



The cool rooms

Australia's top new hotel openings and refurbishments

CHRISTINE McCABE

SHERATON MELBOURNE

Housed within an eye-catching 31-storey "wavelinear" building looming over Little Collins Street, the newly opened Sheraton Melbourne has 174 guestrooms (including 11 suites), each featuring the group's trademark Sweet Sleeper sink-into bed and marble bathroom with natural light. There's an all-day-dining bistro and groovy terrace bar as well as a heated indoor lap pool, fitness centre and day spa featuring the products and treatments of cutting-edge Spanish brand Germaine de Capuccini. More: sheratonmelbourne.com.

ONE & ONLY HAYMAN ISLAND, QUEENSLAND

Reopening July 1 following a mammoth \$50 million refurbishment that has completely transformed our most iconic resort, Hayman has reduced its room inventory, introduced more suites and spruced up its famous lagoon



pool to become One & Only's first property in the Asia-Pacific region. Explore seven restaurants and bars, luxury day spa (complete with a celebrity mani-pedi studio) and private poolside cabanas. Almost half of the 160 rooms are configured as suites, villas or penthouses with some ground-floor options offering direct swim-out access to the pool. Early guests can take advantage of a 25 per cent discount (available until the end of July for travel to the end of September). More: oneandonlyresorts.com.

IKARA SAFARI CAMP, FLINDERS RANGES, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Wilpena Pound Resort has diversified its accommodation options, adding 15 upscale safari tents set among river red gums and whispering pines in the dramatic Flinders Ranges. Situated a little away from the resort's other facilities, it's a "glamping" compound, offering a close encounter with Mother Nature minus any hot-and-

dusty inconveniences. Each large tent is air-conditioned and features a king bed dressed in best-quality linen, mini bar, fully tiled en suite bathroom and a private timber deck, custom made for sundowner cocktails. The opening of the safari camp, together with the upgrade of the resort's Poddy Dodger's Bar, represent the first major upgrades to the property since it was purchased by Indigenous Business Australia in 2012. More: ikarasafaricamp.com.au.

HOTELHOTEL, CANBERRA

The foyer of this ultra-contemporary Canberra bolthole feels more like a hip university lounge than a five-star hotel. Hotel Hotel is as cosy as it is chic, encouraging guests to mingle easily at shared tables or prop their feet on a sofa by the fire. Going several steps further than your regular "art hotel", this intensely handcrafted project is a collaboration with about 60 artists and craftspeople who have worked on every element of the property, from designing water decanters fashioned from old beer bottles to devising room-key cards hewn from biodegradable maple. A vision of the Efkarpidis brothers Nectar and Johnathan, with set director Don Cameron scouring the globe for vintage fixtures, including 1950s chandeliers from an Italian railway station, the hotel forms part of the get-a-lifestyle NewActon cultural precinct overlooking Lake Burley Griffin. The 68-room hotel occupies the lower three levels of the Nishi Building; apartment digs are also available. More: hotel-hotel.com.au.

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LONGITUDE 131, NORTHERN TERRITORY

James and Hayley Baillie of Baillie Lodges have moved swiftly to rejuvenate this famous tented resort overlooking Uluru. A just-completed \$2m refreshment includes the addition of specially commissioned campaign-style furniture, signature Baillie Beds, staff uniforms by RM Williams and a new fleet of luxury Mercedes touring vehicles. All this comes ahead of a more significant refurbishment, including the addition of premium suites and a horizon pool, planned for next year under the direction of Max Pritchard, the architect behind the Baillies' acclaimed Southern Ocean Lodge on South Australia's Kangaroo Island. Meanwhile, new indigenous artworks, outdoor Eco Smart fire pits and dune-top dining at Table 131 bring a renewed sense of style to this popular outback property. More: longitude131.com.au.

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QT CANBERRA

Long a popular luncheon bolthole for Canberra polities and powerbrokers, the former Rydges Lakeside was recently relaunched following a style-savvy makeover at the hands of QT Hotels & Resorts. Like its quirky sister property in Sydney, the 205-room Canberra hotel combines theatrical flourishes with a nostalgic glamour, a design ethos that extends from the staff uniforms to a prohibition-style speakeasy, members' club and traditional barber's shop offering razor shaves. Each Nic Graham-designed guestroom features a balcony with city or lake views and the signature QT minibar with cocktail-making station and Nespresso machine. More: qtc Canberra.com.au.

MAYFAIR HOTEL, ADELAIDE

Occupying the handsome, gargoyle-daubed 1930s Colonial Mutual Life building on the corner of Adelaide's King William and Hindley streets, and featuring a new jewel-like southern wing by JPE Design Studio, the 170-



Clockwise from top left: Ikara Safari Camp; Mayfair Hotel; Longitude 131; Hotel Hotel; Sheraton Melbourne; Schaller Studio

room Mayfair is scheduled to open before Christmas. Guestrooms will feature luxury showers (with various adjustable spray patterns), smart televisions, media hub and gratis WiFi. The \$55m development will include a Parisian style cafe and signature restaurant under acclaimed local chef Bethany Finn (ex Urban Bistro) and a glamorous rooftop Hennessy Lounge with champagne terrace affording panoramic views towards the Adelaide Hills. More: watpac.com.au/project/mayfair-hotel/.

THE SCHALLER STUDIO, BENDIGO, VICTORIA

The progressive Art Series Hotel Group has shipped its hotel-as-gallery concept from the big smoke to regional areas, last month opening a 128-room hotel in Bendigo, 90 minutes from Melbourne. Featuring 240 original works by the Melbourne-based expressionist artist Mark Schaller, the boldly coloured "studio" hotel is equipped with all sorts of original, user-friendly features, including bikes and smart cars for hire and an art-daubed tram to trundle about town. Each guestroom is equipped with a

balcony, televisions with Foxtel and a dedicated art channel, coffee machine, mini bar stocked with local goodies and an original Schaller work. In-house art tours, a signature experience of this hospitality group, are also available. More: artserieshotels.com.au.

THE WATSON, ADELAIDE

Hot on the heels of Bendigo, the Art Series Hotel Group debuts in Adelaide in July with a hotel dedicated to the works of renowned indigenous artist Tommy Watson. Featuring more than 100 rooms and residences, the hotel is housed in a redeveloped Transport Department site located on the River Torrens in Walkerville, 10 minutes from the CBD. The complex will include a swimming pool designed by Olympic medallist Michael Klim. More: artserieshotels.com.au.

HYDRO MAJESTIC HOTEL, BLUE MOUNTAINS, NSW

Stretching for more than 1km across the Megalong Valley escarpment in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, this grand old dame, built at a time when trunks and trains ruled, not carry-on bags and planes, is slowly coming back to life. A mammoth renovation under interior designer Peter Reeve, aimed at peeling back the layers to reclaim the old gal's original beauty, is being undertaken in stages with 51 guestrooms together with the Casino Majestic Ballroom, Wintergarden, Cat's Alley and Delmonte Building scheduled to open in late spring. More: hydromajestic.com.au.

HOTEL INCHCOLM MALLERY COLLECTION, BRISBANE

Accor's MGallery collection of privately owned boutique hotels will acquire a new member this October when the Inchcolm relaunches; a soft opening is planned in time for the G20 summit. Each of the 50 guestrooms will differ slightly, dictated by the configuration of the heritage building but, according to an Accor spokesperson, the look will be old-world luxe with a spot of art deco opulence. More: mgallery.com.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OFF THE BEATEN PATH AND NO PATH AT ALL.

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