

JOURNEY OUTBACK LUXURY

Well-catered camping at Sal Salis, on the North West Cape peninsula, some 1200 kilometres north of Perth.

the far pavilions

AN ERA OF LUXURY HAS ARRIVED IN SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST REMOTE LOCATIONS.

WORDS VIRGINIA IMHOFF, KYLIE WALKER



**SAL SALIS
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Nestled in dunes overlooking Ningaloo Reef, Sal Salis offers a rare combination of bush and beach, of back-to-nature experiences and luxury. Set on the edge of the Cape Range National Park, this remote safari camp has just nine wilderness tents, positioned to ensure the privacy of all guests. Spend your time hiking in the nearby gorges, diving, taking a guided kayak and snorkel tour of the reef, and swimming with the gentle whale sharks that pass during their migration from April to July. Or simply relax in the main lodge, which includes the dining room, a lounge and a deck for stargazing. *From \$375 a person twin-share (\$750 during the whale shark season), including all meals and beverages. Open mid-March to November 30. The nearest commercial airport is at Exmouth, which has daily flights to and from Perth. Hire cars are available at the airport or transfers can be organised by the camp: \$150 return children, \$250 return adults. Scenic flights from the airport to Sal Salis start at \$487 one-way for two people. 1300 790 561; salsalis.com.au*

Vintage portfolio, \$75, from Seasonal Concepts. Moscot 'Lemtosh' sunglasses, \$369, from Somedays. Luggage tag, \$19, from Hunt Leather. All other props, stylist's own. For stockist details, see page 139.



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE Deckchairs at Sal Salis; Sails In The Desert welcomes visitors to Australia's Red Centre; Uluru on the horizon. FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP Watch for passing whale sharks from a Sal Salis tent; Berkeley River Lodge sits on a 65-metre-high dune; inside one of the luxurious villas; the Berkeley River.

**THE BERKELEY RIVER LODGE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

From the air, it looks like a piece of Indigenous art — ribbons of red and swathes of dark green dotted with rows of tiny white shapes, nestled beside a swathe of cream. The red is the soil of this Kimberley coast location, the mottled green the trees, the cream the beach that's just a short walk from the 20 luxurious villas and central lodge. The villas command great views of the Timor Sea, or the Berkeley River and the rugged red gorges in the distance. Activities include river cruises, guided hikes, fishing, 4WD and helicopter excursions and, seasonally, evening turtle viewings. Dining is at the lodge's Dunes restaurant, taking in more dramatic views. *Standard three-night package, including all meals, drinks and a range of activities, \$3475 a person from Kununurra, \$4245 from Darwin. The lodge operates March–October. There is no road access to the lodge. Transfer flights from Darwin or Kununurra are included in accommodation rates. (08) 9169 1330; berkeleyriver.com.au*

**SAILS IN THE DESERT
NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Situated in the middle of Australia's central desert region, and a close neighbour of Uluru, Sails is a unique combination of luxury and nature. Refurbished in late 2012, Sails — part of Ayers Rock Resort — draws on the colours of the landscape and the culture of the local Anangu people. There is a range of experiences on offer around Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, from the Sounds of Silence dinner under the stars to sunrise flights over Uluru and a visit to one of Australia's most significant Indigenous art sites. The resort has several dining options and a luxury spa. *From \$388 a night room only, minimum two nights; five-night stay from \$233 a night. Packages including Sounds of Silence dinner also available. Flights operate from Melbourne and Sydney to Ayers Rock airport, which is six kilometres from the resort; connecting flights from some other destinations via Alice Springs. A commercial coach service also operates between the resort, Alice Springs and Kings Canyon. 1300 134 044; ayersrockresort.com.au >*

SAL SALIS PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL WEE BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPHY GUY BAILEY STYLING PHOEBE McEVROY



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT One of Arkaba's five suites; luxury undreamt of by the 19th-century graziers; wildlife encountered on the four-day Arkaba bushwalk in SA's Flinders Ranges.

ARKABA SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Arkaba started in the 1850s as a sheep station at the southern end of the spectacular, but then remote Flinders Ranges, some 450 kilometres north of Adelaide. Today, the sheep are gone and the stone homestead offers a level of luxury and comfort that those early settlers would never have imagined. There are five beautifully renovated rooms, all with bathrooms and verandahs. The menu features fine South Australian produce and wines. Arkaba is a wildlife conservation sanctuary and a habitat for the endangered yellow-footed rock wallaby; the all-inclusive package offers guided wilderness safaris and bushwalks, with other excursions and tours also available. The Arkaba Walk is a four-day walk led by expert guides, with overnight camps set in spectacular locations on the 24,000-hectare property and the final night spent at the homestead. *Homestead rates, \$816 a person twin-share. Four-day, three-night Arkaba Walk, \$2150 a person twin-share. Arkaba is 4½ hours' drive from Adelaide or an hour by private chartered flight. Scheduled commercial flights operate between Adelaide and Port Augusta, from where it's a 1½ hour drive to Arkaba. 1300 790 561; arkabastation.com*



GUESTS STAY IN BEAUTIFUL SUITES AND ENJOY A FINE DINING MENU.

EL QUESTRO WILDERNESS PARK WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The magnificent Kimberley landscape is on show just beyond El Questro Homestead, 100 kilometres south of Kununurra in Western Australia. Perched above Chamberlain Gorge and set in tropical gardens, the homestead enjoys panoramic views; guests stay in beautiful suites and enjoy a fine dining menu. The vast property also offers several other accommodation options. There is a range of complimentary excursions, and guests can also explore the region on one of the many other paid tours operating from the station, from helicopter flights to horse trekking and fishing trips.

Homestead rates \$1969–\$2899 a night twin-share, including accommodation, meals and all beverages, personalised itinerary and guided tours within El Questro Valley. Transfers from Kununurra or from El Questro station to the homestead are at additional cost. Open April 1–October 25, 2015. 1300 731 551; elquestro.com.au

BAMURRU PLAINS NORTHERN TERRITORY

At Bamurru Plains, the provision of a unique, close-to-nature experience goes with a passion for conservation and for minimising the resort's impact on the land. Sitting just west of Kakadu National Park, Bamurru's 10 luxurious bungalows overlook the Mary River floodplain. Guests wake to calls of magpie geese and other wildlife, often only metres away. The connection to the bush is reflected in the menu, with native ingredients featuring in many dishes. Experiences available include airboat tours of the wetlands, guided 4WD safaris and excursions to see the Aboriginal rock art of Kakadu and Arnhem Land.

*From \$550 per person twin-share, including all meals and most beverages. Wilderness Experience or Fishing Safari packages also available. Open May–October. The resort is a 30-minute flight or three-hour drive from Darwin. 1300 790 561; bamurruplains.com **



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT El Questro Wilderness Park is all about the rugged Kimberley landscape; buffalo graze at Bamurru Plains; El Questro's 400,000 hectares have room for bungalows and campsites, as well as the luxurious Homestead.

