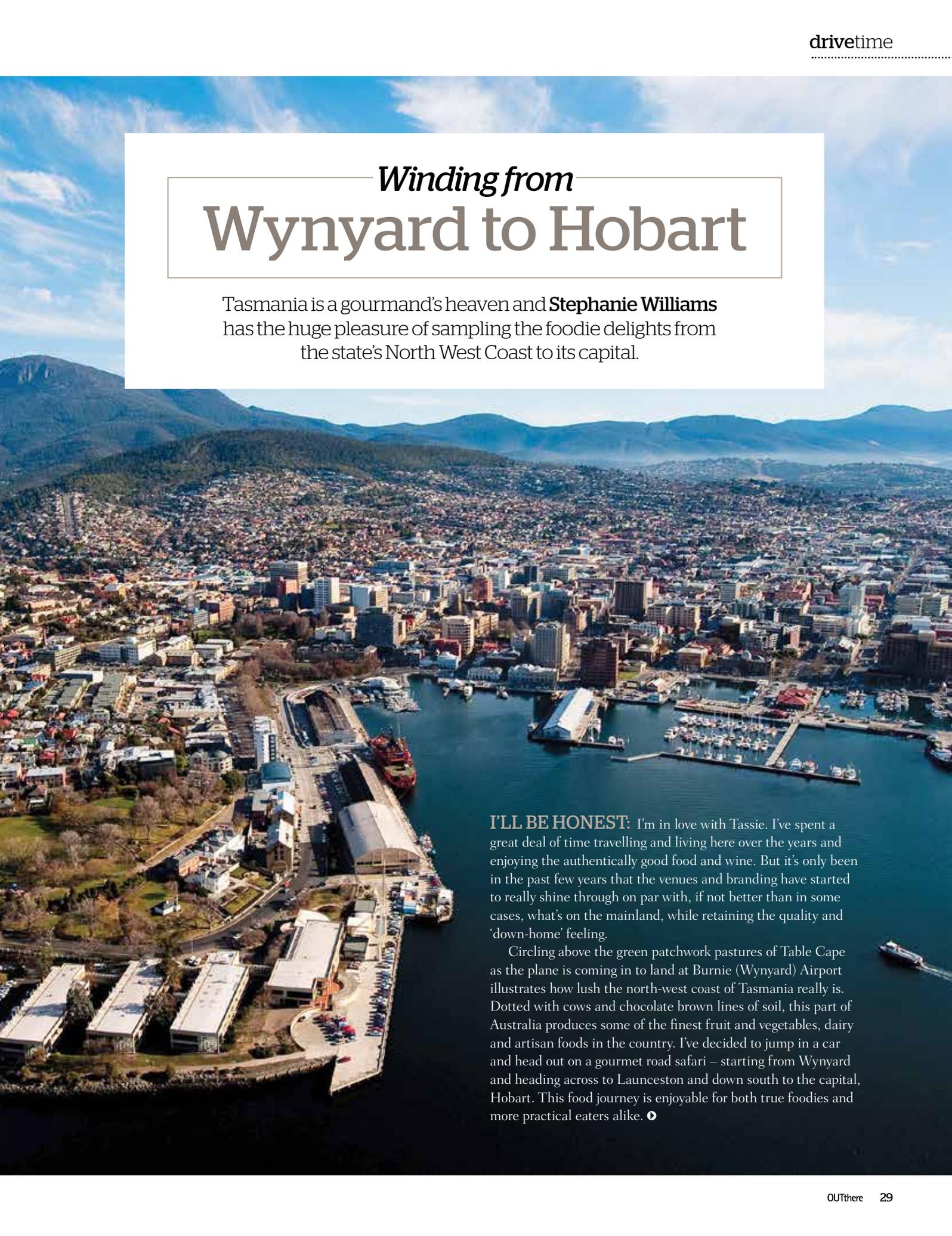


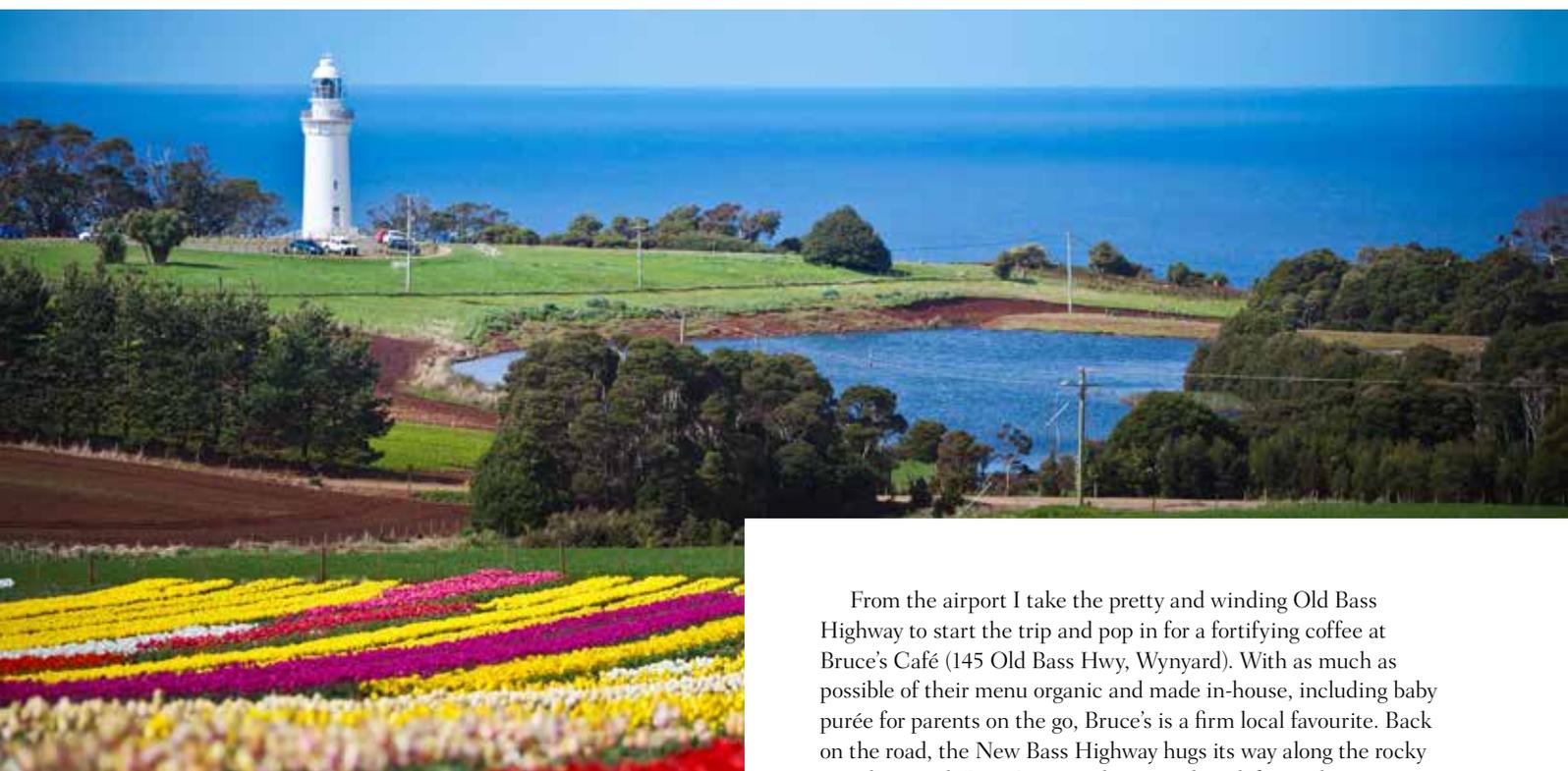
Winding from Wynyard to Hobart

Tasmania is a gourmand's heaven and **Stephanie Williams** has the huge pleasure of sampling the foodie delights from the state's North West Coast to its capital.



I'LL BE HONEST: I'm in love with Tassie. I've spent a great deal of time travelling and living here over the years and enjoying the authentically good food and wine. But it's only been in the past few years that the venues and branding have started to really shine through on par with, if not better than in some cases, what's on the mainland, while retaining the quality and 'down-home' feeling.

Circling above the green patchwork pastures of Table Cape as the plane is coming in to land at Burnie (Wynyard) Airport illustrates how lush the north-west coast of Tasmania really is. Dotted with cows and chocolate brown lines of soil, this part of Australia produces some of the finest fruit and vegetables, dairy and artisan foods in the country. I've decided to jump in a car and head out on a gourmet road safari – starting from Wynyard and heading across to Launceston and down south to the capital, Hobart. This food journey is enjoyable for both true foodies and more practical eaters alike. ▶



From the airport I take the pretty and winding Old Bass Highway to start the trip and pop in for a fortifying coffee at Bruce's Café (145 Old Bass Hwy, Wynyard). With as much as possible of their menu organic and made in-house, including baby purée for parents on the go, Bruce's is a firm local favourite. Back on the road, the New Bass Highway hugs its way along the rocky coastline, with Bass Strait to the immediate left, until we arrive at the seaside city of Burnie.

Burnie was originally an industrial port city, established to transport the bounty of the nearby mines, forestry and manufacturing, and is still one of Australia's busiest ports. Whisky lovers should now take a turn off the main highway to visit Hellyers Road Distillery (153 Old Surrey Rd, Burnie). Established 16 years ago and inspired by Henry Hellyer, one of the gutsy original surveyors of this rugged part of Van Diemen's Land back in 1825, the distillery now produces world-class whisky, runs tours and has a fully licensed restaurant. Try the local north-west coast beef and whisky pie.

For something less alcoholic, Run Rabbit Run (69 Mount St, Burnie), is a new eatery serving up a classic café menu using local produce. Their breakfast is a killer, particularly the smashed avocado with organic Red Cow feta cheese, from a nearby dairy using non-homogenised milk with the cream on top. Also try The Otis Room (Level 1, 69 Mount St, Burnie), for top live music, or the health-focused Alchemy Café (640 Forth Rd) is a few kilometres off the highway in the hamlet of Forth, in an atmospheric old post office. Wild (87 Main Rd, Penguin) offers the finest food on the coast for lunch and dinner.

Home to some of the best apples in Australia, Devonport is the next stop on this foodie road trip. Laneway Cafe (2/38 Steele St) is the result of a few local boys learning their coffee craft in Melbourne and returning home to open this café and deli – and the coffee is seriously good. Across the Mersey River in East Devonport is the world-famous Petuna Seafoods (134 Tarleton St, East Devonport) – supplier of top seafood to restaurants like Tetsuya's and Flying Fish in Sydney. Petuna's relationship with Tetsuya Wakuda is so strong that he often attends the Devonport Food and Wine Festival, held in March each year. Also try La Lucha (24 King Street) for fresh Mexican, or Playfish (53b Forbes St) for casual coffee and sandwiches.

Previous page: An aerial view of Hobart. Above and this image: Tulips and Table Cape Lighthouse at Table Cape; Tasman Bridge at night.



Out on the highway again, rolling through the green hills and lakes, I'm coming up to the delicious trilogy of House of Anvers chocolates, Ashgrove Cheese and the Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm. Each is worth a stop for taste tests and their delicious products are all for sale. House of Anvers (9025 Bass Hwy, Latrobe) has a particularly good café with hearty European-style sandwiches and traditional Aztec hot chocolate. Ashgrove Cheese (6173 Bass Hwy, Elizabeth Town) pack their cheese to travel and the raspberry ice-cream at Christmas Hills is to die for. Also try the Colonial-style White House Bakery (170 King St, Westbury) who bake all their bread in a wood-fired oven (made by Convict hands).

Next stop is Launceston, the second-largest city on the island and where our focus turns to beer. Home of the iconic Boag's Brewery (39 Williams St), Launceston and its surrounds are also now home to a burgeoning craft brewing scene. Van Dieman Brewing Company (537 White Hills Rd) have set up shop among the century-old oak trees in the hamlet of Evandale. Try the Ragged Jack Pale Ale or one of their limited releases. Crown Cellars (Cnr Bathurst & Elizabeth St) is not your average bottle shop – the beers geeks running the show feature the best range of craft beers in the state. Also head out to the Tamar Valley to explore the cool-climate wineries like Bay of Fires, Josef Chromy, Pipers Brook and Tamar Ridge.



Back on the food trail now and heading due south toward Hobart, lies the town of Perth, a much smaller version of its WA cousin. The highlight here is Ut Si (86 Main Road, Perth), a self-proclaimed 'righteous eating' café in an historic church. They grow their own vegetables, built a wood-fired oven for baking, only use organic and ethically slaughtered meat, and source as locally as possible. Try their delicious frittata, salads and burgers, and don't leave without a house blend chai. Also try Red Bridge Café and Providore (137 High St) in Campbell Town. ●

Above and this image: Cheese at Garagistes; evening on Launceston waterfront.



Down the road is Callington Mill (1 Mill Lane, Oatlands), which was built in 1837 but lay dormant until a huge restoration job in 2010. You can now take tours of the historic mill, buy local flour or enjoy delicious flour-based snacks like sandwiches and scones in the café.

With the big smoke of Hobart approaching, it's time for some serious food and wine action. Hobart, in recent years, has been elevated from quiet regional city to a 'must visit' destination, firmly in top-10 lists around the globe. The opening of the incredible MONA gallery (651-655 Main Rd, Berriedale) kickstarted the revival. Visit top venues like Garagistes (103 Murray Street, Hobart) for innovative Tasmania-produce driven dishes; Pigeon Hole Café (93 Goulburn Street, West Hobart) for great coffee; and Ethos Eat Drink (100 Elizabeth St, Hobart) for clean, no-fuss flavours. No trip to Hobart is complete without a walk through the iconic Salamanca Market on Saturdays, and now also a trip to A Common Ground, the joint initiative by Gourmet Farmer Matthew Evans and cheesemaker Nick Haddow. Here you can pick up the finest local honey, cheese, chocolates, smallgoods (from Matthew's own farm) and contemporary pottery. Also try a Gourmania food tour (www.gourmaniafoodtours.com.au) with local Mary McNeil, who will take you through the hidden secrets of Hobart's food scene. [O]



Round-up

STAY

Islington Hotel

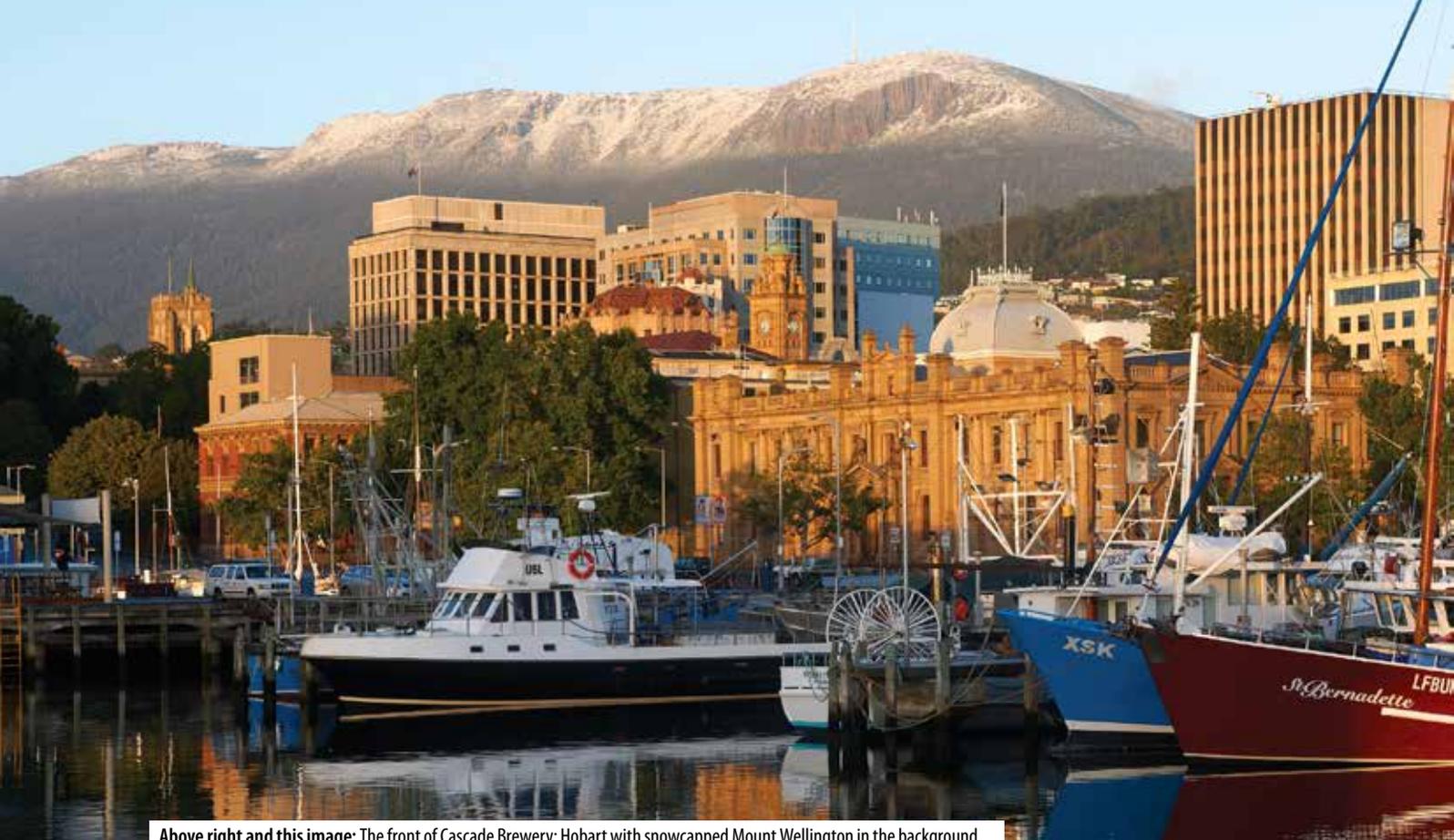
321 Davey Street, Hobart
Boutique style accomodation wwith rooms from \$299 per night.

Peppers Seaport Hotel

28 Seaport Boulevard, Launceston
Modern studios overlooking the Launceston marina from \$179 per night.

MORE INFO

www.discovertasmania.com.au



Above right and this image: The front of Cascade Brewery; Hobart with snowcapped Mount Wellington in the background.