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## DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

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- Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel (p155)
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- Doyles Palace Hotel (p166)
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# DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

In a city where alcohol was once the main currency (see p23), it's little wonder that drinking is a big part of the social fabric – whether it's knocking back some tinnies on the beach or meeting mates at the pub.

These days Sydney offers plenty of choice in drinking establishments, from the flashy to the trashy. If the mood to tie one on hits, you should find no difficulty finding a place that suits. Sydneysiders are generally gregarious and welcoming of visitors, and the easiest place to meet them is at the pub.

Many areas have kept their historic corner pubs – an appealing facet of British life that the colonists were loathe to leave behind. Given the Australian weather the addition of beer gardens was an obvious improvement on the formula. Over the last few years those pubs lacking them have scrambled to graft on rooftop terraces to cater to smokers; smoking is now banned from all substantially enclosed licensed premises. It's a cruel irony that the most pleasant open-air areas are now often the stinkiest.

While it might not seem the case, NSW licensing laws are quite restrictive. Setting up a new venue requires buying an existing premises or paying through the nose to transfer a license. The result is that the licenses tend to go to where the money is – huge booze barns with racks of poker machines. Unlike Melbourne, small wine bars and cocktail bars are uncommon – unless attached to a kitchen or part of a larger complex.

Poker machines ('pokies' in the local lingo) are the scourge of Sydney's bars – changing many a lovely local into a circus of flashing lights, beeps, whistles and hypnotised gamblers. It's a brave licensee who forgoes this cash cow in favour of a more pleasant drinking environment (in NSW they suck up more than \$4 billion annually), but bigger complexes have the luxury of hiding them in a separate annex.

## LIVE MUSIC & DJS

From the 1950s jazz music made inroads into Sydney venues, and in the 1970s and '80s Aussie pub rock became a force to be reckoned with – spawning the likes of INXS, Midnight Oil, Men At Work and Cold Chisel. Although Sydney fell into a house-induced trance in the '90s, live music has started to make a comeback. You can catch a band any night of the week in dozens of inner-city pubs and clubs. Pick up the free street mags (*Drum Media*, *Revolver*) and check Friday's Metro section of the *Sydney Morning Herald* for what's on.

Sydney's obsession with dance music was born out of the gay scene's legendary bacchanalias – Mardi Gras, Sleaze Ball and numerous other megaparties (see p182). The crossover into mainstream youth culture in the 1990s coincided with the worldwide explosion of dance music and a flood of ecstasy tablets. Now it's so ubiquitous that it is unusual to step into any venue without a four-to-the-floor doof-doof soundtrack.

Apart from some truly world-class night-clubs, plenty of upmarket bars have DJs and dance floors. Sydney's not quite like New York or London where you can party large any night

of the week, but if your booty needs shaking there are plenty of options from Wednesday through Sunday. Look for flyers, a free copy of *3D World* magazine, or call into Central Station (p127) for information and tickets for coming events.

Sydney's nightlife has had a druggy reputation for years, but that didn't prepare it for the horrible toll that an influx of crystal-methamphetamine has had on the scene (aka crystal meth, ice, P, Tina); the inane grins of e-heads have all too often given way to the psychotic grimaces of crystal addicts. Without wanting to sound like a nana, this incredibly addictive and destructive substance is best avoided.

## OTHER ENTERTAINMENT

Poker competitions are the current hip addition to many pubs' midweek entertainment line-up. Other old favourites include trivia and karaoke, and you'll occasionally find comedy or poetry nights as well. Life drawing is a current fad; although we suspect the venues that offer it just like to have naked people hanging around. Most places have Sky TV for screening sports.

## WHEN TO GO

Pubs generally open midmorning (later on weekends) until around midnight. In livelier areas they'll crack on until the wee small hours, and some stay open continuously. Places get busier as you head towards the weekend. The post-beach Sunday sundowner is extremely popular, and Sunday nights attract plenty of hospitality workers and hairdressers.

Clubs don't normally open their doors until 10pm, but don't expect them to get pumping until after midnight. Most close around 5am.

## WHAT TO WEAR

Yes, Sydney can be flashy, but it's also very casual. Men will nearly always get away with tidy jeans, T-shirts and trainers. Thongs (flip-flops, jandals), singlets (vests) and shorts are usually fine in pubs in the daytime, but can be more problematic at night. At ritzier bars and clubs it's safest to dress up. If you're a guy, getting your tits out on the dance floor is de rigueur if any two of the following three is true: a) it's a gay bar; b) it's incredibly hot; and c) you're incredibly hot.

Women can generally wear whatever the hell they like, and many take this as an excuse to wear as little as possible. Dress up for cocktail bars and nightclubs. Some gay bars have a no-open-toed-shoes policy, ostensibly for safety (avoiding broken glass) but generally aimed at keeping straight women out.

## WHAT TO DRINK

Beer is the staple; Tooheys New, Victoria Bitter and Carlton Cold are the most popular on tap. Order by the schooner (425ml), middy (285ml), or, if you're sharing, a jug. The cheapest places to drink are the Returned Services League (RSL) clubs. In a tourist-friendly irony, locals are prevented from entering unless they're members, but visitors who live more than 5km away are welcome. You'll need to bring proof.

Australian wine is very good and most house wine available at pubs is quite drinkable. Many places now offer extensive wine lists. Cocktails (often with an Asian or Latin twist) are all the rage in the more upmarket venues, usually costing upwards of \$15.

## THE ROCKS & CIRCULAR QUAY

The Rocks has had a boozed-up reputation since convict times, and several of its pubs date to that era. On George St you'll discover a tiny pub every few doors, many with live musicians performing throughout the week. While The Rocks is quite tourist-orientated, it's still an interesting stretch to explore. Cross Sydney Cove for a completely different experience; East Circular Quay is lined with modern bars serving pricey drinks to view-hungry tourists at tables spilling out onto the promenade.

### BLU HORIZON BAR

Map p54

% 9250 6000; 176 Cumberland St, The Rocks; h 5pm-1am Mon-Thu, noon-2am Fri, 5pm-2am Sat, 5pm-midnight Sun; d Circular Quay

You'll need to dress up to get in here (trainers are strictly forbidden, no matter how cool or clean), but the views and slick décor justify the effort. Perched on the top of the Shangri La hotel tower, it's worth heading up here for one over-priced drink and a walk on the glitzy side of Sydney life.

### LENIN

Map p54

% 9251 0311; Opera Quays, East Circular Quay; h 11am-11pm Sun-Thu, 11am-1am Fri & Sat; d Circular Quay

The Soviet décor is so inspiring it's tempting to sit inside and miss the view. Vodka lovers can choose between 12 Russian varieties, 23 Polish, nine Swedish, seven French and 23 from other unlikely places, including Ireland, New Zealand and the Ukraine. Upstairs is icy *Minus 5* (p59) and swanky cocktail lounge *Bubbles*.

### LORD NELSON BREWERY HOTEL

Map p54

% 9251 4044; www.lordnelson.com.au; 19 Kent St, Millers Point; h 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; g 431-4

There are pubs in older buildings, but the Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel is Sydney's oldest continually licensed pub. Since 1841 it's been pouring pints and by now it's pretty good at it. Try one of the natural ales brewed in the stainless steel vats at the back.

**HARBOUR VIEW HOTEL**

Map p54 Bar, Live Music  
% 9252 4111; 18 Lower Fort St, The Rocks;  
h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-10pm Sun;  
d Circular Quay

Built in the 1920s, the Harbour View was the main boozier for the Harbour Bridge builders and now it's fulfilling that role for the [BridgeClimbers](#) (p226). Head to the lovely 2nd-floor balcony and wave to the hardy souls as they traverse the nearby girders. On the weekends bands play in the main bar.

**HERO OF WATERLOO**

Map p54 Bar, Live Music  
% 9252 4553; 81 Lower Fort St, The Rocks;  
h 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun;  
g 431-4

Enter into the roughly hewn stone interior, meet some of the boisterous locals and enjoy the nightly music (piano, folk, jazz or Irish tunes) of this historic, old-time bar. Downstairs is an original dungeon, where drinkers would sleep off a heavy night before being shanghaied to the high seas.

**BASEMENT** Map p54 Live Music

% 9251 2797; www.thebasement.com.au;  
29 Reiby Pl, Circular Quay; admission \$15-50;  
h noon-1.30am Mon-Thu, noon-2.30am Fri,  
7.30pm-3am Sat, 7pm-1am Sun; d Circular Quay  
This subterranean jazz bar offers dinner-and-show tickets or standing-room tickets to live jazz, blues, cabaret and the occasional rock and pop gig. It's an intimate setting that sometimes attracts huge names. Prince played an impromptu set here in 2003.

**CITY CENTRE**

The centre of town has a diverse selection of bars, none of which you would describe as cosy locals. Some are worth seeking out for their views, boutique beverages, sumptuous décor or historical interest. Most are what Sydney wags might call 'drycleaners' – good places to pick up suits. Many of them close on Sunday when the suits are shed in favour of Speedos and cocktails in the inner suburbs.

**WYNYARD & AROUND**

**BAVARIAN BIER CAFÉ** Map pp62-3 Bar  
% 8297 4111; www.bavarianbiercafe.com.au; 24 York St; h 10am-11pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-11.30pm Sat; d Wynyard

**top picks****LIVE JAZZ**

- Basement (left)
- Wine Banq (opposite)
- El Rocco Jazz Cellar (p160)
- Strawberry Hills Hotel (p162)
- Unity Hall Hotel (p165)

The handle glasses hanging over the central bar twinkle like a chandelier whether you're wearing beer goggles or not. This super-slick spot has Löwenbräu and Franziskaner on tap and an extensive beer menu, along with wine and food.

**ESTABLISHMENT** Map pp62-3 Bar

% 9240 3000; 252 George St; h 11am-2am Mon-Fri, 6pm-3am Sat; d Wynyard  
Flashier than greased lightning is this upmarket yuppie bar that brings together white Corinthian columns, a 42m marble bar, leather sofas and cashed-up crowds convinced it's still the '80s. The garden out the back is a fine place to enjoy tapas and smooth music.

**ORBIT** Map pp62-3 Bar

% 9247 9777; Level 47, Australia Sq, 264 George St; h 5pm-midnight; d Wynyard  
For the price of a trip up [Sydney Tower](#) (p68) you can get four happy-hour cocktails (5pm to 9pm Monday to Wednesday) at this 47th-floor lounge bar at the top of [Australia Square](#) (p61). Sink into an Eero Saarinen tulip chair under the glow of an Alex Noble lamp and watch Sydney spin around far below. No thongs, shorts or singlets allowed.

**REDOAK BOUTIQUE BEER CAFÉ** Bar

Map pp62-3  
% 9262 3303; www.redoak.com.au; 101 Clarence St; h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat; d Wynyard  
Even beer-haters will find something drinkable here, whether it's a honey ale or Belgian chocolate stout. Redoak has been the most awarded brewery in the Australian International Beer Awards for three years running. Try a beer and food tasting – four beers individually matched with finger food (choose from meat, vegetarian, seafood, cheese or dessert) for \$20.

**TANK STREAM BAR**

Map pp62-3 Bar  
% 9240 3109; 1 Tank Stream Way; h 4pm-midnight Mon-Thu, noon-midnight Fri; d Wynyard  
Hidden down a dark alley in the bowels of the swanky Establishment Hotel is this upmarket and atmospheric bar, populated mainly by suits getting over their working days. Flashes of steel and high stools add elegance to the original warehouse features.

**HOTEL CBD** Map pp62-3 Bar, DJ

% 8297 7000; 75 York St; h 11.30am-2am Mon-Fri, 5pm-3am Sat; d Wynyard  
This lovely old corner pub is a multilevel escape for those who've had a tough day making money in the CBD. The ground-floor bar gets crowded after work but there are quieter options upstairs and a celebrated bistro.

**HEMMESHERE** Bar, DJ, Live Music

Map pp62-3  
% 9240 3040; Level 4, 252 George St; h 5.30pm-1am Tue & Wed, 5.30pm-1.30am Thu, 6pm-2am Fri, 6pm-2am Sat; d Wynyard  
Like a giant living room that serves cocktails, this exclusive lounge is a quiet, low-slung alternative to the frenetic energy of the other drinking dens in the Establishment complex. DJs lay down soulful funk and lounge, and on Friday nights there's live music. Reservations are advised.

**SLIP INN** Map pp62-3 Bar, Cub

% 9240 3000; 111 Sussex St; h noon-1am Mon-Thu, noon-4am Fri, 6pm-4am Sat; d Wynyard  
This historic complex offers plenty of choice if you're looking for bars, pool tables, a beer garden or dance floor. Friday night is breaks night at the Chinese Laundry nightclub (enter Slip St; before/after 10pm \$10/15), while Saturday is Laundry night (before/after 10pm \$10/20), featuring a changing roster of local and international DJs.

**TANK** Map pp62-3 Club

% 9240 3094; 3 Bridge Lane; admission \$15-20; h 10pm-6am Fri & Sat; d Wynyard  
Basement spaces never looked so good. Dress up as fine as you're able, pretend you're a movie star and crash the VIP room; you might just run into someone famous. The punters here are young and thin, and gyrate to the funky house music

whipped up by some of Sydney's best spinners.

**ST JAMES & AROUND**

**BAMBINI WINE ROOM** Map pp62-3 Bar  
% 9283 7098; 185-187 Elizabeth St; h noon-10pm Mon, noon-11pm Tue-Fri, 5-11pm Sat; d St James

Don't worry, this bar doesn't sell wine to *bambinis* – it is a very grown-up affair. This tiny darkwood-panelled room with a huge chandelier is the sort of place where you might expect to see Oscar Wilde holding court in a corner. There's an extensive wine list (including the rarely seen sparkling shiraz), superb table service, and free almonds and breadsticks.

**WINE BANQ** Map pp62-3 Bar, Live Music

% 9222 1919; www.winebanq.com.au; 53 Martin Pl; h noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am Sat; d Martin Place  
This looks like an architect's dream bunker and a brilliant wine list only adds to the appeal. It's the sexiest spot to hear live jazz (admission \$10, check website). Past performers include Wynton Marsalis, Barbara Morrison and Harry Connick Jr, but you'll catch lesser luminaries several nights a week.

**TOWN HALL & AROUND STATEMENT LOUNGE**

Map pp62-3 Bar, Cabaret  
% 9373 6758; 49 Market St; h 5pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 6pm-midnight Sat; d Town Hall  
Hidden underneath the State Theatre, this low-lit jazz-era bar blends Deco features with a modern makeover. Slink into this atmospheric locale for a quiet drink (it's rarely busy) or a show tune belted out by a cabaret chanteuse.

**ARTHOUSE HOTEL** Bar, DJ, Cabaret, Club, Live Music

Map pp62-3  
% 9284 1200; www.thearthousehotel.com.au; 275 Pitt St; h 11am-midnight Mon & Tue, 11am-1am Wed & Thu, 11am-3am Fri, 5pm-6am Sat; d Town Hall  
The art-meets-alcohol theme carries throughout this sumptuous [heritage site](#) (see p69). Friday nights see live jazz in the Dome Lounge, while on Saturday the whole downstairs becomes [Kink](#) (admission \$25), one of Sydney's hottest club nights.

**MARBLE BAR** Map pp62–3 Bar, Live Music  
% 9265 6026; www.marblebarsydney.com.au;  
Hilton Sydney, 488 George St; h 5pm–1am Mon–  
Thu, noon–3am Fri & Sat, 6pm–midnight Sun;  
c Town Hall

There's no place better for putting on the Ritz (even if this is the Hilton) than Sydney's most sumptuous bar (p68). Live musicians play anything from jazz to funk from Wednesday to Saturday. It's full of suits on Friday nights, getting seedier as the night progresses.

## DARLING HARBOUR & CHINATOWN

The bright lights of Darling Harbour house some glitzy bars that get more clublike as the night progresses, as well as Sydney's only real super-club. There's easy fun to be had in the backpacker bars attached to the hostels around Central Station. You won't find many locals (unless they're hoping to indulge their Swedish backpacker fantasies), but you'll find plenty of boozed-up Europeans.

### HOME

Map p72 Bar, Club, Live Music  
% 9266 0600; www.homesydney.com; Cockle Bay Wharf; admission free–\$49; h bar 11am–late daily, club 9pm–late Thu–Sun; c Town Hall

This monster-sized pleasuredome took club design to a new level when it opened 10 years ago; at the time of research it was about to get a million-dollar overhaul, including a Roger Sanchez–designed DJ booth. Apart from special events, admission is around \$20 to \$25. Thursday's Rebel Rebel indie night is free and features live bands. The legendary Sublime (trance, hard house) is on Friday, Famous (house) on Saturday and Home on Sunday has an electro tinge.

### CARGO BAR

Map p72 Bar, DJ  
% 9262 1777; www.cargobar.com.au; 52–60 The Promenade, King St Wharf; h 11.30am–midnight Sun–Thu, 11.30am–4am Fri & Sat; c Wynyard  
By day you can relax on the smooth wood benches or leather sofas while enjoying the water views; plant yourself under a white umbrella among the preeners and romantics to take in the airy breezes and sweet cocktails. By night, DJs have this joint jumping until the wee small hours.

## top picks

### CLUBS

- Home (left)
- Arq (p184)
- Kink, Arthouse Hotel (p157)
- Yu (p161)
- Lady Lux (p160)

### LOFT

Map p72 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9267 7099; www.theloftsydney.com; 3 Lime St, King St Wharf; h 4pm–1am Mon–Wed, 4pm–3am Thu, noon–3am Fri & Sat, noon–1am Sun; c Wynyard

From its heavily carved wooden roof panels to the beaded lighting fixtures and rope sculpture, The Loft screams out flashy-but-sophisticated – as do its punters. There's live 'music for grownups' on Thursday and Sunday nights, while weekend afternoons offer traditional high tea or pitchers of Pimms.

### PONTOON

Map p72 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9267 7099; www.pontoonbar.com; The Promenade, Cockle Bay Wharf; h 11am–midnight Mon–Wed & Sun, 11am–3am Thu–Sat; c Town Hall

One of the most popular drinking dens at Darling Harbour, offering water breezes, high-tech atmosphere and cool sounds. There's dancing on weekends, when DJs lay down the R&B and hip-hop (Saturday \$10, free before 10pm) and live jazz chills the air on Sunday afternoons.

## DARLINGHURST TO POTTS POINT

Sydney's premier party precinct, this neighbourhood has stacks of decent bars ranging from snug locals to super-slick posing palaces. Kings Cross is the destination of choice for suburban party kids, glamping up for a night on the tiles. Darlinghurst is still the epicentre of gay nightlife (see p183), although some horribly trashy straight clubs have elbowed their way into the famed Oxford St strip.

## DARLINGHURST

**BEAUCHAMP HOTEL** Map p78 Bar  
% 9331 2575; 267 Oxford St; h 10am–2am; c 380

The design police have transformed this cool corner pub into something very groovy indeed. On weekends it gets packed – and incredibly noisy – with a stylish mixed crowd. There's an attractive terrace upstairs but the highlight is the cave-meets-boudoir Velvet cocktail lounge in the basement (Friday and Saturday nights only). Order a Sex-On-The-Beach(um) for a handy clue to the pub's pronunciation.

### DARLO BAR

Map p78 Bar  
% 9331 3672; 306 Liverpool St; h 10am–midnight Mon–Sat, noon–midnight Sun; c 311

A good spot for a quiet one during the week, the Darlo attracts a boisterous crowd on weekends. The service is friendly, the furniture retro, the music groovy and the lighting makes things bright but cosy. Add an interesting neighbourhood and you've got a winner.

### GREEN PARK HOTEL

Map p78 Bar  
% 9380 5311; 360 Victoria St; h 10am–2am Mon–Sat, noon–midnight Sun; c 311  
Who's gay and who's straight? Who knows or cares at this place. It's the ultimate 'whatever' inner-city bar, where locals of all persuasions come to drink beer, shoot pool and chill out.

### JUDGEMENT BAR

Map p78 Bar  
% 9360 4831; level 1, 189 Oxford St; h 11.30am–4am Mon–Thu, 24hr Fri–Sun; c 380  
Many Sydneysiders only know the grungy Judgement Bar as a blurry memory before being trundled into a taxi at the end of a big night. It's a shame, as it's actually a nice spot to sneak into during the day for a quiet, unpretentious bevvie and filling pub grub. The best that can be said for the main Courthouse Hotel bar downstairs is that it beats drinking on Taylor Sq.

### KINSELAS

Map p78 Bar, DJ  
% 9331 3100; 383 Bourke St; h 9am–6am; c 380  
In what used to be a funeral parlour, this Taylor Sq institution has come back from the dead more times than we can recall. The downstairs is all Deco stylings (spot the chapel), while Middle Bar upstairs is chic, modern and popular with cocktail-swilling

bright young things. It has the best balcony in town and a bitchin' lesbian night (Bitch) every Friday.

### RUBY RABBIT

Map p78 Bar, DJ  
% 9332 3197; 231 Oxford St; admission free–\$15; h 9pm–6am Tue–Sat; c 380  
If you can make it past the door Nazis, Ruby Rabbit offers a sumptuous, stylish trio of long thin bars that might have been designed by Liberace. There's no room for pretension when the décor's this camp. Entry to Versailles-inspired De Nom on the top floor is only by reservation, membership or referral.

## WOOLLOOMOOLOO OLD FITZROY HOTEL

Map p78 Bar  
% 9356 3848; www.oldfitzroy.com.au; 129 Dowling St; h 11am–midnight Mon–Fri, noon–midnight Sat, 3–10pm Sun; c Kings Cross  
A slice of London's Islington in the back streets of Woolloomooloo, this is a proper theatre pub (see p172) but also a decent old-fashioned boozier in its own right. The little balcony is unbeatable on a hot steamy night and there are airy street-side tables. Wednesday night trivia (\$3 per person) is a hoot.

### WATER BAR

Map p78 Bar  
% 9331 9000; Finger Wharf, 6 Cowper Wharf Rdwy; h 4–11pm Sun & Mon, 4pm–midnight Tue–Sat; c 311  
Like stepping into the pages of Wallpaper\* magazine, this stylish bar sits in the cavernous heart of the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf (p80). The drink menu is long (18 different tequilas!), the ceilings are high and the sofas are so comfy you may well find yourself horizontal in record time.

### TILBURY

Map p78 Bar, DJ  
% 9368 1955; 18 Nicholson St; h 9am–midnight; c 311  
By all means prop up the bar nearest the restaurant or nab a table out the front, but to get the best of this place head up and out – to the 1st-floor bar and its spacious terrace. The Tilbury consistently has friendly staff, schmick décor, chilled beats and a good wine list, but it really comes into its own on a Sunday afternoon when a more bohemian, mixed crowd descends.

## KINGS CROSS

**FAVELA** Map p78

Bar, Club

% 9380 7950; [www.favela.com.au](http://www.favela.com.au); 1 Kellett Way; club admission \$10-20 Thu-Sun; h 6pm-midnight Tue & Wed, 6pm-3am Thu-Sun; d Kings Cross  
This place may actually be too flashy even for Sydney. A nondescript entrance leads into a designer's dream bar populated by dressed-up 20-somethings. If you want to splash your roubles, \$600 will get you and your four most impressionable friends a Gold Room table (gold-tiled ceiling and walls) and two bottles of Moët. In the upstairs club, the ceiling's 8000 golden light-globes groove in time to the house beat.

## GAZEBO WINE GARDEN

Map p78

Bar, DJ

% 9357 5333; [www.gazebowinegarden.com.au](http://www.gazebowinegarden.com.au); 2 Elizabeth Bay Rd; h 3pm-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; d Kings Cross  
A hip wine bar in skanky old Fitzroy Gardens? Who would have believed it 10 years ago? This place is awesome – super-groovy décor, interesting mixed clientele and a high-tech storage system that shoots gas into open bottles, meaning 55 sometimes obscure wines are available by the glass to join the 300 by the bottle.

## PEPPERMINT LOUNGE

Map p78

Bar, DJ

% 9356 6634; [www.peppermintlounge.com.au](http://www.peppermintlounge.com.au); 231 Victoria St; h 6pm-3am Wed-Sat; d Kings Cross  
Remember when getting into a nightclub meant guys needed a nice collared shirt and leather shoes? Nothing's changed here, and the spiffy young crowd love it. Curl into the padded booths seemingly carved out of the wall by a melon-baller and order a cocktail while listening to deep house with an electro and hip-hop flavour.

# top picks

## SUNDAY SUNDOWNER

- Tilbury (p159)
- Gazebo Wine Garden (above)
- Clovelly Hotel (p163)
- Doyles Palace Hotel (p166)
- Welcome Hotel (p165)

## WORLD BAR

Map p78 Bar, DJ, Live Music

% 9357 7700; 24 Bayswater Rd; h 1pm-1am Mon, 1pm-4am Tue & Thu, 1pm-3am Wed, 1pm-6am Fri, 1pm-7am Sat, 1pm-3am Sun; d Kings Cross  
Three floors of cool spaces attract the backpacking crowd (especially on Tuesday's Krapp Karaoke night) to this former bordello, and cheap drinks keep them rockin'. There's an airy tropical terrace out the front, different genre DJs nightly (electro, indie, hip-hop, boogie house) and live indie bands on Friday.

## BAR ME & EL ROCCO JAZZ CELLAR

Map p78

Bar, Live Music

% 9368 0894; 154 Brougham St; admission free-\$35; h 5pm-1am Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am Sat & Sun; d Kings Cross  
Sydney's first jazz club, between 1955 and 1969 this was the city's premier bohemian haunt, hosting performances by Frank Sinatra and Sarah Vaughan. Those heady days are long gone but live jazz is back on the agenda in the legendary rock-hewn basement. There's a free open mic night on Monday.

## LADY LUX

Map p78 Club

% 9361 5000; [www.myspace.com/ladyluxnightclub](http://www.myspace.com/ladyluxnightclub); 2 Roslyn St; admission \$10; h 10pm-5am Fri-Sun; d Kings Cross  
There's a sophisticated cosiness to this small-ish club with its funky floral metallic wallpaper and cushioned couches. Friday nights are for underground house 'from deep to minimal tech', with loads of international DJs. Sundays are huge, attracting a very young, dressed-to-the-nines crowd sticking it out until the first train back to the suburbs.

## POTTS POINT

**JIMMY LIK'S** Map p78

Bar

% 8354 1400; 188 Victoria St; h 5pm-midnight; d Kings Cross  
Long benches and a longer cocktail list (try the Japanese pear with lemon juice, sake and vodka) fit the highfalutin' atmosphere of this slim joint, next to the excellent restaurant (above).

## SOHO BAR & LOUNGE

Map p78 Bar, DJ

% 9358 6511; [www.sohobar.com.au](http://www.sohobar.com.au); 171 Victoria St; h 10am-4am Mon-Thu, 10am-6am Fri, 9am-6am Sat & Sun; d Kings Cross  
The beautiful Art Deco Piccadilly Hotel is a dark, relaxed establishment whose smooth

# top picks

## COCKTAILS

- Jimmy Lik's (opposite)
- Longrain (p145)
- Toko (p146)
- Bank Hotel (p164)
- Velvet, Beauchamp Hotel (p159)

leather lounges have felt the weight of Keanu Reeves', Nicole Kidman's and Ewan McGregor's celebrity booties. It's rumoured to be where Kylie met Michael Hutchence. Soho is actually the upstairs cocktail bar (evening's only), but the ground-floor Piccadilly Room is just as elegant.

## YU

Map p78 Club

% 9358 6511; [www.yu.com.au](http://www.yu.com.au); 171 Victoria St; admission \$10-20; h 10pm-6am Thu-Sun; d Kings Cross  
Yu wants you to get down to the best of house, funk and electro, played by some of Sydney's most venerable DJs and overseas guests. This slick-looking club is attached to the fancy Soho bar.

## PADDINGTON TO DOUBLE BAY

Some cool Darlinghurst-style local bars spill over into Paddington, but generally this area is a little more hoity-toity and a lot less interesting. The pretension disappears completely after big matches when the sports fans spill out of Aussie Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground and into the neighbouring pubs. The Entertainment Quarter (p86) is worth checking out for its handful of decent venues.

## LIGHT BRIGADE HOTEL

Map pp84-5 Bar

% 9331 2930; [www.lightbrigade.com.au](http://www.lightbrigade.com.au); 2A Oxford St, Woollahra; h 10am-1am Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; g 380  
Charge into this glorious Art Deco pub for a relaxed ground-floor bar with a decent menu, pool table and snazzy sofa lounges. Happy hours run daily from 3pm to 6pm, and it's usually packed until closing on the weekends. Upstairs there's a chic cocktail lounge (Thursday to Saturday only).

## FRINGE BAR

Map pp84-5 Bar, Comedy

% 9360 3554; 106 Oxford St, Paddington; h noon-1am Mon-Wed, noon-3am Thu-Sat, noon-midnight Sun; g 380  
Sumptuous fringed red-velvet curtains cover exposed brick in this cool bar hung with chandeliers and gilt mirrors. There's a busy weeknight schedule; comedy Monday, trivia Tuesday, fashion Wednesday and, the backpacker's friend, \$10 all-you-can-eat pizza Thursday.

## GOLDEN SHEAF HOTEL

Map pp84-5 Bar, DJ, Live Music

% 9327 5877; [www.goldensheaf.com.au](http://www.goldensheaf.com.au); 429 New South Head Rd, Double Bay; h 10am-1am Mon-Thu, 10am-2am Fri & Sat, 10am-midnight Sun; g 323-6  
This handsome old pub complex rambles through a shady beer garden, large sports bar with pool tables, TAB, bistro, pokie palace, cocktail bar, dance floor and live music space. The music policy covers rock, soul, hip-hop, samba, house and funk-ed-up folk – both live and DJ-delivered (see website for details). Something for everyone.

## WOOLLAHRA HOTEL

Map pp84-5 Bar, Live Music

% 9327 9777; [www.woollahrahotel.com.au](http://www.woollahrahotel.com.au); 116 Queen St, Woollahra; h noon-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; g 389  
It's a bit snooty and suity most of the time, but it's worth checking out the free live Latin, jazz and Brazilian funk on Sunday (6.30pm to 9.30pm) and Thursday (7.45pm to 10.45pm).

## SYDNEY COMEDY STORE

Map pp84-5 Comedy

% 9357 1419; [www.comedystore.com.au](http://www.comedystore.com.au); Entertainment Quarter; tickets \$15-30; h shows 8.30pm Tue-Sat; g 339  
In its purpose-built home in the Fox Studios, this comedy venue has stand-up and open-mic nights. Acts have included the crème of local and international talent.

## SURRY HILLS TO ALEXANDRIA

There are two types of Surry Hills cool. There are the chic newly renovated designer bars that go hand in hand with the new restaurants. Then there are the long-standing, grungy, back-street pubs, many hosting live

music. Cocktail connoisseurs should investigate the sleek bars attached to the **Longrain** (p145), **Toko** (p146) and **LoStudio** (p145) restaurants, as well as those listed below.

**BAR CLEVELAND** Map pp90-1 Bar  
% 9698 1908; www.barcleveland.com.au; 433 Cleveland St, Surry Hills; h 10am-2am Mon-Thu, 10am-4am Fri & Sat, 10am-midnight Sun; g 372 Very much a relaxed local pub despite its sexy Deco curves, this is great spot to watch the footy, shoot pool or relax with mates. The clientele ranges from the bohemian to the blokey, but it's still gay-friendly. Cocktail cravers should try the \$6 Wednesday night specials (6pm to 8pm).

**CLOCK** Map pp90-1 Bar  
% 9331 5333; www.clockhotel.com.au; 470 Crown St, Surry Hills; h 11.30am-midnight; g 301-3 Slip a coin into the jukebox, play some pool, dissolve into a booth or check the time back home (there are 11 clocks with international times). The outside tables are nice and airy, as is the wraparound balcony upstairs where you can order happy-hour cocktails (6pm to 7pm) and tapas.

**CRICKETERS ARMS HOTEL** Map pp90-1 Bar  
% 9331 3301; 106 Fitzroy St, Surry Hills; h noon-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; g 301-303 The zenith of Surry Hills grunge, a cosy vibe fills this friendly pub with friendly locals who gather around the wraparound bar or, in winter, open fireplaces. There are tapas available, a small beer garden with wooden benches, and an intimate upstairs area.

**DOLPHIN** Map pp90-1 Bar  
% 9331 4800; www.dolphinhotel.com.au; 412 Crown St, Surry Hills; h 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; g 301-3 Slick as all get-out is this large refurbished pub. The Dolphin's a smart beast that's been spruced up and given a smoking terrace. The pretty things head upstairs to the is-that-actually-someone's-lounge-room addition, while non-boofhead sports fans gravitate to the big screens downstairs. There's a decent bistro attached.

**MARS LOUNGE** Map pp90-1 Bar, DJ  
% 9267 6440; www.marslounge.com.au; 16 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills; h 5pm-midnight Wed, 5pm-3am Fri, 7pm-3am Sat, 7pm-1am Sun; d Museum

Someone call David Bowie and tell him that there is life on Mars – and it's young, hip, holding a cocktail and swaying to some smooth house in this red-tinged upmarket warehouse conversion.

**HOLLYWOOD HOTEL** Map pp90-1 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9281 2765; 2 Foster St, Surry Hills; h 11am-midnight Mon-Wed, 11am-3am Thu & Fri, 6pm-3am Sat; d Museum  
This Art Deco pub looks nondescript from the outside but its dark intimate inside reveals a somewhat bohemian gay-friendly crowd and great place to kick-start a weekend. There's live jazz on Tuesday nights and a loungey DJ set on Thursday.

**MACQUARIE HOTEL** Map pp90-1 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 8262 8844; www.macquariehotel.com; 44 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills; h 10am-midnight; d Museum  
The Mac's a good down-home pub with stuff on every night, whether that be a pool or poker comp, wine tasting or live music. It also brews its own beer.

**EXCELSIOR HOTEL** Map pp90-1 Bar, Live Music  
% 9211 4945; 64 Foveaux St, Surry Hills; admission free-\$12; h 11am-midnight Mon-Wed, 11am-3am Thu-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; d Central  
This casual, grungy joint is good for an outdoor schooner on a sunny afternoon, but it's at night when it really rocks out. A hub of local alternative music, it attracts an eclectic crowd to its nightly live gigs.

**HOPETOUN HOTEL** Map pp90-1 Bar, Live Music  
% 9361 5257; 416 Bourke St, Surry Hills; admission free-\$12; h 3pm-midnight; d Central  
This great little venue offers live music every night, running the gamut from folk to rap. You'll occasionally catch internationally well-known indie acts playing here.

**STRAWBERRY HILLS HOTEL** Map pp90-1 Bar, Live Music  
% 9698 2997; 453 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills; admission free; h 24hr; d Central  
This basic pub features the live jazz of the Eclipse Alley 5 (4pm to 7pm Saturday) and Bill Dudley's New Orleanians (5pm to 8pm Sunday). Plus there's happy hour from 2.30pm to 6pm, so throw down some \$3 schooners before the show.

## BONDI TO COOGEE

If you're in the mood to seriously knock some back, you'll find plenty of company in the backpacker haunts along the coast. In the egalitarian Eastern Beaches some of the cheapest boozers have the best views. However, it's not all raucous pub-rock venues – you'll find slick credit card-maxing cocktail joints as well.

**BONDI ICEBERGS** Map pp94-5 Bar  
% 9365 9000; 1 Notts Ave, Bondi; h noon-midnight Tue-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; g 380  
You can't get more modern and trendy than this classy spot, attached to the famous **Icebergs** (p147) restaurant. The hanging chairs, colourful sofas and elegant cocktails are just fine, but the view's the absolute killer. Make sure your bank account's up to the strain.

**EASTERN** Map pp94-5 Bar, DJ  
% 9387 7828; www.theeastern.com.au; 500 Oxford St, Bondi Junction; h 10am-3am Mon-Sat, 10am-midnight Sun; d Bondi Junction  
This delicious Deco pub was saved from the wrecking ball and fully renovated when **Westfield Bondi Junction** (p132) was built all around it. It now has elegant but relaxed bars, a snazzy rooftop terrace, a decent restaurant and a popular electro-pop club-night on Wednesday.

**BEACH ROAD HOTEL** Map pp94-5 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9130 7247; 71 Beach Rd, North Bondi; h 10am-12.30pm Mon-Tue, 10am-1.30am Wed-Sat, 10am-10.30pm Sun; g 389  
Behold the sight of the beautiful, bronzed and boozed-up at play. This huge multi-level fortress of rough-edged fun hosts live music and some good local DJs. Wednesday and Sunday the place gets crowded, as do the banks of pool tables. There's a decent beer garden.

**BONDI ICEBERGS SWIMMING CLUB** Map pp94-5 Bar, Live Music  
% 9130 3120; 1 Notts Ave, Bondi; h 10am-11pm Sun-Thu, 10am-midnight Fri & Sat; g 380  
Located just below Icebergs bar, this is a more affordable and laid-back place with practically the same views. Bring ID: if you're not a member, you need to prove

you live at least 5km away. There's live music Friday nights and Sunday afternoons.

**NORTH BONDI RSL** Map pp94-5 Bar, Live Music  
% 9130 8770; 120 Ramsgate Ave, North Bondi; admission free; h noon-10pm Mon, noon-11pm Tue-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat, 10am-11pm Sun; g 380-389  
This place isn't fancy, but with priceless views and cheap drinks, who cares? Bring ID, as you need to prove that you live at least 5km away to justify your lack of a membership. There are live bands most weekends and poker comps on Monday and Thursday.

**COOGEE AQUARIUM** Map pp94-5 Bar, DJ  
% 9664 2900; www.beachpalacehotel.com.au; 169 Dolphin St, Coogee; h 11.30am-midnight summer, 4pm-midnight winter; g 372-3  
Taking up the top floor of the historic Beach Palace (1887), a massive booze barn at the north end of the beach, Aquarium is the place to be on a Sunday afternoon – or if you're a backpacker or under 26, any old time. The views from the large terrace are magnificent; best enjoyed over a chilled glass.

**CLOVELLY HOTEL** Map pp94-5 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9665 1214; www.clovellyhotel.com.au; 381 Clovelly Rd, Clovelly; h 11am-10.30pm Sun-Thu, 11am-midnight Fri & Sat; g 339  
An old-style local pub with a nice shady terrace and water views, it's the perfect post-beach Sunday afternoon spot to crack a coldie to the accompaniment of acoustic musos. DJs crank it up on Saturday nights.

**COOGEE BAY HOTEL** Map pp94-5 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9665 0000; www.coogeebayhotel.com.au; cnr Coogee Bay Rd & Arden St, Coogee; h 9am-3am Mon-Thu, 9am-5am Fri & Sat, 9am-midnight Sun; g 372-4  
Heaven for Brit backpackers and those wanting to score them, the Coogee Bay is a big rowdy boozier with a massive beer garden, resident DJs and a popular sports bar. It's also a well-known live music venue that attracts some big names from time to time.

## INNER WEST

Devotees of the comfortable, atmospheric local pub will find much cause for celebration throughout the Inner West. Historic Balmain and Rozelle are the best pub crawl locations in Sydney, with a chain of interesting hotels within easy walking distance of each other. The Inner West's large student population supports a wealth of live music, with some big-name venues located in Annandale and Newtown. Sydney's second gay hub, Newtown supports a couple of venues for gay men and several weekly events catering to lesbians.

## NEWTOWN & ERSKINEVILLE

**BANK HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar  
% 8568 1900; www.bankhotel.com.au; 324 King St, Newtown; h 10am-midnight Sun-Tue, 10am-2am Wed & Thu, 10am-4am Fri & Sat; d Newtown After a \$5 million refit, the Bank is brighter and shinier than ever, with a new rooftop terrace and cocktail bar, back-end beer garden and beautiful bogs. It still attracts a queer mix of lesbians, students, sport fans, gay men and just about everyone else – although they're all a little snazzier dressed than before. There's a long-running lesbian night on Wednesday.

**MARLBOROUGH HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar, DJ  
% 9519 1222; 145 King St, Newtown; h 10am-3am Mon-Sat, 10am-midnight Sun; g 422-3 A straighter version of the Bank, this place has a rough-edged front sports bar, a shady beer garden and an attractive large cocktail floor with a cool wraparound terrace.

**ZANZIBAR** Map pp100-1 Bar, DJ  
% 9519 1511; 323 King St, Newtown; h 10am-4am Mon-Thu, 10am-6am Fri, 10am-5am Sat, 10am-midnight Sun; d Newtown

## A NIGHT ON THE TILES

Sydney's old tiled pubs may look quaint now, but you wouldn't have thought so if you ventured into one at 5.45pm on a weeknight 60 years ago. In NSW, 1916 to 1955 was the era of the infamous six o'clock swill. In an effort to reduce drunkenness and get husbands back to their families in time for dinner, all pubs were forced to close at 6pm. The effect of this wasn't the increase in public decorum that the temperance movement had hoped for. Instead, workers would rush to the bars as soon as they knocked off and imbibe as much as humanly possible in the hour before closing.

Pubs built during this time tended to have large central bars to allow easy service to the maximum number of punters and extensive tiling so that the whole rancid mess of slopped beer, vomit and urine could be hosed out afterwards. Erskineville's Rose of Australia (above) is a good example. The central tiled bar looks a little like a urinal, with a drain around it, and one wall has 'There It Is' printed in the tiles with a large hand pointing to the gents. It seems that in this ballistic binge no-one wanted to lose their place at the bar, not even for a toilet stop.

Eastern opulence continues all the way to the roof in Newtown's late night option. Catch the sublime sunset views from the rooftop, settle into a cushioned couch or shoot some pool in the downstairs bar.

## ROSE OF AUSTRALIA

Map pp100-1 Bar, Live Music  
% 9565 1441; 1 Swanson St, Erskineville; h 10am-11pm Mon, 10am-midnight Tue-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; d Erskineville Renovations to this gorgeous old corner pub haven't dented the tiled front bar's charm one iota (see below). Locals of all persuasions hang out here, catching the afternoon sun at the street-side tables, a footy game on the big screens, a meal upstairs, or the live performers on Wednesday and Friday nights.

## SANDRINGHAM HOTEL

Map pp100-1 Live Music  
% 9557 1254; 387 King St, Newtown; admission free-\$10; h 9.30am-midnight Mon-Wed, 9.30am-2am Thu & Fri, 10am-2am Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; d Newtown Minimal (or no) cash will score you a live music fix at this intimate venue where God comes for a tippie, according to local legends The Whitlams. There's a beer garden, free internet and happy hours (4pm to 7pm).

**VANGUARD** Map pp100-1 Live Music  
% 9557 7992; www.thevanguard.com.au; 42 Kings St, Newtown; tickets \$10-25; h 7pm-midnight Tue-Sun; g 422-3 This atmospheric, intimate restaurant and live venue has performers six nights a week, including some well-known names. Although it's primarily a jazz, blues and roots club, you can hear anything from a Led Zep covers band to the latest pop starlet. Dinner and show deals are available (\$75 to \$99 for two). Check the website for line-ups.

## GLEBE & PYRMONT

**FLYING FISH** Map pp100-1 Bar  
% 9518 6677; Jones Bay Wharf, 21 Pirrama Rd, Pyrmont; h noon-midnight Sun & Tue-Fri, 6pm-midnight Mon & Sat; MLR Star City One for the romantics, let the city lights sparkling over the harbour work their magic at the quiet end of this wharf, aided by an indulgent cocktail (\$18). If you're not the mushy type, check this bar out for the coolest toilets in town – the clear glass stalls frost over only when you lock the door.

**A.B. HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar, Cabaret  
% 9660 1417; 225 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; h 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; g 431-4 Another old favourite to have a \$5-million facelift, the former Ancient Briton is looking mighty fine – particularly the Pacific Penthouse with live fish swimming around inside the bar. Large portraits of Lenin adorn the wall and on Thursday nights you can catch a fabulous Bette Midler lookalike performing cabaret. That's Glebe for you.

## FRIEND IN HAND HOTEL

Map pp100-1 Bar, Comedy, Poetry  
% 9660 2326; 58 Cowper St, Glebe; h 8am-midnight Mon & Tue, 6am-midnight Wed-Fri, 5am-midnight Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; g 431-4 This early opening down-home pub offers life drawing (\$10) on Monday, poetry slams on the first Tuesday of the month, crab races every Wednesday and comedy gigs every Thursday. Or just grab an eyeful of the bric-a-brac around you, and say hi to the cockatoo. The punters are a mix of grizzly old timers and raucous young 'uns.

## ROZELLE

**BALD ROCK HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar, Live Music  
% 9818 4792; 17 Mansfield St, Rozelle; h 11am-11pm Mon, 11am-midnight Tue-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; g 432-4 This tucked-away workingman's pub (1876) has skungy carpet but lots of charm. There's free pool on Wednesday, Trivia on Thursday, live rock and blues on Saturday and live jazz on Sunday.

**WELCOME HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar  
% 9810 1323; 91 Evans St, Rozelle; h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; f Balmain; g 432-4 Extending a warm welcome since 1877, this cosy local pub hasn't lost any of its atmos-

phere. Come to watch the rugger, have a slap-up meal, while away a Sunday arvo in the beer garden, or commune with the ghost of Winston, a foxhound that supposedly haunts the place.

## BALMAIN

**EXCHANGE HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar  
% 9810 1171; cnr Beattie & Mullens Sts, Balmain; h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun; f Balmain; g 432-4 The beautiful Exchange (1885) in Balmain's back streets has been lushly renovated and now houses an upmarket restaurant. Stake a place on the terrace for a \$5 cocktail late on a Sunday afternoon.

**MONKEY BAR** Map pp100-1 Bar  
% 9810 1749; 255 Darling Rd, Balmain; h noon-midnight Mon-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat, 11am-10pm Sun; f Balmain Flirty monkeys should add this upmarket meat market to their Friday night pub crawl.

**TOWN HALL HOTEL** Map pp100-1 Bar, DJ  
% 9818 8950; 366 Darling St, Balmain; h noon-midnight Mon-Thu, noon-1am Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun; g 433-4 The upstairs of this smart old bar has lots of little nooks and crannies and a wrap-around balcony that's great for brunch or a late afternoon tippie. Friday and Saturday nights see DJs (with the odd live accompanist) pulling in the single-seeking-other punters downstairs.

## UNITY HALL HOTEL

Map pp100-1 Bar, DJ, Live Music  
% 9810 1331; 292 Darling St, Balmain; h 9am-midnight Mon-Thu, 9am-3am Wed-Fri, 10am-3am Sat, 11am-10pm Sun; f Balmain Its late hours make this ungentrified pub (1875) Balmain's traditional last port of call. It has its own house band that plays trad jazz on Sunday afternoons and Friday evenings. There's more live music on Thursday (acoustic) and Saturday (various), while booty-shakers are looked after by a DJ playing upstairs every Saturday night.

**CAT & FIDDLE** Map pp100-1 Bar, Live Music  
% 9810 7931; www.thecatandfiddle.net; 456 Darling St, Balmain; admission free-\$10; h 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-9pm Sun; g 432-4 Around 30 live bands (mainly rock, blues and folk) perform here every week, from

# top picks

## LIVE ROCK

- Excelsior Hotel (p162)
- Annandale Hotel (below)
- Sandringham Hotel (p164)
- Hopetoun Hotel (p162)
- Cat & Fiddle (p165)

Wednesday through Sunday. Prop yourself up on the tall stools and enjoy the sounds, or escape for a bite to eat at the bistro in the main bar.

## ANNANDALE ANNANDALE HOTEL

Map pp100–1 Bar, Live Music

☎ 9550 1078; www.annandalehotel.com; 17 Parramatta Rd, Annandale; h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 4-10pm Sun; g 436-8

The Yeah Yeah Yeahs and the Dandy Warhols are some of the bigger names to have fired up the stage at this alternative venue that hosts live music from Tuesday to Sunday (tickets \$11 to \$30). Cult movies screen on Monday nights.

**EMPIRE HOTEL** Map pp100–1 Bar, Live Music

☎ 9557 1701; www.empirelive.com.au; 103 Parramatta Rd, Annandale; Fri & Sat admission free-\$15; h 10am-midnight Mon & Tue, 10am-3am Wed-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun; g 438

Blues (along with ska, pop and rockabilly) buffs should investigate the Empire for live acts, aided by a very good sound system.

## NORTH SHORE

You'll find bars scattered throughout the North Shore, but not many are worth travelling for. North Sydney has a Friday night after-work swill, but on most nights people are keen to leave this dull commercial centre and escape to their home suburbs. Manly has its own lively party circuit centred on the Corso.

**GREENWOOD HOTEL** Map p108 Bar, DJ

☎ 9964 9477; www.greenwoodhotel.com; upstairs Greenwood Plaza, 36 Blue St, North Sydney; h 11.30am-midnight Mon-Wed, 11.30am-3am

Thu, 11.30am-12.30am Fri, noon-10.30pm Sun; d Newtown

It's all about the sandstone; the conversion of this impressive building (1878) from a school to one of the Shore's pumping-est pubs has left it largely unadorned apart from a giant mirror ball. School is not a distant memory for many of the punters, apart from the Friday night after-work brigade. Booty-shake to hip-hop and R&B on Thursday nights, or grab a ticket (\$15) to the Sounds-On-Sunday day party for uplifting house in the substantial courtyard.

## MANLY WHARF HOTEL

Map p110 Bar, DJ, Live Music

☎ 9977 1266; www.manlywharfhotel.com.au; East Esplanade, Manly; h 11.30am-midnight Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat, 11am-10pm Sun; f Manly Taking the phrase 'open plan' to the nth degree, this breezy place is designed to resemble a 1950s waterside weekender – feature walls, bamboo, lots of stone. This is justifiably Manly's most popular bar and it gets seriously packed on the weekends. A chilled bottle of wine at the Jetty Bar on a summer's day is magical.

**STEYNE HOTEL** Map p110 Bar, DJ, Live Music

☎ 9977 4977; www.steynehotel.com.au; 75 The Corso, Manly; h 10am-midnight Sun-Wed, 10am-3am Thu-Sat; f Manly

Boasting nine bars on two levels, this place has a spot for everyone – from sport bogans to club kids. The internal courtyard isn't flash, but the upstairs veranda more than makes up for it with wicked views over the beach. Live bands and DJs play every day.

## OTHER NEIGHBOURHOODS DOYLES PALACE HOTEL

Map pp50–1 Bar, Live Music

☎ 9337 5444; 1 Military Rd, Watsons Bay; h 10am-11pm; f Watsons Bay

One of the great pleasures in life is languishing in the rowdy beer garden of the Doyles Palace Hotel with mates over a jug of sangria after a day at the beach. Stay to watch the sun go down over the city and grab some seafood if you're hungry – fish and chips or a fiddly platter complete with crabs and cray.

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