

## /BAMURRU PLAINS TROPICAL WETLANDS, NT

'Wild bush luxury' is key here, a concept that brings a silk touch to a grassy Top End floodplain where the human presence is barely a scratch on the hide. Set close to the western boundary of Kakadu National Park, where the Mary River spills across a wetland before it meets the Arafura Sea, Bamurru Plains' nine safari bungalows are jacked up on stilts with floor-to ceiling mesh on three sides, which means an early morning wake-up as the warming sun stirs life on the floodplain.

The style is Hemingway chic. Aboriginal artwork and fish traps, antique photos, early maps and buffalo horns are set against corrugated iron walls—but there's also a pillow menu, classy modern Australian dining and high pressure showers in the palatial en suite bathrooms. It also treads with a light footprint.

Rooms and lodge sit among fringing bush on the edge of the floodplains, under cover of pandanus palms and woodland. Most of the power comes from the sun, air con is limited to three rooms, soap is chemical free and there are no plastic water bottles.

The bird watching is sensational. Airboat safaris through the paperbarks and across the floodplain are a specialty, the barra fishing during the February to April runoff is right off the dial and the Mary River floodplains are said to have the world's highest concentration of saltwater crocodiles. Among the special touches are airboat breakfasts, a 24-hour open bar and guides who will remind you not to trail your fingers over the side as your boat skims through this croc-infested kingdom.

[www.bamurruplains.com](http://www.bamurruplains.com)



## /ARKABA STATION FLINDERS RANGES, SA

Around South Australia's Wilpena Pound, the rippling hills rise and fall with the slow and easy rhythm of waves on a sea, covered with callitris pines and guttered by creeks lined with river red gums. Wedge-tailed eagles drift in the air currents and in the mornings, the hills are alive with western grey kangaroos. For anyone who prefers their outback scenery wild, majestic and steep, the central Flinders Ranges are in a class apart, and Arkaba Station serves the experience with style.

Until it became part of the Wild Bush Luxury collection and a nature conservancy, Arkaba was the heart of a 26,000-hectare sheep station, and the handsome, historic homestead preserves the architecture and manners of its aristocratic lineage. Four guest rooms are located inside the 1856 homestead, each with a door that opens to the verandah. In the corner of the garden, another suite has been fashioned from the former Coachman's Cottage. The comfort level is set to 'max' and decor is crisp and whimsical, with bare timber, leather and fieldstone walls providing the



essential rough-hewn ingredients.

The Flinders Ranges are stunning country for walkers, and a highlight of the activities menu is the Arkaba Walk, a four-day adventure traversing this ancient, sun-blistered landscape. Nights are spent beneath the stars in a deluxe swag, with hot showers and wines with your three-course dinner to smooth out the rough edges. Flights over Wilpena Pound, mountain biking, four-wheel drive tours and shorter walks are some of the other options. Sunsets conjure up colours from the furnace – ochre, livid purple and charcoal, until the dying sun sets fire to the ridge tops.

[www.arkabastation.com](http://www.arkabastation.com)

