

# Scotland and Ireland Go Australian

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## TOP-TIER IN TASMANIA AND QUEENSLAND

The ole' girl is looking pretty darned amazing or, dare we say, absolutely stunning. [Tarraleah Lodge](#) was built in the 1930s and underwent a brilliantly orchestrated facelift in 2006. Your clients are invited to meet this lovely, "lodgey" lady, don their kilts and travel not to bonnie **Scotland**, but to **Australia's Tasmania** and its **Central Highlands**. Equidistant between the cities of **Strahan** and **Hobart**, Tasmania's capital, the lodge is located on the famed touring route labeled by many Aussies as one of their country's top 10 drives.



Guests of O'Reilly's Rainforest Escape go on a nature walk.

The indigenous Aboriginal name of this remarkable property means "Forestor Kangaroo," and although you may indeed jump for joy when you see a few 'roos and their joeys, you're also likely to spy some of the other wild and crazy wildlife for which Australia is famous: platypuses, quolls, wallabies, wombats, echidnas and, of course, Tasmanian devils. Tarraleah's own **Highland Cattle**, an ancient Scottish breed of beef cattle with long horns and shaggy pelts, roam the 300-acre estate.

The onsite contact person is Assistant General Manager **Mark Newcombe** ([info@tarraleah.com](mailto:info@tarraleah.com)). Marketing Manager **Lisa Dunn** ([lisd@tarraleah.com](mailto:lisd@tarraleah.com)) invites agents to query her regarding fam visits to Tarraleah. "Come to breathe the fresh air and drink the clean water—two precious commodities these days," says Dunn.

Nine deluxe guest rooms are priced from \$590, and the top-of-the-line **Highlander Suite** is priced from \$790 through August. In the rooms, clients can utilize Internet service, flat-screen TVs, DVDs and high-fidelity iPod connections. They can then tuck into silk-covered, custom-designed, king-size beds topped with Tasmanian mohair throws. The chic art-deco bathrooms feature latest-model spa therapy baths or rainforest showers, heated floors, luxury toiletries from the **London** house of **Moulton Brown** and sensually soft cotton bathrobes for use after your requisite cliff-top hot-tub dip. Guests here can enjoy the gym,

squash court and complimentary golf clubs (greens fees are included in their tariff).



A deluxe guest room at Tarraleah Lodge in Tasmania.

“Ninety percent of guests eagerly fill out comment forms before they leave,” says Dunn, “and that hot tub always makes the top of the list.” Visitors love to immerse themselves, open the sliding doors and gaze at the gorgeous valley and river below.

A four-course dinner and gourmet breakfast are part of the package and are served in the **Wildside Restaurant**, which proudly boasts 300 wines and 170 single malts in its Library Bar. Insiders tell us that “roughing it” lodge-style in Tasmania never tasted so good.

If “trout, trout, trout” are on your client’s mind, 30 lakes and six streams beckon with rainbow and brown species; plus, regulars love to try to “sight fish”—ask your guide how and where. Please don’t whine if you come up “empty-hooked” while using your top-end **G. Loomis** equipment, which is provided by the lodge for visitors’ use. “Even if you choose to fish alone, never feel underwhelmed in front of your quarry. We can provide expert advice, guidance and even a little (actually, very little) sympathy when your adversary gets the better of you,” says lodge management, which has high hopes for your fishing trip. Don’t bring a long face to this pleasant place—“Come as you are...We suggest you get dressed first.”

Locals suggest requesting pre-dinner drinks with zoologist and nature guide par excellence **Hans Naarding**, who is reputed to have seen the last Tasmanian tiger in the wild in the mid 1980s.

### **Luck of O’Reilly’s**

Moving from “Scotland” to “Ireland” in Australia, it’s on to **O’Reilly’s Mountain Rainforest Escape, Gold Coast, Queensland**. When we say “Gold Coast,” don’t assume we mean surfing. Rather, know that you’ll be traveling inland 90 minutes via a road to **World Heritage**-listed **Lamington National Park** in the **Hinterland**, also known as “the green behind the gold.”

Sales and Marketing Coordinator **Amanda Tidmarsh** ([amanda@oreillys.com.au](mailto:amanda@oreillys.com.au)) welcomes your inquiries, and wants her guests to know how special this place is to its owners as well as its employees. The property was settled as a dairy farm in 1914, the area around it declared a national park a few years later, and when the O’Reilly family opened a guest house to meet demand, the hospitality business became far more successful than milking bovines.

The well-known property, with a stellar 90-year history, offers a wide range of accommodations, starting with top-tier two-bedroom/bath canopy suites, constructed in one of the former O’Reilly family homes, with a living room, two-way fireplace, outdoor spa tub, polished timber floors and cedar shutters. Your guests may also select from one-bedroom canopy suites, mountain-view rooms and garden rooms. Prices range from \$265 per night for a double to \$680 for up

to six people in the coveted two-bedroom suites.

Reservations manager **Cathi Gladstone** is ready to help at [reservations@oreillys.com.au](mailto:reservations@oreillys.com.au), and she'll also gladly book one of the resort's 48 brand-new villas, with either two or three bedrooms, full kitchen, private deck, spa bath and barbecue, along with undercover parking. Rates range from \$310 to \$660, per villa, per night, and either two- or three-night minimum stays are required.

If your clients love nature, this is the place to embrace it outright and Aussie-style. At O'Reilly's, outdoorsy types can choose from such **Discovery Program** selections such as bird walks, interpretive rainforest walks and guided night walks; guests tell us a must-do is the **Treetop Walk**, 100 feet above ground. After a long day walking to your heart's content, stop and sample wine at the family's **Canungra Valley Vineyard**—we toast with the award-winning **Shane Reserve Shiraz**—where a resident family of platypuses have set up camp in the nearby stream.



Lounge of a two-bedroom canopy suite at O'Reilly's Rainforest Escape.

Kids are welcome here and are offered their fair share of fun activities. Onsite amenities include a heated plunge pool, spa and sauna and fully equipped game room. Previous visitors tell us O'Reilly's special theme weeks encourage a fine time Down Under: **Bird Week, Frog Week, Mammal Week, Off the Beaten Track Weeks**, plus extended bushwalks, photography, and writers- and artists-in-residence programs. Even if it rains—and this is a rainforest—there is always something to do. Massage lovers, take note: In June, the property will debut its own **Lost World Spa** along with a conference center.

Dining at O'Reilly's is a gourmet experience. Head Chef **Ian Garrett** creatively designs a **"Modern Australian"** menu that changes seasonally to take advantage of local produce and is "always delicious and warming," according to Tidmarsh.

A world of big vacations awaits on the world's smallest continent. When clients ask, "Why Australia?," Tarraleah and O'Reilly's are two of the best answers.

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