

SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE

IT TAKES A BOLD VISION TO PULL OFF A place like Southern Ocean Lodge. A remote setting miles from anywhere, high on a limestone cliff top on a sparsely populated island in the Southern Ocean didn't make things easy. But this is where James and Hayley Baillie decided to locate world-class Southern Ocean Lodge. And, as it turns out, it's these very qualities that play a large part in making Southern Ocean Lodge special; the complete contrast of the wild and untamed setting with the finest accommodation, cuisine and hospitality that Australia has to offer.

Arriving on Kangaroo Island by air from Adelaide, or ferry from Cape Jervis on the South Australian mainland, the change of pace is immediate. There is a country charm and rural elegance that is both relaxing and attractive. The Southern Ocean is glorious, varying in colour from light green to cobalt blue, sometimes set against white sandy beaches, other times against foreboding limestone cliffs. The landscape is a patchwork of farms, orchards and bush. Segregated from the mainland's invasive species, it is a veritable

Warm morning light floods the Great Room.





Noah's Ark of Australian wildlife; a place of protection for iconic species such as the koala, seal lion, echidna, platypus, wallaby and kangaroo, as well as 267 bird species.

Kangaroo Island's size – 155 kilometres long and 55km wide – gives it a sense of scale. Southern Ocean Lodge is located on the south-west coast of the island, near Flinders Chase National Park. It's a 50-minute drive from Kingscote Airport and a 90-minute drive from the ferry terminal. Driving up the long private road to the lodge, there is an air of arriving somewhere special. Imposing doors open into the Great Room, where the magnificent rugged seascape is revealed larger-than-life, appearing almost as if painted on glass that extends along the entire length of the building. Glass continues across multiple levels to the adjoining bar and restaurant as the building gently follows the topography of the site, true to the Baillies' guiding eco-philosophy. Its suites also sit low on the cliff in perfect alignment with the gentle slope of the land. Southern Ocean Lodge was designed to blend within, rather than stand upon its surroundings. Even the effect on the view was carefully considered by its Kangaroo Island architect, Max Pritchard.

The 21 guest suites are a pleasure for the senses, from the heated floors and beach-style neutral colour scheme to the multi-level spaciousness of the living area. The coastal soundscape is soothing – when the floor-to-ceiling glass doors are thrown open the room fills with the pounding of the ocean hitting the rocks below and the calls of seabirds. Sheltered by low coastal bush that provides the ideal habitat for kangaroos, tamar wallabies and echidnas, the suites' balconies make the perfect vantage for watch dolphins surf in the long Southern Ocean swells.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The spa has stunning views across Hanson Bay; the guest suites follow the coastal topography; bathrooms enjoy ocean views in complete privacy.



Southern Ocean Lodge offers a refined epicurean experience that showcases the best in Kangaroo Island produce. “Cuisine is a major part of what makes Southern Ocean Lodge special,” says lodge manager Alison Heath. “Our chefs source more than 75 percent of ingredients locally, and we’re lucky to have wonderful relationships with producers providing the best organic lamb, marron, sheep cheese and some of the world’s finest seafood. It’s all right here on Kangaroo Island.”

But the availability of the freshest local ingredients is not the only factor influencing the ever-changing menu. Chefs also respond to guests’ preferences, designing personal menus to suit individual tastes.

If relaxing is not enough, guests can engage in a range of experiences that take in the island’s natural beauty. Experienced guides offer customised interpretative tours and adventures to suit all interests. A popular option to start with is the Guided Cliff Top Walk that takes about 90 minutes and follows a coastal track from the lodge to a rocky lookout, where an osprey nest can be observed from a comfortable distance. For those wanting something a little more challenging, there are self-guided hikes of between 7km and 13km through terrain that varies from beach to cliffs to bush to grassland.

Only a few kilometres from the lodge is Grassdale Cottage, which is set in a large open field surrounded by bush. This is the place to go in the late afternoon if you want to be assured of an encounter with the island’s namesake. The local breed of kangaroo is a subset of the eastern grey and has distinct characteristics developed over thousands of years of isolation from its mainland cousins. Shorter in stature, with small ears and a dark face, it makes up for its lack of height with its substantial weight. With no predators and ideal conditions, these kangaroos wander calmly through the field, giving guests plenty of photo opportunities before wine and canapés are served on the verandah of the

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A canapé of toasted rye and smoked salmon with horseradish; elderflower sorbet, pistachio sponge, lime and berries for dessert; the Great Room and restaurant in the morning light; a waterfront drinks location reached via timber walkways through the dunes.



SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE

LOCATION
 Southern Ocean Lodge is on Hanson Bay, 95km south-west of Kingscote, the main town on Kangaroo Island. The island is 110km south-west of Adelaide.

GETTING THERE
 REX Airlines flies daily to Kingscote Airport from Adelaide (15kg baggage limit). SeaLink vehicle and passenger ferries operate daily services between Cape Jervis, on the mainland, and Penneshaw.

WHAT'S INCLUDED
 Accommodation, meals, open bar, in-suite bar, selected guided Kangaroo Island experiences and airport transfers.

WHAT TO BRING
 Sunscreen, hat and comfortable clothing, walking shoes, binoculars, camera, smart casual clothes for dinner.

WHEN TO COME
 Kangaroo Island experiences a Mediterranean climate, with warm summers and cool winters. The lodge is open year-round and the wildlife is always active.

CONTACT
 Southern Ocean Lodge
 Hanson Bay, Kangaroo Island
 South Australia 5223
 Phone: 61 2 9918 4355
 Email: reserve@baillielodges.com.au
www.southernoceanlodge.com.au

The Tailor
 33 Queen Street, Thebarton
 South Australia 5031
 Phone: 61 8 8354 4405
 Email: info@thetailor.com
www.thetailor.com

homestead. For those wanting to earn their dinner, the coastal hike to Grassdale is a comfortable two-hour walk. It offers a cross-section of natural features, including rock shelves along the ocean edge, pristine coves, freshwater lagoons and native bushland trails.

Southern Ocean Lodge partners with the island tour operator Exceptional Kangaroo Island to provide private driving tours to locations right across the island. Half-day tours typically take in the spectacular landscapes and biodiversity of Flinders Chase National Park, exploring Remarkable Rocks and Admirals Arch, or to Seal Bay and the site of the third-largest colony of the endangered Australian sea lion. Like everything else at Southern Ocean Lodge, the experiences are customised to suit the interests of the guest.

In keeping with the relaxed and indulgent nature of the lodge, Southern Ocean Lodge Spa offers a distinctly Australian interpretation of the traditional spa experience. Located in a separate building, a small sand dune away from the main lodge, its treatments boast the Australian Li'tya Botanicals, starting with a smoking ceremony that pays homage to the Indigenous tradition of cleansing and welcoming. The commanding view from the spa only adds to this exquisite experience.

Spending time at Southern Ocean Lodge engages the senses and leaves guests feeling inspired, calm and energised. Perhaps it's the highly oxygenated air coming from the waves below, or the personalised service – all the staff know the guests' names. Whatever the special ingredient, there's no doubt that what started as a vision for showing off the best that Kangaroo Island has to offer has become one of the finest lodge experiences in the world.

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: A dingy and rope river crossing; the lodge blends into its surroundings; Grassdale, where guests can get close to kangaroos in the evening; beach fishing in the Southern Ocean; coastal cliffs are home to the white-bellied sea eagle.