The
100
GREATEST
holidays
OF AUSTRALIA

Welcome to a very, very special edition of *Australian Traveller*.

What you’re about to read is the culmination of a body of work that goes far beyond any ‘normal’ article.

This project involved not only the most industry involvement and expert opinion to have ever been included in an *Australian Traveller* project – some 12,000 nominations alone were accepted at the outset of this project – but a list that is, quite possibly, the most comprehensive, unbiased, well-considered gazetting of Australian holidays to have ever been published by the media.

Big call, we know.

But we’ll let you make up your own mind...
And how did we do it, exactly?

Putting together a list like this is no mean feat.

* Firstly, we put out a call to almost 3000 contacts across the Australian travel industry, asking for their thoughts on the best travel holidays in the country via a 26-question survey, covering everything from food to festivals. Their responses took weeks to sort though.

* (Weeks.)

* Slogging through the nominations, we created a shortlist that allowed each destination to ‘put its best foot forward’. The best part of a Byron Bay experience was always going to include its beaches; a Ningaloo holiday was undeniably going to include swimming with its whale sharks. Where a destination offered more than one best ‘foot’ — for example, the Margaret River region’s beach holidays are pretty spesh, but so too is its food and wine trail — we included both. (Whichever came out first ‘won’ for that region.)

* Once we had a final shortlist (around 900 options) we asked 20 of Australia’s most well-travelled — whose fair faces you have just become acquainted with — to give every holiday a score between one and 10. To ensure fair and even representation across the board, each member of the panel was selected not only for their general knowledge on Australian travel, but also for their speciality areas across various states, territories and holiday categories. From there, it was time to get our hands dirty.

* Hundreds – quite literally – of hours later, this it is. The 100 greatest holidays Australia has to offer, right across the country, from the humble beachside weekend to the grandest wilderness journey. We hope you enjoy it.
Best-kept secrets of the Margaret River region

Kerry Heaney spills the beans...

- For absolute beach front views with breakfast, head to the laid back White Elephant Café, perched on the edge of Gracetown Beach. A great spot to check out the surf. [whiteelephantcafe.com.au](http://whiteelephantcafe.com.au)
- Relax under the grapevines or cozy up by the fire at Swings Taphouse & Kitchen and try the share plates of fresh, sustainable, local produce. [swings.com.au](http://swings.com.au)
- Fermoy Estate at Wilyabrup produces top quality, award-winning wines. The on-site Pukara Estate Tasting Room also offers tastings of the region's distinctive olive oils. [fermoy.com.au](http://fermoy.com.au)
- Don't miss sunset at Sugarloaf. Follow the narrow road down off Cape Naturaliste Road – it won't disappoint.

TAKE A FOODIE BREAK IN THE MARGARET RIVER REGION
WA, SCORE: 8.9

“Plenty of other wine regions claim to have it all,” says Daniel Scott, “but Margaret River really does.” Ah yes, Mr Scott, we agree. Gorgeous countryside, where vines are strung out between karri forests, and a raggy coastline of vanilla coloured beaches and ancient limestone caves rolls into turquoise sea; and some of the country’s best chefs, who throw together meals of sublime delicacy and freshness from locally-sourced produce. “It’s not good,” finishes Daniel, “it’s the best for a gourmet break.” Hear hear.

ESCAPE TO LORD HOWE ISLAND
NSW, SCORE: 8.89

In 2012, the youngest American to have ever visited every country in the world, Lee Abbamonte, was asked to write an article reflecting on the highlights of our planet. “I don’t know what paradise awaits in the next life,” he wrote, “but I do know that paradise on Earth is located on Lord Howe Island.” This tiny utopian speck is just two hours by plane from Sydney or Brisbane, but a world away from life as you know it – and we really mean that. Pristine beaches, perfect wilderness, amazing snorkelling and some of the nicest people on Earth are only the beginning.

While you're there...

There are two stays that really summarise LH:
- Capella Lodge which, at $700 per person per night is not cheap, but worth doing once in your life; and
- The delightfully old-school Pinetrees, which has been a family-run business since the mid-1800s – just think about that for a minute – and feels a lot like the home you never knew you had (from $410 per person a night).