

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa

Design & Architecture

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa is Australia's first luxury conservation-based resort.

Nestled between two of Australia's most prominent national parks and bordering the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa forms the centrepiece for unique experiences and insights into Australia's wildlife, history and cultural heritage.

Occupying just two per cent of a 4,000-acre conservancy reserve, Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa combines the expectations of the high-end traveller with a commitment to broader social, ecological and environmental sustainability. Heralding a new era of luxury travel in Australia, the resort actively protects its surrounding habitat and indigenous wildlife species while delivering the first-class standards and quality expected from luxury resorts.

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa is the only Australian resort in recent history to receive permission to be built adjacent to a World Heritage Area.

From an architectural perspective, the resort was built with respect to the Australian identity and local rural history. Its design, inspired by original Federation style, is reminiscent of traditional rural Australian homesteads.

The architecture defers to its spectacular natural context. The range of materials, which consists predominantly of timber and sandstone under traditional steel roofing, has been chosen to blend harmoniously into the landscape.

Accommodation

The resort features 40 individual secluded suites for a maximum of 90 guests. Each suite has its own indoor / outdoor swimming pool, private verandah, separate living and bedroom areas, separate walk-in wardrobe, luxurious en-suite bathroom and double-sided fireplace.

Suite configurations include:

- ✓ 36 Heritage Suites: one-bedroom king suites for a maximum of 2 guests. Internal area of 83 square metres, verandah space of 85 square metres with a 2.5m x 7m swimming pool built into the deck. Four of these one-bedroom suites are available in twin configuration.
- ✓ 3 Wollemi Suites: two-bedroom suites for a maximum of 4 guests. Internal area of 201 square metres, verandah space of 131 square metres with a 4m x 7m swimming pool built into the deck.
- ✓ 1 Wolgan Suite: two-bedroom suite plus separate staff quarters and gourmet kitchen, for a maximum of 6 guests. Internal area of 245 square metres, verandah space of 168 square metres with a 4m x 7m swimming pool built into the deck.

Sustainable Building Principles

Built on the same principles as Emirates' acclaimed Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa in Dubai, Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa incorporates as many Ecologically Sustainable Design principles

as possible, including rainwater collection, full recycling of all domestic water, heat exchange technology to reduce electricity consumption and the use of solar panels for all hot water systems. Additional measures aimed at reducing the resort's carbon footprint include efficient room orientation to reduce heating and cooling requirements, modern insulation envelopes and wide traditional verandahs, which increase airflow around and through the buildings. The resort even makes use of traditional windmills instead of electrical pumps.

During the construction phase, all contractors on site received extensive training on how to prevent environmental damage and protect the local fauna and flora. All construction vehicles were washed to prevent the transmission of invasive plant seeds into the valley. All waste material was removed from the valley, and disposed of via municipal safe sites. Not a single tree was destroyed during the construction of the resort.

Wherever possible, natural and recycled materials such as sandstone and timber were sourced within a 100-km radius around the property – the sandstone, for instance, came from nearby Mangrove Mountain in New South Wales. Original farm-fencing posts from the property were recycled for use on the resort and fallen 'oldwood' Eucalyptus trees found on the reserve were milled to create unique furniture pieces.

Most of the tradesmen, craftsmen and sub-contractors were also employed in the region. This approach not only assisted the growth of the local economy at a time when this was most needed, but it also significantly reduced the construction's carbon footprint.

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa is the only Australian resort in recent history to receive permission to be built adjacent to a World Heritage Area. It adheres to World Heritage Committee standards and has exceeded the minimum requirements of construction controls imposed by both State and Federal Agencies – positioning Emirates as the only foreign investor carrier with such level of commitment to Australia.

Interior Design

From an interior design perspective, Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa has been fully committed to supporting regional artisans, and much of the furniture and artwork were commissioned locally.

Local carpenters were commissioned to create the resort's signature furniture collection, the Wolgan Valley Furniture Collection – bespoke timber furniture pieces using superb Australian hardwood, much of it recycled. Local ironsmiths created the resort's lamps, furniture and door knockers. Local artists also designed unique pieces for the resort, from hand-made porcelain jugs and colonial-style leadlight windows to lamps made from carefully selected and recycled industrial artefacts.

The colour palette is strongly inspired by the natural colours of the stunning landscape backdrop of Wolgan Valley.

Main Homestead

Inspired by original Federation style, the Main Homestead includes the reception and guest services area, a fully equipped business centre, a conference space for up to 90 guests and a concept store developed by Interior Design Firm Chhada Siembieda Australia and inspired by retail design principles from iconic Australian brand R.M. Williams.



The Homestead also includes the Country Kitchen, a providore-style casual dining room serving lunch and light meals throughout the day; the Valley Bar & Terrace, which offers commanding panoramic views of the spectacular Wolgan Valley below; a walk-in wine cellar; and the Creekside Room – a private dining room seating up to 12 guests.

The Wolgan Dining Room, where breakfast and dinner are served, is the Homestead's main dining area. Reminiscent of a traditional Australian dining room, this generous space features a lofty ceiling and impressive double-sided fireplaces with recycled timber beam from the property. To give it a feeling of privacy and make the experience more intimate, this area has been filled with large furniture pieces from the Wolgan Valley Furniture Collection.

The walls of books in the private dining room, fabric panelling in the Valley Bar & Terrace, and walls of wine in the walk-in cellar give the smaller rooms of the Main Homestead a personal ambience.

Wolgan Valley Timeless Spa

As with Al Maha, Wolgan Valley incorporates Emirates' own 'Timeless Spa' branded facility. This features six double treatment rooms and offers a distinct range of relaxation, rejuvenation and beauty therapies drawn from techniques used traditionally in various parts of the world.

The design of the spa is rooted in its natural surroundings and all internal spaces of the building direct their focus to uninterrupted and private views of the majestic Wolgan Valley escarpment through full height windows. This relationship with the outdoor setting influenced the natural colour and material palette used for the spa. Colours are muted and calm, appropriate for relaxation. A strong use of recycled timbers from the local area gives a warm, more welcoming feeling to the building.

1832 Heritage Homestead and Kitchen Garden

The property features a very unique original settler farmhouse from 1832. A previously condemned site, the building has been restored to its former glory after two years of meticulous work.

The history of the Homestead is significant. The original land grant was given to European settler William Walker, who built the Homestead in the early 1830s. There is a strong link to Charles Darwin visiting the Homestead in 1836 during his trip to Australia. Darwin stayed as a guest of the Walker family at their nearby Wallerawang Estate before visiting Wolgan Valley the next day.

This specialist work was commissioned to Ian Kiernan. An Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) and former Australian of the Year, Ian is the Chairman and Founder of Clean Up Australia and Clean Up the World, projects which inspire global communities to clean up, fix up and conserve their local environment. In 1998, he was awarded the prestigious United Nations Environment Programme Sasakawa Environment Prize. By trade, Ian is a builder specialising in the stabilisation and restoration of endangered and historic buildings, with over 40 years of experience under his belt.

The stabilisation and restoration of the original Homestead was carried out under the UNESCO Burra Charter, which provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance. The Charter was adopted by the Australian National Committee of ICOMOS – the International Council on Monuments and Sites, a non-



government professional organisation closely linked to UNESCO – on 19th August 1979 at Burra, South Australia.

The Charter recommends preserving as many original features of a heritage building as possible in order to stay true to the craftsmanship of the early settlers.

Techniques used for the stabilisation of the Homestead included unique methods of propping, jacking, tweaking and removal of damaged, termite-affected timbers. Ninety per cent of all windows and doors were repaired and many original domestic fittings and objects have been skilfully displayed in the restored farmhouse.

The Homestead will be used as a starting point for many of the resort's activities. The Heritage Homestead is a 'living museum', covering the Aboriginal, settler and agricultural history of the Valley – giving guests a glimpse into the lives and conditions faced by early Australian settlers.

Guests also enjoy fascinating insights into the domestic lives of the original settlers, with the heritage country garden painstakingly re-established in precisely the same location and format as the original. Today, this garden provides a constant supply of fresh vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts to our kitchens and the spa.

About Turner + Associates Architects

Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa's architecture was commissioned to Australian architecture firm Turner + Associates Architects. Leading edge design, environmentally sustainable design principles, issues relating to buildability, and market awareness inform the trajectory this Sydney-based practice founded in 2001. Buildings designed by Turner + Associates Architects can be found not only in Sydney and New South Wales, but across most states and territories as well as internationally in countries such as Lebanon, China, India and Vietnam. Their current projects include masterplanning, workplace, urban housing, aged care, showroom, industrial, hospitality, houses and, increasingly, hybrid combinations of these typologies.

About Chhada Siembieda Australia

Chhada Siembieda Australia created the resort's interior designs and features. The Sydney-based practice offers superior interior design, and related services, specialising in international luxury hotels and resorts. With projects across Asia and Australia, the company's particular strength is in its meticulous detailing – best seen in the creative furniture, and even artisan-made fabric design. The firm has currently completed more than 100 projects worldwide for leading hospitality brands, in addition to their work on smaller, more intimate and unique hotels.

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