

hot spots Eight Nicholson, Perth

Where is it? Cheryl de Jong has style. Her fingerprints can be found throughout Eight Nicholson, an intimate retreat in the streets of Perth's swanky Subiaco suburb. Four spacious guest rooms in an Edwardian residence built in 1905 make up Eight Nicholson. De Jong renovated the building, creating a stunning wooden facade with a landscaped garden at the front, hiding the contemporary gem within.

What's the ambience like? Enter Eight Nicholson and feel instantly soothed; the mood is tranquil and creative. Exposed wooden floors, high decorative ceilings and natural light flowing from the glass back wall combine with international art works.

Each of the guest rooms (top right) is slightly different in configuration and design, with upholstered headboards and soft furnishings in red, charcoal and grey. All four rooms feature Dunlopillo latex beds to sink your weary traveller's body into for a great night's sleep. Goose feather duvets and lambs' wool blankets are also provided. Rooms are spacious with heated-tile en suites, massage shower heads and flat-screen televisions. Broadband internet is available throughout.

What is there to do? De Jong and her husband own a vineyard in the Margaret River area. Most of their grapes go to the premium Cape Mentelle wine label but they keep some for their own, Cape Landing. Expect to taste these hand-crafted wines in the purpose-built tasting cellar, with de Jong pouring and talking guests through the production process.

Anything else we should know? Eight Nicholson has a guest lounge (bottom right) with an open fireplace and exquisite pieces from Singapore, Nigeria, Ghana and Oman, where de Jong spent many years. Her Asian and African influence is found throughout Eight Nicholson in both the art and choice of furnishing. A courtyard with lemon trees is perfect for afternoon tea in the sun.

The pride of Eight Nicholson is the 10-seat wooden dining table with leather and chrome chairs. Many a lively breakfast conversation has been had by guests around this table, which is often used for impromptu meetings between creative media folk staying over in Perth and drawn to Eight Nicholson's design.

Mammoth art canvases hang on the walls facing the glass doors that screen off the alfresco dining deck. A giant candelabra hangs from a rustic chain, creating a flame-lit setting for after-dark drinks. Step outside and be soothed by the sound of a trickling water feature and the clean lines of the topiary garden and courtyard.

What's on the menu? De Jong creates a personalised breakfast for guests each morning, using homemade muesli, fruit compote, yogurt, sourdough breads with preserves and eggs in every form with smoked salmon, spinach and feta.

What's the bottom line? Rooms cost from A\$220 (HK\$1,520) a night for bed and breakfast.

Eight Nicholson is at 8 Nicholson Street, Subiaco, Perth, Australia, tel: 61 8 9382 1881; see www.8nicholson.com.au. *Rachael Oakes-Ash*



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Any downside? Without the optional battery-boost feature, the unit takes about three to five minutes to fully charge. Charging an iPod takes about three times as long as on a computer USB port but at least it charges while you use it.

Where can I get it? The Inflight Power Recharger comes in five colours and costs US\$34.99. Order online at www.inflightpower.com. Delivery to Hong Kong can be arranged.

Catherine Shaw

