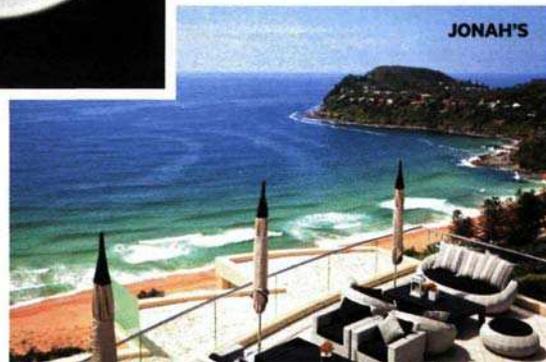
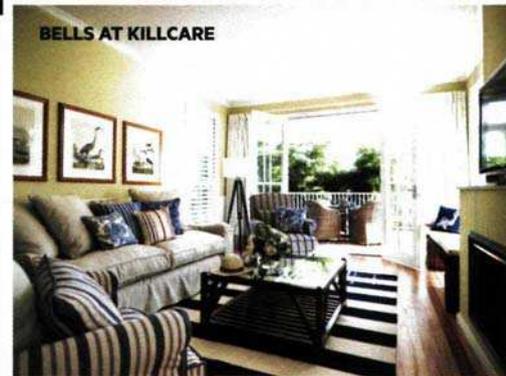
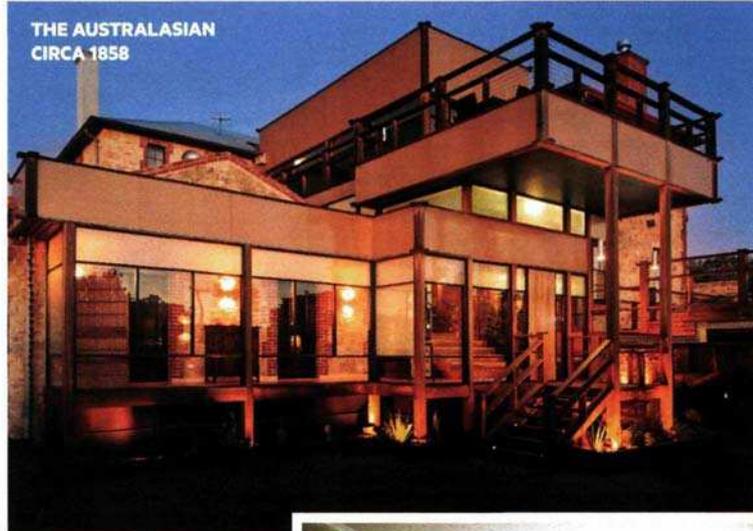


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RESTAURANTS WITH ROOMS

One of life's sweetest pleasures is to arrive at a destination restaurant, feast without restraint, and sleep safely and peacefully on site. Especially in Australia with its tyranny of distance.

Top of mind is **Brae** in the Victorian town of Birregurra, where Dan Hunter and Julianne Bagnato run six chic suites behind their spectacular restaurant, currently ranked number three in Australia. Available only to diners, the rooms complete the ultimate Big Day Out: savour Hunter's \$240-a-head dégustation, then retire to rooms of recycled brick and heated slate floors with record collection, wine fridge and bucolic views at hand (braerestaurant.com).

There's a similar sensibility at **Biota Dining** in the NSW Southern Highlands where chef James Viles prepares multi-course menus reflecting the region's terroir. Beside the restaurant, a converted motel has 12 rooms for diners – "a resting spot in the grounds of the restaurant", says Viles (biotadining.com).

Jonah's clifftop perch above Whale Beach on Sydney's northern beaches is hard to beat for meals with views. Order Australian-accented European fare, dive into the phenomenal wine list and then retire to one of 11 ocean-view rooms (jonahs.com.au).

At **Bells at Killcare** on the NSW Central Coast, new executive chef Dean

Jones brings sunny Italian cuisine to a country estate of 27 Hamptons-inspired suites (bellsatkillcare.com.au). And at **Cottage Point Inn**, not far away on the Hawkesbury River, water and bushland views and Kevin Solomon's sophisticated menus meet sweet dreams in attached apartments (cottagepointinn.com.au).

In the gold-rush town of Beechworth in northern Victoria, chef Michael Ryan runs **Provenance** restaurant in a former bank and a four-room inn in converted stables. Guests dine on Ryan's Japanese-accented local fare – perhaps Myrrhee goat with miso dressing – then hit the hay in the old barn (theprovenance.com.au).

There's more Asian influence on the table at **The Australasian Circa 1858**, a stylishly eclectic five-room inn near the mouth of the Murray River in Goolwa, on South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula. Chef and co-owner Juliet Michell's restaurant is open only to houseguests, except on Saturdays when all comers arrive for her set menus; the red duck curry with lychees is a treat (australasian1858.com).

In the quaint Victorian village of Dunkeld, **The Royal Mail Hotel** and its bistro offshoot **The Parker Street Project** offer an unbeatable package of star chef Robin Wickens, vast kitchen gardens, a 30,000-bottle cellar and lodgings for 90 amid the grandeur of the Grampians (royalmail.com.au).