



NATURE'S Gems REVEALED

UNEARTHING AUSTRALIA'S TREASURES

Within the collective rugged deserts, tropical seacoasts and lush, mountain forests, Australia's natural treasures abound. Whether it's a celebrated local truffle or the world's largest round South Sea pearl, many of the precious commodities cultivated within these unique terroirs are seldom seen, touched or tasted by travelers. The sublime fragrances of flora bear fruits of indulgence and mines brim with rare diamonds and gold ore. To make your visit a gleaming example of extravagance, we excavate a few of Australia's most luxurious trappings along with exciting suggestions for experiencing them in style.

HUNTING FOR TRUFFLES

Unearth a cache of culinary riches buried deep in the loamy soils of Manjimup, the Western Australian town where an internationally noted, gourmet mushroom reigns supreme. Coveted by chefs such as Thomas Keller and Alain Ducasse, the Manjimup Truffle is born from the spores of the illustrious French Périgord black truffle, *tuber melanosporum*. Pass sheep, emu and cattle grazing the verdant fields during your picturesque three-and-a-half hour drive south of Perth. Then experience the romance and excitement of participating in an authentic truffle hunt at The Truffle & Wine Company, the world's largest producer of Périgord black truffles. Follow the champion trained dogs helping you locate and procure the sumptuous morsels harvested during Australia's winter season. On the estate, the Cellar Door uncorks small-batch vintages of Truffle Hill wine, where you might join winemaker Mark Aitken for a privileged flight tasting. Each year, Manjimup celebrates its truffles with a three-day festival, the *Truffle Kerfuffle*. Meet food and wine celebrities from Australia and around the globe while partaking in everything from master classes and truffle hunts to enjoying long-table lunches and dinners. Additionally, many restaurants throughout the region feature truffle-themed menus, paying homage to this decadent tuber from the truffle risotto antipasto to your truffle-infused ice cream dessert.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Delight in the refreshing scent and vivid colors at Port Arthur Lavender; Pan for lustrous treasure along the Golden Mile outside the town of Kalgoorlie; An intriguing albino kangaroo frolics with her joey; Explore the cultivated pearl production process, from oyster seeding to pearl grading, at Willie Creek Pearl Farm. THIS PAGE: Sample whisky, gin and hard cider produced by award-winning distiller Sullivans Cove; Beauty and grandeur radiate from authentic South Sea pearls; Appreciate the taste of a rich truffle-topped steak; Marvel at the glittering beauty of pink diamonds from the Rio Tinto Argyle Diamond Mine.



OYSTERS & CHEESE

Celebrate the voluptuous delights secreted along the coast and on the grassy plains of Tasmania's Bruny Island. During a privileged tour at Get Shucked Oysters, oyster farmers describe how the pristine waters of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel bathe these bivalves until they become the succulent sweet Pacific oysters local epicureans praise. Take seafood to another level with degustation menus paired with sweeping views of Great Oyster Bay at your sleek and contemporary island base, Saffire Freycinet – awarded the World's Best Boutique Hotel of 2014. As a guest of the hotel, you're

exclusively invited to a complimentary Saffire Freycinet Marine Farm experience; slip on some waders to relish fresh oysters at a linen-clad table set in the waters of an estuary flanked by forests, farms and the Pelican Bay bird sanctuary. Or stay dry on the deck overlooking these waters instead, ordering a dozen fresh oysters sided by some Tasmanian Blue Mussels, served up on an icy tray.

Tasmania is famous for another refined delicacy bookending your dining experience: cheese. The isle's sea of sweet grasses uniquely flavor the cow and goat milks used in the hard and soft cheeses,

which you can see being made at Bruny Island Cheese Co. Relax under the shade of eucalyptus trees to enjoy a glass of local wine paired with wood-fired bread and the maker's entire cheese collection, including "1792," a cow's milk cheese matured on aromatic Huon Pine planks. At the restaurant Stillwater in the charming town of Launceston, you will also find Bruny Island Cheese Co.'s signature nutty cheese, "Tom," served alongside five other perfectly ripe cheeses, fermented green apple and local scallops.

CULTURED PEARLS

Of the finest pearls cultured on this planet, only one is revered for its grandeur: the South Sea pearl – among the largest and most coveted commercially harvested cultured pearls in the world. It's found in the warm, crystal waters off Broome, Western Australia's exotic pearling town, affectionately known as the "Pearl of the North." The discovery of these ocean jewels in the 1800s fuelled a mass migration to the area, with Japanese, Filipino and Malay pearl divers arriving in droves to seek their fortune. Cruise the azure waters at Willie Creek Pearl Farm just north of Broome to see the oyster panels where the silver lipped oyster, *Pinctada maxima*, turns an implanted irritant into a highly-prized gem or visit Australia's oldest operating pearl farm at Cygnet Bay and immerse yourself in the workings of an authentic pearl farm. Afterwards, indulge in the luxury of a pearl-meat degustation menu at Cygnet Bay Bistro and browse the showroom. Back in Broome, you can shop the strands of pearl showrooms in Chinatown. Your cultural immersion culminates in August when the town's annual Shinju Matsuri – Festival of the Pearl – celebrates Broome's interesting mélange of Japanese, Filipino and British influence and a unified love of the pearl.

FIELDS OF LAVENDER

Follow the Provence-like rows of purple fragrant buds reputed for their calming and de-stressing properties at Tasmania's newly opened 18-acre herb farm, Port Arthur Lavender. See how the pure essential oil from the 12 different types of organic lavender grown here is extracted, distilled and later imbued into candles, creamy soaps, lotions and organic body products. At the farm's onsite café, rest and refuel with lavender-infused confections, chocolate bars and artisanal ice creams including the crème de la crème, the Lavender Indulgence: three flavors of lavender ice cream topped with lavender-chocolate fudge sauce, handmade local nougat, Persian fairy floss and chocolate wafers, all magically sprinkled with "lavender dust." Lulled into a relaxed state, you are aptly prepared to learn the grim past enshrouding the famed Port Arthur Historic Site, a mere five-minute drive from the farm. Take a harbor cruise to the Dockyard, Point Puer Boys' Prison and the Isle of the

Dead cemetery to hear fascinating tales of prisoners and the paranormal annexed within the foreboding walls displayed throughout the open-air museum. Remain surprisingly unnerved, simply inhaling the heady scent of lavender fondly lingering in your memory.

PINK DIAMONDS

Tucked in the northwest corner of Western Australia, the Kimberley region is home to the Rio Tinto Argyle Diamond Mine – one of the world's largest producers of diamonds. Each year, the mine produces 20 million carats of diamonds (around 20 percent of the world's diamond supply) and around 90 percent of the world's rare pink diamonds. Board your chartered flight, the best entrée for visiting this underground block-cave mine. Fly over the breathtaking Bungle Bungle Ranges within the UNESCO World Heritage site of Purnululu National Park and soar over Lake Argyle, Australia's largest expanse of freshwater. Then touch down at the mine to learn firsthand how the sought-after pink stone ranges from pale blush to deep violet-red. Unlike most colored diamonds, the source of this jewel's ravishing color remains a mystery. At the mine, witness the various stages of diamond extraction and processing before viewing the company's collection. Even if you decide not to go to the source, you can still peruse bijoux embedded with Argyle accents at jewelry shops such as Kimberley Fine Diamonds in Kununurra.

SPIRIT SEDUCTION

The delectable world of peat, apples and wild botanicals converge as you delve into the distilleries and mills producing Tasmania's award-winning single malt whisky, gin and hard cider. At Sullivans Cove, seduce your palate with their smoky, amber elixir to appreciate why their French Oak Cask Single won "World's Best Single Malt Whisky" at the prestigious World Whisky Awards in London. Sip a glass of Sullivans from the bow of Tasmanian Yachting Adventures' 62-foot racing vessel, Helsing IV, as you sail down the Derwent River, taking in the views of Mt. Wellington and keeping a lookout for Bottlenose dolphins and seals. The Tasmanian Whisky Trail leads you on another path of discovery from the north coast's town of Burnie, through the central highlands to Hobart,

to meet the people behind the peat-bog creations such as Bill Lark of Lark Distillery. During a tasting at the distillery's Cellar Door, sample a few of the 100 different varieties of single-malt whisky uncorked here, including three receiving gold medals within the "Best World Whisky" category in the 2014 International Whisky Competition in Chicago. Taste how this handcrafted liquid gold is adventurously paired with a chef's dinner tasting at Nant Estate Restaurant, vaunting regional specialties like eel smelts, lamb plucks and venison. Even purchase your own 225-liter barrel from this esteemed estate, with a guaranteed buy-back after four years in the cask. If you're not a whisky aficionado, you can toast with other award-winning spirits made from Tasmania's pure glacial waters and natural local flavors, such as Lark Distillery's herb, juniper and peppercorn-infused gin or Red Sails' Champagne-like hard cider made from estate-grown apples, a must-try along the Tasmanian Cider Trail.

GOLD RUSH

Irishman Paddy Hannan first discovered gold just outside Western Australia's town of Kalgoorlie in 1893, sparking one of the biggest gold rushes in history. This stretch, now deemed "The Golden Mile," is reputed to be the richest square mile of gold-bearing earth in the world, and one of only four locations worldwide to have produced more than 50 million ounces of gold. Boldly punctuating this proverbial yellow brick road is the Super Pit, an open-cut mine large enough to bury Australia's iconic monolith, Uluru (Ayers Rock). Witness this mining operation in action from viewing platforms or catch a glimpse from above during a scenic flight. From this perspective you can fathom how more than 900,000 ounces of radiant gold have been excavated from this massive cavity, measuring nearly two miles in length, a mile across and quarter mile deep. Back in Kalgoorlie, a private guide will show you gleaming examples of mining history at the Western Australian Museum of Kalgoorlie Boulder, showcasing a miner cottage replica and the state's largest collection of gold bars and nuggets.

Please contact us or turn to page 64 for more information on Australia and for a selection of ULTIMATE EXPERIENCES.