

Southern comfort:
freshly-caught sardines.



Box seat: Southern Ocean
vistas on KI.

SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE KANGAROO ISLAND

Located just 13 km off the South Australian coast and within easy reach by either plane or ferry, Kangaroo Island is a stunning wilderness famed for its abundance of native wildlife and breathtaking scenery.

In the midst of all the natural beauty is Southern Ocean Lodge, an eco-temple comprising 21 luxury suites cantilevered along a cliff top where the views are cinematic. In fact, 15 percent of guests adore the ocean panorama so much – along with the all-inclusive food and wine – that they return for another stay.

It's easy to see why. Daily-inspired menus focus on local seasonal specialties – oysters, saffron, ducks, geese, South Australian cheeses and the lodge's signature dish: local marron with an oyster, wakame (seaweed) powder and herb mayonnaise.

Along with the addictive marron, Kangaroo Island – known as KI to locals – is home to many small-scale sustainable producers, so you'll find free-range eggs and lamb, aquaculture-farmed barramundi, organic honey from the world's last pure strain of Ligurian bees and edible 'weeds',

such as samphire and wood sorrel. With the rise of sustainable food tourism, KI is now capturing the attention of chefs and home cooks.

One approach embracing this discovery is the annual six-night Food Safari presented by the lodge, which in 2011 was hosted by *The Cook and the Chef* TV series presenters, Maggie Beer and Simon Bryant. On the safari, guests dine outdoors, learn the story of the production behind the produce, find out what to look for when buying at a local store, supermarket or farmers' market

and taste delicacies, such as abalone destined for export markets.

Summer offers white sand beaches, turquoise waters and plentiful local seafood; winter invites the prospect of a glass of vintage red fireside while watching the windswept Southern Ocean beyond; and spring is the time for blooming wildflowers and new wildlife, so guests are likely to see kangaroo and wallaby joeys, koalas and echidnas.

southernoceanlodge.com.au



Island time:
knockout
World Heritage
views.

PINETREES LODGE LORD HOWE ISLAND

As there's no mobile phone coverage on World Heritage Listed Lord Howe Island, high-profile guests can truly escape their schedules by flying two hours from Sydney. Regulars include Hollywood actors, TV personalities, government ministers, ex-premiers, CEOs, sports stars and community leaders, and during peak season, there can be a dozen guests at any time with AO, QC or SC after their name.

The 11 km-long island is restricted to a maximum of 400 visitors at any time and some 85 guests (with an average stay of seven days) can be accommodated at Pinetrees Lodge, run by the sixth generation of the one family.

Pinetrees is all inclusive and chefs make everything from scratch – stocks, curry pastes, bread, pastries, desserts – but in this case, full board isn't about an assortment of heavy retro meals. Rather, think mushroom

soup with truffle foam, or saffron broth with poached king prawns, fennel and salmon roe. Classic French or Italian dishes are interspersed with lighter options, such as sushi, kingfish tataki or a Vietnamese pho with herbs plucked fresh from the organic garden.

What everyone raves about, however, is the 'fish fry' dinner, served for more than 70 years and a Lord Howe tradition. Today, the 'fish fry' has evolved into a five-course indulgence. It starts with a light miso with poached salmon and is followed by a sushi and sashimi platter of local yellowfin tuna, kingfish, wahoo and trevally, then crisp beer-battered kingfish and chips with salads. And to round things off, there's a 10-dish dessert buffet and a platter of Australian cheeses.

Then there's Pinetree's al fresco lunch, also marketed in a novel way. It's a local pandanus basket packed with gourmet barbecue offerings, such as kingfish, lamb chops, fresh salad, homemade

bread and good cheese that can be delivered to the island's wood fire barbecue spots.

Other food marketing initiatives include the provision of an earlier daily dinner for children so that parents can enjoy a romantic meal later on, 'regional dinners' such as red duck curry, paella or yoghurt-marinated kingfish, and 'wine match' dinners. Masterclasses from high-profile chefs are also slated for autumn, winter and spring in 2012.

In summer, the demographic tends to be mainly Sydney and Melbourne families looking for a quintessential family beach holiday without the need to shop, cook or clean, while in quieter seasons, prices drop and guests come from everywhere, mostly to snorkel, dive, surf, walk and explore the island. International guests make up 5 percent, with most being honeymooners and nature lovers from the US, Europe and Japan.

pinetrees.com.au