

Brisbane



Brisbane River

INSIDER TIP
The little-developed suburb of **Sandgate** has plenty of charm, not to mention spectacular views over the water to the bay islands.

SHOP TALK
Catering to the younger fashionista, **EP by Easton Pearson**'s designs are bold with a touch of whimsy. Winn Ln, Winn St, Fortitude Valley, tel: +61 (0)7 322176, www.eastonpearson.com

CHEAP EATS
Progressive, expressive and creative are the words West End café **Jam Jar** uses to describe itself. It's part street art gallery and all great food. 138 Boundary St, West End, tel: +61 (0)7 3844 3395, www.jamjarwestend.com

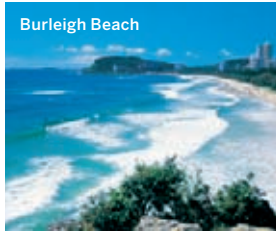
TOP TABLES
Located in the Cottage Garden Nursery in East Brisbane, **Gillian's Garden Café** dishes out superb breakfasts and lunches. 999 Stanley St, East Brisbane, tel: +61 (0)7 3391 1001 ☹☹

AT YOUR LEISURE
Suitcase Rummage vendors haul in suitcases filled with everything from vintage goods to vinyl records and bric-a-brac. Reddacliff Place, Queens St

LATE & LIVELY
Expect great cocktails, tapas and rustic charm at **Canvas**. 16B Logan Rd, Woolloongabba, tel: +61 (0)7 3891 2111, www.canvasclub.com.au

OVERNIGHT
Stay at the **Medina Executive Apartments** and you're sure to be reaching for your camera to shoot the nearby Story Bridge. 15 Ivory Ln, tel: +61 (0)7 3218 5800, www.medina.com.au ☹☹

Gold Coast



Burleigh Beach

INSIDER TIP
Don't neglect the beaches **away from the glamour strip** of Surfers Paradise. Those at the southern end of the strip tend be less crowded and just as inviting.

SHOP TALK
Marina Mirage has been a centre of style here for about 25 years and it remains at the forefront of fashion. 74 Seaworld Dr, Main Beach, tel: +61 (0)7 5555 6400, www.marinamirage.com.au

CHEAP EATS
Mme Grenouille serves decadent macarons and cakes, and, of course, great coffee. Meriton Bldg, Shop 1, 2669 Gold Coast Hwy, Broadbeach, tel: +61 (0)7 5538 3111

TOP TABLES
Citrique at the Marriott showcases international cuisines across four dining zones. 158 Ferny Ave, Surfers Paradise, tel: +61 (0)7 5592 9800 ☹☹☹

AT YOUR LEISURE
The city celebrates the festive season with the **Christmas Light Up Competition**. Travel the Glitter Strip to check out elaborately decorated homes.

LATE & LIVELY
Still going strong after 30 years, **Melba's** continues to attract big names in regional entertainment. 46 Cavill Ave, Surfers Paradise, tel: +61 (0)7 5538 7411, www.melbas.com.au

OVERNIGHT
Luxuriously appointed rooms, a rare attention to detail and European-style charm are the drawcards at the **Sofitel Gold Coast**. 81 Surf Pde, tel: +61 (0)7 5570 0393, www.sofitelgoldcoast.com.au ☹☹☹

Melbourne



Majorca Building, Centre Place

INSIDER TIP
Head to the **Melbourne Cricket Ground** from 26-30 December and join about 80,000 fellow fans for the Boxing Day Test, the world's biggest match.

SHOP TALK
Beneath the iconic Arts Centre, the **Sunday Market** is a collection of more than 150 stalls showcasing arts, crafts and food from across the state.

CHEAP EATS
Resembling a tiny lounge room, **Konjo** is the place to try traditional Ethiopian cuisine as well as its mealtime custom – there's no cutlery. 20 Smith St, Collingwood, tel: +61 (0)3 9419 5713

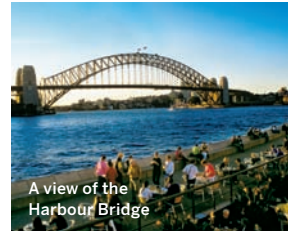
TOP TABLES
Ideal for groups, the dinner banquets at Turkish eatery **Pasha's** are a great way to sample the offerings. 108 Smith St, Collingwood, tel: +61 (0)3 9417 7007, www.pashas-melbourne.com.au ☹☹

AT YOUR LEISURE
In the hotter months it's a treat to cruise down the **Yarra River** past attractions like the Botanical Gardens, Federation Square and the Docklands. www.melbcruises.com.au

LATE & LIVELY
The Everleigh is all about sophistication, soothing tunes and touches like hand-chipped ice. Level 1, 150 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, tel: +61 (0)3 9416 2229

OVERNIGHT
Hilton South Wharf is located in the city's newest suburb, just steps from the CBD. 2 Convention Centre Place South Wharf, Docklands, tel: +61 (0)3 9027 2000, www.hilton.com ☹☹

Sydney



A view of the Harbour Bridge

INSIDER TIP
To travel around the city at no cost, hop on one of the **free 555 shuttle buses**, which operate along George and Elizabeth Streets.

SHOP TALK
Go bargain hunting at **Birkenhead Point**, home to big-name brands. Roseby St, Drummoyne, tel: +61 (0)2 9812 8800, www.birkenheadpoint.com.au

CHEAP EATS
If the harbour views aren't enough to woo you, **Miss Chu's** vibrant Vietnamese finger food surely is. Bennelong Pt, tel: +61 (0)4 5009 9888, www.operakitchen.com.au

TOP TABLES
Expect the best locally sourced produce prepared in Chef David Chang's signature, Korean-American style at **Momofuku Seiobo**. 80 Pyrmont St, tel: 1800 700 700 ☹☹☹

AT YOUR LEISURE
Combine art with exercise at **Sculpture by the Sea** until 13 November. The event transforms the Bondi to Tamarama coastal walk into an inviting art trail.

LATE & LIVELY
The effortlessly chic **Barrio Chino** offers tasty, street-style Mexican fare and a choice of more than 80 Agave tequilas. 28-30 Bayswater Rd, Kings Cross, www.barriochino.com.au

OVERNIGHT
Every room at **The Darling** boasts floor-to-ceiling windows with unbeatable views along with LED TVs and Molton Brown toiletries. 80 Pyrmont St, Pyrmont, tel: 1800 800 830, www.thedarling.com.au ☹☹☹