

# Escape

OUT&ABOUT



Emu Bay Holiday Homes, above and below, and Kangaroo Island Wildlife Park.

## ISLAND LIVING

Six months after it was devastated by bushfire, green is the new black on Kangaroo Island.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS CAROLYNE JASINSKI

**W**hat a view! Even on a muted winter's day, with not a ray of sunshine poking through the clouds, Emu Bay is one of the prettiest places on Kangaroo Island.

From the veranda of my holiday home, high on a hill, I'm looking over green gardens and natural scrub, past tall gums to the beach beyond. It stretches in a semi-circle, reaching out towards the horizon. Cliffs meet clouds at the farthest point.

Ant-like dots on the sand are people and dogs, enjoying the protected bay. Some even brave the icy waters, maybe hoping to meet the resident pod of dolphins we're told about.

A flock of squawking corellas breaks the silence. Closer to the house, little blue wrens flit in and out of bushes.

It's a scenic salve – nature's ointment soothing the soul. I have spent days lapping Kangaroo Island, checking on its recovery after the double whammy of bushfires and virus assaults.

KI is usually quiet in winter. Tourist numbers drop and some operators close for a well-deserved break after the holiday season. Attention turns to the wilderness and wildlife – two of the island's biggest drawcards. The timing is perfect as the lockdown has given nature a chance to regenerate.

Green is the new black on KI. "Hairy-legged" trees have replaced charred trunks in many areas; bright green shoots that were just poking through the ashes in January are now bold patches; and all over the island, rain-soaked green pastures dominate.

And there is plenty to see and do. Seal

Bay has reopened to visitors, Pennington Bay draws in surf-loving visitors and Vivonne Bay sparkles against a backdrop of white sand, blackened bushes and promising green shoots.

The north coast from Western River Cove to Snelling Beach and Stokes Beach (the secret one) is a picture.

One island attraction that never closes down – not even during raging fires or coronavirus lockdown – is the KI Wildlife Park.

Sam and Dana Mitchell have had the park since 2013 and, until this year, went quietly about their business of refurbishing enclosures and looking after hundreds of animals, from dingoes, wombats and cassowaries to marmosets, alpacas, alligators and even penguins.

In January, though, the spotlight fell on their efforts to save koalas injured in bushfires. Park staff and volunteers hand-fed and nursed the koalas back to health.

After full days braving the cold and exploring, you need a "home" to retreat to. Which brings us back to Emu Bay Holiday Homes ... and that view.

There are eight accommodation options, from quaint cottages for two to sprawling homes for the whole family – all looking out over Emu Bay.

We scored Jireh, a three-bedroom, two-bathroom escape pod with full-length windows and living areas that take advantage of the scenery. I even pulled back the blinds in my bedroom and watched the sun rises turn the sky into a soft pastel playground for wispy clouds.

Outside is a barbecue and a table setting to fit everyone in warmer weather. Inside, it's warm, the couches are soft and welcoming and the kitchen has all you need to cook, or you can have Lucy at KI Kitchen bring dinner over for you. Everything about this property is comfortable and comforting. Roos often graze in the gardens and koalas hang out in the trees.

The writer was a guest of SeaLink but her companions were paying customers.



**EMU BAY HOLIDAY HOMES**  
21 Bayview Road, Emu Bay; (08) 8553 5241;  
emubayholidayhomes.com.au

**LOCATION** Emu Bay is a 50-minute drive from Pennington, where the SeaLink ferry docks. The turn-off is close to Kingscote, the main town on the island. There are no shops in Emu Bay so stock up and refuel in Pennington or Kingscote.

**GETTING THERE** SeaLink (sealink.com.au) has a special post-coronavirus package to Kangaroo Island: Three nights at Emu Bay Holiday Homes plus passenger and car ferry fares from \$397pp. **ACCOMMODATION** Eight choices from quaint cottages for two people to Amani – the main house plus apartment, which sleeps 12. We stayed in the three-bedroom Jireh (sleeps 10).

**FACILITIES** Everything you can think of – except washing machines because of water restrictions. Communal herb garden. Cubby house.

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESS** Yes (in Amani).

**PRICE** Jireh costs from \$125/night (minimum two-night stay). Includes linen and towels.

**RATING** 5/5