

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

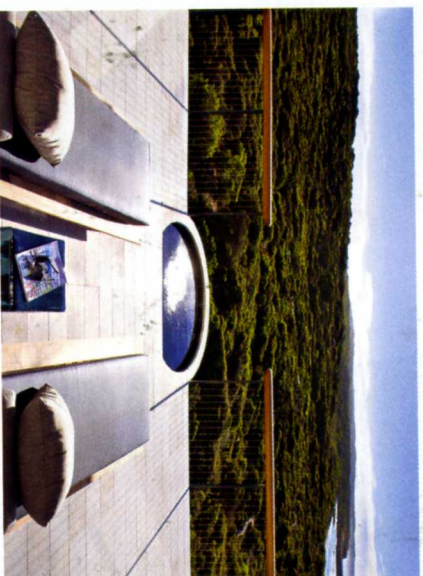
JUST IN TIME FOR TOURISM AUSTRALIA'S \$50 MILLION CAMPAIGN TO SELL THE COUNTRY ON THE BACK OF BAZ LUHRMANN'S FILM, A WHOLE NEW SPECIES OF EXPERIENTIAL LUXURY IS FINALLY EMERGING

It was the old tourism conundrum: why did this country lack the sort of upmarket travel accommodation characteristic of, say, Africa, with its luxury safari camps, or New Zealand, with its boutique design hotels and ultra-indulgent lodges?

It mattered more as international travellers grew richer, yet more jaded, and as the day loomed when backpacker tourism was no longer enough.

That moment is now upon us, according to Tourism Australia figures which show that while international visitor numbers were up only 2 per cent in 2007, spending increased by 13 per cent.

And, just in time, a collection of upmarket destinations has not only emerged, but reached critical mass. In September, Grant Hunt, former head of Voyages Hotels and Resorts and a board member of Tourism Australia, launched Anthology, the Travellers' Collection. Billed as "a compendium of travel experiences", it has taken over four destinations: Tasmania's Bay of Fires, Cradle Mountain Huts Walks and Quamby Estate, and South Australia's Wilpena Pound Resort, with plans to expand to 12



has also lodged plans to develop an eco lodge and 20 permanent eco tents on Hook Island's Back Beach in Queensland's Whitsundays.

That said, traditional luxury is also part of the mix. The extraordinary wealth creation of the past 10 years has

ABOVE: Uninterrupted views from the Osprey terrace and bathroom at Southern Ocean Lodge. Remoteness is key to

