



AUSTRALIA'S WILD SOUTHERN LUXURY

The small island state at the bottom of Australia is often overlooked, but unjustly so, as Tasmania encapsulates some of the country's greatest scenery, gastronomy and art

Pumphouse Point is Tasmania's newest wilderness retreat

Tasmania, or “Tassie” to the locals, packs some of Australia’s finest offerings into a neat, heart-shaped landmass roughly the size of Ireland. The landscape is stunning and varied, shifting from peaked mountain ranges to gleaming lakes to dense forests fringing white-sand beaches. Local produce is hailed as some of the best in the country, with Tasmanian growers, cheesemakers, vintners and distillers regularly scooping up awards. Throw in a storybook of intriguing history, and the thought of skipping Tasmania suddenly seems remiss.

Tasmania entered European vernacular as Van Diemen’s Land, named after a former governor of the Dutch East Indies. Anthony van Diemen had sent Abel Tasman on a discovery voyage, on which the explorer found the island in 1642. It was Tasman’s appellation that eventually stuck, and the Australian state fixed its current name in 1856.

Indigenous Australians lived in Tasmania long before European discovery, however, and the island’s Aboriginal culture dates back at least 35,000 years. As in many parts of Australia, the culture and accord of local tribes were scarred by European colonialism, with the 1828 massacre of around 30 Aboriginal men at Cape Grim noted as a particularly dark moment in the island’s past.

Tasmania also became an outpost for petty and hardened criminals in the early 1800s. The British government shipped more than 75,000 convicts to Tasmania between 1804 and 1853, where they labored with relative freedom, provided they stayed in line. Secondary offenders were sent to Port Arthur, a 90-minute drive from Hobart, and the well-preserved remnants of this penal colony are well worth a visit.

Hobart, Tasmania’s capital city, is just over an hour’s flight from Melbourne (making it shorter than a Melbourne-to-Sydney trip) and melds a country-like pace with urban sophistication. Residents are unhurried, but demand quality from their dining and cultural pursuits, synonymous with Tasmania’s gastronomic and artistic prowess.

To ensure produce is sourced at the epitome of quality and freshness, chefs from Franklin in downtown Hobart hold one-on-one meetings with local growers. A 10-ton wood-fired Scotch oven and a “made from scratch” kitchen ethos then help formulate the menu’s complex flavors.



Left page
Freycinet marine oyster farm is a unique dining experience to rejuvenate taste buds and senses

Right page
At Saffire Freycinet, the conceptually organic buildings reflect the surrounding environment

Below
All suites at Saffire are designed for the utmost privacy while taking in the magnificent views



On the city’s waterfront, jutting out over Sullivan’s Cove, The Glass House celebrates the finest Tasmanian wine and whiskey in a transparent building with 280-degree views of the marina. The upscale restaurant shares Tasmania’s regions and stories through food, and like Franklin, uses superior local produce. In honor of its name, the floating beacon has an impressive Murano glass display and a private collection of table glassware sourced from Tasmanian estate auctions.

A five-minute walk from the waterfront is the Moss Hotel, covertly positioned above Salamanca Place—a revamped colonial boulevard filled with cafés, galleries and shops. (The square also hosts the Salamanca Market on Saturdays, where Tasmania’s prized foodstuff converges with the wares of local artisans.) Moss’s exposed timber beams, handcrafted furniture and original stonework create an earthy sense of calm that’s far removed from its original function as a warehouse.

Away from the gentle hum of the city center is the Islington Hotel in South Hobart, which offers views of Mount Wellington—a majestic 4,000-foot-high mountain that affords spectacular views across the Tasman Sea on a clear day. Hotel walls are adorned with fine

art and rooms draw personality from antique furniture and contemporary finishes. Book the “signature” room for the ultimate night’s rest in an oversized Austro-Hungarian Empire bed facing a toasty fireplace.

From Hobart, a 25-minute ferry ride sets passengers down at the foot of Australia’s lauded, and sometimes controversial, Museum of Old and New Art. The three-level museum, better known as MONA, is carved into a cliff-face and was founded by professional gambler and art collector David Walsh. In late 2017, the destination gallery expanded with the opening of the Pharos wing, which houses four large-scale installations by American artist James Turrell. With Pharos came a new restaurant and bar (Faro), joining MONA’s existing restaurant, The Source, and its wine bar, brewery and cellar door.

Beyond Hobart’s picket-fenced streets and manicured rose gardens lies an expanse of natural beauty and abundant wildlife. Around 18 miles north of Hobart, take an exclusive night tour at Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary and help feed endangered Tasmanian devils and other native Australian fauna such as sugar gliders, kangaroos and tawny frogmouths. Private daytime feeding tours are also available.



EMBRAER TIP

Looking for a quick getaway from Melbourne, Australia? Board your Phenom 100EV and land in Tasmania in 52 minutes.



Right (all images)
A former family retreat, now transformed into a private getaway, Satellite Island is one of Australia's most exclusive spots



Further up the east coast is Freycinet National Park, where the multi-award winning Saffire Freycinet lodge is tucked in bushland overlooking Great Oyster Bay. The lodge offers a range of experiences, including a visit to the Freycinet oyster farm, a relaxing boat ride around the turquoise bowl of Wineglass Bay, and a cultural tour with an indigenous guide, including tastings of Australian bush tucker, or native Australian sustenance. Back at the lodge, fine dining is a given.

Inching into the wilderness of the west is the iconic Cradle Mountain, marked by a twin-peaked basalt formation with a dipped “cradle” in the middle. Here, luxury accommodation is provided at Cradle Mountain Lodge, where suites include log fires and freestanding bathtubs—ideal to come home to after a day exploring the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park.

Within Cradle Mountain’s national park is Tasmania’s best-known hiking trail, the Overland Track. This six-day trek crosses breathtaking valleys, plains and gorges, and the Tasmanian Walking Company provides nightly accommodation in private huts with hot showers. Optimal comfort then awaits at the end of the trail at Pumphouse Point. With the 12-room “Pumphouse” positioned in the middle of Australia’s deepest lake, this is one of the country’s most unique guesthouses. Wake up to glacial views through the floor-to-ceiling windows and enjoy shared farmhouse-style dinners on the shores of Lake St Clair. On the lake’s edge, there are additional rooms in the Art Deco “Shorehouse” and private “Retreat,” hidden in native bushland. The latter includes a hot tub under the stars.

Full seclusion can be found further offshore at Satellite Island, reached via a short boat ride from the equally stunning, but non-exclusive, Bruny Island, or helicopter or catamaran from Hobart. With private access to Satellite Island, guests can hike along sea cliffs, lever wild oysters from the rocks and kayak beneath soaring white-breasted eagles. Come sunset, dine on gourmet produce by an open fire before retreating to the stylish waterfront boathouse. It’s the perfect marriage of food, wine and natural beauty, and exemplifies the precise reason why Tasmania should not be skipped. ◀



HOTELS

Moss Hotel is a hidden retreat above the bustling Salamanca Place, tucked within the original warehouses, once home to traders, whalers, publicans, gentlemen and convicts. mosshotel.com.au

Islington Hotel is a charming boutique hotel with a large garden offering stunning views of Mount Wellington. Guests are invited on a VIP Tour of the White Label Distillery to taste exceptional single malt Whiskey. islingtonhotel.com

Saffire Freycinet provides an immersive connection to Freycinet National Park and Wineglass Bay. Featuring 20 private suites, a luxury spa, top of class culinary, and individually tailored experiences, Saffire has been named one of the best luxury hotels in Australia. saffire-freycinet.com.au

At **Pumphouse Point** guests may explore the outdoors with walks, bikes, dinghies, fishing, wildlife viewing, scenic helicopter or plane flights and picnics. pumpphousepoint.com.au

RESTAURANTS

The menus at **Franklin** change based on local produce and integrate the foraging of wild rocket flowers or wild fennel. Try the house-made goat cheese aged in their own wine cellar. franklinhobart.com.au

Suspended over Sullivan’s Cove, **The Glass House** has redefined style on Hobart’s waterfront. Elegant cocktails, Tasmanian inspired shared plates, international flair and 280 degree water views. theglass.house

PRIVATE ISLAND

Satellite Island is your own private paradise. Sleep in the Boathouse on the water’s edge with the doors open. Do the rock shelf walk at low tide. At night be sure to look up, the night sky is amazing. You may even see the Southern Light. satelliteisland.com.au