

# PRIVACY BUBBLES

At a time when demand for private home rentals is booming, the most captivating places stand out with an enticing mix of art, architecture and seclusion. Here are our picks, from Lord Howe Island to Paris.

Words by Susan Skelly



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAUL CABRERA (PARIS)



**PARIS, JE T'AIME** The Haussmannian Saint-Germain apartment in the Ambroise Collection on Paris's Left Bank.



You might have heard that the desire for private everything is on the rise – air travel, boat charters, resort buy-outs and trips led by specialist guides. But the secluded holiday rental is still king. “Nothing is going to stop resilient Australians from travelling, but they’re seeking self-containment, security, and a bubble of family and friends,” says David Goldman of travel advisory firm The Goldman Group. The tempting properties on these pages all have great bones, as well as art and ambience, but they also share a connection to place. “It’s all about experiences and connectivity to nature, hiking, walking and wellness,” adds Goldman.

COLLECTABLE PARIS

Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939) was a visionary art dealer who recognised the potential in artists such as Gauguin, Cézanne and Picasso. Modern-day art dealer Amélie du Chalard picks up on that passion with her Ambroise Collection of luxury apartments in Paris whose walls are dressed in works of art by 20th and 21st century artists.

Ambroise Saint-Germain is a Haussmannian apartment that overlooks the Sainte-Clotilde Basilica, with mouldings on the ceilings, a spacious balcony and Hungarian point parquetry. It has three bedrooms with walk-in wardrobes, two bathrooms, large living room, and a billiards room. Ambroise Le Marais, a two-storey house on the Rue Vieille du Temple, has a king suite and a queen suite, two bathrooms and dining and living areas.

Du Chalard is especially fond of the huge Clément Mancini canvas in the Marais house. “His work is composed of fragments of texture,” she says. “Rough, dense, nimble, smooth, colourful.” Hanging in the Saint-Germain property are two large paintings by Bruno Dufourmantelle. “They represent scenes and landscapes on the borderline of abstraction,” she adds.

At these polished residences you can live like a collector. Or take the art home: it’s all for sale. Aside from being impeccably chic, each property comes with French breakfast, daily housekeeping, and a cultural concierge to book exhibition visits. Du Chalard expects to add two more to the collection this year, Montmartre in April and Provence by July.

**Rates** *Saint-Germain* from €700 per night (minimum two nights); *Marais* €500 per night (minimum two nights). [ambroise-collection.com](http://ambroise-collection.com)



LORD OF THE PACIFIC

The local fishmonger has just stopped by Island House. He’s off-loaded bonito, yellowfin tuna, kingfish and snapper, which will join the day’s harvest of carrots, sweet potatoes, bok choy, lettuce, celery and broccoli. It’s all food for thought for on-site chefs Kimie and Hiro Uemoto.

Island House, the newest lodge on Lord Howe Island, is a super-stylish property comprising two architect-designed houses with ample room for eight guests. Set among a jungle of kentia palms and ancient banyan trees, the retreat from Michael Maxwell and his son, Tim, integrates copper roofing, blackbutt cladding and oak floorboards, walls and ceilings.

A stay here is an immersion in nature, art and solitude. Accoutrements include designs as timeless as the island itself, from mid-century Danish furniture to kiln-fired bowls by Japanese ceramicist Keiko Matsui. The abundant artworks include pieces by Indigenous artists Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri and Regina Pilawuk Wilson. One of the houses features a 60-work installation by Danish artist Tine Holscher.

No more than 400 visitors at a time are allowed on Lord Howe Island, an hour’s flight from Sydney and Brisbane, so it still feels like a remote paradise. To aid exploring, the property has its own adventure room with mountain bikes, surfboards, snorkelling gear and custom-made paddleboards with glass viewing windows.

**Rates** \$6,600 per night for the entire site (minimum five days). [islandhouse.com.au](http://islandhouse.com.au)

NEO-INDUSTRIAL BONDI

Minimalists, modernists and hedonists would all appreciate Bismarck House in Sydney’s Bondi. The post-war, semi-detached home, which sleeps up to eight guests in four bedrooms, has been expertly renovated by Andrew Burges Architects. The exterior is clad in a ribbon of perforated aluminium, while the interior features a bold mix of vintage and new furnishings. The final flourish is a courtyard garden of cacti and native grasses designed by co-owner William Dangar of landscape practice Dangar Barin Smith.

Just 10 minutes’ stroll from Bondi and Tamarama beaches, this urban oasis blurs the line between inside and out. Large sliding glass doors open to the breeze in summer, but ducted air-conditioning and hydronic heating mean the residence is ready for any season. The living spaces are finished with a mélange of natural fibres, cork and timber – perfect for its cushy-industrial aesthetic – while the kitchen is fitted with American oak shelving, Miele appliances and hand-made ceramics.

An internal stairway of reclaimed bricks leads to the bedrooms. This level feels as though it’s been carved from a block of magic rock, with voids for light and oblique viewing lines to the laneway adjacent to the property. With a separate entrance, the fourth bedroom operates as a self-contained apartment – ideal for extended families.

**Rates** From \$1200 a night (minimum three-night stay in the low season; more during high-demand times). [bismarckhouse.com.au](http://bismarckhouse.com.au)



**ROOMS OF ONE'S OWN** Opposite page: The dining area at Island House on Lord Howe Island. Top left: One of the fully equipped kitchens at Island House. Above and left: Bismarck House in Sydney's Bondi. Below: The Saint-Germain apartment in the Ambroise Collection.



PHOTOGRAPHY: RAUL CABRERA (PARIS) & PETER BENNETT'S (BISMARCK HOUSE)





LOVE AMONG THE VINES

Set in the charming Byron Bay hamlet of Newrybar, Le Viti Barn is an Italian-inspired farmhouse with oversized timber doors, whitewashed walls and modern accessories. Textured limestone, rich terracotta and reclaimed timbers from local salvage dealers blend to create a harmonious feeling of refined glamour and earthy calm.

Accommodating a couple or two or a small family, Le Viti Barn is equipped with a master bedroom and a media room that can be used as a cosy lounge or second bedroom. There’s a deck for alfresco dining or lounging under the vines amid the scent of citrus and olive trees, rosemary and lavender. Interior designer Mel Gubbin of Avenue Twenty Two has opted for sumptuous fabrics throughout – lots of layered linen, rich bedding and velvety bespoke upholstery.

Owners Gemma and Jason Andrews live in the neighbouring farmhouse. It can accommodate two couples and can also be rented in tandem. In the neighborhood are the acclaimed Harvest restaurant, deli and bakery, Newrybar Merchants for artisanal homewares, and Driftlab for breezy clothing. Not far away is Olivia Newton-John’s spa, Gaia. It’s also a short drive to Broken Head, Suffolk Park and Byron Bay’s beaches and restaurants.

**Rates** \$845-\$1395 per night (minimum two nights). [byronbeachabodes.com.au](http://byronbeachabodes.com.au)

**SENSE OF PLACE** Above: Le Viti Barn in the Byron Bay hinterland has been designed with oversized timber doors and whitewashed walls.



A GREEK IDYLL

A short ferry ride from Paros in the southern Aegean is Antiparos, a small island studded with juniper trees and criss-crossed with dry stone walls. Here you’ll find Cliffhanger, a sculptural villa that looks as though it’s been towed into place for a film shoot. With staggering views, sunsets not even a filter could improve on, and a sublime whitewashed palette, the lodge radiates a raw, natural beauty.

One of a portfolio of residences by Athens developers Oliaros, Cliffhanger has five bedrooms and flexible living spaces. The secluded master bedroom seems to float over the sea, while a detached guesthouse has its own courtyard. There’s also a vegetable garden, rooftop lounge and a sheltered barbecue space with a fully equipped chef’s kitchen.

Greek firm Deca Architecture and landscaper Thomas Doxiades dug deep to capture a spirit of place that erased boundaries between built and natural landscapes. The island is famous for its archaeology, notably the Cave of Antiparos, with its golden stalactites and stalagmites. The village, a kilometre away, and the waterfront are alive with fish restaurants, boutiques and galleries. Little wonder the villa is a home away from home for several Hollywood luminaries.

**Rates** €2000 per night; available May to October. [oliarosproperties.com](http://oliarosproperties.com)

DELUXE DIGS

**FOR LUXURY HOLIDAY** rentals around Margaret River, Mandurah, the Swan Valley, and the Great Southern region of Western Australia (Albany, Walpole and Denmark). [privateproperties.com.au](http://privateproperties.com.au)

**FOR MORE GREEK** Island escapes, choose from more than a dozen luxurious Cycladic villas, big on architecture and a sense of community. [oliarosproperties.com](http://oliarosproperties.com)

**FOR LUXE RETREATS** in the Caribbean, Antigua, Mustique, Mallorca, Italy, and France see the Red Savannah, a recipient last year of the Queen’s Award for Enterprise. [redsavannah.com](http://redsavannah.com)

**FOR A SPECTACULAR** portfolio of more than 300 exclusive havens in Bali, Lombok, Phuket, Koh Samui, Sri Lanka, Japan, India and the Maldives. [elitehavens.com](http://elitehavens.com)

**FOR THE CRÈME DE LA** crème of statement houses on AirBnB Luxe, from Bali to Costa Rica, the Swiss Alps to Los Angeles. [airbnb.com.au/luxury](http://airbnb.com.au/luxury)

**FOR SKI CHALETs** in the Austrian Alps, the Dolomites, the French Alps and the Swiss Alps courtesy of Abercrombie & Kent’s luxury villa portfolio. [akvillas.com](http://akvillas.com)

**FOR MORE BYRON** Bay polish, this collection of nine properties features the chic builds and renovations of founders Taliah and Sein Lowry. [byronbeachabodes.com.au](http://byronbeachabodes.com.au)