

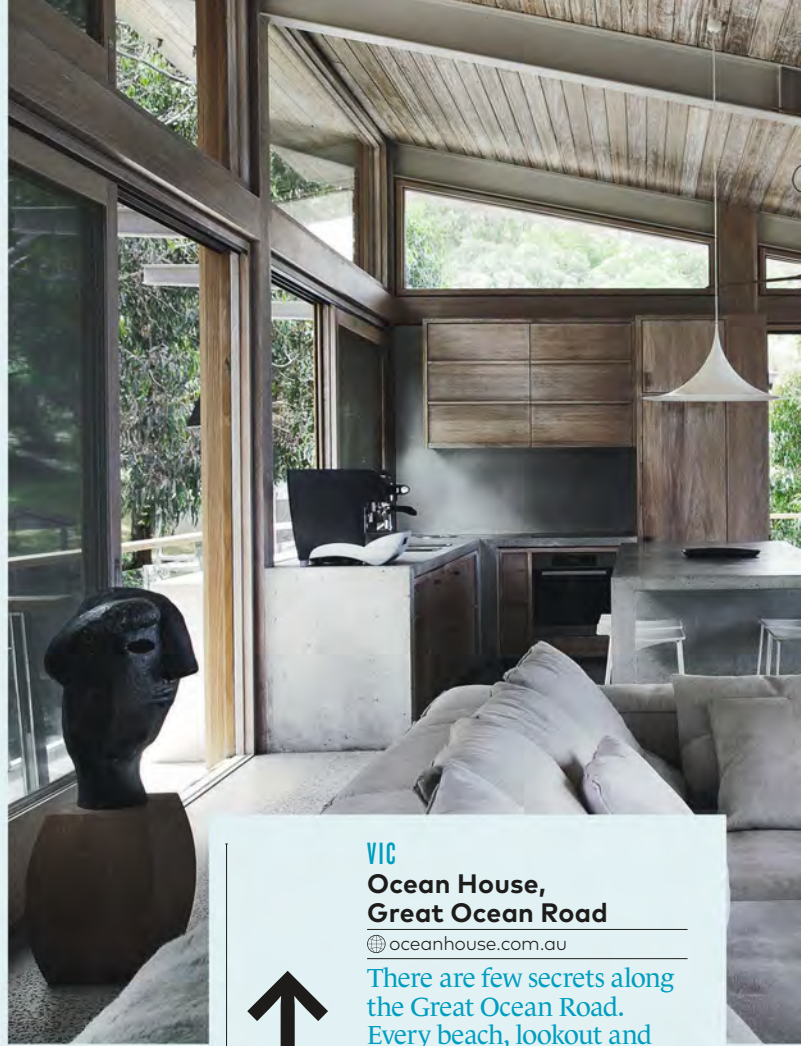
Get set

NSW
 ↓ **Spicers Sangoma
 Retreat,
 Blue Mountains**

🌐 spicersretreats.com

It's only an hour's drive from Sydney but this retreat – run by Spicers Group – feels like another world. It's surrounded by native bush, nestled on a hill with valley views and has just five suites. Our favourite? The African-themed Tent Suite with its Philippe Starck-designed two-person bathtub. There's also a heated pool on site – the ideal post-sunset spot to take in the surrounding cliffs' dramatic silhouette rising against the backdrop of a twilight-blue sky.

AKASH ARORA



VIC
 Ocean House,
 Great Ocean Road

🌐 oceanhouse.com.au

There are few secrets along the Great Ocean Road. Every beach, lookout and Apostle, it seems, has a busload of tourists hovering around it. But go off the main drag – sometimes as little as 100 metres – and it's full of surprises. A case in point? Ocean House, a beautifully designed timber-and-glass getaway with circular bedrooms and wraparound terraces. But nothing is as staggering here as the views – the boisterous blue ocean on one side, serene bush-clad hills on the other, with the winding Great Ocean Road splitting the two. Take it in from the outdoor bath on the house's rooftop area – your exclusive, tourist-free lookout. AA



QLD
 Nightfall
 Wilderness
 Camp,
 Lamington
 National Park

🌐 nightfall.com.au

There are but three bespoke luxury tents secluded deep in the rainforest in the shadow of Lamington National Park. Explore the wilderness or chill out in a hammock, surrounded by pristine waterfalls and rock pools. Sunset drinks magically appear, followed by enticing aromas from the wood-fired oven, heralding the arrival of delicious organic meals served under a sea of stars.

MORAG KOBEZ



Weekend escapes

Beat your retreat to these lesser-known stays.



Simon Kenny, Willem Rethmeier, Shannon McGrath, Kara Rosenlund



SA

A Barn in the Barossa, Kapunda

abarninthebarossa.com.au

Kapunda artist Jacqueline Coates has transformed this 19th-century coach house into a self-contained two-storey bed and breakfast with exposed-stone walls, pitched roofs, two oversized bedrooms and one sprawling garden. Coates calls this “the south of France in the Barossa” and, looking at the barn’s Provençal-inspired kitchen (flush with natural light and stocked with regional, seasonal goodies), we tend to agree.

Admire original artworks on the wall or – with a little help from Coates at her nearby Salon Rouge Gallery – make your own. AA

WA

Hidden Valley, Pickering Brook

hiddenvalleycoco.com.au

“We should do this more often” is one of the first things West Australians say when they get to the Perth Hills. The vistas. The wineries. That clean mountain air. There’s a lot to like about this easygoing part of the world, especially if you’re staying at Hidden Valley. While the on-site day spa and luxe trimmings fit the bill for style, eco-sensitive design and touches ensure these lodges want for nothing in substance.

MAX VEENHUYZEN

NT

Wildman Wilderness Lodge, Arnhem Land

wildmanwildernesslodge.com.au

Are you looking at wallabies through the window of your tent or are they gazing in at you? At Wildman Wilderness Lodge, it’s impossible to tell. Located two hours east of Darwin and a short drive to Kakadu National Park, this resort features 10 swank cabins and 15 luxury tents, all of them free-standing and with ensuites. Kick back and relax in a squatter’s chair with a book or join one of the lodge’s guided tours – an excellent way to explore the Mary River wetlands, a breeding ground for some of the NT’s most beautiful and diverse plants and animals. AA

ACT/NSW

↑ EcoCrackenback, Crackenback

ecocrackenback.com.au

Okay, technically it’s in NSW but EcoCrackenback’s proximity to Canberra makes it an ideal weekend getaway for those in the capital. Tucked off the Alpine Way between Jindabyne and Thredbo, it has family-friendly cabins with picture-perfect views from every window. Heated floors and ethanol fireplaces chase the chill, while activities include mountain biking, fishing, golf, tennis and sipping hearty Canberra reds on the balcony.

CHRIS SHEEDY



TAS

↑→ Satellite Island

satelliteisland.com.au

Just south of Hobart is this private island getaway that you will have to share with deer, sheep, pheasants and local wildlife. Relax in beautifully renovated summerhouse and boathouse accommodation, walk around the rock shelf circling the island, dangle your feet from the jetty or throw in a line. Bring supplies, order produce from Bruny Island (five minutes away by boat) or arrange for a chef to visit.

JO COOK

