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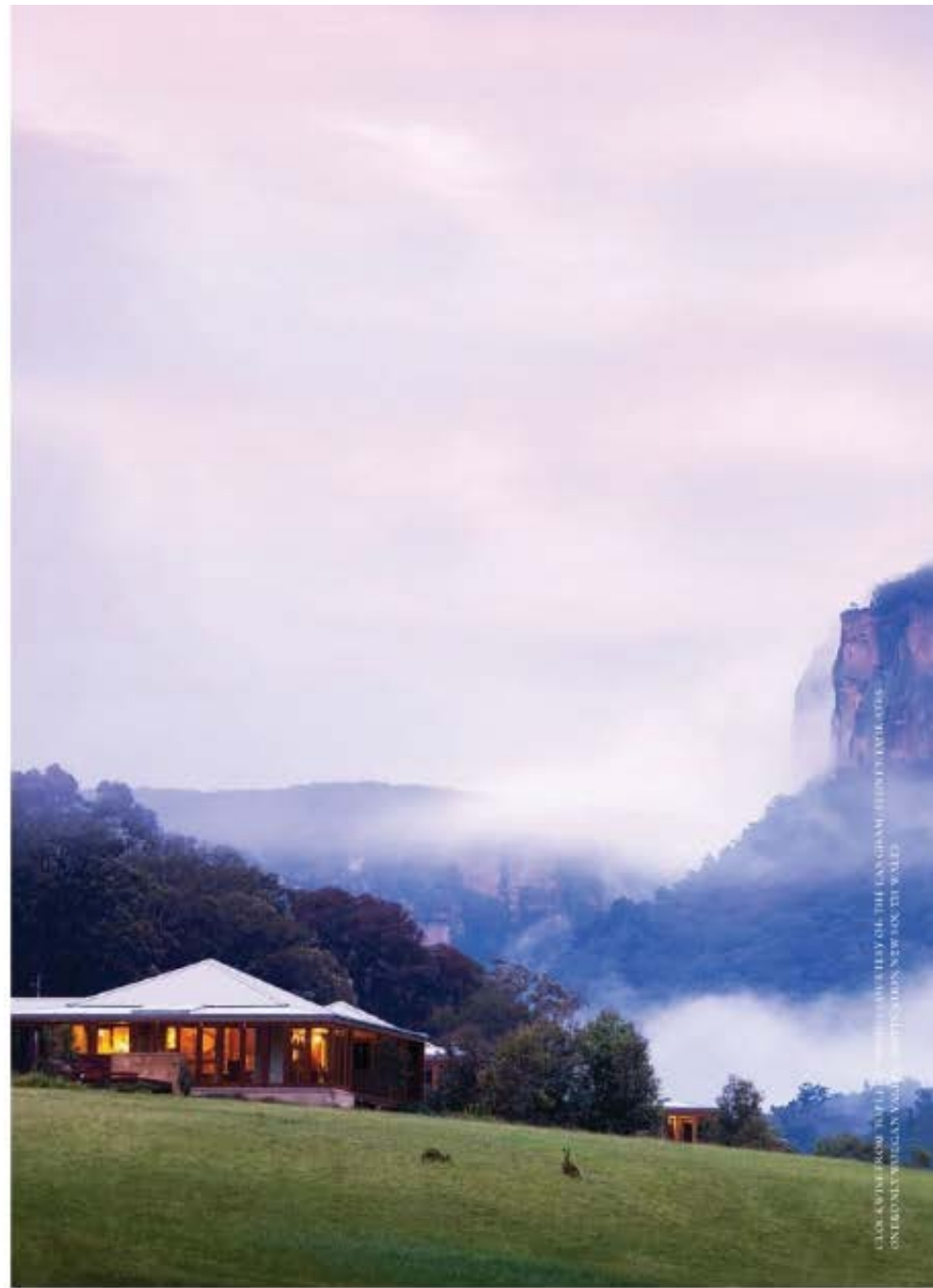
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Revive

Clockwise from near right: A deluxe double room with a harbor view at The Langham, Sydney affords stately, quiet comfort in one of the city's oldest, most historic neighborhoods; the Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley resort is in the Outback, with towering cliffs and kangaroos at every turn; the iconic Sydney Opera House,



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: THE LANGHAM, SYDNEY; THE EMIRATES ONE&ONLY WOLGAN VALLEY RESORT; THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

JET SET

SYBARITIC SYDNEY

Impressive landmarks, stunning landscapes and imaginative meals beckon in the land Down Under. BY CAROLYNE ZINKO

When we think of Australia, scenes of the Outback from *Crocodile Dundee* or *The Thorn Birds* come to mind. Even landing in Sydney, first impressions focus on the physical grandeur that envelops the city at every turn, including towering cliffs; dozens of inlets with hillside homes overlooking boat-filled marinas; and the rainbow lorikeets, sulphur-crested cockatoos and laughing kookaburras in neighborhood trees. But a closer look reveals Australia's unique style and sophistication—especially when it comes to a refined cuisine that makes you forget all about shrimps on the barbie.

On a recent visit, a friend and I check into The Langham, Sydney (\$418 to \$728 per night, langhamhotels.com) in The Rocks, a historic (and walkable) district. We ease into our surroundings with a knowledgeable guide from Splendour Tailored Tours (from \$860 per person, splendourtailoredtours.com.au) and see Wendy Whitdey's Secret Garden at Lavender Bay; Manly Beach; and breathtaking distant views of downtown's skyscrapers from North Head Sanctuary, a coastal national refuge. At the Parisian Bistro Rex (bistrorex.com.au) in Potts Point, we indulge in a quick glass of Perrier-Jouet and a dozen impeccably fresh oysters before returning to The Langham, Sydney for dinner and a nightcap at the hotel's cozy Observatory Bar.

The next day, we fly to Bert's Bar & Brasserie for a four-course lunch via Sydney Seaplanes (packages \$393 per person, seaplanes.com.au). Soaring over the Sydney Opera House and coastline is a thrill, as is eating delicate seafood (salmon and fennel pollen on brioche toast to start). We feel as though we've stepped





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: THE COUNTRY OF THE GREAT DIVIDE, SYDNEY'S COASTLINE; KEAT RESTAURANT; SYDNEY SEAPLANES; QUAY RESTAURANT; A PRIVATE VILLA AT EMIRATES ONE&ONLY RESORTS; WOLGAN VALLEY



Clockwise from top right:
The dining room at The Langham, Sydney's Kitchens on Keat restaurant; Sydney Seaplanes takes off for a daytrip to a restaurant along the coast; Quay restaurant's signature frozen dessert, Coral; the living room (with adjacent indoor pool and screened-in porch) in a private villa at Emirates One&Only resort in Wolgan Valley, west of Sydney.

back in time, sipping Australian sparkling wine amid the cream-hued, rattan-filled restaurant with a *Gatsby*-era vibe. The following afternoon, we hike near Bondi Beach and lunch at Icebergs Dining Room and Bar (idrb.com) with glorious ocean views. Our snapper with lemon, sorrel and olive oil, and a side of peas with biodynamic farro, celery, mint and salted ricotta, are light and refreshing. After a relaxing massage at The Langham, Sydney's spa, we head to the famed Quay restaurant (quay.com.au) for a six-course adventure in executive chef Peter Gilmore's Australian cuisine (\$165 per person, wine pairings from \$93 per person). Dishes include osetra caviar with smoked eel, walnuts and sea cucumber crackling; and smoked pig jowl with black-lipped abalone, shiitake mushroom and fan shell clams. Coral, a signature dessert, features white mango ice cream, coconut cream and white chocolate mousse that's topped with yet more white chocolate mousse frozen with nitrous oxide into a crispy coral-like mass.

While the city is full of surprises, you'd be remiss if you didn't take advantage of the elegant Emirates One&Only at Wolgan Valley (\$1,921 to \$7,927 per night, oneandonlyresorts.com) in the greater Blue Mountains. Its remote location among jagged sandstone cliffs ensures absolute quiet, while 40 spacious guest villas are ensconced in privacy. Horseback riding and Jeep-led nature tours (some with picnics) are available for viewing kangaroos and other wildlife. Hiking trails and the Wolgan Warrior 13-mile running route, stargazing, gourmet dining (food and nonalcoholic drinks are all-inclusive), and the best of Australia's wines and spirits (including local Wolgan gin) are all part of the allure. A spa offers massages and sound baths with gongs (a form of alternative healing we find very therapeutic).

Our Australian sojourn is like experiencing Yosemite and San Francisco at once, or an exciting London whirl with a relaxing wine weekend at the end. The verdict? Sydney is stunning, sybaritic and scintillating. ◊