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The Tassie hotel where the artworks are for sale

Hobart's five-star Henry Jones Art Hotel is like staying in a gallery, where the pieces – and the food – feed the soul.

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As enthusiastic mainlanders know, Tasmania rings all the bells for art, history, food and the wild outdoors [<https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/travel/tasmania-remains-inimitable-here-s-why-20210811-p58hwy>]. In Hobart, one place brings them all together – and you can stay the night.

The five-star Henry Jones Art Hotel, facing Constitution Dock and a stroll along the waterfront from historic Salamanca Place, takes up most of a row of sandstone buildings dating from the early 1800s when Hobart flourished as a trade and shipping hub.



The luxurious H. Jones Suite overlooking Hobart's waterfront, with the Tasmanian blackwood ceilings and wall panelling of the old boardroom.

The building's transformation from former warehouse and jam factory to one of the world's few dedicated art hotels yielded architect Robert Morris-Nunn and his colleagues a swag of awards.

From outside, the stencilled "H. Jones & Co" and "IXL Jams" recall 12-year-old Henry Jones' progression from sticking labels on jam tins to being owner of the famously successful IXL brand.

Inside, the intertwining of history, architecture and art begins with the original timber warehouse beams and enormous, finely detailed artworks by Lindsay Broughton that dominate the foyer.

In the atrium beyond, sail cloths trap the sunlight and warm a space for a cafe, entertainment area and events including the Henry Jones Art Prize that showcases contemporary Tasmanian artists.



Hotel art curator Kate Jackson with one of Lindsay Broughton's works on display in the foyer.

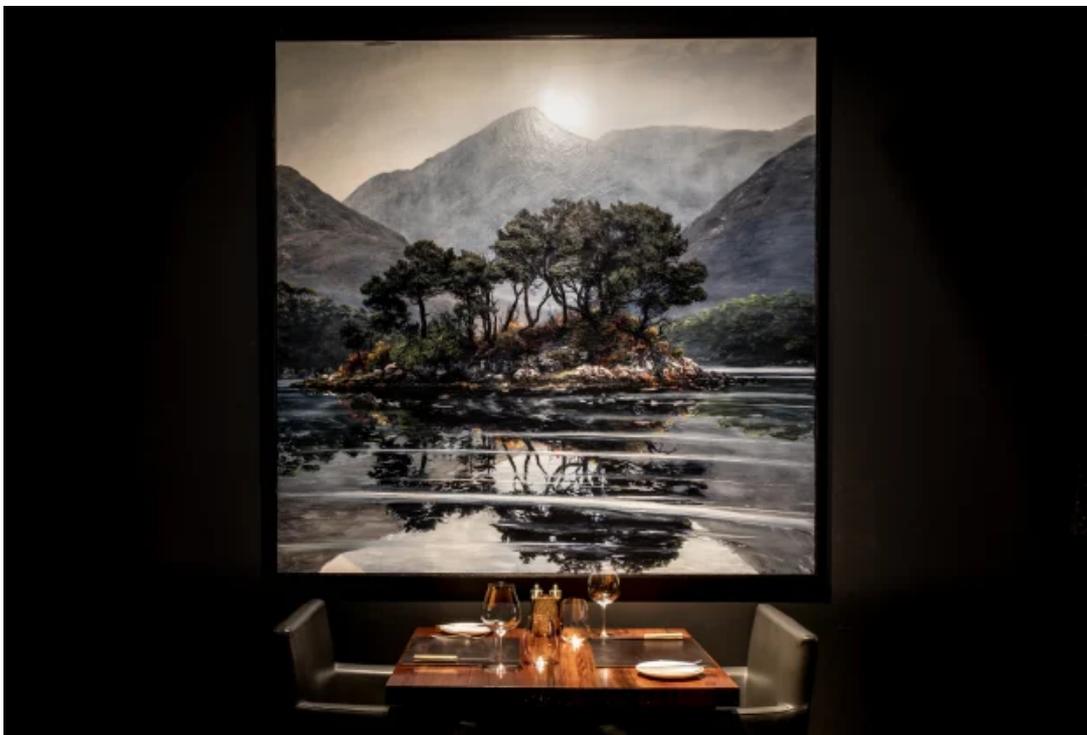
Staying at the Henry Jones is much like staying in an art gallery, though here most of the works hanging along each corridor and in every room are for sale.

Kate Jackson, the hotel's full-time art curator, brings together the 400 or so works on display at any one time, drawn from 70-80 artists from around Tasmania. An artist herself, Jackson has a background in commercial galleries nationally and globally. She has worked with Tasmanian community arts and Indigenous organisations.

The Henry Jones runs an artist-in-residence program, with featured artists working in a nook in the foyer. Suellen Saidee Cook, who creates surreal, imaginary environments by layering up to 50 photographs, is the most recent resident.

But the hotel's freshest jewel – this year's winner of the prestigious Glover Art Prize – now has pride of place in the elegant, softly lit Landscape Restaurant & Grill. This is a place so comfortable and attentive to detail that favoured regulars keep their personal steak knives in a special cabinet in the reception area.

Victoria-based artist Jennifer Riddle won the 2022 Glover prize – considered the Archibald of landscape painting – with her dramatic depiction of Tasmanian wilderness, inspired by trips to the waterways of isolated south-west Tasmania. “It's hard to look at Port Davey's pristine, remote landscape without feeling the enormity and impact of its presence,” she noted in her entry.



Jennifer Riddle's prize-winning depiction of the Port Davey wilderness in south-west Tasmania.

Renowned 19th century landscape artist John Glover, whom the Glover Prize honours, was similarly moved when he emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1831.

His more genteel, romanticised paintings, capturing the soft Tasmanian light and distant convict and Indigenous figures from the early settlement, dot the Landscape Restaurant's main walls.

Much of the restaurant's inspiration was drawn from Glover's hopeful depiction of the early colony. Its main focus, though, is showcasing fresh seasonal produce from farmers around the state.



Paintings by 19th century artist John Glover inspired and are a feature of Landscape Restaurant & Grill.

A point of distinction is the restaurant's Asado grill. It is fired daily with wood from old sherry, bourbon or port casks supplied by the Tasmanian Cask Company. From there, head chef Nathaniel Embrey presents a menu that perfectly matches the elegant surrounds.

Starters might be freshly shucked oysters from Norfolk Bay, char-grilled Stanley octopus or kingfish sashimi.

For mains, a Cape Grim steak from Tasmania's far north-western corner melts with Asado tenderness and flavour, paired, if you like, with hand-cut duck fat chips.



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You might alternatively try the more delicate blue-eye trevalla with wood-fired greens, cauliflower, spanner crab and dashi butter. Or perhaps the Huon Berkshire cutlet with sweet corn and charred cabbage.

It could be Embrey's hand or it could be Landscape's easy-going cosiness, but it does seem that being surrounded by wonderful art adds another layer of flavour.



Artfully-presented food in the Landscape Restaurant. **Adam Gibson**

After dinner, if you've elected to stay the night, you might have the good fortune to walk upstairs to the luxurious H. Jones Suite, located in what

was once the boardroom of H. Jones & Co.

All the rooms have their own distinctive qualities – exposed timber and brickwork, perhaps a remnant factory pulley hanging from the ceiling. But the top suite (from \$740 a night) stands apart with its Tasmanian Blackwood ceilings and wall panelling and views of Hobart’s waterfront. And, of course, the art.



Bringing art and history together: the grand H. Jones Suite.

The writer was a guest of Henry Jones Art Hotel.

Peter Kerr

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