



# Greener getaways

Spicers Balfour is aiming to become Australia's first zero-waste hotel.



Fiona Carruthers edits *Sophisticated Traveller* magazine, next issue out on Friday, October 18, in *The Australian Financial Review*.

**A**long with entering the unfamiliar worlds of your colleagues or business associates across the ocean, one of the best aspects of travel for work is learning their daily routines and getting a fresh perspective.

Journalists are especially spoilt, getting to travel with some of the world's most accomplished people. After my share of away stories with entrepreneurs and celebrities, I've acquired handy hints on everything from picking stocks to no-carb/no-meat meal plans and the best fitness routines. (Pilates beats yoga, apparently.)

Interviewing Francis Ford Coppola at his luxury hotel Palazzo Margherita in Bernalda, southern Italy, is the standout of recent years, even if his tips on becoming an Oscar-winning film director haven't quite worked for me yet.

On Tasmania's Three Capes Track, Virgin Australia co-founder Brett Godfrey gave me a lesson on the back of a beer coaster on how to plan an airline business from scratch. It's all in how convincing a diagram you can draw: keep the lines straight and the arrows pointing up.

Before the opening of his luxury Kokomo resort in Fiji, Lang Walker marched me out back to the sewage treatment plant to introduce his 50-odd staff by name. Even when you're the top dog, spend more time back of house than front and your staff will stick, he says.

When your job gives you access to citizens of the world, naturally you're going to press them for those all-important tips. Yet, I'd never thought to drill down into how your average eco-minded rich-lister approaches recycling.

The September 21 climate strike coincided with a (carbon offset) trip from Sydney to rural southern Queensland to chat to Jude Turner



## ECO TIPS FOR HOUSEHOLDS

Spicers Retreats' founder Jude Turner offers her tips for reducing environmental impact.

**Mulch matters:** Have an organic compost bin at home. **Plastic not so fantastic:** Soft plastics can be cleaned and taken to Coles or Woolworths, which both subscribe to the RedCycle program. (You can deposit anything that can be scrunched up, such as chip packets and cling wrap.)

**All together now:** Co-mingled recycling bins are a time-effective, easy option.

**Those pesky tubes:** Items such as empty cosmetic containers and toothpaste tubes can be disposed of for recycling using a TerraCycle collection bin.

**A new leaf:** Get a green waste bin through your local council.



about her 13 Spicer's hotels and retreats across Queensland and NSW. We started with a one-hour tour of the Spicer's Hidden Vale Wildlife Centre, a joint venture with the University of Queensland to breed and study threatened native species.

Over lunch, we got chatting about all things eco, not least how the travel industry is in the firing line. It's to be expected, although many don't realise aviation accounts for only 2 per cent of all carbon emissions, according to the International Air Transport Association.

Turner talks openly about how to make tourism more environmentally friendly. The Hidden Vale resort has significantly reduced its waste, and the wildlife centre has dropped its weekly disposal from a skip to just one bin. Her Brisbane boutique hotel, Spicer's Balfour in New Farm (pictured above), is on track to become the nation's first zero-waste hotel.

Turner has committed the Spicer's portfolio to zero net emissions and zero waste by 2030. Like many hotels today, Spicer's properties have in-room recycling options, and there is an "end-of-life" plan for almost every object.

She has even roped in husband "Skroo", co-founder of Flight Centre, who now jogs to business meetings around Brisbane rather than driving. "We had to sign some documents the other day and he turned up at the lawyers' offices in his running gear," Turner says. "He was a bit sweaty, but I thought good on him."

"Jog to meetings" now tops my life-tips list.

## POINTY END



### Fly gently

With many airlines scrambling to showcase their environmental credentials, the first step for passengers is to read up on the best ways to get eco friendly in the air. Website [alternativairlines.com](http://alternativairlines.com) has a section on how to be a more environmentally conscious passenger. Tips include packing light, taking non-plastic items such as bamboo toothbrushes, and buying carbon offset credits. Once on the plane, lower the shade and order a vegan or vegetarian meal.

The site points out that in the scheme of things, air travel is not so bad. The average fuel consumption per passenger is below four litres per 100 kilometres, and this figure is being improved on every year.



### Sweet Dreamliners

We are seeing an increasing number of eco ratings for airlines. Winners are usually low-cost carriers with the newest fleets, given these tend to be more fuel-efficient models such as Dreamliners. Not-for-profit German organisation *atmosfair* produces an annual airline eco index, which British low-cost carrier TUI has won two years in a row. (The bad news is its Premium Club seats aren't on par with standard business class.) Qantas, which operates a number of Dreamliners and has more on order, ranks in the top 50. Its website provides detailed information for passengers looking to make informed choices.