

# Media backgrounder

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## Capella Lodge

Capella Lodge is a luxe interpretation of the classic Australian beach house, spectacularly located beside the soaring mountains and clear waters of World Heritage-listed Lord Howe Island.

The founding property of the Baillie Lodges collection, it offers seclusion and understated luxury in one of world's most celebrated natural locations, a two-hour flight from the Australian mainland.

Unveiled by Baillie Lodges in 2004, Capella is among Australia's most exclusive retreats, combining a relaxed contemporary style with outstanding views, superb food and wine, and attentive first-name service.

Its light-filled and open architectural design makes the most of the ocean air and stunning panoramas, while custom furnishings and contemporary interior styling give the relaxed but sophisticated feel of a private coastal retreat.

From its position above Lovers Bay at the southern end of Lord Howe Island, Capella Lodge is dominated by its views of Mount Gower and Mount Lidgbird, the twin landmarks whose lush slopes and sheer cliffs rise hundreds of metres above the shore.

At their base, the world's most southerly coral reef encloses a sheltered lagoon of vivid colours and constantly changing shades, providing a mesmerising outlook.

Beautifully designed in glass and naturally weathered teak, the main pavilion is the heart of the lodge and home to its Capella Restaurant, Makambo Bar, Gower's Terrace and Kentia Lounge, each positioned to revel in the dramatic views.

Exclusive hand-printed fabrics and original works by artists including Bruce Goold have been teamed with custom furnishings and modern fittings to create Capella's own signature style.

Separated from the main pavilion by boardwalks and tropical gardens are Capella's nine superb suites, each with expansive decks, outdoor lounging and floor-to-ceiling glass to make the most of the view. Timber floors and marine ply joinery are combined with bespoke furniture to capture the essence of a modern beach house and create an informal sense of style.

Dining at Capella Lodge is a celebration of the pristine local environment, with fresh contemporary dishes and an emphasis on the superb seafood caught in surrounding waters. Herbs, edible flowers and

vegetables are grown organically on the island's fertile slopes, while exceptional meats and premium produce are sourced from artisan producers on the mainland.

On an island with few vehicles, Capella's fleet of bicycles and electric buggies are the chief form of transport, connecting guests to a wealth of experiences. Forest walks, palm groves, hiking trails and superb beaches are easily accessible, while the island's many sustainable tourism operators offer expeditions on land and sea to explore the natural riches that make Lord Howe famous.

Capella Lodge is a founding member of Luxury Lodges of Australia and National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World.

## Lord Howe Island

Located 600km off Australia's east coast, Lord Howe Island is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site of global natural significance. Its unique flora, prolific birdlife, dramatic landscape and pristine marine environment combine to create one of the most extraordinary sub-tropical islands on earth.

About 11km long and between 300m and 2km in width, Lord Howe is the remnants of an ancient shield volcano, eroded over seven million years to leave a rugged landscape of about 14.5 square kilometres. Its highest point, Mount Gower, is 875m tall or more than twice the height of Uluru (Ayers Rock), with some of the world's highest seacliffs at its edges. Its adjoining twin, Mount Lidgbird, is 777m high, while 20km offshore is the world's highest volcanic stack, Ball's Pyramid, a sheer pinnacle rising 562m above the ocean, taller than New York's World Trade Center.

Lord Howe is home to the world's southern-most coral reef, warmed by currents from the Coral Sea to the north. Protected by marine reserves, it is home to green sea turtles, hawksbill turtles and a kaleidoscope of tropical fish and marine invertebrates, making the island a major drawcard for diving and snorkelling. Dolphins and migrating humpback whales are spotted in the surrounding seas. Watersports including swimming, surfing, kiteboarding and windsurfing are also popular.

With a population of just 360 people and a limit of 400 visitors at any one time, Lord Howe Island is perpetually laid-back and uncrowded. It has an abundance of picturesque coves and beaches around its shores, dozens of hiking trails and countless scenic locations that can be enjoyed in complete seclusion. Ned's Beach is famous for its prolific fish which can be hand-fed while wading in the sandy shallows.

Lord Howe is one of Australia's top bird-watching destinations, with 14 species of seabirds breeding on the island in their hundreds of thousands. Red-tailed tropic birds, shearwaters (mutton birds), sooty terns, masked boobies and the rare providence petrel can all be sighted. The island also boasts more than 130 other permanent and migratory bird species, among them the Lord Howe Island woodhen, a flightless endemic species saved from extinction by conservation efforts.

Much of Lord Howe Island is covered by lush forests, including 241 indigenous plant species of which 113 are found nowhere else in the world. Nearly two thirds of the island is a Permanent Park Preserve, while 75 per cent of its original natural vegetation remains intact and undisturbed.

The epic climb to the summit of Mount Gower is regarded among the greatest and most challenging walks in Australia, yet there are peaceful walks among lower peaks, forests and palm groves that can be enjoyed by walkers of almost any fitness.

Lord Howe Island is about 800km north-east of Sydney, or approximately half-way between Sydney and Norfolk Island. It is about 700km south-east of Brisbane and about 1300km north-west of New Zealand's North Island. The island is part of the State of New South Wales and is administered by the Lord Howe Island Board, which reports to the NSW Minister for Environment.

## At a Glance

- Capella Lodge is positioned at the southern end of Lord Howe Island, overlooking Lovers Bay at the foot of Mount Lidgbird and Mount Gower.
- Owned and operated by Baillie Lodges, a collection which also includes Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island and Longitude 131° at Uluru.
- Designed to offer the care-free spirit of an Australian beach-house, offering superb luxury in a contemporary coastal style.
- Nine suites offering breath-taking views of the towering mountains and turquoise lagoon, including Capella Suites (2), Catalina Suite (1), Lagoon Lofts (4), Makambo Loft (1) and Lidgbird Pavilion (1).
- Communal areas include the stylish lounge, the outdoor Gower Terrace with horizon plunge pool, a light and open restaurant and bar, and the secluded Kentia Lounge.
- Superb dining with a focus on fine local ingredients, including the exceptional seafood harvested from pristine local waters. An open bar (from 6pm) includes a boutique list of fine Australian wines.
- The petite Capella Spa offers a menu of rejuvenating treatments inspired by the clean island environment and features an Australian-made range of spa care products.
- Breakfasts and dinners at Capella Lodge are included in the tariff, along with an open bar (from 6pm) and premium wines and spirits (cellarmaster's list additional).
- Capella Lodge welcomes children ten years and over.

## Getting There

Capella Lodge is five minutes' drive from Lord Howe Island Airport and provides complimentary airport transfers. QantasLink operates regular daily flights between Sydney and Lord Howe Island (approximately two hours). A 14kg per person luggage limit applies. Eastern Air Services operates flights to Lord Howe Island from Port Macquarie, Newcastle and the Gold Coast.

## Rates

Rates are per suite per night and include gourmet breakfast, sunset drinks and canapes, dinner with daily inspired menu, open bar with premium wines and spirits from 6pm daily (cellarmaster's list additional), non-alcoholic beverages, select in-suite bar (excludes spirits) and island airport transfers.

Current rates are available at [capellalodge.com.au/rates](http://capellalodge.com.au/rates)

## Accommodation

Capella Lodge is the only accommodation on Lord Howe Island that commands spectacular views of both the ocean and the island's awe-inspiring twin peaks, Mount Gower and Mount Lidgbird.

Its nine contemporary suites complement the island's pristine natural environment and provide a luxurious, serene refuge. Spacious, light-filled interiors feature timber floors, marine ply joinery and custom furniture pieces that create the feel of a sophisticated beach house. Modern ensuite bathrooms are fitted in basalt stone to reflect the island's volcanic peaks and feature oversized rain showers and island-inspired Capella Spa toiletries.

Each suite offers a king bed with superior cotton linens, an in-suite bar, a Bose music system, TV, DVD player, telephone and wireless internet. Beach towels, bathrobes and backpacks are provided, along with daily housekeeping and an evening turndown service.

With a flowing single-level design, the lodge's two *Capella Suites* offer cameo views of the ocean and mountains, with high ceilings and 45 square metres of space. A Danish Primetime chair with classic Artemide Tolomeo lamp provides an ideal spot to read in the afternoon breeze, while Julie Paterson woodcuts bring a touch of the island's birdlife to the walls.

The single-level *Catalina Suite* is perfect for a small family or friends relaxing together, with a king bedroom and a separate lounge area with day beds that can convert to two single beds on evening turndown. Flexible bedding options also allow four single beds. Vaulted white ceilings and marine finishes create a cool and airy feel to this 65 square metre suite.

Capella's four popular *Lagoon Lofts* offer 60 square metres of space in a mezzanine layout, with a king bedroom upstairs, a living area downstairs and private decks on both levels. The living area's daybeds can convert to one or two single beds. Views are sensational from the upper level, while the private deck areas offer sumptuous daybeds or teak armchairs for a relaxed refuge.

With superb views from its corner position, the 90 square metre *Makambo Loft* is among the largest suites at Capella. Its extra touches include a private plunge spa and a retro Ditzel 'hanging basket' chair. A generous upstairs king sleeping area is reached via a striking red spiral staircase, while luxe daybeds in the living area can convert to one or two single beds.

The finest of Capella's suites is the magnificent *Lidgbird Pavilion*, a two-storey private residence of 120 square metres with awe-inspiring views from its wrap-around balcony and decks.

Its generous upper level bedroom takes in the best of the views and features an oversized ensuite bathroom with twin stone slab vanities and modern timber benches. The ground level offers the suite's living areas with luxe features including a Tomek Campfire Table, Bang & Olufsen television and sound system, a personal laptop and a complimentary in-room bar.

The pavilion's living area opens to outdoor decks where guests can choose between a private plunge pool or a superb outdoor freestanding Lotus bath beneath a frangipani tree. Private drinks and canapés can be delivered to the Lidgbird Pavilion each day at sunset, while a deck dining option provides the perfect occasion to indulge a loved one. The Capella electric buggy is reserved for exclusive use of Lidgbird Pavilion guests.

## Design

Positioned discretely along a ridge at the southern end of Lord Howe Island, Capella Lodge has been designed in a style that is striking and contemporary, yet understated and sympathetic to its natural surrounds.

Conceived by Sydney architect Justin Long in collaboration with interior architects Pike Withers, its skillion roofline and floor-to-ceiling glass windows create a light and open space while at the same time forming a cinematic frame around the magnificent views.

Exteriors and decks are fitted in naturally weathered teak to give the feel of a modern beach house, while glass doors and louvre windows are positioned to capitalise on the fresh sea breezes, avoiding the need for air conditioning.

The interior styling has been created around a contemporary coastal theme, drawing on the work of local artists and designers to provide a distinct Lord Howe character. Works by Mambo artist Bruce Gould include lino-cut prints and custom fabrics to provide an eccentric highlight, while pieces by Australian artists Scott Cardamatis and Joseph Saad draw from botanical elements as a link to the natural environment.

Soft furnishings include hand-printed fabrics designed by Julie Paterson to reflect the Australian outdoors. Julie also created a series of woodcuts of the Lord Howe woodhen to adorn the walls, while a collection of hand-chosen character pieces and curios give each space its own personality.

Throughout the lodge, marine ply joinery, plantation shutters, timber floors and copper finishes all add to the coastal feel, providing a relaxed contrast to designer items and bespoke furnishings including Danish Primetime chairs, Artemide Tolomeo lamps, sleek EcoSmart fireplaces and Gervasoni ceramic cubes.

Encompassing all is a lush garden of kentia palms, frangipani trees and native species, secluding Capella Lodge in a natural sanctuary that makes it appear almost entirely hidden to the outside world.

## Experiences

Lord Howe Island offers the relaxed freedom recalled from childhood holidays by the sea. Clean white beaches, sparkling clear waters and care-free solitude are the hallmarks of an island stay.

Yet despite its laid-back feel, Lord Howe's extraordinary natural assets allow for a seemingly limitless choice of activities for the visitor. Options as simple as setting off on a bicycle or taking a morning swim become unforgettable experiences in the stunning World-Heritage environment of Lord Howe, while the island's many sustainable tour operators offer a chance to delve deeper and fully understand the global significance of this incredible location.

Capella Lodge is a luxury base camp from which to mount any number of adventures on the island. Its fleet of mountain bikes is available for guests to explore the island at their leisure, while lodge staff can arrange superb picnic lunches to enjoy at one of the many unspoilt beaches and secluded coves.

Hiking trails offer magnificent views of the mountains, sea and off-shore islands, weaving their way through palm groves and forests or across ridges and open fields. The simplest routes are easy for walkers of any fitness, while the most challenging is the guided climb to Mount Gower's summit, regarded as one of the best adventure hikes in Australia.

Marine excursions are a specialty on Lord Howe Island where a choice of guides and tour operators offer expeditions for snorkelling, diving, kayaking and surfing. Turtle spotting is a highlight, providing the opportunity to sight green sea turtles and hawksbills, while glass-bottom boat excursions provide a view of the prolific corals and tropical fish that inhabit the sheltered waters of the lagoon.

Fish feeding at Ned's Beach is favourite among visitors, offering a chance to wade in the shallows among a frenzy of mullet, wrasse, garfish, silver-drummer, spangled-emperor and king fish. Or for bird lovers, the island's teeming colonies of seabirds can be viewed along its cliffs and beaches at different times of year, including red-tailed tropic birds, shearwaters (mutton birds), sooty turns and masked boobies.

Other sports and activities available on Lord Howe Island include windsurfing, fishing, paddle boarding, kite surfing, tennis, golf and lawn bowls. Private guides, naturalists and boat charters are also available, and any of the island's tour operators can be booked with the help of Capella Lodge staff.

At the end of a day's exploring, one of the best ways to relax is at Capella's boutique spa, where an indulgent menu of signature treatments and massages is available to cleanse and revive. Incorporating an Australian-made range of treatment products, the spa utilises ingredients inspired by the island environment.

The ultimate indulgence is the three-hour 'Dreaming', a complete face and body treatment, or for a local touch, the 'Sacred Stone Therapy' draws upon the power of heated basalt stones collected from the island's windward beaches.

## Food and Wine

Dining at Capella Lodge is at once refined and relaxed, sophisticated and island inspired. It's a celebration of fine local produce with an abundance of fresh line-caught fish, island-grown greens and foraged coastal herbs. A surprising harvest springs from this tiny island, blessed with rich soils and clear waters.

Combining both local delicacies and the exceptional produce found on the mainland, Capella's chefs create a daily changing menu that reflects the seasons and the day's catch.

The riches of the surrounding Pacific feature daily, with local kingfish, tuna and squid a highlight. Fresh Yamba prawns and Nambucca oysters are a treat, and boutique farmed meats and free-range chicken complement fresh inventive salads and wholesome greens.

Vegetarian options are fresh and flavoursome and include organic island vegetables and house-made pastas. Delicious daily-baked breads and lodge-churned ice-creams add an artisan feel to the menu.

Wines at Capella are carefully selected to create a concise yet balanced selection of premium Australian labels. With an emphasis on the varied regions of New South Wales, the wine list offers a hand-picked selection from both emerging wineries and renowned cellars, creating an engaging choice of varieties and styles.

Capella's bright and open Restaurant and Bar are at the heart of the lodge, commanding spectacular views of the mountains and lagoon. Their convivial and relaxed atmosphere make a perfect place to mix with staff and other guests, whether to share drinks and canapes at sunset or to relive the day's exploring on Lord Howe Island.

## Environment

Baillie Lodges operates all its properties under a detailed Sustainable Management Policy, having set new benchmarks for sustainable tourism development in Australia. All three lodges have been designed to minimise their impact on the local environment and utilise the best available technology to reduce energy consumption and waste.

Capella Lodge collaborates closely with the Lord Howe Island Board to implement management policies in keeping with the destination's World Heritage status.

Revegetation of 8000 square metres of land surrounding Capella Lodge is ongoing, where endemic species are planted to prevent erosion. Species include kentia palms, hopwood, sallywood, melaluca, juniper, bulli bush, tea tree, berry wood and goat wood.

Capella also works with local naturalist guides and tour operators to provide expert interpretive experiences for guests, building awareness of the natural environment and encouraging a greater sensitivity for broader ecological issues.

A commitment to best manage energy is ongoing at Capella Lodge. The aspect and architectural design of the property has been planned to maximise benefits of the island's natural weather patterns and temperate sub-tropical climate, encouraging flow-through ventilation and the use of glazing to capture sunlight and store natural heat.

Capella Lodge employs a solar power system that minimises the property's draw on the island energy supply and feeds back into the island grid during periods of low energy use. Its 40 solar panels are discretely positioned across the roof of Capella Lodge and have been installed as part of Lord Howe Island's ambition to generate 80 per cent of its energy from renewable sources by 2018. The SMA Sunny Tripower system generates 14100kwh each year.

Capella Lodge also uses green energy ethanol to fuel contemporary EcoSmart fires which heat both public areas and in-room fire places. Capella uses electric vehicles to transfer guests around the island, complemented by a fleet of mountain bikes which are the primary source of transport on the island.

An environmentally sensitive on-site sewage treatment plant manages wastewater in line with the Lord Howe Island's strict regulations. Waste water is captured and treated to a standard that prevents negative impact on the island's ground water and sensitive marine environment. This will soon be upgraded with a new generation Kubotato system provided by TrueWater Australia, providing an even higher standard of tertiary treatment.

Organic waste is sent the short distance to Lord Howe Island's leading edge Vertical Compost Unit for recycling and compost used for island regeneration and environmental projects.

Extensive recycling is undertaken daily to separate compost materials, cardboard and paper, glass, plastic, aluminium and rubbish. Biodegradable chemicals are used for cleaning.

Capella Lodge captures up to 50 per cent of all its water needs in rainwater tanks, with a total storage of 250,000 litres.

In accordance with the Commonwealth Government's Water Efficiency & Labelling Standards Act, Capella Lodge has accredited bathroom and shower fittings to ensure efficient systems for guests to minimise water usage.

Guests are encouraged to opt for laundry services every third day of their stay, potentially saving 250,000 litres per annum as well as minimising detergent use.

## Local History

Lord Howe Island is part of the Lord Howe seamount chain which stretches northwards for 1000km off the east coast of Australia. It was created seven million years ago by a series of volcanic eruptions that lasted for approximately 500,000 years.

Unlike nearby Norfolk Island, Lord Howe appears to have been unknown to Polynesians and there is no known archaeological evidence of indigenous populations or visits prior to Europeans.

The first recorded sighting of Lord Howe Island was on February 17, 1788, just days after the establishment of the British colony of Sydney. The commander of the First Fleet ship HMS Supply, Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, sighted the island on his way from Botany Bay to Norfolk Island and later sent a party ashore to claim it as a British possession.

From 1800 onward, Lord Howe Island became a well-known stopover for whaling ships to obtain food and water, leading to the first permanent inhabitants who arrived in the 1830s to operate a supply station for visiting ships from an area now known as the Old Settlement. Other inhabitants came and left over subsequent decades, growing vegetables, fishing and rearing livestock to supply to whalers and other passing vessels.

By the late 1880s the kentia palm (*Howea forsteriana*), a variety found only on Lord Howe Island, had become fashionable as a house plant in Britain, Europe and the United States, leading to a thriving seed export industry. The palm became sought-after both for its attractive fronds and its ability to tolerate cooler conditions, and is today the world's most popular indoor palm.

In 1918 the steamship SS Makambo ran aground near Ned's Beach at the north of the island. It was repaired and refloated, but had stayed aground for several days during which black rats reached the island. The introduction of rats triggered an environmental disaster and led to the extinction of several endemic bird species. The rats also wiped out the giant Lord Howe Island stick insect, thought to be extinct until a tiny population was discovered on Ball's Pyramid in 2001.

During World War II the RAAF flew Catalina flying boats to Lord Howe Island and established a meteorological station and radio base. With the development of a fledgling tourism industry after the war, Catalinas began regular services to the island from Rose Bay in Sydney. They continued through the heyday of the flying boats until the current airstrip was constructed in 1974 and operations replaced by more modern land aircraft. The wreckage of a RAAF Catalina can still be found in forest near Malabar Hill after a crash in 1948 that killed seven servicemen.

Increasing scientific interest and environmental awareness led to the Island's inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1982, followed by the declaration of the Lord Howe Island Marine Park in 1999. Today tourism is the main industry for the island's 360 permanent residents.

## Weather

Lord Howe Island has a subtropical climate with warm summers and mild winters. Average maximum temperatures range between 24°C and 27°C in the summer (December to February) and between 17°C and 20°C in the winter (June to August). The island's location amid stable warm ocean currents prevents it from experiencing extremes of heat or cold, making it a year-round destination.

Regardless of the time of year, guests should ensure they include sunscreen and a hat when packing.

## Timezone

Lord Howe Island time is 30 minutes ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time. During daylight-saving periods, Lord Howe Island operates on the same time as Australian Eastern Daylight-Saving Time.

## Photography

A comprehensive selection of destination and lodge imagery is available for download in high resolution, visit Baillie Lodges' [trade and media console](#). No copyright applies. Photographic credit to Capella Lodge would be appreciated.

Tourism Australia and Destination NSW offer exceptional online image libraries. To order image files, visit [images.australia.com](https://images.australia.com) or [content.destinationnsw.com.au](https://content.destinationnsw.com.au)

## Baillie Lodges

Baillie Lodges is a growing portfolio of luxury lodges renowned for setting benchmarks in premium experiential travel. Set in exclusive locations of unique natural or cultural significance, the boutique properties appeal to the discerning global traveller seeking a remarkable experience. The Australia-based collection was founded in 2003 by James and Hayley Baillie and includes Longitude 131° at Uluru-Kata Tjuta, Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island, Silky Oaks Lodge at the Daintree Rainforest, and The Louise in the Barossa Valley. Flagship property Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island was destroyed in the 2020 bushfires and its rebuild is in progress, with an anticipated reopening in mid-2023. In 2019, an affiliate of KSL Capital Partners acquired Baillie Lodges with the aim to further expand the unique collection of luxury lodges. The 2022 addition of Chile's esteemed Tierra Hotels group marks a continuation of the collection's foray into international waters, joining the Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge on Canada's Vancouver Island and New Zealand's Huka Lodge. For more information, please visit [baillielodges.com.au](https://baillielodges.com.au)



## Luxury Lodges of Australia

Luxury Lodges of Australia is a collection of 19 independent luxury lodges and camps offering unforgettable experiences in Australia's most inspiring and extraordinary locations. Capella Lodge, Longitude 131°, Silky Oaks Lodge, The Louise and Southern Ocean Lodge are honoured amongst the 'first 15' founding lodge members of this prestigious collection designed to celebrate a new era of Australian luxury accommodation and adventure. See [luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au](http://luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au)

## Reservations

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