glam rock

Tasmanian-based hoteliers, Kerry and Alastair, are new to the game, but their home and boutique hotel speaks a different story
VERANDA
‘We never tire of the view – dolphins, whales, fairy penguins, and a constantly changing nautical backdrop,’ says Kerry.

MOO-NUT-RE-KER SUITE
Each suite tells a story – tales of local happenings, shipwrecks and lives lived and lost.

Portrait of Alastair’s grandmother by Ulrica Burke

Exterior woodwork and trims in Barely There by Haymes Paint
FAMILY
LIVING ROOM
Dark walls and the original Tasmanian pine floorboards create a relaxing retreat.

Walls in Seclusion by Haymes Paint. Antique chaise, similar from Streett Marburg. Bentwood dining chairs, similar from Dig Haushizzle. Antique Tasmanian floorboards, similar Bert & May
Christmas is hotting up in Tasmania and this year the Houston family will be celebrating in style, having completed an 18-month renovation transforming a derelict former pub into a chic boutique hotel and home at the foot of The Nut—a sheer rocky volcanic plug overlooking the picturesque harbour of Stanley.

Their new home and business venture began life as a pub in 1849, built by Michael Lyons, grandfather of the former Australian Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons. The stone walls have seen pub owners come and go, along with an infamous 1880s roller-skating rink, a crowd-pulling billiards and skittles room, and a cold room that doubled as the local doctor’s morgue, before falling into disrepair and standing empty for more than a year. It was said, “if walls could talk, these would have tales to tell.”

Five years ago a much-anticipated tropical holiday failed to meet the family’s expectations and the decision was made to try something different and closer to their Hobart home. Despite growing up in the southern hemisphere, Alastair’s English family owned homes in Norfolk and the Isle of Skye, and as a child, he would visit regularly. ‘Discovering Stanley evoked fond memories of Skye for Alastair,’ says Kerry. ‘We wanted our children to enjoy the same rural freedom and decided to buy and renovate a holiday cottage—which we also offered occasionally as an Airbnb.’

Pulled by the simple charms of Stanley, the family took a leap of faith. ‘I wanted to follow my passion for interiors and Alastair was keen to carve a future away from the arduous rigours of stonemasonry,’ says Kerry. The former pub caught their eye and they decided to make a permanent move to open their first boutique hotel, the Ship Inn.

With the help of the Australian design duo Lynda Gardener and Belle Hemmings of Inside Story, Kerry and Alastair have transformed the distinctive ochre-painted landmark into seven self-contained guest suites, along with two separate apartments for themselves and Kerry’s parents. With colour and style templates agreed, Lynda and Belle were given freedom to work their magic, combining stone and wood with soft linens, contemporary fittings, antique furniture and one-off decorative finds. The elegant interiors, decorated in earthy greys and muddied greens that reflect the local vernacular, are immensely welcoming—comfortable sofas, battered leather chairs, natural weave rugs and treasured collections of ancestral portraits, oils and sketches add a sense of time-worn nostalgia. Bespoke cabinetry features throughout, along with a hand-carved fireplace and stone garden walls, designed and built by Alastair from the surrounding volcanic lava.

With the festive season approaching, the tree waits patiently until Christmas Eve. ‘It’s a family tradition—Dean Martin plays on repeat, decorations are lovingly unpacked, the kids spend ages deliberating over which gifts to open early and the turkey is propped,’ smiles Kerry. ‘This year we will be very thankful for our new home and the life it has given us. It’s a winter wonderland indeed, even if it is summer!’

Find out more about the Ship Inn at shipinnstanley.com.au
A former barrel store was knocked through to create a light-filled family kitchen, with views out to the bay.

Kitchen design and accessories, Inside Story, Cabinetry, Alec Blacklow, Smithton Joinery
home truths

HOLIDAY ATTIRE - SPARKLY OR COSY?
It's warm here, so definitely sparkly!

BEST CHRISTMAS SONG?
Walking in a Winter Wonderland
by Dean Martin.

FESTIVE TIPPLE?
Ice-cold Moët & Chandon, before lunch.

TURKEY OR LOBSTER?
Turkey every time - a definite nod to my Sheffield-born parents.

CHRISTMAS PUD OR ICE-CREAM?
Both! We make a delicious frozen bomb every year - crumbled Christmas pudding, mixed with ice-cream, frozen, then covered in melted chocolate and refrigerated.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE?
Be kind, it's not hard.
LYONS RETREAT SUITE
Suites combine original artefacts, art, soft linens and bespoke fittings.

Bedhead, The Upholstery House.
Bedding, Cultiver; try Larusi for similar.
Lamp, find a similar style at Loaf

WILDFWAVE SUITE
A rich floral wallpaper nods to the rugged landscape beyond.

Raphaël Black wallpaper, Sandberg.
Bedhead, The Upholstery House.
Bedding, Cultiver; try Piglet for similar.
Bedside table, Inside Story

MOO-NUT-RE-KER EN SUITE
Contemporary meets antique for a distinctive vibe in each space.

Towels, Loom Towels.
Tiles, similar from Tile Boutique. Stool, similar from The Fig Store. Mirror, similar from Made.com