

ANDREW HARPER'S Hideaway Report online

JANUARY 2012

Grand Awards 2012



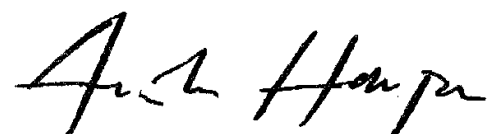
{ CANDID REVIEWS BY A WRITER WHO TRAVELS INCOGNITO AND ALWAYS PAYS HIS OWN WAY }

editor's letter

JANUARY 2012 — Each year, I have the pleasure of recalling my travel experiences over the previous 12 months and singling out a number of hotels and resorts for special recognition. To be considered for our annual Grand Awards, a property must be relatively small and possess a distinctive personality. It is also required to demonstrate a consistent devotion to personal service. I do not evaluate hotels by means of a checklist. Rather, I rely on 30 years of experience and my intangible summary impression. Some of our award winners are more lavish than others and provide a wider range of facilities. However, all offer the traveler comfort, warmth and charm, as well as a spirit of sincere hospitality.

In 2011, I was thrilled to find sophisticated hideaways in countries as unexpected as China, Panama and Ecuador. But it also was a good year for classic European destinations such as Rome, Corsica and the south of France. Although my primary purpose is to discover hideaways, I have also singled out the most distinguished Grand Hotel and Grand Resort that I encountered in the past 12 months. And in this issue, you will find a wide range of additional award categories, such as Best Cruise, Best Spa and Best Family-Friendly Resort.

At the end of each year, I am always amazed by the extent of the ground I have covered. But travel is an addiction, fortunately a benevolent one, and the conclusion of one year's globe-trotting merely fires me with excitement for the next.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Arch Hampen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A".

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2012 GRAND AWARD WINNERS



Southern Ocean Lodge
HIDEAWAY OF THE YEAR



Southern Ocean Lodge

KANGAROO ISLAND, AUSTRALIA



Kangaroo Island lies a 40-minute flight south of Adelaide. More than 90 miles long, but with just 4,300 inhabitants, it is a wild and magnificent place with an evocative landscape of rolling moors and sheep-dotted pastures.

Southern Ocean Lodge is perched high above wind- and sea-gouged cliffs that are scoured by breakers and punctuated by glorious white-sand beaches. After check-in, we relaxed in the spectacular Great Room, a huge pavilion with floor-to-ceiling windows, a wall of golden limestone and a suspended woodburning steel fireplace. The space is compartmentalized by the exquisite furniture of Adelaide-based, Malaysian-born designer Khai Liew. The 21 suites all have hypnotic views of the Southern Ocean, which extends as far as Antarctica. Our room came with a paved limestone entrance and floors made from recycled timber. In front of the window, an inviting sofa was strewn with canvas bolsters, kangaroo-print cushions and a soft wool throw. The bath was faced with toast-colored limestone, equipped with underfloor

heating and provided with locally made lavender-scented toiletries.

The resort's dining room has tables set in intimate niches in the limestone wall, as well as others by windows overlooking the sea. Given the constraints of a remote location, the food is excellent. Among the dishes we especially enjoyed were smoked abalone with soba noodles and shaved pickled ginger, and grilled local snapper in a lime and ginger sauce. The lodge has only a small plunge pool, as water is drawn from an underground well and has to be desalinated. Nonetheless, facilities include a spa with idyllic treatment rooms backdropped by the Southern Ocean.

On a memorable four-hour excursion to Flinders Chase National Park, we saw dozens of Australian sea lions and New Zealand fur seals, volcanic blowholes, historic lighthouses and numerous kangaroos, wallabies and koalas. Southern Ocean Lodge was unquestionably the highlight of our three-week trip to Australia.

SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE Flinders Suite, \$990 per person, including all meals, drinks, excursions and airport transfers; Remarkable Suite, \$1,500. Hanson Bay, Kangaroo Island. Tel. (61) 8-8559-7347. southernoceanlodge.com.au **BOOK ONLINE**



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