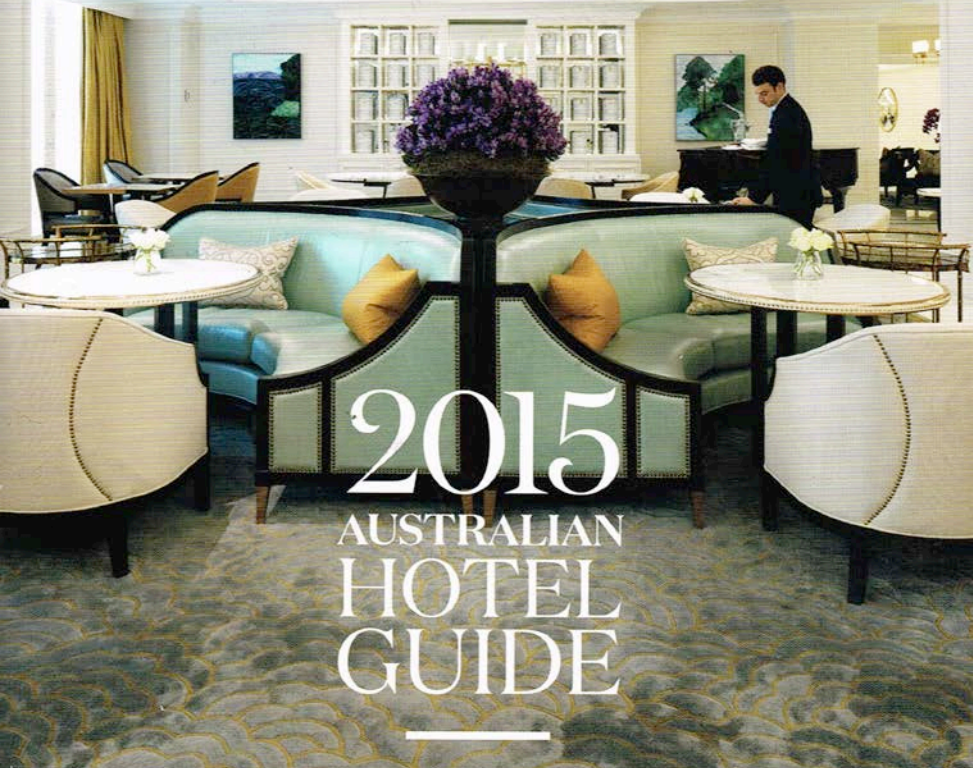


A U S T R A L I A N

GOURMET TRAVELLER

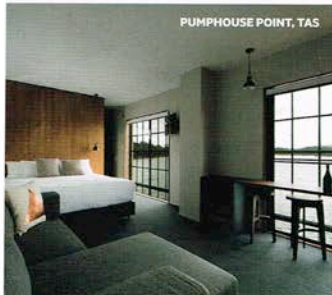


2015 AUSTRALIAN HOTEL GUIDE

IN PROUD ASSOCIATION WITH

NESPRESSO

THE AWARDS



Hotel of the Year

[THE LANGHAM SYDNEY, NSW](#)

When Sydney's former Observatory Hotel closed mid-2014, no one knew what to expect as its new owners took a \$30 million mallet to the 21-year-old interiors. Now we know. The Langham Sydney is a classic, as much for its beautiful interiors as for the breadth of its amenities (tennis and Pimms anyone?) and the suave assurance of its service. [langhamhotels.com](#)

New Hotel of the Year

[THE LANGHAM SYDNEY, NSW](#)

The sparkling new Langham Sydney is a precious gem of a hotel, remarkable for the imagination behind its transformation, the attentiveness of staff, the effortless poise of guest spaces. Easily the most impressive Australian debut of the past year. The Observatory is dead. Long live The Langham.

Large Hotel of the Year

[CROWN TOWERS, MELBOURNE, VIC](#)

As we sum it up in the pages of this guide, Crown Towers is "late-model capitalism in high gear, and the ride is smooth. Things run like they should, arrive when you'd hope and all meet the (highest) expectations". A triumph of the "more-is-more" philosophy. [crownmelbourne.com.au](#)

Boutique Hotel of the Year

[HOTEL HOTEL, CANBERRA, ACT](#)

When a vision as original as Hotel Hotel arrives, everyone takes notice. While some brilliant boutique hotels opened in the past year, none came close to the game-changing novelty of Hotel Hotel. It has transformed hospitality in the nation's capital and set a new benchmark for boutique hotels. [hotel-hotel.com.au](#)

Regional Hotel of the Year

[PUMPHOUSE POINT, TAS](#)

Pumphouse Point is our regional choice not because it is perfect in any way, but because it is a uniquely magical place to stay. This remote complex of hydroelectric buildings opened in January as a comfortable but pared-back 18-room hotel where the emphasis is on the environment – gorgeous, untamed, and bathed in ethereal light. [pumphousepoint.com.au](#)

Best Service

[PARK HYATT SYDNEY, NSW](#)

With a view this spectacular, a hotel might be tempted to rest on its harbourfront laurels. But not the Park Hyatt. From check-in

to room service to concierge, the service at this showpiece property is a study in cool sophistication. Nothing is too much trouble; impossible is not an option. [sydney.park.hyatt.com](#)

Best Breakfast

[GRAND HYATT MELBOURNE, VIC](#)

Breakfast is definitely the most important meal of the day at Melbourne's Grand Hyatt, less a cook-by-numbers morning smorgasbord than a bustling hawker kitchen. Every egg cooked to order, every juice squeezed fresh, with just-baked muffins and cakes, and ingredients sourced mainly within Victoria. [melbourne.grand.hyatt.com](#)

Best Pool

[SOUL SURFERS PARADISE, QLD](#)

Tough call, this one, but Soul triumphs with its trio of pools dedicated to guest pleasure. The sexily tiered 25-metre outdoor pool with sweeping Surfers views is a knockout, but there's also a 25-metre heated lap pool indoors and a wading one for little swimmers. [soulsurfersparadise.com.au](#)

Best Bar

[HOTEL HOTEL, CANBERRA, ACT](#)

At last, a hotel with a real bar. Not some throwback vision of what a hotel bar ought to be, but a destination drinking hole to lure guests and visitors alike. Monster Kitchen and Bar has a notable emphasis on regional wines, terrific cocktails and memorable food. The toast of the town.

Best Club Sandwich

[THE LANGHAM SYDNEY, NSW](#)

Of the 50 club sandwiches we road-tested, the standout was a classic with a gentle twist. Curried egg is teamed with leg ham and house-smoked chicken. Served between six white toast triangles with lettuce and cucumber, it came with a bowl of hand-cut chips and pot of aioli. A sure winner.

Best Minibar

[MONA PAVILIONS, HOBART, TAS](#)

Okay, so it's more maxi than mini but we wish more hotels offered liquor cabinets such as those at MONA Pavilions. Each in-room cellar features a 30-bottle selection ranging from local heroes to French legends Alphonse Mellot and Pol Roger. Extra marks for the Aesop toiletries and vagina-shaped soaps. [mona.net.au](#)

Innovation of the Year

[NEXT HOTEL BRISBANE, QLD](#)

We're torn between one hotel and two great ideas. At Next, we were mightily impressed by the 24/7 guest access to sleep pods, showers, pool, snacks, gym and business centre, even before check-in and after check-out. And we reckon its smart-phone-controlled rooms are the shape of things to come in the hotel world. At Next, the future is now. [nexthotels.com/brisbane](#)

A CREATIVE ROOM



HOTEL HOTEL

The Nishi building, with its eclectic façade of timber, glass and concrete, has become an instant landmark in this hip part of central Canberra – not least because it houses the very hip Hotel Hotel. The grand staircase of salvaged timber makes a striking entrance to this temple of sustainability, but the hotel doesn't wear its green credentials on a hairshirt sleeve. Instead you find a singular gathering of environmentally friendly yet elegant design, bespoke furnishings, artworks and *objets trouvés*, all fashioned by local artists and makers. Meals are served in the lobby bar at geometric dining tables, while banquette seating and sofa huddles suit the cocktail crowd. Streamlined rooms feature clay-rendered walls and contoured cabinetry, as well as tech-savvy touches such as iPads containing guest info, and super switches for lights and block-out blinds. The bathrooms with walk-in showers have heated floors – heaven – and the grey linen robes are possibly the finest we've seen. Each room has a unique mix of furniture, perhaps restored mid-century pieces, and original artworks. Did we mention the staff? Urbane and friendly as befits this most chic boutique hotel.

We love What don't we love? From the one-of-a-kind entranceway constructed of suspended planks of reclaimed timber to the unique artworks in public spaces and rooms, this place speaks of creativity and considered detail at every turn.

Thoughtful extras The umbrella and carry-bag in the room are welcome touches for travellers who pack light. Complimentary yoga on Saturday and Wednesday mornings also ticks the box. And free bikes make for a breezy trip to galleries via the lake.

Eating in Arguably Canberra's best eating is right here in the lobby. Sean McConnell's Monster Kitchen and Bar dishes out the good stuff from 6.30am to 1am. At breakfast, it's trout hash browns with fried eggs and herb salad or house-made crumpets with the hotel's own honey. At dinner, there's

mahi mahi with jamón serrano and sweetcorn, or have the extraordinary yabby jaffles sent to your room.

Stepping out You're at the epicentre of capital cool here in New Acton. Take a stroll through the precinct over the road, where you'll find cafés, bars and restaurants and A Baker, which neatly combines all three under one roof, as well as sculptures by local artists.

Drink up Minibars are streamlined but considered: Nick O'Leary's Canberra-district wines, The Apple Thief Pink Lady Cider, Oracle Cloudy Apple Juice, with Thomas Chipman organic chips, fancy nuts and A Baker coffee. Monster's cocktails include spirits such as Tasmania's 666 vodka and Margaret River's West Winds gin, in classics and "seasonal" creations such as the Noir Negroni made with cold-drip coffee and grapefruit.

NEW ACTON
NISHI,
25 EDINBURGH
AVE, CANBERRA
(02) 6287 6287
HOTEL-HOTEL.
COM.AU

WHERE
Canberra CBD.
COST
From \$285,
without breakfast.
IDEAL FOR
Urban explorers,
bar hoppers,
design junkies.
AT A GLANCE
68 rooms and
suites, adjoining
rooms; restaurant,
bar, gym, library,
paid parking.
IN ROOM
Free WiFi, iPad,
plunger coffee,
room service
(6.30am-1am),
pillow menu,
Aesop toiletries.
BEST BEDS
Meandering rooms
are the largest.
All have polished
concrete baths
and overlook the
internal atrium's
tree fern garden.

BATHROOM CHIC

