by Agostinis to tasty French pastries from L'epi Bakery there is something for everyone to enjoy.

There will also be a chance to taste local brews in the BentSpoke Brewing Beer Garden, enjoy wine from the Canberra Region in the Canberra District Wines' Wine Garden and Cellar Door or a Floriade-themed cocktail at the Underground Spirits Gin Garden.

NightFest is also returning for four captivating nights from 3 to 6 October. See Commonwealth Park illuminated with vibrant colours and an amazing program of live music featuring the likes of Karise Eden, Sunday Lemonade, Camino Gold, Wallabindi and the RMC Rock Band (to name a few), roving performers, and much more.

The Kazador Tent will also host the adults-only (18+) 'Kiss Bang Cabaret' during NightFest. This risqué, silly, and hilarious show perfectly combines comedy, circus, burlesque and cabaret. Tickets are on sale now with NightFest tickets.

And while in Canberra, don't miss the opportunity to visit iconic museums and galleries, indulge in delicious dining and take in the hidden gems and unexpected moments scattered across the city.

For more information visit floriadeaustralia.com.



Floriade by night.



Plenty to enjoy. (Submitted)



A beautiful destination for flower lovers.



The beauty of floriade.



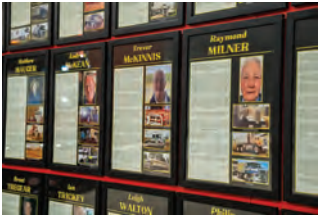
Full of colour.

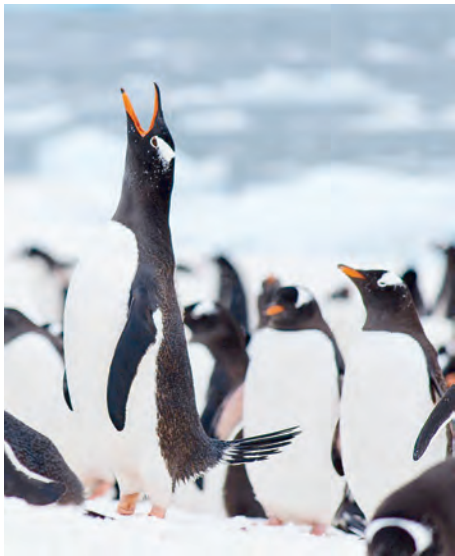


NATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT HALL OF FAME

Incorporating the Shell Rimula Wall of Fame, Kenworth Dealer Hall of Fame, Old Ghan Railway and RSI Military Museum there is something for everyone to see!

Please see website for opening hours. Entry fees apply
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Timeless spirit of discovery

By Holly Ireland
1000 Mile Travel Group

Embarking on my first voyage to Antarctica from Ushuaia (South America) a decade ago seems very surreal. It is hard to put into words what it is truly like to explore the Polar regions.

I can still feel the excitement I had when I first saw our Quark Ship the “Ocean Diamond” at the end of the Pier. What lay ahead of us, was it going to be the Drake Shake or the Drake Lake? Was this crossing really as treacherous as the stories we had heard and read?

After many years of cruising on large ocean ships, the charm of a smaller ship was felt as soon as we boarded. The intimate connection forged with surroundings as we ventured to remote, seldom-visited locations that only smaller ships could reach.

Dropping anchor in tranquil, sapphire-blue bays where silence reigns, broken only by the occasional creak of a glacier or whisper of the wind. Each day brought a fresh adventure, kayaking through towering icebergs, hiking untamed mountain ridges and losing ourselves in a Penguin colony in Antarctica. With panoramic vistas, cruising on zodiacs to secretive spots where fearless animals bask on ice flows. Under the midnight sun, ever-changing light dances on the waters, creating moments so spellbinding once experienced, they are forever etched in your memory.

This trip was a turning point in my life and the way I would travel with a new found respect for our planet. That has led me from one remote destination to the next.

I will never forget the Kayaking over towards a glacier calving when I heard a very unfamiliar sound coming from almost under our kayak as I turned to look at my travel partner a whale appeared beside me, here I was eye to eye with this magnificent creature. Time seemed to stand still and tears of joy fell from my eyes.

These moments are what makes an expedition truly special and from that moment in Antarctica I knew I had to reach the Arctic. I needed to get a better understanding of the polar regions, from the bottom of the world to the top of the world.

A few years later, I headed off on a circumnavigation of Spitsbergen, the largest island of Svalbard archipelago with Quark on board “Ocean Adventurer”

Travelling by small expedition ship, allows you to explore at your own pace then come together to share your experiences over a wonderful, debrief, dinner and cocktail. It is always exciting hearing and sharing photos of the day as everyone will capture something different once broken down into smaller interest groups making it a great option for multinational families who are looking to celebrate a special milestone, couples or solo travellers which has contributed to the growth we have seen providing life-changing memories that also help us better understand the places we travel to so we can preserve our planet’s pristine environments. With expert glaciologists, historians, biologists and photographers who share their in-depth knowledge with you and your cruise director who will have you feeling a part of the team, in time. It has become a preferred style of travel for many, so much so we have experienced a huge growth post pandemic as travellers look to immerse themselves in a destination, connecting with locals and come back



feeling rejuvenated and educated.

Travelling to the Polar regions will allow you the opportunity to understand the planet and help protect these regions for the future. Please keep in mind that both Polar regions have short seasons and offer many voyages to choose from so if you’re planning a first or second trip to one of these destinations, please speak with an expert who can help choose the best voyage for you.

Today Quark has three new five-star luxury Ships ‘Ultramarine’ (199 guests) ‘World Ex-

plorer’ (199 guests) and coming in 2025 a very special addition ‘Ocean Explorer’ (X-Bow) - 139 guest who I look forward to exploring the Three Arctic Islands with.

Quark has purposely kept all ships under 200 passengers so they can venture into remote areas, tiny villages and settlements, often through narrow fjords and channels. This offers you more time at landings and engagement with your expedition leaders for a memorable expedition.

If you would like to speak with me , please

contact me as I would love to hear from you and share my expert travel knowledge to plan your next holiday.

Yours in travel Holly

- M 0400 423 198
- E holly.ireland@1000miletravel.com.au
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Explora Suite \$13,620pp* Twin
Solo Panorama from \$19,080*



Svalbard Explorer Ocean Explorer

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Helsinki to Helsinki
Departing 31st May 2025
Deluxe Veranda fwd \$13,790pp* Twin
Studio Single \$16,800



South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula World Explorer

Penguin Safari - 18 days
Departing 6th Jan 2025
Ushuaia - Ushuaia
Triple Stateroom \$24,420pp*
Infinity Suite \$30,120pp* Twin



Antarctic Explorer Ocean Explorer

Discover the 7th Continent - 11 days
Departing 10th Dec 2024
Ushuaia - Ushuaia
Deluxe Veranda fwd \$15,300pp* Twin
Studio Single \$20,340*



Contact your Quark Expedition Specialist

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or Your 1000 Mile Travel expert | 1300 361 425



Oceanview Helicopters - Caloundra. (Submitted)



Makepeace Island aerial view, Noosa.

Springtime on the coast

From newly refurbished coastal stays to boutique hidden gems in the hinterland, the Sunshine Coast is blossoming this Spring with something for everyone to discover.

New immersive animal encounters will get visitors to the coast up close and personal with seals, penguins and whales; while a new helicopter tour takes guests to new heights for a unique picnic experience highlighting the Sunshine Coast's local produce. The proud showcasing of local products continues with the annual Sunshine Coast Pop and Pour Festival which will take guests on a journey to 10 of the region's craft breweries and distilleries.

Accommodation

Refreshed coastal stays

Glen Eden Beach Resort is located in one of the Sunshine Coast's most in-demand villages, Peregrine Beach. Located just 10-minutes' from Noosa with direct beach access, the resort is under new management and the resort is getting a fresh new look - with refurbished public spaces and furnishings.

In Mooloolaba, Mirra Chana's beach-level three-bedroom apartments have undergone impressive renovations with contemporary furnishings, deluxe bathrooms and fully-equipped full-size kitchens. Mirra Chana resort is the perfect beachside getaway with direct access to Mooloolaba Beach and only a short walk from The Wharf Mooloolaba.

Richard Branson's Sunshine Coast home, Makepeace Island, has reopened to the public following extensive refurbishment including new bathrooms and furniture, a new tennis court and barge. This heart-shaped private island resort caters for groups up to 22 guests exclusively, with three two-bedroom villas and four private rooms with ensuites in the Bali House.

New heritage homes open their doors

Despite being built in 1916, Elsie's Cottage opened for guest stays for the first time last month. This enchanting hinterland retreat is named after the youngest granddaughter of Joseph and Alice Dixon, pioneers of the Sunshine Coast in the 1800s. The cottage has been lovingly restored by Joseph and Alice's great-great-grandson Matthew Clarke and his wife, Sarah. The cottage sleeps four and has two exquisite ensuite bedrooms and boasts panoramic views over the Blackall Range to the coast. Built in 1895, Montville Estate offers a large original homestead as well as a private self-contained luxury cottage on a sprawling 1.5 acre property. In early 2024, the owners of Montville Estate opened the entire state to guests for the first time following a luxury redesign of the property and its estate. In Gympie, an atmospheric cottage has been created out of the heritage building, The Wimberley (c. 1911), which was once part of Wimberley and Sons Grocery and Hardware Store in the hinterland village of Goomeri. Fully renovated and accessible, this two-bedroom boutique stay is the perfect base for exploring the rail trail and Gympie's renowned local produce.

Hinterland stays for the whole family

Thirlestane Farm is a quintessential farm workers cottage renovated to an exceptionally high standard with an adjoining newly built barn set in 28 acres of peaceful rolling hills in Cooroy, just 20-minutes' to the stunning beaches of Noosa. Sleeping up to eight guests, these two



Peregrine Beach Glen Eden Beach Resort.



Oceanview Helicopters.



Montville Estate.



Bali House Bedroom, Makepeace Island, Noosa.

properties are ideal for families or small groups to escape to the country to relax and soak up the serenity of the farm - complete with highland cows.

Into The Wild has launched their second tiny home on the Sunshine Coast, Tiny Aahana, perfect for tranquil family getaways. The first of Into The Wild's family builds in Queensland, Tiny Aahana sleeps up to six guests and is equipped with all the amenities needed for a relaxing break, including an outdoor bathtub with sweeping views of the lush landscape.

Attractions and tours

Reaching new heights in the hinterland Oceanview Helicopters is set to launch a new 'Picnic on a Peak' experience that will provide the ultimate aerial tourism and local food experience on the Sunshine Coast. Taking flight from September, guests will traverse some of the Coast's 100 kilometres of beaches before heading into the hinterland to collect produce from local suppliers before flying to a hidden gem perched on top of the Blackall Range for a gourmet picnic with sweeping views.

New immersive animal encounters

Mooloolaba's SEA LIFE has launched a new 'behind the scenes' Ultimate Animal Experience which includes the opportunity to swim

and meet with the seals, feed the penguins and get an exclusive look at the seal and penguin back of house areas. The three-hour guided tour is hosted by one of SEA LIFE Sunshine Coast's marine specialists and is limited to just two guests at any one time for a more memorable and intimate animal encounter. For those wanting to get out on the water, Epic Ocean Adventures has launched a first-of-its-kind whale encounter with the introduction of whale watching ocean kayak tours. The new tour is one of Australia's most unique minimal impact whale watching tours and departs daily from Noosa during whale migration season (June-November).

Food and drink

A new distillery in the heart of Maroochydore Established by two mates with a passion for fine spirits, Hayden Mokaraka and Trent McEvoy will open Buderim Distilling Co on Ocean St, Maroochydore, later this month. Offering craft spirits from the on-site distillery along with the best local craft beers and a global wine selection, they offer taste testings, share plates and a wide selection of cocktails made from locally-sourced ingredients.

Brand-new farm-to-cup coffee experience

Glasshouse Plantation has reopened after

renovations complete with a working coffee farm for a full farm-to-cup coffee tasting experience, all accompanied by stunning Glasshouse Mountains views. Visitors can enjoy sipping on locally-grown coffee, farm tours and tastings.

Events

The Big Pineapple Festival - 19 October

One of Australia's most-loved outdoor concerts has been confirmed at Australia's most-loved 'Big Thing'. Heavy metal guns The Amity Affliction, global sensation Tones and I, and hip-hop trio Bliss n Eso are the big names heading this year's Big Pineapple Music Festival. The festival, returning on October 19 after a three-year hiatus, is being billed as "an unforgettable day of live music, delicious food and vibrant experiences". Presented by Triple J, the festival promises some of Australia's most celebrated artists as well as local names.

Pop and Pour Festival - 26 October

The Sunshine Coast Pop and Pour Festival is a one-day brewery and distillery adventure unlike any other. Hop aboard the fleet of Pop and Pour's hop-on-hop-off buses and embark on a journey through the Sunshine Coast's vibrant beverage scene. 10 of the region's top breweries and distilleries will be open for tastings, each offering a unique taste of the local craft.

Discover the Sunshine Coast's craft breweries and distilleries.



- 1 **Brouhaha Brewery**
1 Edison Cres, Baringa
brouhahabrewery.com.au
- 2 **Moffat Beach Brewing Co**
PRODUCTION HOUSE
51 Caloundra Rd, Caloundra West
moffatbeachbrewingco.beer/production
- 3 **Moffat Beach Brewing Co**
2/12 Seaview Tce, Moffat Beach
moffatbeachbrewingco.beer/beachside
- 4 **Brouhaha Brewery**
6/39 Coral St, Maleny
brouhahabrewery.com.au
- 5 **Your Mates Brewing Co**
41 Technology Dr, Warana
yourmatesbrewing.com
- 6 **Glass House Brewery**
8/330 Mons Rd, Forest Glen
glasshousebrewery.com.au
- 7 **Blackflag Brewing**
13 Brisbane Rd, Mooloolaba
blackflagbrewing.com.au
- 8 **Ten Toes Brewery**
4/127A Sugar Rd, Alexandra Headland
10toes.beer

- 9 **Sunshine Coast Brewery**
1/13 Endeavour Dr, Kunda Park
sunshinecoastbrewery.com
- 10 **Toes Buderim**
1-5 Pittards Rd, Buderim
10toes.beer
- 11 **Sunshine Brewery**
28 Fishermans Rd, Kuluin
sunshinebrewery.com.au
- 12 **Morts Brewing Co**
25 Short St, Nambour
mortsbrewingco.com
- 13 **Kenilworth Hotel Brewery**
18 Elizabeth St, Kenilworth
kenilworthhotel.com.au/brewery
- 14 **Blackflag Brewing Compound**
10 Lomandra Place, Coolum
blackflagbrewing.com.au
- 15 **Coolum Beer Co**
2 Junction Dr, Coolum Beach
coolumbeercompany.com.au
- 16 **Terella Brewing**
196 Bunya Rd, North Arm
terellabrewing.com.au
- 17 **Eumundi Brewery**
1 Etheridge St, Eumundi
imperialhoteleumundi.com.au/eumundi-brewery

- 18 **Matso's Sunshine Coast**
85 Memorial Dr, Eumundi
matsos.com.au
- 19 **Heads of Noosa Brewing Co**
85 Rene St, Noosaville
headsofnoosa.com.au
- 20 **Boiling Pot Brewing Co**
130A Eumundi Noosa Rd, Noosaville
boilingpotbrewingco.com.au
- 21 **Land and Sea Brewery**
19 Venture Dr, Noosaville
landandseabrewery.com
- 22 **Copperhead Brewery**
52 Kauri St, Cooroy
copperheadbrewery.com.au
- 23 **Noosa Hinterland Brewing Co**
28 King St, Cooran
noosahinterlandbrewing.com.au
- 24 **Eco Brewing Co**
204 Lake Flat Rd, Boreen Point
habitatnoosa.com.au/brewery-new

Sunshine Coast Distilleries

- 25 **Beachtree Distilling Co**
14 Industrial Ave, Caloundra West
beachtree.com.au
- 26 **Nil Desperandum**
104 Nambour Connection Rd, Woombye
nildesperandum.com.au
- 27 **Sunshine & Sons**
104 Nambour Connection Rd, Woombye
sunshineandsons.com.au
- 28 **Steampunk Distillery**
2 Simons Rd, Townen Mountain
steampunkdistillery.com.au
- 29 **Eumundi Distillers**
1 Etheridge St, Eumundi
eumundidistillers.com.au
- 30 **Noosa Heads Distillery**
19 Venture Dr, Noosaville
noosaheadsdistillery.com
- 31 **Seabourne Distillery**
9 Rene St, Noosaville
seabournedistillery.com.au
- 32 **Pomona Distilling Co**
18 Reserve St, Pomona
pomonadistilling.com.au
- 33 **Diablo Co**
1305 Mary Valley Road, Gilldora
diablococo.com.au



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Sunshine Coast

Savouring a good brew

The craft beer and distillery businesses are booming on the Sunshine Coast and there is no shortage of options to quench a thirst or two.

The number of breweries popping up on the Sunshine Coast continues to grow every year.

There are beers brewed with smoked grains, others infused with seasonal local fruit, and the influence of Japanese-style beers that are ideal for the Queensland climate... breweries are putting the Sunshine Coast on the map.

Head over to these small-scale breweries, meet the people behind the scenes, and see how it all gets made.

You can also book a spot on a tour with Coast to Hinterland Tours (their Noosa Brewery Tour, their Sunshine Coast Brewery Tour, and their Sunshine Coast Gin Safari are all fabulous options) or the crew from Sunshine Coast Craft Beer Tours for the ultimate way to experience our diverse range of breweries and distilleries. Or visitors can head on out and check out the individual breweries and distilleries for themselves

As well as the brewery's the region has an award-winning Rum Distillery.

Nil Desperandum Rum have recently added to their list of accolades taking out the prestigious Best Rum trophy at the Australian Distilled Spirits Awards in Melbourne a few week's back. They also added to their medal tally with all 12 entries winning either gold (2), silver (7) or bronze (3).

The winning drop was Nil Desperandum's 'The Double Ton' - a limited edition of 169 bottles that was pot distilled and aged for three years in barrels emptied of bourbon and sherry. The rum was the first batch from a 200 litre barrel and was available to members of The 1871 Club where members get access to exclusive releases.

"We are so delighted to have taken out

a major win last night at the awards and look forward to bringing the trophy home to Woombye, Queensland to join the cabinet alongside Nil Desperandum's other accolades," Matt Hobson, Founder and CEO of Nil Desperandum said.

Meet some of the Sunshine Coasters making a fine drop or two

Eco Brewing Co:

Brewer's name: Connor

- Favourite brew: Red Ale.
- What is the best food to pair the favourite brew: Slow Cooked Brisket,

Noosa Hinterland Brewing Co -

Brewer's name: John Tynan

- Favourite brew: It's a hard choice as we have 12 taps and I am a fan of dark beers in winter, so have a few of them flowing at the moment. Right now though, I would have to say the Hazy Pale is my favourite, with a delicious hop blend.

What is the best food to pair the favourite brew with: I would definitely pair that with our Peri-Peri wings. We are proud members of Slow Food Noosa and support our local producers, growers and suppliers - so the wings are sourced from Cooroy Butchery and Smokehouse and cooked fresh.

Nil Desperandum

- Distiller: Adam
- Favourite beverage: Nil Desperandum Premier with a large ice and a splash of Ginger Ale
- Meal to pair with it: Duck pancakes, watercress, spring onion, small stick carrot and hoisin sauce

Matsos

- Head brewer: Lachlan McIntyre, but goes by Loc.
- Favourite brew: Venue exclusive "Cane Fields" Molasses Dark Lager.
- Meal to pair it with: It goes down a treat with our Lamb Shank.



Matso's.



Michael Conrad Co-Founder, Matt Hobson Co-Founder and Adam Chapman Head Distiller at Nil Desperandum.



Noosa Hinterland Brewing.



Noosa Hinterland Brewing.



Award-winning Nil Desperandum rum. (Submitted)



Eco Brewing. (Submitted)

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The ultimate in cruising

Oceania Cruises, one of the world's leading culinary- and destination-focused cruise lines, is spotlighting an array of new 2025 Europe sailings, ranging from six to 34 days, to whisk guests to the most breathtaking locales across the continent.

The ultra-premium line's elegant boutique ships will set sail on a series of voyages taking in idyllic islands, dramatic fjords, well-loved European resort towns, and bustling cities, putting immersion in local communities and culinary excellence at the heart of each guest's travel experience.

Travellers wanting a true gourmet European adventure will love sailing aboard Oceania Cruises' newest ships, Vista, Allura, and Marina. The ultimate foodie ships offer true immersion in the epicurean arts thanks to hundreds of culinary-focused shore excursions, an unprecedented array of dining venues, guest lectures and demonstrations, and hands-on cooking lessons in The Culinary Center.

One of the highlights of the 2025 Europe season is the debut of the line's newest ship, Allura, which will set sail from Trieste, Italy, on her maiden voyage in mid-July before a series of eastern and western Mediterranean voyages for her inaugural season.

Meanwhile, her sister ship, Vista, alongside Marina, will entice guests to enjoy the quieter early season with its lower temperatures in Spain, Portugal, and Greece, before heading north to the British Isles, Iceland, and Scandinavia for the height of the summer.

For those seeking a smaller ship experience, the 670-guest Nautica will explore the Mediterranean, Adriatic, and Aegean Seas throughout the summer of 2025; Sirena will head to Northern Europe, and Insignia will offer journeys to Iceland. Offering a more intimate onboard experience, these ships will



Culinary discovery tours.

be sailing true port collector voyages, with lesser visited stops such as Lulea and Lysekil in Sweden and the Finnish port of Vaasa.

"We are thrilled to have this rich line-up of

Europe sailings on such a wonderful choice of ships for next year. We cannot wait to welcome Allura to the family in July; to have her, and her sister, Vista, which launched to global acclaim



The Vista near Corsica in France.



Docked in Malta.

last year, in one of the most intriguing and well-loved cruise regions of the world at the same time is so exciting," Oceania President Frank A Del Rio said.

About Oceania Cruises

2025 Europe Season Highlights

A number of the 2025 Europe sailings feature exclusive insider tips from Conde Nast Traveler editors who have handpicked their favourite ports on select 2025 and 2026 itineraries and share their invaluable insider knowledge on what to see, eat, and experience.

Allura

Allura is the eighth vessel for Oceania Cruises and is the line's second 1,200-guest Allura Class ship debuting in summer 2025 and features the largest standard staterooms at sea, a new onboard crêperie, a top-of-ship library with breathtaking sea views thanks to its wall of glass, five speciality dining venues, The Culinary Center, the line's expansive hands-on cooking school, and so much more.

Maiden Voyage: 18 July – 24 July, 6 Days from Trieste, Italy to Athens (Piraeus), Greece: Allura's maiden voyage is an invitation to discover enchanting ports along the luminous Adriatic Sea, from historic Ravenna with its renowned collection of mosaics to the charming walled medieval cities of Dubrovnik and Kotor.

Iconic Mediterranean Shores: 24 July – 5 August, 12 Days from Athens (Piraeus), Greece to Monte Carlo, Monaco: Stroll through Rome's hidden gem shopping streets, lose yourself in the Provençal countryside, and immerse yourself in the enchanting history and cultural wonders of Greece, Italy, Spain, and France on this 12-day sailing. Conde Nast Traveler Exclusive Editor's Tips include where to eat the best pasta in Rome, specifically carbonara. Bon appetit!

Vista and Marina

Vista offers a market-leading staffing ratio with two crew members for every three guests, and like her sister ship, Allura, boasts the most spacious standard staterooms at sea – at more than 27 square metres. Setting new standards for comfort and residential-style luxury, Vista features all-veranda accommodations, plus eight bars, lounges and entertainment venues, and the luxurious Aquamar Spa + Vitality Center and Aquamar Spa Terrace.



A rendering of inside the new Allura.

The 1,250-guest ship Marina underwent an expansive refurbishment in May 2024 including the addition of two new dining options: Aquamar Kitchen, the new wellness-inspired dining venue which debuted on Vista; and the al fresco evening Pizzeria, serving spectacular Italian dishes including pizzas and burrata with stunning seascape views from Waves Grill. There is also an expanded poolside ice cream parlor serving milkshakes and smoothies.

Iberia to Wine Country: 16 June – 30 June, 14 Days from Barcelona, Spain to London (Southampton), United Kingdom aboard Marina: Sail through Spain, Morocco, Portugal, and France and explore their distinctive architecture, soulful cultures, and acclaimed culinary scenes, with overnights in a dazzling trifecta of cities: Barcelona, Bordeaux, and Paris.

Fairytale Isles and Fjords: 15 June – 29 June,

14 Days from London (Southampton), United Kingdom to Oslo, Norway aboard Vista: Discover the dramatic beauty of Norway and the British Isles' rugged landscapes. Pet the Shetland Islands' adorable ponies, stroll through Oslo's intricately carved Gol Stave Church, and sail breathtaking Sognefjord, Scandinavia's longest fjord.

Scottish and Nordic Voyager: 30 June – 11 July, 11 Days from London (Southampton), United Kingdom to Reykjavik, Iceland aboard Marina: Enjoy the bustling city of London before sailing to the historic charm of Edinburgh and the rugged beauty of Invergordon and Lerwick in Scotland. Adventure on to majestic fjords and the enchanting villages of Seydisfjörður and dive deep into the natural and cultural splendours of Northern Europe. Conde Nast Traveler Exclusive Editor's Tips



Bathing in luxury on-board Vista.

for Ålesund include spending a day at Godøy Island, and leaping from a floating sauna in the heart of town.

Nautica

Elegantly charming, Nautica carries just 670 guests, served by 400 crew members. Boasting luxurious, residential furnishings and decks of the finest teak, custom stone and tile work, Nautica features four specialty restaurants, the Aquamar Spa + Vitality Center, plus eight lounges and bars, and a casino.

Echoes of Antiquity: 27 July – 8 August, 12 Days from Istanbul, Turkey to Athens (Piraeus), Greece: Appreciate the intriguingly intertwined histories of Greece and Turkey as you experience some of antiquity's most fabled sites. Highlights include visits to Cyprus, Crete, and whitewashed Santorini, the quintessential Greek Isle.



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Las Palmeras Lunch.



San Juan Gaztelugatxe.

Basque Coast adventure

By **Kylie Mitchell-Smith**
@travellingsenorita

Nestled in Northern Spain, the Basque Country is rich in culture, agritourism and nature.

The capital city is Bilbao, both modern and traditional, and is home to the iconic Guggenheim Museum—Designed by Frank Gehry, the museum boasts a contemporary art collection, and impressive outdoor sculptures, such as the giant sized flower “Puppy” by Jeff Koons.

Stroll through Bilbao’s charming Old Town, with narrow streets and historical buildings, each with its own story to tell. The Mercado de la Ribera, is one of the largest fresh food markets in Europe, and is a must visit- sample local cheeses, cured meats, olives and wine.

Embark on a pintxos crawl, the Basque version of canapes, where an array of tasty morsels are served on a slice of bread. Hop from bar-to-bar, tasting delicacies like grilled prawns, stuffed peppers, and the famous Gilda—a skewer of olives, anchovies, and pickled peppers.

There are an array of quality restaurants to choose from, like the Michelin mentioned Losfueros, housed in a charming building, try the array of fresh seafood dishes paired with local wine from across the region.

Take a day trip to San Juan de Gaztelugatxe-known as castle rock- on the Basque Coast, with a climb to the top that is as steep as it is rewarding. Capturing views of the rugged coastline and the deep blue Bay of Biscay, the summit is dedicated to John the Baptist. (fun fact, San Juan de Gaztelugatxe features in Game of Thrones.)

Take a drive to the coastal town of Plentzia, with a pretty fishing village and historical old town. The area is known for fresh seafood straight off the trawler and txakoli, a sparkling white wine. Long lunch at Las Palmeras on the surrounding plateau, offering a menu peppered with grilled meats, fresh fish and home-made desserts.

Visit Gorliz located in the Biscay Bay, known as the sunniest town in Bizkaia with sandy beaches in the shape of a shell. The promenade is perfect for a leisurely walk, with a selection of cafes and bars that boast the ocean as the backdrop.

A trip to the Basque Country isn’t complete without visiting San Sebastián, a city that is renowned for its culinary scene, beautiful beaches, and lively atmosphere. Start the day at La Concha Beach, with golden sands and glistening water.

For lunch, we explore the Parte Vieja (Old



San Sebastián

Part), a historic town threaded with pintxos and wine bars. After devouring an assortment of Pintxos, take a funicular ride up Monte Igueldo (the hill above the old town) for a breathtaking view of the city and crescent-shaped bay.

Just over the hill is Gros Beach, known for its surf, and Kursaal cultural centre, it’s a friendly neighbourhood with a commanding cathedral and bustling town square. From affordable tapas bars to award winning restaurants, like the renowned Gerald’s Bar (also

one in Melbourne) the area is less populated and more affordable than neighbouring San Sebastian.

Back to Bilbao, take a stroll along the Nervión River and meander the many artisan shops along the way. The city’s blend of old and new, from its traditional Casco Viejo to the modern architecture of the Abandoibarra district, leaves a lasting impression.

Whether you’re an art enthusiast, a foodie, or an adventurer, the Basque Coast and Bilbao offers something for everyone.



Old Town, Plentzia.



Catalonia Hotel- San Sebastián. (Submitted: Kylie Mitchell-Smith).

EAT-

- Las Palmeras
- Los Fueros-Bilbao
- Gerald’s Bar- Gros
- Pintxos Tour, San Sebastian

PLAY-

- San Juan de Gaztelugatxe
- Oma Forest
- Transporter Bridge- Bilbao

STAY-

- Catalonia Hotel- San Sebastian
- Catalonia Hotel- Bilbao



Coronet Peak. (Destination Queenstown).



Fabulous wearable art. Seraph, Sasha Wisniewski, Australia.



Cardrona. (Supplied: Michael Bollen)

Sunny days and NZ slopes

With soft and snowy mountaintops, basins green with fresh growth and colourful flowers in bloom, spring is the perfect time to travel to Aotearoa “The Land of the Long White Cloud”.

New Zealand’s diverse array of seasonal events and experiences come alive in spring both on and off the slopes, making it the perfect time to cross the Tasman.

Spring ski – North Island and South Island

Though often assumed to peak in winter, skiing in Aotearoa New Zealand makes for an incredible experience right through until late spring, with the lifts still in operation until the end of October.

Ski fields across the North Island and South Island all thrive in September and October, with shorter lift lines and fewer crowds making it a great time to visit. No matter the level of experience, Cardrona, Treble Cone, Coronet Peak, Mt Hutt, and Whakapapa, to name a few, all come to life in spring.

Shoulder ski season brings longer warmer days, forgiving snow, and stable weather, all making for optimal ski conditions. Once you’ve enjoyed a day on the mountains, it’s time to explore off the slopes too, from experiencing world-class food and wine, to relaxing and unwinding in a hot pool.

For those a bit more serious about their time on the slopes, spring is one of the best times of year to perfect their runs. Due to the warmer conditions, the snow is softer and easier to manoeuvre, with conditions that are pristine for learning or progressing new skills and making some exceptional gains in skiing

or boarding.

With more than 20 ski resorts across New Zealand, there are offerings for all levels of ski and winter sport enthusiasts. Below are the scheduled closing dates for the 2024 ski season:

North Island

- 13 October: Whakapapa, Ruapehu
- 28 October: T?roa, Ruapehu

South Island

- 22 September: Coronet Peak, Queenstown
- 29 September: Treble Cone, W?naka
- 13 October: Cardrona Ski Resort, W?naka
- 13 October: The Remarkables, Queenstown
- 13 October: Mt Hutt, Canterbury

World of WearableArt (WOW) – Te Whanganui a Tara Wellington

It wouldn’t be a trip to New Zealand in spring without experiencing Wellington’s World of WearableArt (WOW). A feast for the eyes, WOW is back this September for another extravaganza of artistic innovation. The 2024 show, ‘DREAM AWAKE’, sees imagination become reality with six awe-inspiring realms that push the boundaries of theatrical spectacle, live music, dance, aerial choreography and wearable art to the extreme.

Since its establishment in 1987, WOW has embraced the worlds of art and design, running an international competition that culminates in a spectacular theatrical performance each year, giving designers the opportunity to be recognised and celebrated on the world stage, to an audience of over 60,000 attendees each year.

- 26 September – 13 October



WOW Earthling, Gill Saunders, New Zealand.



Wearable art on display. This is the Pyrocene, by RR Pascoe, from Australia. (Supplied)

Savour tastes of The Tweed

Australia's newest premier food and drink event, Savour The Tweed, will be held from 30 October to 3 November 2024, shining a light on The Tweed's culinary excellence and unparalleled food and drink provenance.

The inaugural five-day celebration of border region's rich gourmet offerings will feature a program of curated events to champion the region's local produce and those who bring it to life, from First Nations storytellers and passionate chefs to talented distillers, brewers and baristas, cheesemakers and farmers and an endless list of artisan producers.

Savour The Tweed will feature a program of 20 distinctive events featuring local and visiting chefs with highlights including a First Nations welcome dinner and native food foraging, farm to fork menus and wild-caught seafood lunch, plus events showcasing healthy and sustainable food practices and ethical farming.

The program is co-curated by Tweed-based chef and author Christine Manfield and local food advocate Amy Colli of Straight To The Source and will highlight the diversity and prominence of The Tweed as one of Australia's leading food and drink destinations with farm tours, distillery and brewery masterclasses, long table lunches, storytelling, cooking classes and local degustations.

Christine Manfield said the program aimed to unearth the distinctive 'terroir' of the region by showcasing locally sourced seasonal produce and native ingredients and The Tweed's host of talented chefs and food and drink artisans.

"Savour The Tweed will be a signature regional event, created from the ground up, and I'm so excited to be collaborating with The

Tweed's impressive line-up of food and drink producers, leading chefs and cultural storytellers to celebrate the distinctive flavours and character of the region and to offer a program of immersive experiences," Ms Manfield said.

"The Tweed's growing profile as one of Australia's leading culinary destinations is testament to the creative vision and hard work of the region's chefs, restaurateurs, growers, distillers, brewers, food producers and First Nations talent who will all feature throughout the event program."

Tweed Tourism Company General Manager Sally Scott Savour The Tweed was an exciting addition to the region's annual tourism events calendar.

"As a five-day event, Savour The Tweed is the perfect long-weekend getaway for foodies who also want to experience The Tweed's holiday highlights including the Tweed Regional Gallery and Northern Rivers Rail Trail in the hinterland to surf lessons and snorkelling with turtles from our seaside villages."

Savour The Tweed is a partnership between Tweed Shire Council and The Tweed Tourism Company to boost regional tourism.

Tweed Shire Mayor Chris Cherry said the event would provide the perfect opportunity to celebrate the Tweed's incredible fresh food offering.

"Savour the Tweed is a key investment by Council to host a signature event that showcases our region and highlights our culinary strengths," Cr Cherry said.

For more information on Savour The Tweed and to sign up for program updates and early ticketing details, head to visitthetweed.com.au/savourthetweed



Enjoying the garden at Potager.



Lunch on deck at Tweed River House in Murwillumbah.



Christine Manfield and Ben Devlin at Pipit.



Couple and dog on a farm walk at Farm and Co.

Captivating the City

Brisbane Festival 2024 is set to captivate the city with a vibrant and dynamic program that celebrates global premieres, iconic artists, and innovative productions. Running from 30 August to 21 September, 2024, the festival will weave a rich tapestry of culture, celebration, and community, transforming Brisbane into a stage where artistry and creativity shine.

This year marks the fifth program from Artistic Director Louise Bezzina, who has curated a lineup that invites audiences to experience the pinnacle of performance art. The festival will feature world premieres, Australian exclusives, Queensland commissions, and Brisbane spotlights, offering something for everyone across 23 days of festivities. With 1,085 performances spread across the city's premier arts venues, unique landmarks, and close-knit communities, Brisbane Festival 2024 promises to unite, inspire, and empower people from all walks of life.

One of the festival's most anticipated events is the exclusive Australian premiere of Jean Paul Gaultier's Fashion Freak Show (August 30 – September 15) at South Bank Piazza. This eclectic revue-style production is a dazzling collision of fashion, music, pop culture, cabaret, and art, brought to life with local flair by Queensland Indigenous artist Grace Lillian Lee, who has collaborated with Gaultier on a bespoke couture piece for the show. Lee will also debut her own world premiere exhibition, The Dream Weaver: Guardians of Grace (August 30 – September 21), at Brisbane Powerhouse.

Brisbane Powerhouse will also host Volcano (30 August – 15 September), a groundbreaking hybrid production from Ireland that blends theatre, dance, and a sci-fi television thriller into a binge-watchable experience. Another world premiere, Straight from the Strait (30 August – 1 September), co-produced with



Dream Weaver. (Submitted)

Opera Queensland, tells the remarkable true story of Torres Strait Islander workers who laid 7km of railway track in a single day in 1968.

Lighting the Dark (12-15 September) by Dancenorth Australia, developed in collaboration with emerging choreographer Chris Dyke, illuminates a life-affirming adventure inspired by real-life heroes such as Banksy, David Bowie, and Freddie Mercury. The festival will also see the global debuts of Trent Dalton's Love Stories (10-29 September) and Fancy Long Legs (12-22 September), both stage adaptations of beloved Brisbane authors' works.

Queensland premieres such as Eucalyptus – The Opera (2-4 September), GURR ERA OPP (18-21 September), and Big Name, No

Blankets (20-21 September) further enrich the program, offering a diverse range of performances that celebrate storytelling, culture, and inclusivity.

Brisbane Festival continues its tradition of free community programming with events like Brisbane Serenades, which will bring mini-festivals and musical experiences to neighborhoods across the city, including Moorooka Block Party (September 7) and Pasifika Made at Kuraby (September 21).

The festival will open with the beloved Riverfire by Australian Retirement Trust on 31 August, lighting up the Brisbane skies with the city's biggest and most-loved fireworks display. The closing weekend will feature Skylore



The Art Boat. (Joel Devereux)

— The Rainbow Serpent, a breathtaking and poetic drone show that returns by popular demand after last year's success. The festival will also see the return of the all-new illuminated trail Lightscape in the City Botanic Gardens, adding to the festival's dazzling spring season.

BRISBANE FESTIVAL BY NUMBERS

- 1085 performances
- 319 free performances
- 13 world premieres
- 4 Australian premieres
- 7 Queensland premieres
- 1215 Queensland-based artists and arts workers
- 65+ arts organisations
- 183+ First Nations artists

Free Country festival on the Coast

One of Australia's favourite country music festivals returns to the Gold Coast this October with a stack of incredible artists added to an already impressive lineup.

Groundwater Country Music Festival (CMF) unveiled the second wave of country music stars set to rock the Broadbeach stages in 2024.

Joining iconic artists like Australia's Kasey Chambers, American Jim Lauderdale and Canada's acclaimed Tim Hicks on the Gold Coast from 18 - 20 October will be Australian country music stalwart Adam Brand, the sensational Jess Moskaluke (CAN) and new country convert Ella Hooper performing the Linda Ronstadt Show.

Produced by Experience Gold Coast and with more than a decade under its belt, Groundwater CMF's powerhouse 2024 lineup is set to be an unforgettable three-day country party.

Joining this year's lineup is Adam Brand, a stalwart of the Australian country music scene, renowned for his electrifying live performances.

With a career spanning two decades, 12 Golden Guitars and six ARIA Awards to his name Adam has established himself as one of Australia's most influential figures in country music.

"There's nothing like Groundwater! It's something pretty unique to be blasting out country music in the middle of the holiday strip right on the beach...oh and did I mention it's totally free?! Does it get any better?" Adam Brand said.

Multi-awarded rising Canadian music sensation, Jess Moskaluke, is set to dazzle country fans with her magnetic presence and powerhouse vocals that has her making waves across the industry. With her infectious energy and a string of chart-topping hits like "Cheap Wine and Cigarettes" and "Kiss Me Quiet," Jess brings a modern twist to traditional country with a unique blend of heartfelt lyrics.

The Linda Ronstadt Show featuring Ella Hooper will be an unmissable moment of this



A drone shot of the crowd. (Submitted)

year's festival.

Groundwater Country Music Festival (CMF) will be back on the Gold Coast 18-20 October 2024

- With more than a decade under its belt, the award-winning Groundwater Country Music Festival is bringing some of Australian country music's most iconic artists to the Gold Coast this October.
- Announced on the festival's first lineup is none other than the Queen of Country, leg-

endary songstress Kasey Chambers.

- The multi-award-winning Aussie artist leads a star-studded 2024 line up alongside acclaimed acts including Canadian singer-songwriter Tim Hicks, country music legend Jim Lauderdale (USA) and Grammy-nominated artist Gord Bamford(CAN).
- They are joined by some of Australia's favourite names in country including the multiple Golden Guitar winning Felicity Urquhart & John Cunningham, Taylor Moss, Josh Setter-



Attendees at last year's festival.



Headliner Kasey Chambers.

field and rising stars Max Jackson and Sweet Talk, as well as local Gold Coast performer Emily Grace Taylor just to name just a few.

- Groundwater Country Music Festival gathers some of the best country artists in the industry for three days of Free live music on the Gold Coast.
- Set only steps away from the iconic golden beaches of Broadbeach, there's no other country music festival quite like it.



By **Kylie Mitchell-Smith**
travellingseniorita.com

We've said it before, and we'll say it again, Brisbane is the place to be, from world class theatre and touring exhibitions to the upcoming opening of the Queens Wharf precinct to hidden rooftop gems like Sixteen Antler that overlooks the historic City Hall-home to MOB (Museum of Brisbane).

We book a weekender in the city, to wander around the square and take in the latest exhibitions at the museum, and along the way we discover a delicious (free) food festival at the adjacent Roma Street Parklands, the annual 'Providore in the Park'.

Stay at the Pullman Hotel, and you'll be amongst all the action, the hotel overlooks the City Hall, King George Square and Roma Street Parklands. Offering five-star luxury at an affordable price, in arguably one of the city's most convenient locations. The hotel is home to the popular Sixteen Antlers rooftop and tapas bar and the Mediterranean style restaurant Goldfinch, ideally located on the ground floor.

As the sun goes down across the city, we indulge in a 'Hot Choctail' on the rooftop before devouring a share plate, winter menu



at Goldfinch. The menu is peppered with fresh dishes like Baby Squid, Brisket Ragout Papardelle and a Crispy Skin Barramundi paired with the creamiest garlic mash and seasonal green vegetables.

The desserts are something to write home about, like the delicious Chocolate Fondant and Hazelnut Brittle, Apple Fitters with Dusted Cinnamon and Salted Caramel and a warm Sticky Date Pudding with Whipped Butterscotch and



Crème Fraiche- along with a decadent high tea that's served across the weekend.

After dinner we walk toward the river and discover the newly opened Bar Miette with sweeping views across the water and luminated Story Bridge. The ideal place to enjoy a Martini and watch the boats pass by, Bar Miette is the terrace bar to the newly opened Supernormal, hailing from Melbourne- it's renowned Chef Andrew McConnell's first foray into Brisbane.

As night is falling, we head back to the hotel and enjoy a relaxing sleep in our spacious suite, complete with a supersized bath and dreamy views across the city. Mornings in the river city

are all about long walks around the botanical gardens, stopping off for good coffee and a hearty breakfast, along the way.

Checking out of the Pullman we scoot down to the soon to opened Queens Wharf precinct, with all its bells and whistles, there's a curated public art walk and garden and a striking bridge that links the city back to Southbank-stay tuned for all the hotel and restaurant goings on as they unfold.

Visit Brisbane in September, and you'll catch the annual Brisbane Festival, billed as an explosion of international arts performances and interactive experiences, the cultural festival takes over the city's iconic landmarks- connecting people to place with a bold and brave, multi-faceted arts program.

EAT

- Goldfinch Pullman Brisbane
- Sixteen Antlers
- Bar Miette
- Firma Italian

PLAY

- MOB, Museum of Brisbane
- Roma Street Parklands
- Brisbane Festival 30 August-21st September.

STAY

- Pullman Brisbane, King George Square



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The iconic ferris wheel.

Festival of petal power

As if celebrating 75 years of petal power was not enough.

This year the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers (TCOF) features Petals and Pups – an official dog-friendly program, completely dedicated to hounds and their humans, and in salute to Toowoomba's first canine Ambassador, 'Puppy' the Pomeranian, who led the very first grand parade all those years ago!

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers is not only one of the most beautiful events in the country, but also the toast of the nation after being crowned best major event at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards.

The 75th anniversary program features more than 80 events over four petal-filled weekends from 13 September to 7 October.

The pawsome Petals and Pups program boasts more than 20 dog-friendly activities and 27 off-leash parks, as well as dog-friendly cafes, restaurants and accommodation recommendations. It's the purr-fect time to get your paws amongst the petals in the Garden City.

Dogs have always been a part of the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers. At the very first Carnival parade in 1950 the Toowoomba Thistle Band's drum major, Hugh Morgan, set the benchmark with his tartan-clad pooch 'Puppy' marching alongside the ensemble. Today a statue commemorating 'Puppy' stands in the iconic Picnic Point Parklands which overlooks Toowoomba's scenic panorama of the Great Dividing Range.

Since its inception in 1949, the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers has flourished and is now an iconic Queensland event. The brainchild of Essex Tait and the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, Carnival was introduced as a way for the city to use its "Garden City" reputation to promote increased economic activity following the hardships of war. On 21 October 1950, the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers commenced with a street procession that stretched three miles in length. Led by a bullock team and watched by a crowd estimated to be 50,000 strong, it was a resounding success, as it has been ever since.

2024 Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers

Petal-fueled showstoppers this year include the full Queensland Symphony Orchestra performing under the baton of Chief Conductor Umberto Clerici, a 75th Memorabilia Exhibi-

tion, exciting new dining experiences and the return of another record year of #trEATS, the expansion of the popular Teddy Bears' Picnic into the Thrive on Arts four-day event at the Empire Theatre, the return of beloved Carnival Queens and Ambassadors to share their memories, and more than 40 million petals on display across the city's famous parks and public spaces.

The famous Festival of Food and Wine runs across 13 to 15 September with Thirsty Merc, Pete Murray, Kate Ceberano and James Reyne headlining at Queens Park, while celebrity chef and dessert powerhouse Anna Polyviou has the flavour baton.

More than 190,000 blooms have been planted across the city's major parks and public spaces to create a spectacular canvas of colour for much needed celebrations from 13 September.

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers 2024

13 September to 7 October

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers' Petals and Pups program:

- Cultured Canine Itinerary - if spending a weekend strolling through perfectly manicured gardens, taking in amazing art and indulging in a long lunch (all with a canine companion in tow) appeals, then this is your pawfect pick. The day starts with some lane-way love, exploring Toowoomba's fantastic street art scene, before a visit to Picnic Point where a selfie with the famous bronze statue of 'Puppy' is a must. From here, it's a lazy lunch, before an off-leash play at Queens Park and then some petal time in the Botanic Gardens.
- Pampered Pup Itinerary - a fur-bulous day of Instagrammable indulgence! This begins with a puppychino (and cappuccino for the human), before some doggie day spa time (a signature cut and blow dry perhaps) followed by some well-behaved dog-friendly local luxe shopping (hello Harolds Finishing Touches) before taking in the blooms at Laurel Bank Park.
- Adventure Dog Itinerary - it's barking brilliant for action-packed trailblazers and starts with a hearty breakfast, a bushland adventure at Garnett Lehman Park, a snack (and a great single origin coffee for humans) before free ranging at Dr Alex Horn Park (great for sunsets).

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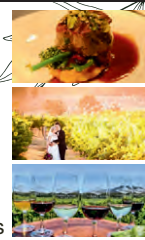
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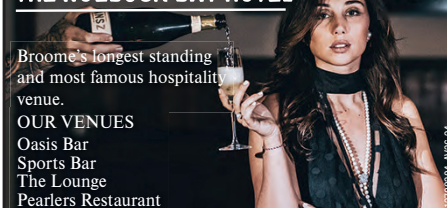
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