



MOUNT TOMAH BOTANICAL GARDENS BY LARA WALSH

# AUSTRALIA | Public & Private Gardens, Rainforests, Cloud Forests, Ancient Culture, & the Great Barrier Reef

12 DAYS from \$5,950 | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **MAR–MAY; SEP–NOV**

**DISCOVER** true splendor Down Under as you explore some of Australia’s best public and private gardens. The island’s biodiversity unfolds as you travel from Melbourne to Sydney to Tropical North Queensland, including an excursion to the spectacular Great Barrier Reef. You’ll appreciate the variety of habitats and garden styles showcased in this itinerary, which presents endemic species plus plants from around the world in 19th-century colonial farm gardens, formal European-style gardens, eco-conscious contemporary parklands, and along the rainforest trails of the aboriginal Kuku Yalanji people.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore three of Australia’s acclaimed Royal Botanical Gardens at Victoria, Cranbourne, and Sydney.
- Spend a day on the Great Barrier Reef cruising, swimming, snorkeling, and admiring marine life from an underwater observatory.
- Dine on an unusual, rainforest-to-table lunch at the Botanical Ark.
- Discover the diverse species and landscape styles of private gardens like Cruden Farm, Vaucluse House, Cloudehill, Blue Mountains Mount Tomah, Tabu, and more.
- Examine the spiritual connections between Australia’s aboriginal people and the natural world on a Dreamtime Gorge Walk.

## WHAT’S INCLUDED?

- Specialist guide
- Private transportation
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Bottled water on the bus
- Carbon offsetting



MOSSMAN GORGE BY MICHAEL ZIMMER





SYDNEY HARBOUR BY COREY LEOPOLD

## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

### Day 1 | **Melbourne**

Upon arrival at Melbourne International Airport, after completing Immigration and Customs formalities and collecting your luggage, exit into the Arrivals Hall where you will be met by your local Melbourne gardens guide. You will then transfer to your hotel for check-in. (Pre-registered rooms for immediate occupancy have been arranged). Early this afternoon, meet your gardens guide for a one hour walking tour of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. You will take a fifteen minute walk from hotel to Swanston Street, then a tram to the Gardens. There are 28 different collections to visit, including the rare and threatened Victorian native plants, and the Australian Forest Walk, which focuses on forest species from impressive forest giants to middle and understory trees and shrubs. After your time at the Gardens, you will return to your hotel for dinner and overnight. *Overnight at Clarion Suites Gateway (LD)*

### Day 2 | **Melbourne**

This morning you will travel south to visit the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne. The Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne is one of Victoria's most precious areas of native bushland and offers nature-lovers the chance to explore 363 hectares of untouched heathlands, wetlands and woodlands. The Garden features a treasure trove of native Australian flora, dramatic sculptures, exhibition gardens, and the rockpool waterway, with 170,000 Australian native plants found in contemporary landscaped display gardens. It is surrounded by remnant bushland and wetlands; a protected site of State significance for biodiversity conservation, where 370 species of native plants can be found, as well as 20 native mammal species and 11 amphibian species. Arranged for your group is a private tour through the Garden in the comfort of the Garden Explorer. You will be able to "hop off" at points of interest. Enjoy lunch in the Garden's Boon Warrung Café, and then depart for a visit at the Cruden Farm, the garden of the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. Dame Elisabeth loved this garden that she designed

and planted all those years ago: the lake, the herbaceous borders, picking garden, shrub walks, and famous avenue of lemon-scented gums that leads to the house. Situated on 133 acres, Cruden Farm comprises the internationally renowned garden, ornamental lakes, rolling pastoral paddocks, and hidden sections of indigenous vegetation. You will see all the components: the walled garden, Italianate garden, native garden, vegetables, and rich flower borders. Dinner this evening is on own. *Overnight at Clarion Suites Gateway (BL)*

### Day 3 | **Melbourne**

This morning, travel to Olinda in the Dandenong Ranges to the delightful cool climate garden, Cloudehill. The roads through the Dandenong Ranges are highly scenic with views across surrounding valleys to the mountains. Look for Sherbrooke mountain ash, perhaps one of the finest forest trees in the world. Cloudehill incorporates both flower farm plantings and nursery propagation specimens. Some of Cloudehill's venerable plants go all the way back to the 1920s and many have interesting origins. Following the visit to Cloudehill, return to Melbourne where you will visit the historic garden at the Heide Museum of Modern Art. When Sunday and John Reed purchased Heide it was a neglected former dairy farm. After fifty years of vision, dedication and sheer hard work, the Reeds molded Heide into a personal Eden, connecting art with nature and creating a nourishing environment for the artists they championed. Dinner is on own this evening. *Overnight at Clarion Suites Gateway (B)*

### Day 4 | **Sydney**

This morning you will be transferred to the Melbourne Airport for your flight to Sydney. Upon arrival you will be met by your local Sydney specialist guide and transferred to your hotel. This afternoon you will be given a cruise on Sydney Harbour via Captain Cook Cruises' Premium Harbour Story Cruise Line. The Harbour Story combines the old and the new, the fun and the amazing, the sights and the characters, all told through a series of stories and insightful commentary. The cruise route can vary, depending on what's happening on the harbor, but guarantee sightings include Sydney's iconic landmarks such as the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Royal Botanic Gardens, Garden Island Naval Base, Taronga Zoo,

Government House, palatial waterfront homes, and Fort Denison. The Harbour Story operates on premium sightseeing vessels with spacious outdoor decks and expansive viewing windows from our all-weather indoor lounges. After the cruise, you will have time to return to the hotel on own – a leisurely stroll is suggested – before meeting this evening for a delicious buffet dinner at the Sydney Tower Restaurant for spectacular views over Sydney. *Overnight at Grace Hotel (BD)*

## Day 5 | Sydney

This morning embark on a walk through Wendy's Secret Garden at Lavender Bay, with pristine views of the harbor, and hidden in the shadows of office towers and highways – a slice of paradise. Wendy Whiteley (wife of the late Australian artist, Brett Whiteley) and her gardeners have transformed this plot of land into a beautiful public garden. In the afternoon, take in breathtaking views of Sydney Harbour and the beautiful northern beaches on the way to a native coastal garden near Newport Beach. A wonderful wildlife habitat has been created in this stunning contemporary ocean-side garden, taking advantage of the brilliant views of the cliffs, beach, and the ocean below. This evening dine at Nick's Seafood Restaurant overlooking Cockle Bay. *Overnight at Grace Hotel (BD)*

## Day 6 | Sydney

After breakfast depart Sydney for the Blue Mountains, traveling along the Bells Line of Road to the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah. The Garden covers 28 hectares on the summit of a basalt-capped peak. At 1,000 meters above sea level, you'll find cool climate plants from around the world, specifically from Australia, Chile, Peru, New Zealand, New Caledonia, and Africa.

This afternoon visit two private gardens at Mount Wilson. Mount Wilson is famous for its cool climate exotic gardens and during Spring and Fall are a blaze of color. Nooroo is a privately owned garden of great beauty and botanical interest. Built and planted in 1880 by William Hay, the original plantings include English oaks, chestnuts, ash, and cedars, which are underplanted with thousands of bulbs, including, bluebells, daffodils, and crocus. Windyridge is one of those quintessential cool-climate gardens, growing on the rich soils of an old volcanic plug. Towering trees, terraced lawns, stone walls, a waterfall, lilypond, sculpture and focal points – this well-designed garden has all the features you'd expect in a large garden. Return to Sydney late in the afternoon – dinner is on own this evening. *Overnight at Grace Hotel (B)*

## Day 7 | Sydney

This morning enjoy a guided walk through the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney to begin a sightseeing tour of Sydney's Eastern Suburbs including world-famous Bondi Beach. The Royal Botanic Gardens is an oasis of 30 hectares in the heart of the city. Wrapped around Farm Cove at the edge of Sydney Harbour, the Royal Botanic Gardens occupies one of Sydney's most spectacular positions. Established in 1816, the organization is the oldest scientific institution in the country and home to

an outstanding collection of plants from Australia and overseas. The Domain surrounds the Royal Botanic Garden. In colonial times this land was the Governor's buffer of privacy between his residence and the penal colony. Roads and paths were constructed through the Domain by 1831 to allow public access. Since that time it has remained a place for the people.

Following the sightseeing tour, arrive at Vaucluse House for a house and garden tour. Vaucluse House is one of Sydney's few 19th-century mansions still surrounded by its original gardens and wooded grounds. When the towering colonial explorer, barrister, and politician William Charles Wentworth bought the house in 1827, it was a single-story cottage in a secluded valley of partly-cleared coastal scrub. In fits and starts over the next five decades, William and his wife Sarah developed Vaucluse into a large and picturesque estate. The grounds were extended and flourished to cover most of the present-day suburb of Vaucluse but the main house of the family's dreams was left unfinished.

In 1915 Vaucluse House became Australia's first official house museum and continues to entice visitors to its lush and still secluded grounds. In 2015, Vaucluse House celebrated 100 years of being a museum. Enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at leisure, relaxing or exploring Sydney on our own. *Overnight at Grace Hotel (B)*

## Day 8 | Palm Cove

Today you will be transferred to the Sydney Airport to check in for your flight to Cairns in tropical north Queensland. Your Sydney gardens guide will travel with you to Cairns. Upon arrival at the Cairns Airport, board your private coach and travel for just a few minutes to Freshwater and Tabu Gardens. This lush tropical garden sets the scene for the

tropical section of your tour. Nestled at the foot of Mt Whitfield, Tabu is cleverly designed with mass plantings sculpted into the hillside, benefitting from a rainforest background. After lunch and your time at Tabu, you will travel north along the Captain Cook Highway to the seaside resort town of Palm Cove. After checking in to your hotel, you'll have time to relax and explore Palm Cove on your own. Pullman Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa is an upscale resort located on the southern end of the beach in beautiful Palm Cove. Enjoy dinner in the Resort's Temple of Tastes Restaurant. *Overnight at Pullman Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa (BLD)*

## Day 9 | Palm Cove

Today enjoy a delightful cruise to the Great Barrier Reef aboard Quicksilver. You will be collected from your hotel by Quicksilver coach and transferred to Port Douglas. Quicksilver takes you to Agincourt Reef, at the very outer edge of the Barrier Reef. Here, special reefs known as 'ribbons' run parallel to the Continental Shelf. Adjacent to the Coral Sea trench, these ribbon reefs are recognized as the most pristine eco-systems in the reef's environment. Clear water provides the best possible underwater visibility, encourages rich coral growth and supports spectacular marine life. Choose to dive, snorkel, or stay dry and





explore the stunning reef from the comfort of a Quicksilver semi-submersible, just one meter underwater. Watch the fish feeding from Quicksilver's unique underwater viewing platform and underwater observatory or fly in a helicopter over the reef (additional cost). A delicious smorgasbord lunch is served on board. Return to Palm Cove and your hotel. *Overnight at Pullman Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa (BL)*

## Day 10 | Palm Cove

An exciting story awaits you this morning at Botanical Ark. Alan and Susie Carle have an ambitious goal – they want to save the rainforest. So instead of simply writing a check, they are going about it with a mix of creativity, practicality, and sheer hard work. At Botanical Ark, in the lush countryside outside Mossman in far North Queensland, the Carles grow 3000 different species of rainforest plants, more than 400 of which are edible. One of the Carle strategies is to use their love of food and their passion for new flavors to lure you into saving the rainforest by eating it. So lunch at Botanical Ark is a treat. But first there's a tour of the garden, crammed with unusual fruits and the stunning flowers of tropical heliconias, costus, and other treasures. From Botanical Ark, travel to Whyanbeel Arboretum, a former sugar cane farm nestled in the hills of the Upper Daintree. Peter Sargent loves living close to the wilderness. His arboretum is so much more; it's a tropical botanic garden and flower farm. Ferns, mosses, and native peppers grow along the shaded river bank. Exotic vanilla orchids grow among native vines scrambling up palms and trees. Peter's family runs a cut-flower business, producing gingers, heliconias, and palms. Many of the bromeliads and cordylines growing there have been bred by Peter and his father. Return to Palm Cove later this afternoon. *Overnight at Pullman Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa (BL)*

## Day 11 | Palm Cove

This morning, travel to Mossman Gorge, part of the traditional lands of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people, located in the southern part of the World Heritage Listed Daintree National Park. Mossman Gorge is one of the few places in the country that visitors can gain an insight into the lives, culture, and beliefs of Australia's Indigenous population and their connection to the natural environment. Join a guided 90 minute Dreamtime Gorge Walk to get a deeper insight into the ancient flora and fauna of the rainforest, and learn about traditional plant uses and Kuku Yalanji culture. You will be welcomed with a traditional 'smoking' ceremony that cleanses and wards off bad spirits. The walk then meanders through stunning rainforest and takes in traditional huts or humpies. Your interpretive Indigenous guide will demonstrate traditional plant use, identify bush food sources, and provide an enchanting narrative of the rainforest and their special relationship with this unique tropical environment. Your guide will also demonstrate traditions like making bush soaps and ochre painting. At the end of the tour enjoy traditional bush tea and damper. This afternoon, delight in a tour of a private garden in Port Douglas. Visit the nursery and garden of local horticulturist and landscaper John Sullivan. John will share his knowledge of subtropical gardening and plans to develop Mossman Botanic Garden. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at the resort's Temple of Tastes Restaurant. *Overnight at Pullman Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa (B)*

## Day 12 | Depart

Today you will be transferred to the Cairnes Airport for your flight to Sydney, and then onward flight to your home city.



## LAND PRICING

**\$5,950** (18 participants + 1 leader)

**\$6,550** (14 participants + 1 leader)

Rates are per person in double occupancy (plus 1 complimentary from Los Angeles, single occupancy). *Single supplement: \$1,560.*

**Cost includes:** Accommodations, meals as indicated, specialist guides, transportation, gratuities for guides and drivers, activities per itinerary, carbon offset, bottled water on bus.

**Cost does not include:** International and internal airfare, items of a personal nature, optional activities, visa fee.

*Price valid through May 2020.*

## TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/ Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

## THE FINE PRINT

*A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure.*

