



## IT'S PLAY TIME

**GADGETS** The latest addition to the design stores, chic bars and restaurants in Bangkok's Soi Thonglor is Playground!, selling funky fashions and cutting-edge products, such as classic robot repros such as the Lilliput, above, and selected shoes, handbags, jewellery and stationery. Playground!, 946/4 Soi Sukhumvit 55 (Thonglor); +66 2 714 9616; [www.playgroundstore.co.th](http://www.playgroundstore.co.th).

— KATHY MARKS

## tasmania's new luxe

**CHECKING IN** Following on the heels of hospitality entrepreneur Flora de Kantzow's trailblazing with Hatherley House and Henry Jones Art Hotel (in Launceston and Hobart respectively), Tasmania is enjoying a boom in luxurious boutique accommodation. The newly opened **Avalon Coastal Retreat** just south of Swansea on the east coast, wins the prize for location. Solid walls are virtually eliminated in favour of glass, maximising the views over Great Oyster Bay and the Freycinet Peninsula. Ideal for families or groups of friends, the self-contained retreat has three queen-size bedrooms, each with ensuite and one with a Huon pine-clad bath, a huge fireplace and a deli-cum-mini-bar – stocked with goods from Hobart's renowned Wursthause food store – that operates on an honour system. So you can turn up empty-handed but still enjoy fillet steak, gamekeeper's sausages, smoked eel, artisan cheeses, homemade soups and Tasmanian wine and beer. (11922 *Tasman Highway, Rocky Hills, Swansea*; 1300 36 11 36.) \$660 per night for entire retreat Friday to Sunday inclusive, or \$500 Monday to Thursday, including breakfast provisions. **Islington House**, in Hobart's city centre, was built in 1847 as a Regency home. Its latest transformation into a luxury house hotel is



based loosely on the New Zealand lodge concept, according to manager Nicholas Parkinson-Bates, who knows a thing or two about upmarket lodgings having worked with Aman Resorts, the Oberoi group and Gleneagles in Scotland. Artworks collected over many years in Australia and abroad by owners John Goodyear and David Meredith take pride of place, and houseguests are thoroughly spoiled with the equivalent of butler, chef, driver and housemaids on demand. (321 *Davey Street, Hobart*; 03 6220 2123; [www.islingtonhotel.com](http://www.islingtonhotel.com).) Opening rate \$404.50 per room including breakfast, complimentary mini-bar and afternoon canapes. — S.W