



## Barefoot bush luxury

FOR RUGGED OUTDOOR TYPES, THERE'S CAMPING. AND FOR THOSE WHO WANT A MODICUM OF COMFORT, THERE'S GLAMPING. THEN THERE'S SAL SALIS.

WORDS & IMAGE | GISELLE WHITEAKER

### In the undulating sand-scape of Cape

Range National Park in the remote north of Western Australia, nine luxury wilderness tents crouch in the midday sun. The low-lying scrub allows for ocean views from the canvas openings. Hammocks are strung across the entrance-ways, angled towards the beach, primed for spotting humpback whales on their annual migration. This section of Australia's coastline sees the largest migration of humpbacks worldwide – nearly 30,000 of the magnificent creatures leaping and breaching the surface of the warm Indian Ocean.

It's not only whales. Whale shark excursions top the must-do list, but there's always more. The sea here is teeming with life thanks to Ningaloo, the 260-kilometre long reef, Australia's largest fringing coral reef and the only sizeable one positioned within paddling distance of a landmass. Snorkelling guides at Sal Salis are eager guides into this magical underwater realm, but with the beach mere steps from the tent flaps it's easy enough to dive in alone too.

Breaks in the reef create currents that make drift-snorkelling a breeze. With the warm temperatures and an abundance of marine life, it's like floating through a private

aquarium. Multi-hued parrotfish chomp on blue-tipped stag coral, while schools of slaty bream form a silver stream; daffodil-yellow butterflyfish drift lazily and tiny neons play hide and seek with sunbeams; Picasso triggerfish earn their moniker, their bulk splashed with vivid colours as if painted by the Spanish master. A black tip reef shark circles, not ominously, simply curious about the intruders in his playground. Subaquatic bliss washes in with the tides.

On terra firma, kangaroos escape the heat under hardy bushes as dusky pink and grey galahs strut along the sandy pathways before taking flight, the folded creases of the gorges in the Cape Range National Park a bewitching backdrop. The rugged limestone ranges provide opportunities for canyon exploration, the caves and gorges bursting with an astounding array of flowering plants, unusual in such an arid environment. There's an austere beauty here, made all the more poignant by the minimal-impact nature of Sal Salis – the camp is designed to disappear without a trace, leaving nothing but nature in its wake.

Boardwalks snake over the top of the model ecotourism development camp,

protecting the fauna and flora beneath. The sand-coloured tents that face the ocean blend with the surrounding landscape as they oversee the parched landscape.

Power is generated by the sun, with solar panels ensuring a clean, quiet energy source. However to heat water, gas is instead used. This may initially seem like a less eco-friendly way of doing things, but the limited nature of this precious resource is recognised with each guest only allocated their fair share.

It's no surprise that seafood makes its way onto the plates here, laced with subtle scents and spices to set the taste buds tingling. Aromas and flavours collide to sate the senses, as conversation flows across the communal table. Experiences shared doubles the delight, and no guest walks away from dinner without a smile.

Rustic yet stylish, secluded and serene, Sal Salis is the ideal scene for a comfortable connection with nature. No ringing phones mar the song of birds and a lack of light pollution showcases the incredible blanket of stars that wraps around the night sky like silent velvet. Lulled to sleep by the soothing rhythm of the crashing waves, cocooned in comfort, you won't want to leave. 🌌