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Sensational South Australia

KANGAROO ISLAND

Words by Carolyn Gerin



Since grade school geography class, Australia has fascinated me: the untrammled terrain with such disparate, dramatic climate conditions and wildlife (the emu, kangaroo, platypus, koala and anteater) made the forests of suburban Maryland seem positively humdrum in comparison.

Fast forward a few decades and I became a travel writer, covering wondrous West Australia. Flying over the vast, desolate, caramel-hued interior, I realized that Australia was so immense – the intrepid traveler might traverse it one territory at a time.

Where to begin? If you crave a myriad of travel experiences, locales, weather patterns, cuisine, scenery and architectural styles, start with South Australia – a perfect entre to this beautiful behemoth.

Departure Gate, Los Angeles

I live by the bon mot, 'It's not about the destination, it's about the journey.' Start your honeymoon joyfully and jetlag-free on Qantas International Business Class. The party's on the minute you enter:





Southern Ocean Lodge

a glass of bubbly, creative cuisine, Tasmanian wines, cotton pjs and comfy chair beds. They cater to glamorous gastronomists.

Touchdown, Adelaide

South Australia, 'a brilliant blend,' encompasses the best of city, country and coastal amenities starting with Adelaide, Clare and Barossa Valley, and Kangaroo Island. The destinations are close in proximity and wildly different, which adds texture and tone to your trip.

Adelaide is culturally vibrant and central to wine country, the Outback and the coast. With a dash of Victoriana charm and small town sensibility, it channels merry old England (many aristocratic British settled here) with iron filigreed porches and

Edwardian flourishes. Eclectic cafes and shops make it feel intimate and artsy for locals and tourists alike. Pop into a 1930's tiled pub, a ringer for an Edward Hopper painting, for a late afternoon pint. After a turn at the **South Australian Museum** for historical artifacts and Aboriginal art, enjoy hipster ambiance and farm-to-fork cuisine at **The Grace – The Establishment**.

Road trip to **Adelaide Hills** and the **Hahndorf Hill Winery**, offering an exquisite Chocovino Chocolate and wine tasting experience. For lunch, **Bridgewater Mill's** world famous chef, Le Tu Thai, creates a contemporary Australian menu paired with Petaluma wines (their sparkling wines and Chardonnay are standouts).

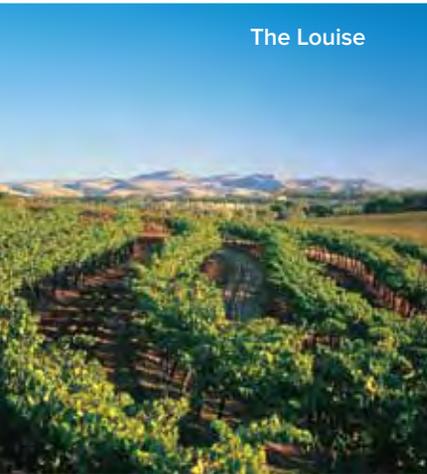
It's wine o'clock...and time for you to head out to the **Barossa**



Southern Ocean Lodge



Southern Ocean Lodge



The Louise



The Louise



Southern Ocean Lodge

Valley, aka valley of roses, home to exceptional wine, chefs and venues. Barossa Trike Tours offers a thrilling, chauffeured, motorbike ride through the region. Later, we're not just drinking wine, we're making it – at **Penfolds Winery** "Make Your Own Blend Experience." (I was told that my Cabernet was very close to their 2010 version!)

The Louise is the definition of lo-fi luxe in the heart of the Barossa Valley. Situated on the edge of a vineyard, the rolling hills surround you like a caress. Rooms are deeply sensual in plush earth tones – the cares of the day vanish over a glass of Shiraz on your private deck. Artisanal and astounding **Appellation** showcases world-renowned Chef Mark McNamara, champion of seasonal, regional ingredients (many from his garden). He brines, smokes, pickles, brews and leads the charge on ground-breaking directions in Australian food.

Explore **Jacobs Creek Retreat** for picturesque wine tasting in their stunning gardens. For a lunch straight out of "Barbettes," feast your eyes on **Skillogalee Restaurant**, vineyard and venue in **Clare Valley**. The George family runs this rustic, romantic venue under towering olive trees using locally grown ingredients and hand crafted wines. For a luxe country wedding, honeymoon or languorous lunch, you'll never forget this unforgettable fete.

Hop like a kangaroo...from Adelaide on a Rex regional plane to the wild and wonderful **Kangaroo Island**. The **Southern Ocean Lodge**, the island's first luxury venue, is perched on the earth's

edge where secluded cliffs and azure seas meet endless sky. Floor-to-ceiling windows blur the edge between fantasy and reality: you are plunged into the center of a luxurious, life-sized terrarium. If James Bond and his paramour were to marry, this mod-meets-magnificent confluence of design and communion with the elements would hit every note. Each private suite and deck overlooks an exquisite expanse of coastline. After a rousing hike or massage at the **Southern Spa** (an existential experience), repair to the open bar or plunge pool for local wines and snacks. Chef Tim Bourke and his team channel the 'produce-to-plate' approach – daily menus leverage luscious regional ingredients with perfect wine pairings.

Sleep deeply to lapping waves, wake up to a gourmet breakfast and tour natural wonders with Exceptional Kangaroo Island. Witness wild kangaroos, koalas and more at **Flinders Chase National Park**. Hike huge and strangely Henry Moore-esque natural granite sculptures at **Remarkable Rocks**.

Watch the ochre sun set over the cliffs from your private terrace and marvel in your good fortune: time is no longer fleeting, it expands, every experience is exquisite; each meal is memorable, all destinations are different, yet divine. *Welcome to your honeymoon, South Australia style...*

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Photos courtesy of: (top to bottom, left to right) Southern Ocean Lodge (1st, 2nd & 5th) and The Louise (3rd & 4th)

