

REVIEW | HOTEL

# Henry Jones Art Hotel, Hobart

By Jim Darby



## CHECK-IN

If I were checking in here a century or so ago, it might be for an appointment with Henry Jones himself, the man who transformed a slum on the Hobart waterfront into a buzzing enterprise. It was, quite literally, money-for-jam for Henry as his IXL Jams empire spread across five continents (he also dabbled in fruit, timber, shipping and mining). At one point he was Australia's largest private employer. Those businesses are long gone, and in the early 2000s the buildings that contained them were transformed into a hotel, bought by Tasmania's Federal Group in 2008, which commissioned another major renovation completed in 2018. It's a delight to roll up to the hotel door in this row of reformed warehouses – the city is just over your shoulder but there's no hectic traffic here, just the fishing boats bobbing in the harbour on one side of the road and the hotel on the other.

## THE LOOK

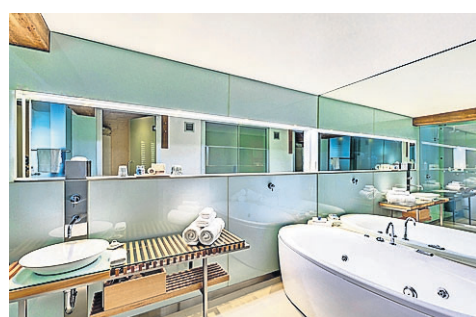
As if to affirm their passion for the project, the architect, Robert Morris-Young and his associates kept part of the building for their own office space. In the transformation to a luxury hotel, they also kept as many huge timber beams, stone walls and other original features in place as they could. The feel is slightly clubby – dark and with sumptuous sofas here and there – but art is very much at the fore, hung all over the hotel and in its rooms, and you'll more than likely encounter an artist in residence working away in a corner of the lobby.

## THE ROOM

I'm in a Deluxe Spa Harbour View room that lives up to all those promises – it's big, the harbour is right outside the two timber-shuttered windows (and the windows open – just a few inches, but they open). There's a king-size bed with storage either side, sofas, a desk, big-screen TV, coffee-making, mini-bar and safe. The bathroom (and yes it has a spa bath) has plenty of room to move and rather than work it into the old structure, is a self-contained pod of luxury within its own frosted-glass walls, and it works a treat.

## FOOD + DRINK

No need to leave the hotel – the IXL Long Bar, near the lobby, is the stop for a pre-dinner cocktail – maybe smile along with the Tequila Mochabird, a mix of tequila, mezcal and coffee liqueur. At one end of the hotel is the relaxed Peacock & Jones restaurant which puts the focus on Tasmanian produce – and why wouldn't you? – with a tasting



Clockwise from top: John Glover's *Oak Tree* above a table at Landscape Restaurant; inside a Deluxe Spa Harbour View Room; it's bathroom; and art in a corridor.



*The feel is slightly clubby – dark and with sumptuous sofas here and there.*

menu with the likes of a subtle wallaby tartare and tasty sheep's labneh. There are also wines to match and again, Tasmania holds its own. At the other end of the hotel, is Landscape, the more upmarket of the two where you might find yourself losing focus from the food as you admire the winning art of the Glover Landscape Prize winners on the walls. The speciality here comes from the grill, the steak is as good as you'll taste but there are also fish and vegetarian options that again show how Tasmania shines for fresh produce.

## OUT + ABOUT

Salamanca and its shops, galleries and Saturday markets is a 10-minute stroll one way and Hobart's CBD 10 minutes the other. But there are still things to do at the hotel, like the art tour that reveals some of the many treasures held here and the breadth of creativity among the mostly Tasmanian artists. There are also history tours that take you back into the Henry Jones Empire, explains how it all worked, discloses the dangers the employees faced and even takes you up the grand and intimidating staircase to the office of their employer. The tours are free for hotel guests or cost \$20 for others.

## THE VERDICT

Art is right at the heart of this welcoming Hobart hotel. The restoration and renovation is authentic but never twee, and at every turn, on this wall or that, there's a new work of art to stop and think about.

## THE ESSENTIALS

Deluxe Spa Harbour View Room from \$450 per night; Corporate Loft from \$320 a night. 25 Hunter Street, Hobart, Tasmania. Phone (03) 6210 7700. See [thehenryjones.com.au](http://thehenryjones.com.au)

## THE SCORE

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Jim Darby was a guest of the Henry Jones Art Hotel.

**HIGHLIGHT** Would be the art, My favourite? Beyond the Glover winners, is Emma Margetts' *Thylacine*, a Tasmanian Tiger leaping from the wall.  
**LOWLIGHT** I know we need to face our history, but I'm not sure I wanted the story of the worker who fell into the vat of hot jam.

**HOW WE SCORE** \*\*\*\*\* AMAZING. CAN WE MOVE IN? \*\*\*\*\* EXCELLENT. GET A LATE CHECKOUT  
 \*\*\* PRETTY GOOD BUT COULD BE BETTER \*\* GET AN EARLY CHECKOUT \* WHAT'S THE REFUND POLICY?