

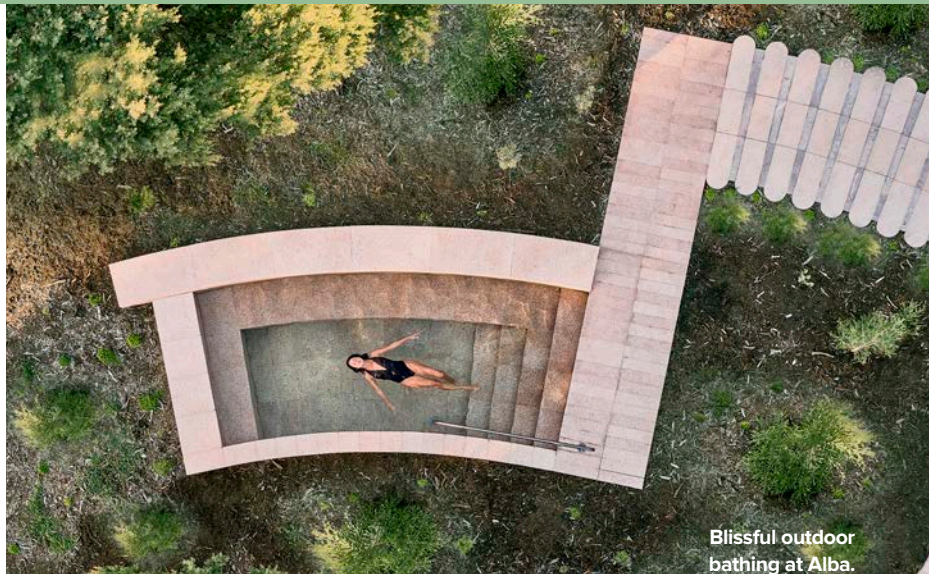
Travel news

EDITED *by* BERNARD O'SHEA

Rise ABOVE

Melbourne hits the roof

It's been closed to the public for 100 years, but now the stunning vantage point atop Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building is open. After years of restoration and building works, visitors can finally explore the iconic building and take in the views of Melbourne city and beyond from the newly re-established Promenade deck. Built in 1880, with a Dome based on the design of Brunelleschi's Duomo in Florence, the Royal Exhibition Building was the first Australian building to be awarded a UNESCO World Heritage listing. *More at museumsvictoria.com.au*



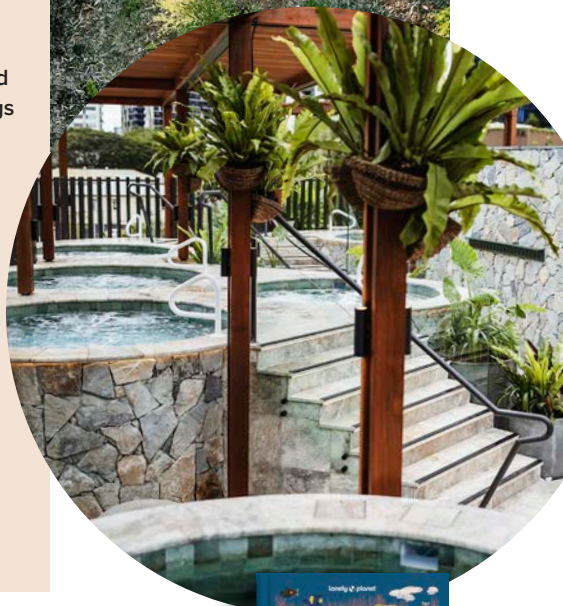
Blissful outdoor bathing at Alba. Below: Soak is Brisbane's first rooftop spa complex.

Bathing BEAUTIES

We like it hot

Our December issue featured enticing spa resorts around the country. Now you can add two newbies to your list. Alba Thermal Springs & Spa on the Mornington Peninsula boasts more than 30 pools, from geothermal to the herbal-infused botanical pool and an invigorating rain pool. Alba's unique outdoor bathing experience also includes a luxurious day spa (don't miss the Hammam Float treatment) and a restaurant menu created by chef and TV presenter, Karen Martini. *Visit albathermalsprings.com.au*

In Brisbane, Soak Bathhouse in West End is set amid lush gardens and green spaces, and features seven mineral spas and pools, saunas, steam room and sundeck. Also on the Gold Coast. *Visit soakbathhouse.com.au for more.*



We're loving ... *The Islands Book, a gorgeous 162-pager from Lonely Planet. It's divided into five regions: the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia and Oceania. Among the Australian islands are Lord Howe, the Tiwai Islands, Christmas Island and remote Macquarie Island, located between Tasmania and Antarctica. lonelyplanet.com*



WORDS BY EVA-MARIA BOBBERT. PHOTOGRAPHY: ROGER KNIGHT. © C.MCCONVILLE.