

the guide.

and enough harmony to lure back wallabies. Of the 31 refurbished rooms, courtyard suites are the pick of the bunch, however, rooms in the ex-hostel are budget-friendly and some self-contained. There aren't any restaurants nearby, but you can buy a barbecue pack or enjoy the retreat's Mod Oz cooking in the fairy-lit courtyard or indoors. From \$140 per double. **South Coast Rd, Flinders Chase, (08) 8559 7275, kiwv.com.**

When nearby **Southern Ocean Lodge** opens in autumn, it's going to be touted as Australia's top luxury destination, complete with exclusive restaurant, day spa, and private beach access. From \$1800 per double, all inclusive. **Hanson Bay Rd, Hanson Bay (02) 9918 4355, ballielodges.com.au.**

If beach bling isn't your thing, Kangaroo Island has plenty of holiday rentals. **Island Beach** is a favourite among South Australia's mainlanders, for its protected aspect and proximity to Penneshaw. **Alchemy on Island Beach** (Pennington Rd, Island Beach, (08) 8272 2794, alchemyonislandbeach.com.au, \$220 per double) is a great choice – a weatherboard with two doubles and a bunkroom. Just-built **Island Beach Lodge** (Borda Rd, Island Beach (08) 8331 3059, malibulodge.com.au, \$230 per double) is for the urban traveller. It has seven rooms, six bathrooms and two kitchens, and can be split in half and rented as two residences.

things to do

Locals chuckle at tourists pushing bicycles down the ferry ramp who plan to scope the isle in a day or two. At 155km long and 55km wide, it's Australia's third-largest island. The population hovers at 4400, but can swell to twice this size with tourists who come for wildlife, relaxation and bountiful produce.

Seal Bay is a favourite for tours of its 700-odd sea lion colony, while the lookout at **Admirals Arch** in Flinders Chase National Park offers a great view of the fur seals. Also in the park are the well-named **Remarkable Rocks**. Visit privately owned **Hanson Bay Sanctuary** for koalas; grab a torch and embark on their dusk tour. Another nightly event is watching the fairy penguins come ashore in Penneshaw and Kingscote.

In summer, on the south coast the surf's up – **Vivonne Bay** was voted "Best Beach in Australia" in 2004 by scientists from Sydney University. North side's **Island and Snelling beaches** are very popular, so be prepared to stumble over surf skis and buckets. If you dream of swimming with dolphins, take a ride with **KI Marine Tours** (0427 315 286). Get on the guide's good side, and he might even fetch you some abalone. Or, do as the locals do and find a quiet spot to drop a line. **d.**
Thanks to the *South Australian Tourism Commission* for assistance with this story, tel: 1300 655 276 or visit: southaustralia.com.

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