**Watch the sunset from Pinetrees’ waterfront boatshed and deck.**

**Devour raw (as sashimi) or seared.**

**Top 3 animals to spy**

1. **Woodhens** - A bird unique to Lord Howe Island (actually an attached rock) to see thousands of these migratory birds between March and November. If you let out a primal call, they’ll swoop down and encircle you. It may only be a two-hour flight from Sydney, but World Heritage-listed Lord Howe Island is like some mythical place from days gone by. Doors remain unlocked. Bicycles are the preferred mode of transport and there’s no mobile phone coverage. It was just a generation ago that the only way to convey messages with the mainland was via a three-word telegram. But who needs to communicate with the outside world when you have an ancient blue lagoon teeming with more than 500 species of fish, the world’s southernmost coral reef, Kentia palm-lined avenues and the spectacular twin peaks, Mt Lidgbird and Mt Gower. Ten minutes after arriving and already the slower pace has begun. We’re driving at the legal speed limit of 25km/h in one of the island’s only vehicles with our host from Pinetrees Lodge, Luke Hanson, who lets us in on a few island rules. As we drive along we notice Luke waves to every person we pass. It’s tradition here in a community of just 350 – and Luke says you know you’re in the bad books with someone when they don’t wave back! The folks at Pinetrees – including Luke’s wife and sixth generation Lord Howe Islander Dani Rourke – like to watch the ‘boardroom to barbecue’ transformation. Luke says at first guests are seeking out internet connections, but by sundown they’re barefoot, carefree and planning the next day’s activities.

2. **Kingfish** - They are ubiquitous here and rather large, snapping at your ankles at Neds Beach. They are delicious to devour (as sashimi) or seared. At sunset we head to the Pinetrees boathouse by the lagoon and, over a glass of wine, watch as the avairy in the sky – there are 200 species of birds here – makes way for a ceiling of stars. Nothing could be more beautiful...that is, until dinner is served! With family members Rachael and Jim McDaiden, Dani and Luke fare, including the renowned kingfish and organic veggies. Every meal is included in the stay, but you don’t need to hang around the resort all day – they can deliver a picnic to a beach or a barbecue hamper so you can try your own fish at one of the barbies (all freshly stacked with firewood) that dot the 11km-long, 2km-wide island.

3. **Kingfish** - Known as Lord Howe’s Everest, the climb is 875m high and can be gruelling at times. It’s an eight-hour round trip so you’ll need a guide and to be fit – but it’s worth it for the views. After a couple of days of taking some of the many hikes on the island, we head to Neds Beach, where there’s a dispenser of fish pellets for feeding the hungry wrasse, mullie and kingfish. Instantly we are surrounded by a feeding frenzy – which also gave us a ticklish foot massage! A storm approaches and it looks like our flight out might be cancelled – and we secretly hope it is as we’ve heard the Monday night fish fry at Pinetrees is the highlight of the week! But alas, we will be flying home. The emboiderer on the plane was right: Lord Howe is different – even the airport has a white picket fence.