

Puzzle of plenty: the extraordinary, angular d'Arenberg Cube



THE CENTURION 10

WHAT'S UP DOWN UNDER

The latest openings, happenings and noteworthy developments in Australia and New Zealand. By **Nigel Tisdall**

1 D'ARENBERG CUBE

An enigmatic 3D puzzle is arising amid the magnificent vineyards of McClaren Vale, a 45-minute drive south of Adelaide. Slated to open later this year, this is a dream project of local winemaker Chester Osborn that will stand five storeys tall and house a tasting room, bars and a restaurant overlooking a 105-year-old family estate renowned for its rich and noble red wines. With a twisted upper section, folding origami entrance and a fallen block in the car park, its whimsical design is reminiscent of a monochrome Rubik's Cube and deliberately mirrors the challenges and piecing together that lie behind the creation of exceptional wines – a playful touch that can also be found in the names of some of d'Arenberg's vintages, including The Swinging Malaysian, The Cenosilicaphobic Cat and Stephanie the Gnome with Rose Tinted Glasses. darenberg.com.au

PHOTO © D'ARENBERG



2 HELENA BAY

Russian billionaire Alexander Abramov spent five years creating an adults-only hideaway that has all the well-known charms of the New Zealand lodge but adds a rare plus-point: it's also on the beach. Opened last November and set in the Bay of Islands near Whangarei, the getaway takes just ten guests and features a banya-style spa and southern Italian cuisine from two-Michelin-starred Ristorante Don Alfonso 1890. The three-kilometre shoreline includes four private beaches with top-class diving available at the nearby Poor Knights Islands marine reserve. Get there in style aboard the lodge's powerful Augusta Westland helicopter, with the flight from Auckland International Airport taking less than 45 minutes. helenabay.com

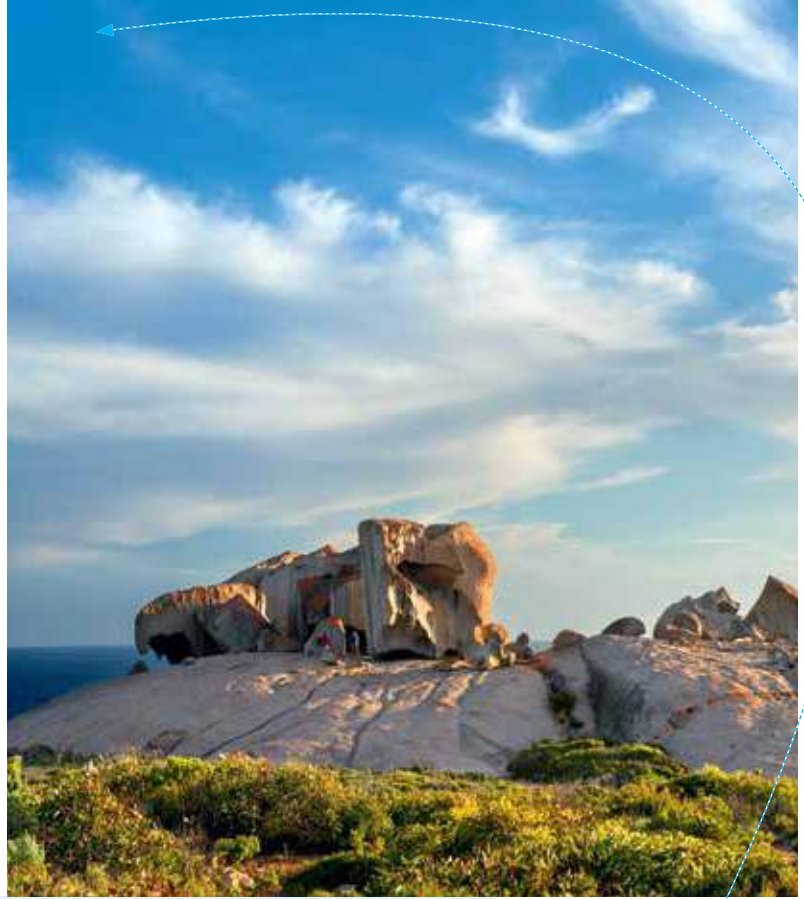
3 TOUCH OF SPICE

New Zealand has a wealth of opulent lodges, but if you're travelling with friends and family and prefer a large or exclusive place to stay the new Residence Collection of premium villas from this bespoke concierge service could be the answer. Its top-level portfolio features stunning properties created by award-winning architects and interior designers with Queenstown a particular strength. Guests can stay here at The Lodge at the Hills, sleeping 12, which has a contemporary sculpture park and access to the world-renowned Hills golf course. Or for something truly away from it all, Kauri Cove takes 14 guests and is set on a privately owned beach on Moturua Island in the Bay of Islands with access solely by boat or helicopter. touchofspice.co.nz

4 EICHARDT'S

Unveiled in December, the new two-bedroom penthouse created by this long-established Queenstown hotel comes with a splendid terrace featuring a hot tub and killer views over Lake Wakatipu. Guests also enjoy access by private lift, butler service, a dedicated chef, exclusive shopping opportunities and the use of their own Land Rover with driver. To complete the heavenly moment, a bespoke day out can be arranged featuring a helicopter flight to Cecil Peak, a gourmet barbecue on Ben Lomond mountain, a 4WD experience, fishing on Moke Lake, access to the world's highest par 3 golf hole, then a soak in a private mountaintop spa with Krug champagne. eichardts.com

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CHRIS MCLENNAN (2), MIZ WATANABE, JASON KELLY



5 MACQ 01

Opening 1 June on the waterfront in Hobart, Tasmania, this innovative storytelling hotel has been created by the owners of the acclaimed Henry Jones Art Hotel and luxe lodge Saffire Freycinet. Chiming with the current interest in immersive experiences, each of its 114 rooms will tell the story of a Tasmanian personality – such as the late-19th-century soprano Amy Sherwin – that typifies the quirky and resilient culture of Australia's largest island. Newly built on Macquarie Wharf and decorated with historical artefacts, the hotel features a restaurant inspired by the early industries of whaling, shipping, farming and mining, and will employ a full-time team of storytellers to reveal the dark secrets and triumphant tales of the past. macq01.com.au

6 KANGAROO ISLAND WILDERNESS TRAIL

A panoramic new hiking trail is drawing visitors to the fabled isle, 20km off the South Australia coast. Billed as the Galapagos of Australia on account of its abundant wildlife, which includes kangaroos, koalas, wallabies and sea lions, this large, tranquil island has long been popular with travellers looking to get close to nature. Now the 61km Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail, which opened last October and tracks the remote and rugged coastline of the Flinders Chase National Park, provides an exhilarating way to engage with the unspoiled landscapes in its southwest corner. The complete trek takes five days but local operators such as Exceptional Kangaroo Island can arrange shorter guided walks. The excellent clifftop retreat Southern Ocean Lodge enjoys a privileged position right on the trail with self-guided hikes available from the front door that take in the tremendous views and deserted white sand beaches. kangarooislandwildernesstrail.sa.gov.au

7 THE MARLBOROUGH LODGE

A charming new base for savouring the delights of New Zealand's noted wine region with its famous sauvignon blanc vineyards, this relaxed and elegant lodge is set in 6.5 hectares of private, park-like grounds. The heritage wooden building from 1901 was originally built as a convent and now has ten well-appointed suites, a heated outdoor pool, grass tennis courts and a restaurant serving seasonal dishes such as local Sounds trevally with beetroot, pomegranate and wasabi. Cooking classes are available, and don't miss the backroads bicycle ride to Cloudy Bay winery, less than five kilometres away. themarbloroughlodge.co.nz



8 ST MARYS RESIDENCE

A visit to New Zealand invariably means spending a night or more in Auckland, and you won't find a more sophisticated place to rest up than this intimate haven. Set in the St Marys Bay neighbourhood, the indulgent retreat includes a roof terrace with fine views over Waitemata Harbour and a pool with an exercise current (ideal for working off the jet lag). Service levels are akin to that found on superyachts, including a multiaward-winning private chef and curated city tours, while a single-party reservation policy ensures complete privacy for up to six guests. Breakfasts are formidable, including a signature dish of Mt Alpine glacial-stream salmon served with quail eggs, avocado, heirloom potatoes and caviar. stmarysresidence.co.nz

9 MAHANA VILLA

Pacific cool meets mid-century modern is the winning style at Glenn Schaeffer's dynamic ensemble of steel, glass and wood set on the 25ha Mahana organic vineyard near Nelson. Created by the American-born art collector and philanthropist, this dazzling property showcases one of the leading contemporary art collections in New Zealand with changing exhibitions and grounds filled with eye-catching sculptures and artworks, including Andrew Drummond's towering *Vertical Spinning Form* and Christine Boswijk's enigmatic *Totems for a Vineyard*. The all-inclusive accommodation includes a four-bedroom owner's house, two loft suites and a new spa suite, backed up with a contemporary restaurant and bespoke wine and art tours. mahanavilla.com

10 THE LANDING

An uplifting 400ha estate set at the tip of the Purerua Peninsula in the Bay of Islands, businessman Peter Cooper's passion project doesn't only create much-respected wines, including an award-winning chardonnay – it also offers exceptional places to stay. Larger parties will appreciate the Cooper Residence, set on top of a hill with five bedrooms and an industrial, timber-lined look, or the four-bedroom Gabriel Residence with high, airy rooms in unfinished hardwood and raw concrete. Guests can also check into the new three-bedroom Vineyard Villa (also for sale) and a waterside Boathouse, sleeping four. Private chefs, birdwatching tours, mountain biking and fishing trips can be arranged, and if you really like it here the owners have permission to build more villas, offering a unique chance to buy into the dream Kiwi lifestyle at one of the country's most scenic spots. thelandingnz.com

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: © ST MARYS RESIDENCE, NEIL SMITH, PATRICK REYNOLDS