

Melbourne



Classic Melbourne architecture

INSIDER TIP

As part of the **Melbourne Bike Share** programme, 50 bike stations with 600 bikes are located around the Melbourne CBD for those who want to see the sites at a slower pace. www.melbournebikeshare.com.au

SHOP TALK

Melbourne's newest chocolate shop, **Ganache** caters to die-hard chocolate lovers – those who are willing to experiment with flavours and textures. 245 Collins St, tel: (0)3 9650 8388, www.ganache.com.au

JAVA JOLT

Sensory Lab might look like a laboratory with its beakers and glass bottles, but the serious coffee experimentation has deliciously soothing results. You won't find any sugar or milk here, just pure coffee goodness. David Jones Store, 297 Little Collins St, tel: (0)3 9643 2222, www.sensorylab.com.au

CHEAP EATS

Large pizzas with tasty toppings are the speciality at **il pomodoro**, located in the heart of bustling Federation Square. Grab a table outside and people watch as you fight over the last slice. The tiramisu is a taste sensation. tel: (0)3 9662 2282, www.ilpomodoro.com.au

TOP TABLES

Founded to help Aboriginal and disadvantaged young people gain hospitality experience, **Charcoal Lane** blends traditional Aboriginal ingredients and modern culinary methods. 136 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, tel: (0)3 9418 3400, www.charcoalane.com.au **SS**

AT YOUR LEISURE

Built in the 1930s, the majestic **Astor Theatre** now screens an array of cult films and new releases. Download a calendar of screenings online. 1 Chapel St, St Kilda, tel: (0)3 9510 1414, www.astor-theatre.com

LATE & LIVELY

The **Rainbow Hotel's** new owners kept the live music that made this backstreet pub iconic while adding an incredible beer list. Chill out in one of the most underrated beer gardens in town. 27 St David St, Fitzroy, tel: (0)3 9419 4193, www.therainbow.com.au

Perth



Biking by the Swan River

INSIDER TIP

Stroll or cycle along the riverside paths or take the ferry to the **South Perth foreshore** for the best views of the city, with Perth Water in the foreground.

SHOP TALK

Harbour Town is all about outlet shopping, with a wide range of shops selling sportswear, footwear and accessories. Discounted prices are the norm. 840 Wellington St (take the free Yellow Cat bus), tel: (0)8 9321 2282, www.harbourtownperth.com.au

JAVA JOLT

Brew-Ha not only serves up an array of good coffees, it also sells a first-class range of good coffees, it also sells a first-class range of beans, blends and teas. Shop 3-4, 162 Rokeby Rd, Subiaco, tel: (0)8 9388 7272, www.brew-ha.com.au

CHEAP EATS

Annalakshmi on the Swan is a vegetarian restaurant with a (big) difference. There are no prices – it's "eat as you like and pay as you feel." The underlying aim is to support charitable efforts in India. Jetty 4, Barrack Square (Ferry Terminal), tel: (0)8 9221 3003, www.annalakshmi.com.au

TOP TABLES

Vertical gardens overflow with greenery and a rooftop garden supplies produce for the kitchen at **Greenhouse**, home of acclaimed young chef Matt Stone. 100 St Georges Terrace, tel: (0)8 9481 8333, www.greenhouseperth.com **SSS**

AT YOUR LEISURE

Swim with the dolphins at **Rockingham Wild Encounters**, south of Perth. Guides use aqua scooters to encourage the dolphins to play and to tow visitors into viewing position. Tours operate daily from Sep to May, with pickups in Perth. Val Street Jetty, Rockingham, tel: (0)8 9591 1333, www.dolphins.com.au

LATE & LIVELY

The Charles Hotel is the hottest place in town for jazz lovers. So much so that the Perth Jazz Society meets here at 8pm every Monday (6pm on public holidays). 509 Charles St, North Perth, tel: (0)8 9321 2282, www.perthjazzsociety.com

Rockhampton



Couple outside Customs House

INSIDER TIP

Rockhampton was hit hard by the **recent floods**, but most tourism destinations bounced back very quickly and it is as great a place to visit as ever.

SHOP TALK

More than 160 specialty shops make **Stockland Rockhampton Central** Queensland's biggest mall and the city's only one-stop shopping experience. Cnr Yaamba Rd and Bruce Hwy, North Rockhampton, tel: (0)7 4928 9166

JAVA JOLT

Not into Sexie Coffie? Then how about some Strip Teas? **Sexie Coffie** spices up the caffeine ritual by offering superior, fresh coffee with a side order of cheeky. Go on, give in to temptation. 49 William St, tel: (0)7 4927 2301, www.sexiecoffie.com.au

CHEAP EATS

Great Keppel Island is a place to get away from the daily grind, but that doesn't mean you have to forgo seriously great pizza. What's more, at **Island Pizza** you have your own private ocean to sit and gaze over while watching the sun go down. Esplanade, Fisherman's Beach, tel: (0)7 4939 4699, www.gki.com.au

TOP TABLES

Just head a short distance from Rocky to check out the **Gracemere Hotel**. Here you'll find some of the best pub grub north of Brisbane. Great bistro fare at very fair prices. Old Capricorn Hwy, Gracemere, tel: (0)7 4933 1241, www.gracemerehotel.com.au **SS**

AT YOUR LEISURE

Mount Morgan, just west of Rockhampton, was once home to one of the world's richest gold mines. TMC Tours offers a fascinating tour of the mine and the town it supported. tel: (0)7 4938 1823, www.tmc-tours.com.au

LATE & LIVELY

Drinks, a great atmosphere and tapas are the ingredients for a great night out, and **Ginger Mule** has them. Head upstairs to enjoy the open-air rooftop bar. William St, tel: (0)7 4927 7255