

SIMON CURRANT AM

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE



[simon@wildernesslodges.com.au](mailto:simon@wildernesslodges.com.au)  
0419 538 505  
PO Box 84, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006  
ABN 12 009 590 603

# Introducing Simon Currant AM

Simon is a highly successful tourism investor, developer and operator with thirty-four years of tourism development, consulting and operational experience.

Simon's strength, in either a greenfield site or existing business or destination, is identifying potential for development, business expansion and diversification through to delivering the operating business. He utilises market trend analysis and consumer testing, coupled with stakeholder consultation and his own experience, to create concepts for successful development and brand enhancement.

Simon's hands on experience in tourism ranges from product concept development through to design, construction and operation. Integral to Simon's success is his ability to identify, develop and operate exceptional destination experiences.

He also runs a tourism consultancy business, consulting world-wide for clients including private entities, governments and industry organisations. He is skilled at working with a range of stakeholders and collaborating with public and private entities.



# Projects

*Simon's developments at Cradle Mountain, Lake St Clair, Hobart, Bruny Island, and Strahan have between them won 14 state and 10 national tourism awards for excellence in the areas of accommodation, training, food and beverage, and marine tours and transport.*

*They encapsulate a full understanding of developing and operating within and adjacent to National Parks and World Heritage Area sites, and with adapting and reusing sensitive Heritage listed properties.*

*Projects delivered for other clients include the Devil's Corner Wine & Food Destination on the east coast of Tasmania, a Cadbury World experience for Cadbury Dunedin NZ, and overseeing the build and delivery of a state of the art cruise experience for RACT on the Gordon River, Tasmania.*



## WINE TOURISM

Simon was instrumental in the evolution and development of Australia's Wine Tourism industry. Based in the Hunter Valley he was responsible for developing several large vineyards and wineries, including pioneering winery tourism experiences.

Within three years his developments, including accommodation, retail, restaurants and entertainment, were handling over 300,000 visitors per year.

He was a consultant and operator in the subsequent destination plan for the region which led to \$2billion of private equity investment in winery tourism over the next 20 years.

Simon currently sits on Wine Australia's Expert Assessment Panel administering the \$50m Export and Regional Wines Support Grants Program.



## CRADLE MOUNTAIN LODGE

Simon then moved on to hold the position of General Manager of Hamilton Island, Queensland during which time he purchased the small Pencil Pine property at Cradle Mountain, in the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania. This was redeveloped into Cradle Mountain Lodge, offering nature based tourism coupled with the development of hands on guided experiences in a National Park and World Heritage Area (WHA). Simon's destinalional market development saw Cradle Mountain become a national tourism icon and the most sought after destination in Tasmania.

## CRADLE MOUNTAIN MASTER PLAN

Simon created and developed the \$100m Master Plan for Cradle Mountain and now sits on the Steering Committee overseeing its implementation. This development will see the whole destination become a world class visitor experience, enhancing its brand and maximizing and protecting its highly prized natural heritage values; including better managing high number visitor impacts and visitor safety and initiating mass transit systems.



## THE STRAHAN VILLAGE

In a complete destination development, Simon acquired almost the entire main street of the Tasmanian west coast village of Strahan, developing 125 rooms of tourist accommodation, four restaurants, a bakery, general store, significant tourist retail shops, a pub and staff accommodation and services.

In conjunction with local indigenous partners, he purchased a failing cruise business operating from Strahan into the WHA. The introduction of a state of the art new cruise vessel, implementation of themed guiding and high quality product delivery on the Gordon River Cruises has made this a spectacular success story.

## FRANKLIN MANOR

Whilst on the west coast, Simon acquired the heritage homestead Franklin Manor, then a failed accommodation business. He transformed it to a successful boutique operation, providing exclusive accommodation on the remote west coast.



## PEPPERMINT BAY AND HOBART CRUISES

Simon had long seen the potential of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel south of Hobart. In this stunning waterfront location he conceived and built the award winning destinational cruise, food, wine and retail business of Peppermint Bay.

At the same time in Hobart, he established Hobart Cruises at Brooke St Pier, carrying thousands of passengers from Hobart through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel to Peppermint Bay, Bruny Island and beyond in a completely new Tasmanian experience offering.

## WILDLIFE AND ADVENTURE

He later added two new adventure vessels to the Hobart Cruises fleet, expanding into adventure wildlife tours. These purpose built vessels carried passengers around the spectacular coastline of Bruny Island, travelling beneath towering cliffs and entering deep sea caves, whilst spotting the abundant coastal wildlife.

In 2013, Simon was instrumental in helping establish the float-plane business Tasmanian Air Adventures, carrying passengers from the Hobart waterfront to all corners of the state including remote and inaccessible locations.



# Pumphouse Point

## PUMPHOUSE POINT

After 20 years of consultation with all levels of government and navigating an onerous approvals process, Simon won the rights to develop the Pumphouse Point site at Lake St Clair within the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, in the state's central highlands.

This ground breaking development, opened in January 2015, sees the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings to create a stunning wilderness retreat where the cornerstone is the delivery of exceptional visitor experiences.

In February 2016 it was named "Australia's Best New Tourism Product" at the national tourism awards.





## DEVIL'S CORNER

Simon created the concept for a major destination at the Brown Brothers Devil's Corner vineyard on Tasmania's east coast. He undertook community consultation, worked through the approvals process, briefed the architects, secured several private operator tenants, and project managed the construction and planned the marketing and PR..

Overlooking the beautiful Freycinet Peninsula, the food and wine offerings and funky lookout was opened in November 2015 and is an extremely popular, fun and engaging stop for travellers on Tasmania's newly branded Great Eastern Drive.



# Cadbury World, New Zealand

## CADBURY WORLD

In 2016 Simon was engaged by food giant Mondelez International to create an exciting new Cadbury World experience in Dunedin, New Zealand. The new \$7m Cadbury World was designed to deliver a high quality, sustainable, profitable operation supporting the local economy, providing employment, and leaving a meaningful legacy for the Dunedin community.

As Project Director, Simon engaged leading architects and experience design specialists to deliver a fun and engaging destination in the absence of a working factory. The design also celebrated the site's heritage & manufacturing history, contained within a very sensitive late 1800's heritage building, the Old Dairy.



# Spirit of The Wild, Strahan

## ***SPIRIT OF THE WILD***

Simon conceived the extraordinary vision to create the most environmentally sensitive cruising vessel in the world, then brought the vision to life for business owners RACT, project managing the design and construction of the \$10m, 33.8 metre passenger catamaran *Spirit of The Wild*, for Gordon River Cruises in Strahan.

Purpose-built for cruising in the sensitive environment of the UNESCO Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, *Spirit of the Wild* is the first of its kind in the world. Her unique and ground-breaking hybrid propulsion system allows quiet cruising on electric motors while on the Gordon River, and tannin-like exterior finishes and floor to ceiling glass ensures she almost vanishes on the river, providing true immersion in this incredible environment.



# Apple Thief Cider House, NSW

## APPLE THIEF CIDER HOUSE, BATLOW, NSW

Commenced in 2019, this \$7m project encompasses a multi-faceted development centred around connecting the Apple Thief Cider brand with visitors in an interactive cider-making experience.

A significant cellar door sales operation, including café and retail, will include other agricultural manufacturing offered as a tourism experience, including cheese and chocolate making, distilled products such as schnapps, brandy and whisky, and farm gate products.

Simon provides original concepts, consulting, mentoring, negotiation assistance, and overall project oversighting and direction.



**MILLSTREAM CHICHESTER NATIONAL PARK, PILBARA, WA**

Consulting for Western Australia Department of Economic Development on the ecotourism development potential of the Pilbara, in particular Naturebank Millstream Chichester National Park.

**SEVEN SPIRIT BAY, NT**

Advice on experience development and access improvement at luxury eco-lodge Seven Spirit Bay on the remote Cobourg Peninsula in Garig Gunak Barlu National Park, NT.



# Consultancy

Simon also runs a successful tourism consultancy business specialising in destinational evaluation, including remote and natural area tourism, and ongoing development, management and advocacy. Simon consults both nationally and internationally, providing expert advice in operations, new destination evaluation, market evaluation, and product concept development. His numerous clients have included private entities, all levels of government, and industry associations. He is skilled at working with a range of stakeholders and collaborating with public and private entities.

Recent consulting includes King Island tourism accommodation and experience development; Snowy Valley Shire Destination Management; advice on new walking experiences in Tasmania's central highlands; Advisory Committee West Coast Wilderness Railway; Stanley Accommodation Market Demand Testing and Report.



# Consulting Services

- *Opportunity Assessment*
- *Concept Development*
- *Demand Assessment and Forecasting*
- *Economic Assessment*
- *Business Modeling*
- *Business Planning*
- *Operational Planning*
- *Brand Development*
- *Marketing Planning*
- *Prospectus Creation*
- *Funds Sourcing*
- *EOI Development*

# Professional

*Simon has won state and national Best Business Awards and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship.*

*He was state winner and national finalist for Entrepreneur of the Year.*

*In 2004 he was voted Tasmanian of the Year.*

*Simon is the recipient of an Order of Australia Medal for services to tourism.*

*In February 2013 Simon was awarded the most prestigious and highly regarded award in Australian tourism, the Qantas Australian Tourism Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to the Australian Tourism Industry.*





# Industry Appointments

- Director and immediate past Chairman, Tourism Council Tasmania - the peak tourism industry body representing 1600 operators in the state.
- Immediate past long term Board Member, Tourism Tasmania - Government Business Unit responsible for marketing Tasmania and industry growth.
- Inaugural Chairman of the federal Tourism Quality Council of Australia.
- Previous long term Board Member, TT-Line Company Pty Ltd., which owns and operates two Bass Strait Spirit of Tasmania ferries.
- Member Expert Assessment Panel for the Australian Government's \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package grant program.

# Contact Simon

Simon Currant

[simon@wildernesslodges.com.au](mailto:simon@wildernesslodges.com.au)

PO Box 84

Sandy Bay

Tasmania 7006

AUSTRALIA

ph. (+61) 0419 538 505