



Luxury boutique hotels are gaining favour around the world as travelers seek out properties that not only provide first class service and amenities, but also memorable experiences. Two of Australia's most prestigious boutique properties – the Henry Jones Art Hotel in Hobart and the Cape Lodge in Margaret River – are shining examples of how a reputation for unsurpassable quality and a commitment to providing a superior level of service are delivering handsome results.

The Henry Jones Art Hotel Hobart

The Henry Jones Art Hotel in Hobart is one of the most unique hotels in Australia if not the world. The first class property is an 'experience' in its own right aligning itself with the core values of the destination – and in Hobart that means history, art, fine cuisine and culture.

The Henry Jones is named after the man who built his fortune on jam; Henry Jones began IXL. The site for the Henry Jones Art Hotel is where Henry first had his factory along Hobart's waterfront. The Hotel is housed in a row of historic warehouses dating back to the 1820s. Designed by award-winning architects the Hotel successfully combines historical elements with the luxury of a first class contemporary establishment.

Matt Casey, General Manager says that from the moment a guest walks in the door their experience begins. All front line staff members are trained in the history of Hobart – training takes place every six months. They are given 30 pages of historical notes which they are expected to memorise and be able to recite with enthusiasm and knowledge turning them into mini tour guides. This extensive training is designed to give the hotel's guests

a unique experience and provide an insight into the rich history of Hobart – one which is more complex than its convict heritage may imply.

The Henry Jones training package also includes art appreciation. The hotel features over 300 works, predominantly by local artists, and there is an in-house art curator who takes the staff through training every six months. "We do a walk through, talk about the artists, their history, how they came to Tasmania, the mediums they use. We discuss the art in the same way you would in a gallery," explains Casey.

This comprehensive training is a catalyst for staff to engage with customers in conversation and introduce them to the historical aspects of Hobart and to the breadth of art featured in the hotel. It also demonstrates to the guest the level of commitment of the Henry Jones to ensuring their stay is an experience they will not forget.

Obviously not everyone is suited to this type of role and Casey says specific attention is given when recruiting to ensure that staff members have the right attitudes. "We employ people who are very personable, friendly and want to engage. Good people skills are essential. That is the most important aspect as our front line staff has more opportunity to engage with customers



than in other hotels.” Casey expands. “In other hotels front line staff are often concerned with administrative tasks. We have removed much of this to back of house so front line staff are able to, and expected to, focus on customer service and interaction.”

“We are focused on building relationships with guests, discovering what they want from their stay in Hobart and injecting humour and warmth into the service experience. Our front line people talk to guests about what cultural events and activities are available in Hobart and at the same time impart the core values of the destination. Staying at the Henry Jones you get an experience unlike any other” including a gallery tour conducted by the art curator every Friday to view the works which are strategically hung throughout the property.

Casey says the demographic for hotel visitors is as broad as those who visit the state. The Hotel does of course attract the luxury world-traveler and the well-heeled, as well as those who have perhaps saved up and chosen the Henry Jones as their annual holiday. The Henry Jones has become a destination in its own right and many come to stay at the Hotel rather than to visit Tasmania. Once they learn about the area though many do return for short breaks and there are frequent repeat visits from those residing in Victoria and NSW. In the winter, says Casey, they have an influx of visitors from Brisbane who are looking to experience a real winter and there are always international visitors predominantly from northern Europe and North America which comprises approximately 17 per cent of the hotel’s business - around 4 per cent higher than most properties. Whereas children are welcomed, they are not encouraged and the profile of visitors largely falls in the double income no kids arena.

The Henry Jones Art Hotel has become a destination in its own right.



The Hotel has a relatively even split between corporate and leisure guests and attracts its share of petite conferences where the organiser is looking for a unique and first class experience.

Whereas the Hotel won’t quote specific figures, they do run at consistently high occupancy rates and weekends are very popular, so you need to plan ahead.

A feature of the Hotel is the all-glass Atrium Courtyard where guests can enjoy cuisine from Henry’s Harbourside Restaurant – Tasmanian seafood is a specialty. There is also a formal dining room inside. The IXL Long Bar is a contemporary space that flows through to the foyer and also the wharf where guests are protected by canopies as they drink in the historical aspects of the location.

An elegant function room, The Jones & Co., caters for meetings, private dining, weddings and receptions for up to 150 guests and is billed as ‘Tasmania’s finest venue for special occasions demanding a sophisticated ambiance in a stylish setting’. It is also used for high-end corporate events.

One of the most impressive rooms is the Art Installation Suite a ‘stylish accommodation suite with its own private art gallery, which doubles as an intimate private dining, meeting or function room. Hung upon the walls of exposed natural stone and rustic brick are selected artworks from The Henry Jones collection. A long, modern balcony suspended outside the room overlooks The IXL Atrium.’

The accommodation rooms have stunning appointments – ‘natural timber furnishings, trapeze lighting, a king-size bed with exotic silk covers and ottomans, a LCD flat screen TV, DVD, and high speed internet connectivity. The bathrooms are something to behold too with the latest in European elliptical spa baths and fittings. Room service is available 24 hours.’

Once you have experienced the Henry Jones Art Hotel it becomes clear why this is one of the treasures of the Apple Isle and why guests return time and again to immerse themselves in the first class experience this property delivers.

The Henry Jones Art Hotel is a finalist in this year’s AHA National Awards for Best Boutique Accommodation.



The Cape Lodge has its own airstrip suitable for chartered flights and helicopters



The Cape Lodge Margaret River

A world away from Hobart is Western Australia's preeminent wine region Margaret River where positioned between the majestic natural landscapes of Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste is the five-star Cape Lodge private hotel.

The property which was once a six room B&B has recently undergone a multi-million dollar upgrade and now features 23 spa suites which provide the ultimate in luxury and privacy. All rooms have breathtaking views and are housed in six buildings strategically positioned amidst 40 acres of manicured parklands and gardens which feature a private lake system.

The original residence houses a guest lounge, bar, private dining rooms and a drawing room where guests can relax imbuing an ambience that is both opulent and accessible at the same time. There are also various meeting rooms. One of the newest additions to the property is the Vineyard Residence which is set exclusively on 3 acres and features a three bedroom residence and two bedroom guest-house.

Cape Lodge first opened in 1993 and its expansion is a direct result of the growing interest in the region and the demand for first class accommodation. In 1996 the Cape Lodge joined the prestigious list of Small Luxury Hotel's of the World and Select Hotels and Resorts. In 2006 the hotel was awarded Australia's Best Regional Hotel (HM Awards for Hotel and Accommodation Excellence) and this year was listed in Conde Nast Traveller's World's Best 100 Hotels and ranked number four in the world for its food.

The Cape Lodge wine label – Shiraz and Sauvignon Blanc – produced from its vineyard for exclusive use in the property's restaurant forms part of the 14000 bottle collection housed in the temperature controlled wine cellar. The wine list also features rare vintage wines from the region. Its lauded restaurant sits over the main lake, one of its features an alfresco dining deck which extends over the water's edge.

Its location, 3 hours south of Perth, isn't a hindrance to visitors who come from around the globe – 50 per cent of guests are international predominantly from SE Asia and the UK. The property's third largest international market is North America – second and third time visitors to Australia. If a three hour trip by car, even the luxury limousine

service the hotel provides, isn't your style the Cape Lodge has its own airstrip suitable for chartered flights and helicopters. There is also an airport at Busselton only thirty minutes drive away.

Seventy per cent of the property's business is a result of word of mouth – they do not advertise. Occupancy is high and like the Henry Jones in Hobart, customers are advised to book well in advance.