

BUSINESS TRAVELLER

LEFT: Flying high, '70s style: Qantas's 747 Captain Cook Lounge. BELOW LEFT: Qantas's new lounge at Heathrow. BELOW RIGHT: Virgin Atlantic's nautical Clubhouse from 1993.



FLIGHT OF FANCY

The humble seaplane gets a classy makeover.

Graceful flying boats no longer lift off from Sydney Harbour's Rose Bay as they did in the 1930s, bound for a luxury 10-day passage to London (mile-high minigolf optional). However, you can still channel a sense of that at Sydney Seaplanes' newly opened Empire Lounge terminal.

Explore the golden age of flight in the purpose-built museum, then sip a champagne and slurp down oysters in the newly appointed cocktail bar before taking off for a bespoke picnic lunch on the northern beaches, perhaps – or a glide-in entrance at Cottage Point Inn on the Hawkesbury River.

It's the perfect aerial adventure for a special celebration, or a spectacular way to show off the sights of the Emerald City to visitors (just ask Ed Sheeran, Leonardo DiCaprio or Pippa Middleton).

Scenic joy flights start from \$200 per person; choose from a classic 1947 de Havilland Beaver or a sleek Cessna Caravan Amphibian (pictured above) for something more streamlined.

A range of Fly & Dine and Fly & Stay packages are also available, and flights can be chartered to points as distant as Port Stephens or Lake Jindabyne. 1300 732 752; seaplanes.com.au

MATT TEPPER



POINTY END

LOUNGE ACTS INSPIRE A FLIGHTY NOSTALGIA TRIP.

Unless you've been hiding under a cloud, you can't have failed to notice that Qantas's Perth to London flights are scheduled to begin operation from March 24, 2018.

As part of the fanfare, new lounges being rolled out in Perth and Ol' Blighty are expected to be finished in time for the inaugural flight on the revamped 17-hour direct Kangaroo Route. The Perth lounge is part of a wider overhaul of the airport, including a new international wing. "Perth will become the western hub for our international services to the United Kingdom and potentially other European destinations in the future," says Qantas CEO Alan Joyce.

The new lounge's point of difference will be an outdoor patio with a barbecue grill and a Neil Perry-designed, Australian-style menu. How very Down Under.

But most eyes are on what Qantas will do in Heathrow's Terminal 3, where the national carrier's split-level terrace lounge for about



230 people is well under way. It too will feature abundant natural light, a Rockpool menu and cocktails, business facilities and a special children's zone.

So much anticipation prompted Pointy End to indulge in a jaunt down memory lane. Back in 1993, Virgin Atlantic was causing nearly as much excitement with the unveiling of its brand-new £1 million Clubhouse concept at Heathrow, featuring heavy brown leather lounges, scattered marble busts, a rustic looking globe or two and a replica tall ship (exactly what you require in an airport).

Pointy End couldn't help but notice a nautical theme was clearly de rigueur for upmarket airline lounges as far back as the '70s, it seems. Take a gander at Qantas's Captain Cook Lounge – a reclining area aboard the old 747s (nestled on the upper deck behind the cockpit), where up to 15 cool cats could kick off their vinyl boots, compare sideburns and generally feel groovy. Talk about flying high.

The Qantas marketing people giggled over this one from the vault – "Images of James Cook, replica lanterns and even rope were used to give the impression passengers were seated inside a replica sailing ship rather than a brand new wide-body jet" – while also noting that the distinctly orange decor "should have come with a volume control".

Qantas could neither confirm nor deny if its new Heathrow flagship lounge will feature a nautical motif or orange pops. Who knows, maybe just a swinging lantern or two ...

FIONA CARRUTHERS



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