

# THE Daily Telegraph

## Naturally decadent

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Article from:

**Daily Telegraph**By **Jenny Stevens**

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**WHAT sets a great spa apart from the rest? A connection with nature, as *body+soul*'s intrepid investigators discovered.**

Southern Spa, Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island, South Australia

Southern Ocean Lodge snakes along the clifftop on the remote, south-west coast of a windswept, sparsely populated island. To the south there is nothing until Antarctica; to the east and west, national parks; to the north, farmland and 15 kilometres of water.

The air is as fresh as the Southern Ocean; walk along the coastal tracks and the aroma of eucalypt and wild brush joins the salty tang.

Ecological harmony was the blueprint for the lodge's design; this coast is a bird, sealion and fur seal refuge and is known for its tiny Tammar wallabies and koalas. Rainwater is harvested, grey water recycled and most wine and food sourced locally.

The lodge hugs the land for minimal impact, with 21 suites facing the sea. All feature sunken lounges, recessed verandahs, heated limestone floors, methylated spirit fires, king-size beds and enormous bathrooms with spas or deep tubs facing the view.

### The spa

The spa is a snug roundhouse overlooking the sea, with floor-to-ceiling glass walls and aromas of eucalypt, lavender and honey.

I'd already wallowed in a bath of Ligurian honey bath salts (the island has the world's last remaining pure stock of endangered Ligurian bees), so I opted for the Wild Lavender and Milk Wrap, one of three signature treatments. There are also face and body treatments using Li'Tya products, based on indigenous plants.

The silence is broken only by the crash of waves below the cliff, the cry of sea birds and the Aboriginal chanting on the sound system. The glass walls are startling at first, but you soon forget about modesty. Do the birds and the bees care?

Exfoliation is with a clay lavender scrub which is almost too coarse. But that is followed by a warm milk-and-lavender muslin wrap. Cocooned like a mummy, you are left to drift off, before being

roused to shower in rainwater in the glass-walled cubicle overlooking the clifftop.

A body and scalp massage with moisturising oils completes the treatment, leaving you to collapse on the deck and study those birds whose eyes have seen too much already. - Jenny Stevens

### **Getting there**

Air Regional Express from Adelaide to Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, or SeaLink ferry to nearby Penneshaw. The lodge includes luxury vehicle transfers in the rate.

### **Rates**

From \$900 per person per night, two-night minimum, inclusive of all meals, alcohol, fully stocked bar fridge, snacks in your suite and wildlife tours.

### **Bookings**

Call (02) 9918 4355 or visit <http://www.southernoceanlodge.com.au>

Waldheim Alpine Spa, Cradle Mountain Lodge, Tasmania

Snow-capped ancient mountains, fresh produce from some of the nation's most fertile soils, no mobile phone coverage and an abundance of the most pristine air and water. Where else could you be but Cradle Mountain, Tasmania?

The air is so pure, just one whiff will leave your pores singing. And to continue the pure and natural theme, lodges have no TVs or wi-fi access. Instead, pack your hiking boots and a couple of good books to read curled up in front of your very own fire, and perhaps finish with a decadent spa bath to the sound of running water and singing birds in the forest.

Overlooking the towering pines and alpine streams, the Waldheim Alpine Spa at Cradle Mountain Lodge uses products from the professional UK spa range, Elemis. If you book in for a spa suite, a complimentary pack of five of the brand's most deluxe body products is waiting in your cabin when you arrive.

Included in any spa treatment is a visit to The Sanctuary, which offers an unrivalled view of the streams cascading down the mountains.

There are no water restrictions in Tasmania – so the feeling that you are in one of the most fertile and lush places on the planet extends to the Waldheim Alpine Spa, probably one of the only spas still left in Australia where you can guiltlessly enjoy Vichy showers.

### **The spa**

When I visited, I was more interested in making the acquaintance of some ancient volcanic stones via the Elemis Stone Therapy Massage. After a tingly dry body brush, the therapist placed warmed stones on key energy points across my back, shoulders, palms and feet, then got to work on what I term my "writer's neck" with a combination of massage and aromatherapy oils.

Even without the massage, being warmed by the smooth surface of ancient rocks leaves you feeling connected to nature, rebalanced and refocused.

The Elemis Visible Brilliance Facial was my second reward to my fair, sunburned skin. Soothing micro-massage techniques, a number of exquisite-smelling masks (I admit, I lost track), followed by a hand, arm and scalp massage ensured I floated out in a glowing cocoon. And the best bit? It was only a short nature-filled walk back to my very own cabin in the woods. - Louisa Deasey

### **Getting there**

Devonport is the closest airport to Cradle Mountain, approximately 80 kilometres away. Daily transfers to and from Cradle Mountain are available when you book your accommodation at Cradle Mountain Lodge.

### **Rates**

Spa Cabins start from \$299 per person per night, which includes Highland breakfast, Elemis spa pack and transfers to the mountain. A casual visit to The Sanctuary at Waldheim Alpine Spa is \$25, and a comprehensive menu of the treatments is available on the website.

### **Bookings**

Waldheim Alpine Spa is open seven days a week from 10am to 7pm.  
Call 1300 134 044 or visit [www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au](http://www.cradlemountainlodge.com.au)

Deep Water Spa, Mantra Deep Blue, Warrnambool, Victoria

Mantra Deep Blue is located on the shores of Lady Bay, with the beach just a stone's throw away from the resort. The Deep Water Baths and Spa takes advantage of the natural mineral aquifer located hundreds of metres below the resort. In fact, the spa received a government grant towards the building of the property's geothermal hot water system.

Mantra Deep Blue has been designed to adhere to an environmental sustainability policy and uses geothermal water throughout the entire resort: for the bathhouse, treatment rooms, showers and even the heating.

The resort has a range of accommodation facilities, from basic hotel rooms to a two-bedroom penthouse suite. The restaurant serves modern Australian cuisine, including some excellent seafood (try the divine seafood platter for two) and a wide range of local, Australian and New Zealand wines, as well as a range of cocktails. The 12 Apostles are just an hour's drive away.

### **The spa**

Relaxation was my aim, so I opted for a package that included a soak in a natural geothermal pool, followed by an aromatherapy massage. After showering, I was led to one of the four private geothermal pool rooms for a dip. Steps led down to a deep pool with benches under the water. The room was candle-lit and felt almost womb-like. I relaxed in the warm water and felt my cares drift away.

Twenty blissful minutes later, my therapist knocked gently on the door to let me know it was time for the next part of the treatment: a back and leg massage using fragrant essential oils.

By the time my massage was over, I practically floated back to my room for an indulgent pre-dinner nap. - Nicola Conville

## Getting there

Mantra Deep Blue is located on the edge of Lady Bay and Stingray Bay in Warrnambool, Victoria. It's an easy two-hour drive from Avalon airport, or 264 kilometres from Melbourne.

## Rates

Rooms start from around \$165 per night for a Hotel Seascape room. Packages inclusive of spa treatments and dining are also available.

## Bookings

Call (03) 5559 2000 or visit [www.mantradeepblue.com.au](http://www.mantradeepblue.com.au)

Amala Spa, Gaia Retreat and Spa, Brooklet, NSW

I arrived at the hilltop retreat of Gaia and an air of tranquillity descended, as though I had stepped into a place designed for the sole purpose of stilling my body and racing mind. Heavenly staff glowing with rude health made me feel so welcome that it felt as though I had come home, instead of just left it.

The Acala Suite, the highest rooms in the resort, had a king-sized bed, sleek modern lounge room and my own outdoor spa, with sweeping views over the hills and ocean. Each day, guests are presented with a card with their daily program: 7am yoga, or meditation and tai chi classes, punctuated by visits to the Amala Spa (offering the most diverse spa menu in Australia).

The place's soul is the Samoan-style Long House, where guests relax under billowing silks and Buddha paintings, or on wide verandahs framed by picture-perfect views. Much of head chef Todd Cameron's creative food is from Gaia's organic vegie patch.

The Byron hinterland is known for its healing energy. Set on the highest point of the shire, Gaia is the ideal spot for renewal, with daybeds dotted around the property to take advantage of the views.

## The spa

There are more healers in Byron than anywhere else in Australia and Gaia has the best practitioners. Everyone I came across was passionate about their work. My favourite treatment was the Detox Package – a mix of Dead Sea salt with green tea and minerals, applied in the steam room.

I was then wrapped in a cocoon of a Deep Sea Marine Mineral body mask, before having a massage that left me feeling so relaxed I'm sure I floated out of the room because I don't remember walking. - Lollie Barr

## Getting there

The resort offers transfers from Coolangatta or Ballina airports.

## Rates

Prices start at \$1730 for three days, including a half-hour naturopathic consultation and 90-minute massage. The resort also has packages that include meals, yoga, tai chi, meditation, stretch class and airport transfers.

## Bookings

Call (02) 6687 1216 or visit <http://www.mantradeepblue.com.au>

Injidup Spa Retreat, Injidup, Western Australia

In the depths of winter, Margaret River conjures up a host of images that both scintillate the senses and soothe the soul. From the wild surf pounding the rugged coastline to the world-class wines and cuisine, the region seems to harbour an inherently therapeutic quality.

By blending that natural quality with a range of personally tailored treatments from around the globe, the Injidup Spa Retreat offers an unforgettable experience.

About five kilometres south of Yallingup and surrounded almost entirely by national park, the resort's 10 villas fuse Australian, oceanic and Mediterranean influences and all have breathtaking views.

Kitchen essentials are provided, but the resort also offers return transfers to the nearby Bathers Café and Restaurant at Smith's Beach Resort. Injidup's elevated position also makes it an ideal spot to observe the migration of the southern right and humpback whales.

Arriving late on a chilly June night, we were greeted with a hamper of local gourmet food and wine, a roaring fire and heated floor tiles. Daylight revealed a view of lush bushland tumbling down to the fringes of Injidup Beach.

## The spa

Injidup's main aim is to accommodate guests' individual needs, so spa consultants meet with clients to create a customised treatment. Our consultants Kate and Joel's easygoing charm put these two spa novices at ease.

I opted for a Remedial Massage, while my partner chose the Relax Massage and Enlivening Foot Treatment. They suggested a spa bath to prepare us for our treatments and moments later the Serenity bath oil was kick-starting the relaxation process.

This prepared us perfectly for our massages. Joel had an impressive ability to locate a number of long-neglected sports injuries, while Kate soon had my partner drifting off. The soothing background music and scents of jojoba, lavender and peppermint added to an overwhelming feeling of serenity that lingered long after our weekend had come to an end. - Gareth Morgan

## Getting there

Follow Caves Road south from Yallingup for approximately five kilometres. Turn right onto Wyadup Road, then left onto Cape Clairault Road. Injidup Spa is approximately 150 metres along on the right.

## Rates

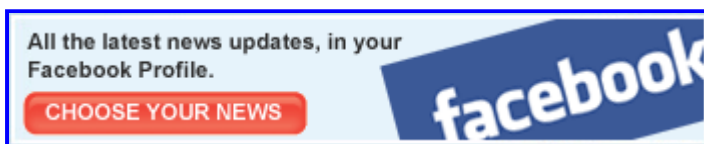
From \$550 per person for two midweek nights (includes breakfast hamper and one extra night free). Many other packages are available. Treatments range from \$140 for one hour to \$335 for two and a half hours.

### Bookings

Call (08) 9750 1300 or visit <http://www.mantradeepblue.com.au> or email [reservations@injidupsparetreat.com.au](mailto:reservations@injidupsparetreat.com.au)

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