



2 RICH PICKINGS, NSW

Guests at Four Seasons Hotel Sydney can taste outback life and take home a keepsake featuring Australia's national gemstone with the new Outback Opal Mine Adventure. After being whisked aboard a light business jet to Lightning Ridge, they meet some of the stars of TV show *Outback Opal Hunters* while touring underground mines and learning more about how opals are formed. Sydney-based jeweller Gary Coffey, of Giulians, accompanies guests and can help to select an opal and then use it to craft a piece of jewellery. "I've always had the philosophy that if a client doesn't love the piece, they don't own it," he says. Tours from \$28,000 for up to four people; opal purchase and jewellery design is additional.

fourseasons.com



3 UPS AND DOWNS, VICTORIA

At the heart of Australia's High Country, the Victorian Alps are a playground for snow lovers. For skiers and snowboarders who want to make the most of a day on the slopes, Alpine Helicopters enables guests to hop between resorts. A jaunt in a five-seat helicopter between Mount Hotham and Falls Creek, for instance, takes just eight minutes. (The Epic Australia Pass permits unlimited laps at Hotham, Falls Creek and Perisher.) Scenic flights of 12 to 45 minutes are also offered from Albury and Mount Beauty airports. From the air, guests can view spectacular and often inaccessible terrain and snowcapped peaks. Scenic flights from \$120 a person; one-way Hotham to Falls Creek heli-hops from \$285 a person (for two people).

alpinehelicopters.com.au

4 SNIP AND SIP, NORTHERN TERRITORY

The personalised craft-gin movement has reached a new high point with the launch of a heli-foraging experience by Darwin Distilling Co. Departing Darwin in the Top End in a Nautilus Aviation helicopter, guests pass over dramatic rivers, floodplains and escarpments before touching down at Finnis River Lodge, set within a 20,000ha working cattle station. From there, they set off in an ATV buggy or airboat to forage for native botanical ingredients such as quinine, tea tree, turkey bush, paperbark and waterlily. Back at the distillery, they blend a bespoke gin before tasting and toasting their efforts over lunch. "I wanted people to be able to really connect ... by being involved in every step of the process," says Rebecca Bullen, owner of Darwin Distilling Co. \$2499 a person (minimum two people).

darwindistillingco.com.au



1 CATCH OF THE DAY, WA

On Australia's west coast, aspiring anglers can sign up for a handful of heli-fishing experiences with a difference. Departing the small town of Carnarvon at the southern end of Ningaloo, guests climb aboard a Coral Coast Helicopter Services chopper and wing their way towards locations that are accessible only by air or sea. The Golden Cliffs Adventure, for instance, flies guests over the rugged Quobba coastline before touching down at the base of dramatic limestone cliffs that rise almost 200m. Here, at a secluded beach, they can swim, picnic, explore caves or cast a line. The Crayfish Adventure also visits a private beach, where guests can wade in shallow waters teeming with fish, sea urchins, octopus and wobbegongs. There's an abundance of Western Red Rock Lobsters here, and each guest can take two home. Golden Cliff Adventure from \$800 a person; Crayfish Adventure is \$1980 for up to three people, with spearfishing available for \$400.

coralcoasthelicopters.com.au

THE HIGH LIFE

Climb aboard a helicopter for these elevated adventures

DENISE CULLEN



5 ELEVATED ART, QLD

A helicopter ride from Cairns, Port Douglas or Mossman can transport guests back 20,000 years to a time when the region's Kuku Yalanji people painted ochre images on rock walls deep within what's known as Quinkan Country. UNESCO considers the collection of stencils, paintings and petroglyphs (engravings), near the township of Laura, to be among the world's most significant bodies of rock art. The "Magnificent Gallery" alone features more than 450 works. Indigenous-owned Jarramali Rock Art Tours has led 4WD and helicopter tours of these sandstone galleries since 2017. Guests fly over the reef, ancient rainforest and open savannah grasslands of founder Johnny Murison's traditional lands. "It's rugged, beautiful and breathtaking," he says. Morning tea and lunch are served in a rustic shack. From \$17,000 to \$22,000 for up to four people.

jarramalirockarttours.com.au