



## The Pinctada McAlpine House

Stay in the former home of a Master Pearler



PHOTOS COURTESY PINCTADA MCALPINE HOUSE

MOST HOTEL ROOMS these days have bathrooms with two sinks, but have you ever stayed in one that has two toilets? That was one of the delightful surprises when we checked into Pinctada McAlpine House in Broome, Western Australia.

Surrounded by flowering frangipani trees and tall palms waving in the breeze, the boutique property is a throwback to another era, when Broome was the Pearl Capital of the world.

Built in the early 20th century for a Pearl Master, there are just eight rooms, each with its own style and private outdoor space.

We're staying in the McAlpine Suite, named for Alistair McAlpine, a British Lord who bought the property in 1982 and built additional rooms while preserving the architectural style of the day.

Historically, buildings were constructed with corrugated iron because it was inexpensive and easily assembled. Large, latticed verandas were added to block the tropical sun and provide privacy.

The McAlpine Suite not only has 'his and her' toilets and sinks, but also his original clawfoot bathtub and a four-poster bed dressed in crisp linen sheets.

Walking barefoot to breakfast, we pass the swimming pool with chaise lounges at each end, pause in the lush garden to admire a magnificent old mango tree and listen for parrots calling from the aviary.

In the dining room, we're greeted by Ronaldo, the ebullient manager, who makes breakfast from scratch, according to our liking and what's available in the market.

We learn that the owner of Pinctada McAlpine House – Marilynne Paspaley – is from the most prominent local pearling family. The Paspaley's have been in the business since the 1930s and today sell pearls all over the world.

"She fell in love with the place when they were having a Master Pearl's dinner in the garden," Ronaldo tells us and we can see why. This private, gated sanctuary lets you escape from both the heat of the day and the cares of the world.

— SUZANNE MORPHET