

REVIEW | HOTEL

The Bond Store, Stanley, Tasmania

By Kerry van der Jagt

Check-in

After an overnight crossing on the *Spirit of Tasmania*, it feels intuitive to drive clockwise towards the east coast. But we're going against the spin to Stanley in the north-west, a one-hour, 40-minute drive from Devonport. More than a fishing village, Stanley is the gateway to the vast wilderness of the Tarkine forest. For two days, the Bond Store will be our waterfront base. Built between 1859 and 1861 as a wharf store, the bluestone building has been transformed into two luxury self-contained apartments. Ours is the one-bedroom Bond Store ONE, the other is the two-bedroom Bond Store TWO. The naming is as simple as the key-box instructions. They opened in October 2025 and we are among the first to stay.

The look

If these bluestone walls could talk, they would speak of storms and shipwrecks and families whose lives were entwined with the sea. Master stonemason Josh O'Connor spent a year repairing the original walls, while owners Julian and Tracey Jacobs – sixth-generation locals – worked with heritage architects David Denman & Associates to transform the warehouse into luxury accommodation. Leather armchairs, soft throws, vintage finds and family heirlooms feature throughout, with contemporary touches such as bespoke lighting, a Scandi-style fireplace and art by Tasmanian creators ensuring the space never drifts into Granny May territory. There's a two-person sauna in the courtyard, which invites a brave dip in the sea afterwards. I prefer to pass the hours in the light-filled sunroom. Private parking, EV charging, smart TVs – tick, tick, tick.

The room

The upstairs bedroom works the old-new vibe to perfection. The porthole and sloped, timber-lined ceiling establishes a maritime mood, balanced by contemporary cabinetry and relaxed linens layered across the king bed. An earthy palette of olive green, tan and charcoal reflects the landscape outside. Nothing has been overlooked – from the electric blanket to a choice of pillows that would keep Goldilocks happy, to robes, slippers and yoga mat. I evaluate the lighting plan, which even the most esteemed properties can fail. The deep bathtub sits under skylights, which makes daytime reading a joy, matched by excellent lighting over the bathroom mirror and easy-to-operate bedside lights. Even the wheel-sized porthole, which could shine light into the room at some ungodly hour, comes with a custom-made cover that fits neatly over it.



From top: The bluestone building; bedroom with porthole light; courtyard sauna; Stanley is the gateway to the Tarkine; the cosy lounge. Photos: Renee Thurston



If the bluestone walls could talk, they would speak of storms and shipwrecks.

Food + drink

The all-Tasmanian welcome basket includes sparkling wine, cheese, sweet treats and crackers, with breakfast provisions of sourdough, eggs, milk, honey, yoghurt and granola. There are fresh-ground beans for the De'Longhi coffee machine plus T2 teas. You could cook up a storm in the modern kitchen, but on the first night, we dine at the Stanley Hotel Bistro, famous for its fresh seafood and Cape Grim beef; on the second, we pick up takeaway from Hursey Seafoods.

Out + about

Perfectly positioned between the harbour and the base of the monolith known as the Nut, the heart of the town is a five-minute stroll away. I start on the Heritage Walk but am distracted by billboards showing where scenes from 2016's *The Light Between Oceans* were filmed, and a stretch of Victorian cottages reborn as shops and galleries. Don't miss Providore 24 for gourmet supplies and Stanley Wine Bar for a splash of whimsy. The Nut calls (walk to the top or take the chairlift) but not as loudly as little penguins coming ashore at Godfrey's Beach (September-March). The 125-kilometre Tarkine Drive loop road is one of the best day-trips in the country.

THE VERDICT

Exhibiting a keen sense of place, character-driven design and quality craftsmanship, the Bond Store delivers a unique retreat that celebrates the building's past.

THE ESSENTIALS

Bond Store ONE from \$590 for two people, depending on the season. See stanleybondstore.com.au

OUR RATING OUT OF FIVE

The writer stayed as a guest of the Bond Store. See stanleybondstore.com.au.

HIGHLIGHT Sitting on the deck as the sky flames red, listening to the sounds of little penguins calling from the rocks below.
LOWLIGHT There's only one toilet and it is upstairs.

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?

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Traveller

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