



27 Sep 2021
Author: Max Anderson
Article type: Publication
Page: 144
Australian Gourmet Traveller
Readership: 249244
AVE: \$70836
Circulation: 61181

This copy is licensed by Copyright Agency for the purposes of a Press Clipping Service. Any reuse of this article must be licensed: www.rightsportal.com.au

page 1 of 6





27 Sep 2021
Author: Max Anderson
Article type: Publication
Page: 145
Australian Gourmet Traveller
Readership: 249244
AVE: \$70836
Circulation: 61181

This copy is licensed by Copyright Agency for the purposes of a Press Clipping Service. Any reuse of this article must be licensed: www.rightsportal.com.au

page 2 of 6





27 Sep 2021
 Author: Max Anderson
 Article type: Publication
 Page: 146
 Australian Gourmet Traveller
 Readership: 249244
 AVE: \$70836
 Circulation: 61181

This copy is licensed by Copyright Agency for the purposes of a Press Clipping Service. Any reuse of this article must be licensed: www.rightsportal.com.au

page 3 of 6



Clockwise: Sequoia's
 artesian spring-fed hot
 pools; poolside treats;
 the calm communal area;
 Sequoia's leafy entrance;
 kingfish crudo at Hardy's
 Verandah Restaurant.





27 Sep 2021
Author: Max Anderson
Article type: Publication
Page: 147
Australian Gourmet Traveller
Readership: 249244
AVE: \$70836
Circulation: 61181

This copy is licensed by Copyright Agency for the purposes of a Press Clipping Service. Any reuse of this article must be licensed: www.rightsportal.com.au

page 4 of 6



Sequoia Lodge is waiting for a delivery of bettongs and potoroos. These might sound like obscure ingredients destined for a dégustation menu, but they're actually small kangaroo-like creatures once common in the Adelaide Hills. They'll be taking up residence in bushland below Sequoia's 14 luxury suites.

"They're supposed to be arriving from a local wildlife reserve," says host, Jessica Bibbo. "Trouble is, they've got to be trapped – and last night, the reserve only managed to catch two possums."

The marsupials have three days to give themselves up in time for the launch of Australia's newest luxury lodge. Bibbo, however, is not worried. For one thing, the fact that Sequoia is launching at all leaves the well-seasoned team truly thankful. And for another, even if the marsupials don't show, guests have plenty to look at.

Sequoia sits on the side of Mount Lofty Summit and enjoys one of Australia's greatest, if under-appreciated, views. Elevated on an escarpment at 727 metres, the lodge looks down into the Piccadilly Valley – a picnic blanket of century-old farms, vineyards and thick forests – and further out past the peaks of Lenswood where the Barossa begins. Magic strikes throughout the day: dawn mists thread like silver ribbons, cockatoos show like diamonds against the canopies, and when the sun retreats, Adelaide's food bowl slowly fills with apricot light.

For the record, I've travelled just 10 minutes from my home to stay here, indeed like all my fellow guests, I'm from Adelaide. At the lodge's reception, I'm greeted with Champagne by hosts in R.M. Williams attire. They hail

from Mexico, America, the UK, Colombia, Canada and Australia; alumni of top-tier retreats like Qualia, Saffire, The Savoy and the Fairmont Chateau. Perhaps because of the chaos of the last 18 months, it's a little moving to be greeted by an industry that won't lie down. But first, we need to talk history.

Sequoia sits in the grounds of Mount Lofty House, 15 minutes' drive from the Adelaide CBD. The imperious old 1852 mansion has been an Adelaide landmark for decades, destroyed in 1983 by the Ash Wednesday bushfires before being rebuilt as a hotel for weddings.

By early 2020 however, South Australian hotelier David Horbelt and business partner Malcolm Bean had got the old girl's stars to align. The fine diner, Hardy's Verandah Restaurant, had won three hats under chef Jin Choi. Young gun sommelier Liinaa Berry, fresh from curating one of the southern hemisphere's finest wine collections for Crafers Hotel, had travelled two kilometres up the road to do it all again for Mount Lofty. And the hotel's 29 rooms got a \$3-million makeover.

To cap it off, \$15 million had been spent building the luxe new suites. The team were ready to welcome international and interstate guests – but of course, like the potoroos and bettongs, they didn't arrive.

"Covid has been really horrible," says Horbelt, "but we stayed open and kept at it. And in a way it became a positive for us because locals needed somewhere to stay. Mount Lofty House has been here forever, but Adelaide people were suddenly rediscovering it as a high-end experience and reconnecting with the region."

Fortuitously, those locals suggested that the fresh suites would be better with their own communal area. Which brings us to the 2021 launch.

Sequoia's main lodge is a two-tiered space with a bar, lounge and dedicated kitchen and dining area. Immediately beneath the picture windows sits a heated pool, two thermal springs

(furiously being landscaped ahead of the launch) and a firepit so guests can admire constellations undimmed by city light. There's also a helipad.

Assistant manager Hannah McGregor pours the lodge's signature sparkling wine and gives a welcome around a generous table of spotted gum. She relates how people have been meeting on the slopes of Mount Lofty ever since the Kaurna and Peramangk people gathered atop "the creator giant" to make law. She shares stories of the settlers through to the winemakers of South Australia's four premier regions, all within 50km of here. And rather gamely, she invites guests to share their story, a gambit that closes the social distance. ►

The lodge looks down into the Piccadilly Valley – a picnic blanket of century-old farms, vineyards and thick forests.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIAN CEBLO (POOL), @NISHANKIRK (TABLE & DUY DASH (ENTRANCE & FOOD)).



27 Sep 2021
Author: Max Anderson
Article type: Publication
Page: 148
Australian Gourmet Traveller
Readership: 249244
AVE: \$70836
Circulation: 61181

This copy is licensed by Copyright Agency for the purposes of a Press Clipping Service. Any reuse of this article must be licensed: www.rightsportal.com.au

page 5 of 6





27 Sep 2021
 Author: Max Anderson
 Article type: Publication
 Page: 149
 Australian Gourmet Traveller
 Readership: 249244
 AVE: \$70836
 Circulation: 61181

This copy is licensed by Copyright Agency for the purposes of a Press Clipping Service. Any reuse of this article must be licensed: www.rightsportal.com.au

page 6 of 6



Clockwise from left: a sun deck at Sequoia Lodge; refined dining at nearby Penfolds Magill Estate; a tonal bedroom; and sleek bathroom in one of Sequoia Lodge's 14 suites. Opposite: an artesian spring-fed pool.



PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIAN CERO (POOL & BALCONY), JOHN MONTESI (FOOD) & AARON CITTI (BEDROOM & BATHROOM).



But of all the experiences, one leaves Sequoia truly a cut above. Hardy's Verandah Restaurant offers a paired seven-course dégustation. Chef Jin Choi and Berry bring you into the Adelaide Hills and then take you out into the world. A salad of charred beetroot (all earthy smokiness and acidity) is paired with – what else? – a cocktail of mezcal, maraschino liqueur and rhubarb bitters. The apple tones of a Yalumba 2018 Viognier work sweetly with a cube of roasted pork belly brined in coconut milk for 48 hours. A Hungarian Tokaji tangos with La Saracca, a raw milk cheese by Section28, the Hills producer that washes this alpine-style cheese for six months.

Before leaving Sequoia, I sit looking out from my suite and have the overwhelming feeling of being so very close to home and yet so very far away. I'm also caught up in feelings of privilege and safety and gratitude. And while looking into the serried ranges – strangely growing more enthralling the further they get – I find myself taking the long view. People will soon come from far horizons to gather again at Mount Lofty. And the bettongs and potoroos will be here to greet them. •

1 Mawson Dr, Crafers, SA, (08) 7912 8042, sequoiialodge.com.au