

## DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

### top picks

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Melbourne's thriving bar scene is one of its biggest attractions. Since the days of early settlement, when teetotal founder John Fawkner set up a public house on the banks of the Yarra, Melbourne has always used the demon drink as a social lubricant. For many years this revolved around pubs, but when liquor licensing laws were liberalised in the late 1980s, bars began to spring up anywhere that rents were cheap and space was atmospheric. Although there's currently much talk about the perils of binge drinking and alcohol-fuelled violence in the city, for the most part Melburnians have a sophisticated, if dedicated, relationship with the bottle.

Many of the first wave of new bars were opened by artists, architects or young hospitality workers and fitted out with creative verve in lieu of spending huge wads of cash. Today that spirit of invention persists, even if the stakes are higher. No one is sure just how many bars the city can sustain, but the scene shows no sign of letting up any time soon.

The liquor licensing laws also made it easy for cafés and restaurants to serve alcohol, an idea common enough throughout Europe, but one that other Australian capitals have only just cottoned on to. This has meant that bars and pubs are often family-friendly and that the boundaries between what constitutes a restaurant, bar or café are gloriously blurred. The place you take your morning short black could quite easily be, come 1am, where you find yourself dancing to Cut Copy. Neighbourhoods such as St Kilda, Prahran, Fitzroy and Collingwood all have their own versions of the city bar, and shopfront fit-outs fan out into the suburbs following the hip kids to Brunswick, Northcote and Yarraville.

Wine bars continue to spring up; these function as upmarket bottle shops where you can buy a bottle to take away or pay a modest corkage and drink at the bar. They often have a daunting range of wines from around the world, and food that won't let the side down.

The bar revolution ironically has done nothing to dim the appeal of the neighbourhood pub, though it has meant that most have had to do some rethinking and some judicious refurbishing. And while Melburnians still profess to love a good old-fashioned boozier, they're often secretly pleased when their local offers a flirty little *anéis* by the glass and keeps a few different vodkas chilled in the fridge.

With many bars concealed up an anonymous flight of stairs or down an alley off a back street, how does a visitor keep up? Melburnians are normally more proud than proprietorial about their favourites, so it's always worth asking a barman or fellow drinker at somewhere you've already discovered. Bar reviews can be found on the website of the [Age](http://www.theage.com.au) ([www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)) newspaper, while [Three Thousand](http://www.threethousand.com.au) ([www.threethousand.com.au](http://www.threethousand.com.au)) keeps a pretty close eye on the latest places to pop up.

## LIVE MUSIC & DJS

Melbourne's thriving band scene loses venues every year as inner-city development gains pace and the residents of new apartment buildings make noise complaints. It's also often more profitable for publicans to open dining rooms than band rooms. Still, there are several pubs that keep the flag flying, showcasing local bands every night of the week. Touring acts play at a handful of venues in the city, St Kilda, Fitzroy, Northcote and Richmond, as well as at city theatres such as the Forum, and the Palais in St Kilda. Gigs are listed in the *Entertainment Guide (EG)* section of the *Age* on Fridays. Pick up free street papers *Beat* and *Inpress* for reviews, interviews and a comprehensive weekly gig guide. They're

available from pubs, cafés and entertainment venues. Also see [Tickets & Reservations \(p357\)](#) for major booking agencies, or check the individual venues for booking details.

Dance music is altogether a more elusive beast. The city boasts an amazingly diverse and happening scene but it's not always easy to find or keep up with. Most clubs are concentrated in the city, though other inner-city neighbourhoods are not entirely without options. Big parties, especially during the summer months, are also an integral part of the calendar.

Gay clubs can be found in Commercial Rd, Prahran and in Collingwood ([p178-9](#)); the scene covers everything from the ultra-commercial (hello Kylie!) to 'queer and alternative'. [Three Thousand](#) ([www.threethousand.com.au](http://www.threethousand.com.au)) lists

## HEADLINE ACTS

When the rock gods (or more commonly pop, R&B and hip-hop stars) roll into town and are too big for Melbourne's beloved medium-sized venues, such as the Corner Hotel ([p153](#)) or the Prince Bandroom ([p158](#)), they are likely to play at one of the following venues (book tickets through one of the agencies listed on [p357](#)):

**Forum Theatre** (Map pp52-3; [www.marrinetheatres.com.au](http://www.marrinetheatres.com.au); 150-152 Flinders St) One of the city's most atmospheric live music venues, it does double duty as a cinema during the Melbourne Film Festival. The Arabic-inspired exterior houses an equally interesting interior, with the southern sky rendered on the domed ceiling.

**Hamer Hall** (Melbourne Concert Hall; Map pp64-5; [www.theartscentre.net.au](http://www.theartscentre.net.au); Victorian Arts Centre, 100 St Kilda Rd) The concert hall is well known for its excellent acoustics, with a décor inspired by Australia's mineral and gemstone deposits.

**Palais Theatre** (Map pp88-9; ☎ 9537 2444; Lower Esplanade, St Kilda) Standing gracefully next to Luna Park, the Palais is a St Kilda icon. Not only is it a beautiful old space, but it also stages some pretty special performances. It's pegged for major development, which has St Kilda holding its collective breath.

**Rod Laver Arena** (Map pp68-9; [www.mopt.com.au](http://www.mopt.com.au); Batman Ave) A giant, versatile space used for headline concerts and the Australian Open tennis ([p12](#)), with a huge sunroof. Not the most atmospheric of venues, but then it's all about the spectacle. Ditto for the nearby [Hisense Arena \(p67\)](#).

**Sidney Myer Music Bowl** (Map pp84-5; [www.theartscentre.net.au](http://www.theartscentre.net.au); Kings Domain) This beautiful amphitheatre in the park is used for a variety of outdoor events, from the [Tropfest](#) ([www.tropfest.com.au](http://www.tropfest.com.au)) film festival to Opera in the Bowl to the New Year's Day rave [Summerdayze](#).

touring djs and special events, and [In the Mix](#) ([www.inthemix.com.au](http://www.inthemix.com.au)), a national dance-devoted site, has a comprehensive Melbourne section that caters for those that know what they are looking for.

## COMEDY & CABARET

Melbourne prides itself on being the home of Australian comedy and isn't remotely reticent about turning the joke on itself. The annual [International Comedy Festival \(p14\)](#) sees the entire city become a sprawling comedy venue. Local comedians join forces with international performers from the festival circuit to take the stage in pubs, clubs, theatres and on city streets.

Melbourne has a few regular comedy venues and nightspots where stand-up comics stand or fall. Weekly gigs are listed in the 'EG' section of the *Age*.

## WHEN TO GO OUT

Most bars and pubs stay open until at least midnight or 1am, but it's always worth checking ahead for opening hours if you're planning a late one. Inner-city bars with djs and most clubs will open until 3am on weekend nights, some much, much later (or should we say earlier, as it's often past dawn). Again, it's best to check with the venue beforehand. At the time of writing the government has

introduced trial 'lockout' legislation banning people from entering, or re-entering, bars or clubs after 2am (although venues can stay open past that, hence the term 'lockout'), hoping to curb late-night violence. How this affects the city's nightlife is yet to be seen; many fear it will dampen a vibrant scene and also lead to *increased* violence at the new communal pumpkin hour.

## WHAT TO WEAR

What *not* to wear might be more of an apt question. And really, it depends on the destination. Melburnians might affect a casual air, but that doesn't mean that most city bars won't be full of people that have put in some effort, even if it's about graphic hoodies, jeans and trainers. Pubs, especially those in neighbourhood back streets, can be a lot more laid-back, but can also deliver the odd sartorial surprise. Bayside venues can go a variety of ways: flip-flops and shorts, rock and roll, or ultra glam.

## SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES

Smoking is banned in all bars and pubs, though there will often be a balcony or courtyard provided. In lieu of this, many smokers congregate on the footpath outside.

## WHAT TO DRINK

Beer is taken seriously in Melbourne and most places serve a variety of local, boutique and imported beers on tap, as well as a wider range by the bottle. Beer is ordered by the pot (285ml) or pint (600ml). The big commercial brews are Carlton Draught and Victoria Bitter (VB). Boutique brands include Mountain Goat, Little Creatures and the vegan's friend, Coopers. Wine is served by the glass and the bottle and it's now common to find wines from France, Italy, Spain and New Zealand among the well-loved Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula labels. Cocktails are increasingly made with skill and premium ingredients, with prices to match. At most bars you'll also find a range of good-quality spirits and European aperitifs and liquors. Pubs are increasingly following this lead, but still often use acrid house spirits unless you specify otherwise.

## CENTRAL MELBOURNE

The city has a diverse range of bars, many of which are the iconic up-an-alley places Melbourne is known for. The suits take over during cocktail hour, especially come Friday night, but there's enough variety if that's not your scene. Things can be pretty quiet early in the week, apart from live music gigs. The city doesn't slow down for the Sabbath – having a big night on a Sunday isn't usually a problem. Despite the constant talk of small hidden bars, there are also plenty of larger pubs and clubs spread throughout the city too. King St was once the nightlife hub of Melbourne. Today it's a rather tawdry strip of 'gentlemen's clubs' and is notorious for its late-night violence.

### BLUE DIAMOND Map pp52–3 Bar/Club

☎ 8601 2720; 15th fl, 123 Queen St; ☎ 5pm-late Thu-Fri & Sun, 7pm-late Sat

This 'social salon and cabaret' is ostensibly a private club, but nonmembers do make it in, especially on Thursday and Sunday nights. It's a dark, dramatic space but the main attraction is the view; it's as good as it gets this side of the Rainbow Room. There's live entertainment from 10.30pm Friday to Sunday, with live soul and funk acts taking the stage.

### CARLTON HOTEL Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9663 3246; 193 Bourke St; ☎ 4pm-late Once upon a time, you went to the Carlton because there was nowhere else to go.

These days, you can still prop up the bar but you'll be drinking a Peninsula pinot gris. OTT Melbourne rococo gets another workout here and never fails to raise a smile. Check the rooftop **Palmz** if you're looking for some Miami-flavoured vice or just a great view.

### CHERRY Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9639 8122; 103 Flinders Lane; ☎ 5pm-late Tue-Fri, 9pm-late Sat

This rock'n'roll refuge is still going strong. There's often a queue, but once inside a relaxed, slightly anarchic spirit prevails. Music is rarely live but never electronic.

### COLLINS QUARTER Map pp52–3 Bar/Pub

☎ 9650 8500; www.collinsquarter.com; 86a Collins St; ☎ 7am-late Mon-Fri, 11am-late Sat

This collection of bars is like a hotel without the rooms upstairs and without the bellhop palaver or aggressive pricing. It's a grown-up space with few rough edges but has a timeless appeal. There's a variety of different areas and moods. A magnolia tree sprouts from the courtyard and inside there's a wood fire burning.

### CROFT INSTITUTE Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9671 4399; www.thecroftinstitute.com.au; 21-25 Croft Alley; ☎ 5pm-late Mon-Fri, 8pm-late Sat

Located in a laneway off a laneway, the lab-themed Croft is a test of drinkers' determination. Prescribe yourself a beaker of house-distilled vodka in the downstairs laboratory and venture up the rickety stairs to inspect the Departments of Male and Female Hygiene (aka the toilets, complete with hospital beds).

### DOUBLE HAPPINESS Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9650 4488; http://doubledouble.com.au; 21 Liverpool St; ☎ 5pm-late Mon-Fri, 6pm-late Sat & Sun

This stylish hole in the wall doesn't just do Chinese-themed décor, it also offers Chinese beers. Try a Tsingtao beer or a cardamom- or ginger-flavoured cocktail.

### GIN PALACE Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9654 0533; 190 Little Collins St; ☎ 4pm-late

With a drinks list to make your liver quiver, Gin Palace is the perfect place to grab a soft couch or secluded alcove, sip, and take it slow. Martinis here are legendary and it's open superlate most nights.

### LONG ROOM Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9663 7226; www.thelongroom.com.au; Georges Bldg, 162-168 Collins St, 4pm-late Tue-Fri, 5pm-late Sat

This decadent space runs the length of a city block, and is bedecked with animal heads, clusters of low-lying tables, a sushi bar and private tatami rooms. The loud after-work crowd recognise the top-40 tunes and loiter till late.

### LOOP Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9654 0500; www.looonline.com.au; 23 Meyers Pl; ☎ 3pm-late

Loop has large double screen and scattered projectors; find yourself a dark seat or a spot at the bar and watch the 'Video Jockeys' display their wares. Not as wanky as it sounds.

### MADAME BRUSSELS Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9662 2775; www.madamebrussels.com; Level 3, 59-63 Bourke St; ☎ noon-11pm Sun-Wed, noon-1am Thu-Sat

Head here if you've had it with Melbourne moody and all that dark wood. Although named for a famous 19th-century madam, it feels as though you've fallen into a camp '60s rabbit hole, with much Astroturfery and staff dressed *à la* the country club. And just like in a Richard Yates novel, they certainly know their booze. The décor might veer towards the hysterical, but it's just the tonic on a chilly winter's day; they even provide lap rugs for the terrace.

### MELBOURNE SUPPER CLUB Bar

Map pp52–3 ☎ 9654 6300; 1st fl, 161 Spring St; 8pm-4am Sun & Mon, 5pm-4am Tue-Thu, 5pm-6am Fri, 8pm-6am Sat

Melbourne's own Betty Ford's (the place you go when there's nowhere left to go), the Supper Club is open very late and is a favoured after-work spot for performers and hospitality types. Leave your coat at the door and cosy into a Chesterfield. Browse the encyclopaedic wine menu and relax; the sommeliers will cater to any liquid desire. Upstairs the **Fuller Bar** has wonderful views and is open to the elements for the cigar smokers.

### MEYERS PLACE Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9650 8609; 20 Meyers Pl; ☎ 4pm-2am Mon-Thu, 4pm-4am Fri & Sat

Local rock-star architects Six Degrees made their mark with this little place, the

Ur-laneway bar. Much copy has been devoted to its recycled materials and interesting demarcation of space over the last 14 years, but for most Melburnians, it's now just a great place to drink.

### MISTY Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9663 9202; 3-5 Hosier Lane; ☎ to late Tue-Sat Misty's white walls, '70s curves and glowing lights has been packing them in for almost a decade. Its location is archetypal; Hosier Lane's colour is right out the window.

### MOO Map pp52–3 Bar

**Money Order Office**; ☎ 9639 3020; Driver Lane; ☎ 5pm-late Mon, noon-late Tue-Fri, 6pm-late Sat

This sumptuous hideaway has the air of an exclusive gentlemen's club. Overstuffed leather couches, private booths lining the walls and excellent service complete the picture. It's the perfect place to work your way through a wine list. Its street-level little sister **Penny Blue** is more of the same décor wise, but with big street-side windows and outdoor seating that suits afternoon imbibing. They spin some great tunes from the dj cage, but the staff can be a little offhand.

### NEW GOLD MOUNTAIN Bar

Map pp52–3 ☎ 9650 8859; www.newgoldmountain.org; Level 1, 21 Liverpool St; ☎ 5pm-late Mon-Fri, 8pm-late Sat & Sun

Unsignposted, New Gold Mountain's intense Chinoiserie interior comes as a shock. Two upstairs floors are filled with tiny screen-shielded corners, with decoration so delightfully relentless you feel as if you're trapped in an arthouse dream sequence. Sours are the thing, though they do great things with vodka too. Harbin heaven.

### ORDER OF MELBOURNE Map pp52–3 Bar

☎ 9663 6707; www.theorder.com.au; Level 2, 401 Swanston St; ☎ noon-11pm Wed-Sun, noon-1am Thu & Fri, 3pm-3am Sat

This warehouse space is loved by RMIT students but also has a nicely mixed crowd of after-work drinkers. There are lots of nooks and crannies, a gleefully eclectic aesthetic and reasonably priced wines. The rooftop space is the place to be in summer.

**PHOENIX** Map pp52-3

Bar/Pub

☎ 9650 4976; <http://phoenixbar.com.au>; 82 Flinders St; ☎ noon-late Mon-Fri, 5pm-late Sat Phoenix's retro-safari theme and split-level surprises are popular with after-workers on the prowl. Late closing on weekends ensures that most Melburnians have ended up here at some stage. A regularly updated *meze* (hors d'oeuvre) menu is also available.

**RECORDED MUSIC SALON**

Map pp52-3

Bar

☎ 9650 3821; [www.recordedmusicsalon.com.au](http://www.recordedmusicsalon.com.au); Level 1, 11 Collins St; ☎ 7am-late Mon-Fri, 6pm-late Sat

All that's left of the original analogue retailer is the name and signage, but the wooden interior has the warmth of an old LP. This unpretentious drinking hole has a long cocktail list, good wine, a day/night menu and window seats with views of the Paris end of Collins St.

**RIVERLAND** Map pp52-3

Bar

☎ 9662 1771; [www.riverlandbar.com](http://www.riverlandbar.com); Vaults 1-9, Federation Wharf (below Princes Bridge); ☎ 7am-late

This bluestone beauty, another by architects Six Degrees, keeps things simple with good wine, beer on tap and bar snacks that hit the mark: charcuterie, cheese and BBQ. A rare riverside drinking hole that doesn't give off the scent of corporate investors. Outside tables are a treat when the weather is kind.

**ROBOT** Map pp52-3

Bar

☎ 9620 3646; [www.robotsushi.com](http://www.robotsushi.com); 12 Bligh Pl; ☎ 5pm-late Mon-Fri, 8pm-late Sat

If neo-Tokyo is your thing or you just have a sudden urge for a sushi hand roll washed down with an Asahi, check out Robot. It has an all-welcome door policy, big windows that open to the laneway, a cute mezzanine level and attracts a laid-back young crowd. There's even anime every Tuesday night.

**SECTION 8** Map pp52-3

Bar

☎ 0408-971 044; [www.section8.com.au](http://www.section8.com.au); 27-29 Tattersalls Lane; ☎ 8am-late Mon-Fri, noon-late Sat & Sun

The latest in shipping container habitats, come and sink a Little Creatures brew with the after-work crowd, who make do with packing cases and Chinese lanterns for décor.

**SISTER BELLA** Map pp52-3

Bar

Sniders Lane; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat The St Jerome's crew colonised this dilapidated laneway warehouse and it's definitely staked its claim as the older sibling. Still, the ramshackle is only knocked back by degrees and they keep the formula similar: cheap beer and wine, cheap food and kids running the place that know they're cooler than you but won't let that ruin the friendship.

**ST JEROME'S & SHIT TOWN**

Map pp52-3

Bar/Club

7 Caledonian Lane; ☎ 8am-late Mon-Fri, noon-late Sat & Sun

Tiny St Jerome's does great coffee and toasties all day for the students that flock here. Come sundown, its time for long-necks and beats in the cloistered back alley. It's also time for *Shit Town*, its twisted next-door sister, to open the door (actually a hole in the wall). Here the 80s crack-house aesthetic is fully realised and the music is loud and left-field.

**TRANSPORT** Map pp52-3

Bar/Pub

☎ 9658 8808; [www.transporthotel.com.au](http://www.transporthotel.com.au); Federation Sq; ☎ 11am-late

A people-watcher's paradise from any angle, this pub looks ultramodern but is unrepentant in its pubiness. It's big, brassy and busy, serving every drink imaginable, plus utilitarian pub food and entertainment: djs, bands and beer-tasting nights (from the 150 varieties available). Also good for an afternoon drop, with views of the Yarra River, Flinders Street Station and Fed Sq.

**BROWN ALLEY** Map pp52-3

Club

☎ 9670 8599; [www.brownalley.com](http://www.brownalley.com); cnr King & Lonsdale Sts; ☎ Mon-Fri 11.30am-late, Sat & Sun 6pm-late

This historical pub hides away a fully fledged nightclub with a 24-hour licence. It's enormous, with distinct rooms that can fit up to 1000 people. Their sound equipment is the business and the rota of djs includes breakbeat, psy-trance and deep house.

**FFOUR** Map pp52-3

Club/Bar

☎ 9650 4494; [www.ffour.com.au](http://www.ffour.com.au); 2nd fl, 322 Little Collins St; entry \$10-12; ☎ till late Thu-Sun

This stark all-nighter is also popular earlier with Friday after-work drinkers, when

entry is free and drinks specials drown out the week that was. It's your basic garden-variety club; each night brings a different crowd-pleasing flavour, from R&B through to Asian cocktail night to commercial house. Join gangs of girlfriends and student types on a big night out.

**LA DI DA** Map pp52-3

Club

☎ 9670 7680; [www.ladidapeople.com](http://www.ladidapeople.com); 577 Little Bourke St; ☎ 9am-late Mon-Fri, 3pm-late Sat & Sun

This large multileveled space attempts to bring back the glam to the seedy old King St area. The Chesterfield-strewn public house feeds and waters an after-work crowd; downstairs the club hosts a selection of djs who spin commercial house or something much more interesting depending on the night.

**LOUNGE** Map pp52-3

Club/Lounge

☎ 9663 2916; [www.lounge.com.au](http://www.lounge.com.au); 1st fl, 243 Swanston St; ☎ 11am-late

The Lounge has seen a lot of years and a lot of extremely big nights. It still feels like a share house from the early '90s, and that's the way the crowd likes it. From Wednesday to Sunday there's usually something on, with all-night djs Friday and Saturday (door charge \$10). Lounge's big balcony, where you can shovel down some reasonably priced food, is a treat in summer.

**3RD CLASS** Map pp52-3

Club

☎ 9662 4555; [www.myspace.com/3rdclassclub](http://www.myspace.com/3rdclassclub); Duckboard Pl; ☎ to late Wed-Sun

Legendary 'if your name is not on the list, you're not coming in' club Honkytonks imploded a few years back and was reborn as this perversely dingy club that draws a very young, very up-for-it crowd. The anti-aesthetic can be both shocking and appealing, depending on the time of night.

**LAST LAUGH COMEDY CLUB**

Map pp52-3

Live Comedy Venue

☎ 9650 6668; [www.comedyclub.com.au](http://www.comedyclub.com.au); Athenaeum Theatre, 188 Collins St, Melbourne

The Last Laugh is open Friday and Saturday year-round, with additional nights in summer. This is professional stand-up, featuring local and international artists. Dinner/show packages are available – bookings recommended. The club is also a venue for acts during the Comedy Festival.

**BENNETTS LANE** Map pp52-3 Live Music/Bar

☎ 9663 2856; [www.bennettslane.com](http://www.bennettslane.com); 25 Bennetts Lane; tickets from \$12; ☎ 8.30pm-late Bennetts Lane has long been the boiler room of Melbourne jazz. It attracts the cream of local and international talent and an audience that knows when it's time to applaud a solo. Beyond the cosy front bar, there's another space reserved for big gigs.

**DING DONG LOUNGE**

Map pp52-3

Live Music/Club

☎ 9662 1020; [www.dingdonglounge.com.au](http://www.dingdonglounge.com.au); 18 Market Lane, Melbourne; ☎ 7pm-late Wed-Sat Ding Dong walks the rock-and-roll walk and is a great place to see a smaller touring act or catch local bands. The monthly Weekender night hosted by radio RRR dj Steve Wide pulls in the crowds to dance to indie, retro and electro.

**MISS LIBERTINE** Map pp52-3 Live Music/Club

☎ 9663 6855; [www.misslibertine.com.au](http://www.misslibertine.com.au); 34 Franklin St; ☎ 8am-late Mon-Fri, noon-late Sat, 9pm-late Sun

This rambling old pub mixes its crowd and keeps its musical outlook Catholic. The front bar goes off, but the main draw is their diverse line-up of local and touring acts, both live and on the turntables.

**PONY** Map pp52-3

Live Music/Club

☎ 9662 1026; [www.pony.net.au](http://www.pony.net.au); 68 Little Collins St, Melbourne

Bands thump away upstairs (from Wednesday to Saturday), above the low ceilings and din of downstairs. You can also saddle up for the long haul, with Pony open downstairs until 7am Friday and Saturday night.

**ROXANNE PARLOUR**

Map pp52-3

Live Music/Club

☎ 9663 4600; [www.roxaneparlour.com.au](http://www.roxaneparlour.com.au); Level 3, 2 Coverlid Pl

Music venue from central casting: up some stairs 'tween porn shop and pool hall. You'll find two rooms of happy indie kids and a varied line up from rock and roll to electro avant-pop to trance/psy djs.

**TOFF IN TOWN** Map pp52-3 Live Music/Bar

☎ 9639 8770; [www.thetoffintown.com](http://www.thetoffintown.com); Level 2, Curtin House, 252 Swanston St; ☎ 5pm-late Sun-Thu, noon-late Fri

An atmospheric venue well suited to cabaret but also works for intimate gigs



by rock gods, avant-folksters or dancehall queens. The moody bar next door serves postset drinks of the French wine and cocktail variety.

### CITY WINE SHOP Map pp52–3 Wine Bar

☎ 9654 6657; 159 Spring St; ☎ 7am-late  
Take home or sample the *de jour* drops by the glass from the wall of local and international wines. You can also buy by the bottle, which adds a corkage charge to the marked price. Counter meals such as crab cakes or goat's cheese omelette (the bar shares a kitchen with the European restaurant next door) demand you make a night of it. Its prime footpath tables are a delight in summer.

## SOUTHBANK & DOCKLANDS

As befits areas that sprang seemingly fully formed from postindustrial wasteland in little over a decade, the bars and entertainment options around here don't tend to the earthy or authentic. What you do get with your boutique ale is views and some provocative interior design.

### BEARBRASS Map pp64–5 Bar

☎ 9682 3799; www.bearbrass.com.au; River level, Southgate, Southbank; ☎ 8am-late Mon-Fri, 9am-late Sat & Sun  
This happy, mainstream bar has a lot to offer: big breakfasts, interesting bar snacks and a wonderful riverside location. And that's all before you notice there's a breakfast cocktail menu with Mexican and Japanese interpretations of the bloody mary and the delightfully entitled 'crack of dawn', a posh play on the mimosa with vodka, verjuice, fresh orange juice and a bit of fizz.

### JAMES SQUIRES BREWHOUSE

Map pp64–5 Bar/Pub

☎ 9600 0700; www.jamesquirebrewhouse.net; 439 Docklands Dr, Docklands; ☎ noon-late  
Big, brassy and boozy – a good place to work off a waterview-acquired thirst or if you've just dropped anchor. The pilsner and IPA are good for a sweltering day or there's some darker drops for when the weather comes in.

### ALUMBRA Map pp64–5 Club

☎ 8623 966; www.alumbra.com.au; Shed 9, Central Pier, 161 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands; ☎ 4pm-late Wed-Fri, 2pm-late Sat & Sun  
Beware the meat-market antics on weekends; during the week it's rather more subdued and the great music, bar staff and stunning location will impress – even if the Bali-meets-Morocco follies of the decorator don't. If you're going to do one megaclub in Melbourne (and like the idea of a glass dance floor), this is going to be your best bet.

### EVE Map pp64–5 Club

☎ 96967388; www.evebar.com.au; 334 City Rd, South Melbourne; ☎ 8pm-5am Thu-Sun  
Florence Broadhurst wallpapers, a black granite bar and Louis chairs set the tone, which gets rapidly lower as the night progresses. Footballers, glamour girls and the odd lost soul come for cocktails and commercial house. Expect to queue after 9pm.

## EAST MELBOURNE & RICHMOND

Richmond's factory-fodder roots are evident in its plethora of corner pubs. This is where you'll find the Corner Hotel, one of the city's best live music venues. East Melbourne isn't on anyone's big night out list, so you'll have to look further east to Richmond or west to town for a drink.

### AVIARY Map pp68–9 Bar

☎ 9428 7727; www.theaviary.com.au; 271 Victoria St, Richmond; ☎ closed Mon; ☎ 24, 109  
If you want a nightcap after your rice-paper rolls and beef in betel leaf dinner, this is a nice, laid-back inner-city bar in an area that's never been too flush with them.

## top picks

### TOP ROOFTOPS

- Madame Brussels (p149)
- Order of Melbourne (p149)
- Supper Club's Fuller Bar (p149)
- Shit Town (p150)
- Palmz at the Carlton Hotel (p148)

There's a good range of beers and wines (including sangria), plus enough vodkas to keep a serious drinker happy. It's also great if you fancy a dessert but are thinking chocolate mousse rather than bean-thread jelly; the menu is interesting to warrant a second visit.

### DER RAUM Map pp68–9 Bar

☎ 9428 0055; www.derraum.com.au; 438 Church St, Richmond; ☎ 6pm-late Tue-Sat; ☎ East Richmond, ☎ 70  
The name conjures up images of a dark Fritz Lang flick and there's definitely something noir-ish about the space and their extreme devotion to hard liquor. Cocktails are not cheap but are muddled and mixed with fresh juices, premium spirits and an encyclopaedic knowledge of the craft.

### PUBLIC HOUSE Map pp68–9 Bar

☎ 9421 0187; www.publichouse.com.au; 433-435 Church St, Richmond; ☎ noon-late; ☎ East Richmond, ☎ 70  
Not in any way resembling a public house from any period of history, this great Six Degrees fit-out features their signature blend of found glass and earthy raw and recycled materials. There's imported beer on tap and a short but sweet wine list.

### MOUNTAIN GOAT BREWERY

Map pp68–9 Brewery

☎ 9428 1180; www.goatbeer.com.au; cnr North & Clark St, Richmond; ☎ from 5pm Fri only  
This local microbrewery's varieties of bottled beer (two premium, two seasonal) are available in lots of bars about town, but there's no better place to really get your Goat than from the brewers themselves. Drop in on a Friday when Cam and Dave answer questions about beer, the universe and everything, cook pizzas and put on a tasting.

### CORNER HOTEL Map pp68–9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9427 9198; www.cornerhotel.com; 57 Swan St, Richmond; ☎ Richmond, ☎ 70  
The band room here is one of Melbourne's most popular mid-sized venues and has seen plenty of loud and live action over the years. If your ears need a break, there's a friendly front bar. The rooftop has stunning city views, but gets superpacked, and often with a different crowd from the music fans below.

## FITZROY & AROUND

Possessing the highest density of pubs of any suburb, Fitzroy has a big drinking scene. Neighbouring Collingwood is getting in on the act too, and distant Northcote sees a lot of action along its High St strip.

### BAR OPEN Map pp74–5 Bar

☎ 9415 9601; www.baropen.com.au; 317 Brunswick St, Fitzroy; ☎ 3pm-late; ☎ 112  
This 10-year-old veteran, as the name suggests, is often open when everyone else is closed. The bar attracts a relaxed young local crowd ready to kick on. Bands play upstairs and are almost always free.

### CAZ REITOP'S DIRTY SECRET Bar

Map pp74–5  
☎ 9415 8876; www.crds.com.au; 80 Smith St, Collingwood; ☎ 5pm-late Wed-Sat; ☎ 86  
Speakeasy chic with a couple of snugs for contriving your own cocktail-fuelled dirty secrets. Down the tiny stairs, there's a cosy (or claustrophobic) bluestone basement. If there's not a private party going on here, you might find DJs, acoustic acts or comedy. The drinks menu is broad and they have an excellent range of spirits.

### JOE'S SHOE STORE Map pp48–9 Bar

☎ 9482 7666; 233 High St, Northcote; ☎ 4pm-late Tue-Thu, 2pm-late Fri-Sun; ☎ 86  
Someone called Joe will no longer sell you lace-up brogues but you'll be pleased with the wine list, featuring around 20 both Australian and 'Continental' wines by the bottle or the glass. It's packed with Northcote cool kids who order pizza from *Meine Liebe* (p136) or just stick to drinks.

### KENT ST Map pp74–5 Bar

☎ 9419 6346; 201 Smith St, Fitzroy; ☎ 10am-late; ☎ 86  
If you like a beer for brunch and your bars dishevelled, Kent St keeps it coming morning, noon and night. Join the gearless bike set on the footpath or explore the nooks and crannies within. Coffee and all-day snacks too.

### LABOUR IN VAIN Map pp74–5 Bar/Pub

☎ 9417 5955; www.labourinvain.com.au; 197a Brunswick St, Fitzroy; ☎ 3pm-late Mon-Wed, 1pm-late Thu-Sun; ☎ 112  
Boy's own beer barn with a pool table and lots of Marvellous Melbourne-era charm.

Upstairs there's a deck perfect for lazy afternoons doing a spot of Brunswick St perving and imagining the horrors of 6pm closing.

### LAMBSGO BAR Map pp74-5 Bar

☎ 8415 0511; [www.lambsgobar.com.au](http://www.lambsgobar.com.au); 136 Greeves St, Fitzroy; ☎ 5pm-late Mon-Wed, 4pm-late Thu-Sat, 4-11pm Sun; ☎ 86

This little temple to beer has been quietly going about its business for quite a few years. They stock an astounding range of the amber fluid: the bar rivals the UN for representation. There's a pool table and a few hidey-hole spaces beyond the front bar.

### EVELYN HOTEL Map pp74-5 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9419 5500; [www.evelynhotel.com](http://www.evelynhotel.com); 351 Brunswick St, Fitzroy; ☎ 112

Playing mostly local acts, the Evelyn also pulls some bigish-name international performers. The Ev doesn't discriminate by genre: if it's quality it gets a look-in here. Both one-off gigs and band residencies feature from Tuesday to Sunday (free to \$30).

### GERTRUDE HOTEL

Map pp74-5 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9419 2823; [www.thegertrudehotel.com.au](http://www.thegertrudehotel.com.au); 148 Gertrude St, Fitzroy; ☎ noon to late daily; ☎ 86

This was until recently the last regular pub on Gertrude St, and some of the old-timers brave the new scene. With its yes-this-is-Fitzroy screaming band posters and a very young crowd, it's a jarring mix. But the counter meals have remained refreshingly unambitious (they do parmas) and the bar staff are fast and friendly.

### NIGHT CAT Map pp74-5 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9417 0090; [www.thenightcat.com.au](http://www.thenightcat.com.au); 141 Johnston St, Fitzroy; ☎ 9pm-late Thu-Sun; ☎ 112

The Night Cat is a barn-sized space that saw the birth of the upside-down lampshade aesthetic in the mid-90s. There are two bars, a stage and a black-and-white checked dance floor that sees lots of action. Music is generally in the Latin jazz or funk vein. There's a door charge Friday and Saturday.

### NORTHCOTE SOCIAL CLUB

Map pp48-9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9489 3917; [www.northcotesocialclub.com](http://www.northcotesocialclub.com); 301 High St, Northcote; ☎ 86

This is one of Melbourne's best Live Musics with a stage that's seen the likes of Jose

Gonzalez, Deerhoof and Spoon one album out from star status. Their home-grown line-up is also notable. If you're just after a drink, the front bar buzzes every night of the week, or there's a large deck out the back for lazy afternoons. A perfect, and well-loved, local.

### ROB ROY Map pp74-5 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9419 7180; 51 Brunswick St, Fitzroy; ☎ 112

The Rob Roy is does live and local music, usually of the guitar variety. Its small back band room is watched over by a determined Johnny Cash, and its front bar is a kitschy collection of furniture. Entry fees are extremely affordable and sometimes free. (By the by, staff have reported spooky sightings and things that go bump in the night.)

### TOTE Map pp74-5 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9419 5320; [www.thetotehotel.com](http://www.thetotehotel.com); cnr Johnston & Wellington Sts, Fitzroy; ☎ 4pm-late; ☎ 86, ☎ 203

This noisy relic of Melbourne's '80s punk/postpunk scene will steal the heart of anyone who loves sticky carpets and sweaty, guitar-driven tunes. Both local and international acts feature. And there's always the promise of an extant rock god sighting in the resolutely grungy front bar.

### WESLEY ANNE Map pp48-9 Live Music/Bar

☎ 9482 1333; [www.wesleyanne.com.au](http://www.wesleyanne.com.au); 250 High St, Northcote; ☎ 4pm-late Mon-Fri, 2pm-late Sat & Sun; ☎ 86

This atmospheric pub set up shop in a church mission's house of assembly. What else can you expect when the demon drink wins out against the forces of temperance? Booze, yes, but also interesting food, live music, a big beer garden with space heaters and a cruisy crowd who often bring their kids along in daylight hours.

### BUILDERS ARMS HOTEL

Map pp74-5 Pub/Restaurant

☎ 9419 0818; 211 Gertrude St, Fitzroy; ☎ 3pm-late Mon-Thu, noon-late Fri-Sun; ☎ 86

A completely re-imagined bad old boozier that's retained its charm despite theatrical new threads. Come for a pot by all means, but there's also decent wine by the glass, a blackboard cocktail list and big Middle-Eastern flavours at the bar or

in the dining room. Picnic style tables on the footpath outside are perfect for taking in Gertrude St.

### NAPIER HOTEL Map pp74-5 Pub

☎ 9419 4240; 210 Napier St, Fitzroy; ☎ 3-11pm Mon-Thu, 1pm-1am Fri & Sat, 1-11pm Sun; ☎ 112, 86

The Napier has stood on this corner for over a century; many pots have been pulled as the face of the neighbourhood changed. The nostalgic should note the memorabilia of the sadly departed Fitzroy footy team still adorning the walls. Worm your way around the central bar to the boisterous back dining room or to the skinny passage that serves as a beer garden. Outside tables aren't flash but look out over the grand Fitzroy Town Hall.

### STANDARD Map pp74-5 Pub

☎ 9419 4793; 293 Fitzroy St, Fitzroy; ☎ 96, 112 The snug front bar is an old haunt of local barflies. Behind lies a larger drinking space and a sprawling beer garden. It's a favourite with students. Summer Sundays are particularly sweet.

### UNION CLUB HOTEL Map pp74-5 Pub

☎ 9417 2926; [www.unionclubhotel.com.au](http://www.unionclubhotel.com.au); 164 Gore St, Fitzroy; ☎ 3pm-late Mon-Thu, noon-late Fri-Sun; ☎ 86

Every inch a local's local, the Union comes into its own in winter with the fire roaring and the footy on. The dining room serves generous pub favourites and there's a rambling courtyard and footpath tables.

### GERTRUDE ST ENOTECA

Map pp74-5 Wine Bar

☎ 9415 8262; [www.gertrudestreetenoteca.com](http://www.gertrudestreetenoteca.com); 229 Gertrude St, Fitzroy; ☎ 8am-late Mon-Fri, 9am-late Sat; ☎ 86

The Fitzroyalty regulars don't mind sharing the banquette space and there are a few more tables out the back among the wine. The 'list' at this svelte wine bar/bottle shop changes regularly and favours European grapes with erudite advice on same. Bar snacks are sourced from Victoria's top suppliers; you can easily make a meal of a couple of plates. While cake doesn't normally score a mention in bar reviews, the Enoteca's are made fresh each day and are wonderful. Order a sticky if you need an excuse.

## CARLTON & AROUND

There's plenty of pubs to be found throughout Carlton and you'll quickly become aware of the area's large student population in many of them. There are also some grown-up gems. Both Brunswick and North Melbourne have a thriving drinking scene which is branching beyond pubs to the odd interesting little bar.

### ATTICUS FINCH Map pp78-9 Bar

☎ 9387 0188; 129 Lygon St, East Brunswick; ☎ 5-11pm Wed-Thu, 5pm-1am Fri, 2pm-1am Sat, 2-10pm Sun; ☎ 1, 8

There's a judicious wine list and back-in-fashion cider at this Brunswick haunt named for everyone's favourite lawyer from literature. The space is smartly and simply done with a slight brooding quality (though perhaps we're overidentifying with the novel). A nice alternative to the bigger pubs in these parts, it still sports the requisite beer garden.

### RROSE BAR Map pp78-9 Bar

☎ 9328 1550; 7 Errol St, North Melbourne; ☎ 2pm-late; ☎ 57

This small bar does both stylish and homey in equal measures (something that's harder to pull off than it looks). A wooden bar that could double as a family dining table, bentwood stools and terrazzo floors add to the eclectic appeal. Not to be overlooked for an afternoon coffee either.

### TRADES HALL BAR Map pp78-9 Bar

☎ 9650 5699; [www.tradeshallarts.com.au](http://www.tradeshallarts.com.au); cnr Lygon & Victoria Sts, Carlton; ☎ 4-7pm Fri; ☎ 1, 8

The ballroom in this fascinating old building runs a weekly bar with 'socialist chardonnays, proletariat reds, beer by the belly full'. Prices are cheap, the chat is not purely political and the high-ceilinged dishabille space is truly unique.

### COMIC'S LOUNGE

Map pp78-9 Live Comedy Venue

☎ 9348 9488; [www.thecomicslounge.com.au](http://www.thecomicslounge.com.au); 26 Errol St, North Melbourne; ☎ 57

There is stand-up every night of the week here. Admission prices vary, but are usually between \$8 and \$12. Monday night features local comedians and has recently featured notorious funny man Mark 'Chopper' Read. Tuesday is kind of an open-mic night, where aspiring comics have their eight minutes of fame (or shame).

**CORNISH ARMS** Map pp78–9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9380 8383; www.cornisharms.com.au; 163a Sydney Rd, Brunswick; ☎ 3pm–3am Mon–Sat, 3–11pm Sun; 🍷 Jewell, 🍷 19

The Cornish Arms is a big, friendly venue hosting performances by local talents, some of them firmly from the '80s, but nonetheless interesting. There's some form of entertainment nightly, be it music, comedy or cabaret. Sunday-afternoon sessions are popular with young families.

**EAST BRUNSWICK CLUB**

Map pp48–9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9388 2777; www.eastbrunswickclub.com; 280 Lygon St, East Brunswick; 🍷 1, 8

One of the newer live venues in town with a very cheering line up of local and international acts. Their front bar also has a friendly local scene with ten-buck specials on a Monday night: jugs, burgers, parmas and pasta are all \$10 each. Vegos and vegans can often miss out on pub grub but they do meatless and dairy-free versions of all the above too.

**RETREAT** Map pp48–9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9380 4090; 280 Sydney Rd, Brunswick; 🍷 Brunswick, 🍷 19

This pub is so big as to be a tad overwhelming. Find your habitat – garden backyard, grungy band room or intimate front bar – and relax. There's blues, roots and acoustic during the week, and djs on the weekends. Sundays are very popular with locals who like to laze in the grass.

**KENT HOTEL** Map pp78–9 Pub/Restaurant

☎ 9347 5672; www.kenthotel.com.au; 370 Rathdowne St, Carlton North; ☎ noon–late; 🍷 1, 8

This is the quietly upmarket Rathdowne Village's local and its position opposite leafy Curtin Square and footpath tables make it very popular. There's no shortage of good wines as well as beer on tap, and the restaurant has had a respectable reputation for many years.

**RATHDOWNE TAVERN**

Map pp78–9 Pub/Restaurant

☎ 9348 1133; 184 Rathdowne St, Carlton; ☎ noon–late; 🍷 96

This grand old hotel has had the decorators in and the smart open room seamlessly segues from the more formal dining space to a nice place to pull up a chair and order

a glass of wine (there's a huge range of by the glass options) and some olives. Bar snacks are a treat.

**TOWN HALL HOTEL** Map pp78–9 Pub

☎ 9328 1983; 33 Errol St, North Melbourne; 🍷 57 The Town Hall is an unfussy local. Live music is staged free in the front room from Thursday to Saturday, otherwise they'll be spinning some classic vinyl. There's a beer garden and pub meals are also available.

**GERALD'S BAR** Map pp78–9 Wine Bar

☎ 9349 4748; 386 Rathdowne St, Carlton North; ☎ 5–11pm Mon–Sat; 🍷 1, 8, 🍷 253

Wine by the glass is democratically selected at Gerald's and they spin some fine vintage vinyl from behind the curved wooden bar. Gerald himself is out the back preparing to feed you whatever he feels like on the day: goat curry, seared calamari, meatballs, trifle. Whatever it is, it's good.

**JIMMY WATSON'S** Map pp78–9 Wine Bar

☎ 9347 3985; 333 Lygon St, Carlton; ☎ Mon 10.30am–6pm, Tue–Sat 11am–late; 🍷 1, 8

Keep it tidy at Watson's wine bar with something nice by the glass, or go a bottle of dry and dry (vermouth and ginger ale) and settle in for the afternoon and evening. If Roy Ground's stunning midcentury building had ears, there'd be a few generations of writers, students and academics in trouble.

**SOUTH YARRA, PRAHRAN & WINDSOR**

South Yarra and Windsor may be in walking distance of each other but are a world away in terms of their bar scene. Windsor has a number of artfully grungy, loungey locals; South Yarra is all about shouting over the music while clutching a lurid-coloured drink. Not so precious Prahran is somewhere in the middle.

**BLUE BAR 330** Map pp84–5 Bar

☎ 9529 6499; www.bluebar.com.au; 330 Chapel St, Prahran; 🍷 Prahran, 🍷 72

A narrow and dimly lit sanctum away from the bustle of Chapel St, Blue Bar's linear architecture and street-smart clientele contrast with the sprawl of couches within.

And Blue Bar blessedly debunks the theory that you have to look like a model to drink in Chapel St.

**CANDY BAR** Map pp84–5 Bar/Club

☎ 9529 6566; www.candybar.com.au; 162 Greville St, Prahran; ☎ 10am–late; 🍷 Prahran, 🍷 72 Harking back to Greville St's clubland heyday, it's a café by day and the djs move in after dark. Check website to find a night that suits: current picks are Monday's drag-queen bingo, or Friday for Sandwich Machine.

**YELLOW BIRD** Map pp84–5 Bar

☎ 9533 8983; 122 Chapel St, Windsor; ☎ 7am–late; 🍷 Windsor, 🍷 6

Keeps Windsor's cool kids happy with all-day drinks (including an evil coffee, sugar and beer shot) and wi-fi access. Owned by the drummer from local band Something for Kate, the rock'n'roll ambience is genuine.

**ONESIXONE** Map pp84–5 Club

☎ 9533 8433; www.onesixone.com.au; 161 High St, Prahran; ☎ till late Wed–Sat; 🍷 Prahran, 🍷 6 Front up to the peephole and if you pass muster, snaffle a couch or a pouf. A wiggle on the small dance floor is obligatory. Friday is house till 9am before the recovery takes over, running all the way through to 11am Sunday.

**REVOLVER UPSTAIRS**

Map pp84–5 Live Music/Club

☎ 9521 5985; www.revolverupstairs.com.au; 229 Chapel St, Prahran; ☎ noon–4am Mon–Thu, 24hr Fri–Sun; 🍷 Prahran, 🍷 6

Rowdy Revolver can feel like an enormous version of your own lounge room, but with 54 hours of nonstop music come the weekend, you're probably glad it's not. Live music, interesting djs and film screenings keep the mixed crowd wide awake.

**WINDSOR CASTLE** Map pp84–5 Pub

☎ 9525 0239; 89 Albert St, Windsor; 🍷 Windsor Cosy nooks, sunken pits, fireplaces and flocked wallpaper make the Windsor Castle extremely attractive – if on a winter's night this way you stumble. The Castle gets chaotic on sunny Sundays when the grass umbrellas and, later, tea lights make for an entirely different mood out the back.

**ST KILDA & AROUND**

We could fill an entire guide with all the options for a tippie in St Kilda. Most can be found in Fitzroy, Grey and Acland Sts, so (beyond those below) you'll not have much trouble sorting yourself out for a casual beer or a couple of caipiroskas. Carlisle St has a surprisingly lively scene too, though it's more indoors.

**AFTER THE TEARS ELSTERNWICK**

Map pp48–9 Bar

☎ 9523 0969; 9B Gordon St, Elsternwick; ☎ 11am–11pm; 🍷 Elsternwick, 🍷 67

This offshoot of long-time Prahran hangout Borsch, Vodka & Tears (p142) is next to the Classic Cinema. It serves an astonishing range of vodkas and its Polish feel is authentic; many of its regulars are Eastern Europeans who settled in the area quite a few decades ago. If you're daunted by shots, ask for a wonderfully warming *sharlotka zubrowka* (Bison vodka and cloudy apple juice).

**GEORGE LANE BAR** Map pp88–9 Bar

☎ 9593 8884; www.georgelanebar.com.au; 1 George Lane (off Grey St), St Kilda; ☎ 6pm–1am Tue–Sat; 🍷 96, 16

Hidden behind the hulk of the George Hotel, this little bar is a good rabbit hole to dive into and its pleasantly ad-hoc décor a relief from the inch-of-its-life design aesthetic elsewhere. There's beer on tap and djs (and queues) on the weekends.

**GEORGE PUBLIC BAR** Map pp88–9 Bar

☎ 9534 8822; Basement, 127 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; 🍷 96, 16

Upstairs/downstairs divisions live on, even in egalitarian St Kilda. Behind the crumbling paint and Edwardian arched windows of the George Hotel, there's the Melbourne Wine Room and a large front bar that keeps the after-work crowd happy. In the bowels of the building is the George Public Bar, often referred to as the Snakepit. It's often rough, rowdy and the perfect spot to nurse a pot and play some pool.

**MINK** Map pp88–9 Bar

☎ 9536 1199; 2b Acland St, St Kilda; 🍷 96, 16, 112 In this dimly lit Trans-Siberian-styled bar there's no shortage of vodka and glam



good times. Get there early to nab the much sought-after private 'sleeper' and start working your way through the extensive list.

### PAUSE BAR Map pp88–9 Bar

☎ 9537 0511; [www.pausebar.com.au](http://www.pausebar.com.au); 268 Carlisle St, St Kilda; ☎ 4pm–1am Mon–Fri, noon–1am Sat & Sun; ☎ Baladava, ☎ 3, 16, 79

Pause draws a mixed local crowd for cocktails and mezes who like to settle into the dim North African-inspired interior for the night. Staff are laid-back.

### VELUDO Map pp88–9 Bar

☎ 9534 4456; [www.veludo.com.au](http://www.veludo.com.au); 175 Acland St, St Kilda; ☎ 96

It's big, it's brassy and it's got a balcony. Over two levels, Veludo's relatively late closing means that most St Kilda-ites have ducked in here after everything else has closed.

### VINEYARD Map pp88–9 Bar

☎ 9525 4527; 71a Adand St, St Kilda; ☎ 96, 16

The perfect corner position and a courtyard barbie attracts crowds of backpackers and scantily clad young locals who enjoy themselves so much as to drown out the neighbouring scenic railway.

### GREYHOUND HOTEL

Map pp88–9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9534 4189; cnr Carlisle St & Brighton Rd, St Kilda; ☎ 16, 67, 79

This is one of the few Melbourne pubs that *hasn't* been refurbished, and is an original all right – it does drag on Saturday night, karaoke on Sunday and bands from Thursday to Saturday. It's dark, grungy and welcomes everyone from bikies to transvestites to bands like the Cosmic Psychos. Just don't ask the barmaid for a Frangelico and lime.

### ESPLANADE HOTEL

Map pp88–9 Live Music/Pub

☎ 9534 0211; <http://espy.com.au>; 11 The Esplanade, St Kilda; ☎ noon–1am Sun–Wed, Thu–Sat noon–3am; ☎ 96, 16

Rock-pigs rejoice. The Espy remains gloriously shabby and welcoming to all. Bands play most nights and there's a spruced-up kitchen out the back. And for the price of a pot you get front row seats for the pink-stained St Kilda sunset.

### PRINCE BANDROOM

Map pp88–9 Live Music

☎ 9536 1168; [www.princebandroom.com.au](http://www.princebandroom.com.au); 29 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; ☎ 96, 16, 112

This venue is an institution with everyone from Tricky to Fat Freddy's Drop to Lee Scratch Perry having graced its stage. Its leafy balcony and raucous downstairs bar are added attractions. Dance acts are a feature, but there's also a good mix of indie, electropop, soul and blues.

### BARKLY HOTEL Map pp88–9 Pub

☎ 9525 3354; [www.hotelbarkly.com](http://www.hotelbarkly.com); 109 Barkly St, St Kilda; ☎ 16, 67, 79

The street-level public bar is the place to go if you're up for sinking a few pints, wiggling to whatever comes on the jukebox and snogging a stranger before last drinks are called. The rooftop bar feigns a bit of class, but things get messy up there too. The look (Gold Coast penthouse, perhaps?) and the music might be just your thing or set your teeth on edge; either way it's worth braving for the abso-bloody-lutely spectacular sunset view across the rooftops to the Palais Theatre and bay beyond.

### DOULTON BAR Map pp88–9 Pub

☎ 9534 2200; 202 Barkly St, St Kilda; ☎ 96

Keep your eyes on the prize: a spot at the curved front window with gold-tinted views down the length of Acland St. Weighty wooden furniture and wood-panelled walls merge with a modern split-level floor plan, in keeping with the original building and mindful of its casual late-20s crowd.

### ST KILDA BOWLING CLUB

Map pp88–9 Sports Club/Bar

☎ 9537 0370; <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sksc>; 66 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; ☎ 96, 16, 112

This fabulously intact old clubhouse is tucked behind a neatly trimmed hedge and a splendid bowling green. The long bar serves drinks at 'club prices' (ie cheap) and you'll be joined by St Kilda's hippest and hottest on Sunday afternoons. Francophiles take note: the petanque club convenes every Friday afternoon.

### WEST ST KILDA RSL

Map pp88–9 Sports Club/Bar

☎ 9534 2485; 23 Loch St, St Kilda; ☎ 112

As far removed from the beer barn RSLs of the northern states as you can get, this

club is housed in a beautiful Victorian villa tucked away in a leafy residential street. Come here for a nostalgically cheap beer and a game of pool.

### CARLISLE WINE BAR Map pp88–9 Wine Bar

☎ 9531 3222; 137 Carlisle St, Baladava; ☎ brunch Sat & Sun, dinner daily; ☎ Baladava, ☎ 3, 16

Locals love this often rowdy, wine-worshipping former butcher's shop. The staff will treat you like a regular and find you a glass of something special, or effortlessly throw together a cocktail amid the weekend rush. The rustic Euro food is good too.

## SOUTH MELBOURNE, PORT MELBOURNE & ALBERT PARK

These neighbourhood's pubs are probably the most gussied up in the city. It's a lively scene, with the area's ad land and media types joining locals at the bar.

### EMERALD HILL BREWERY

Map pp92–3 Brewery

☎ 9696 5491; [www.emeraldhillbrewery.com.au](http://www.emeraldhillbrewery.com.au); 20 Ross St, South Melbourne; ☎ 5pm–midnight Fri only; ☎ 112

This bastion of bloke is only open once a week; the rest of the time they're busy brewing their natural pale, wheat and stout beers. At beer o'clock, up comes the roller door and you're welcome for a pint among the vats.

### GUNN ISLAND HOTEL Map pp92–3 Pub

☎ 9690 1958; 102 Canterbury Rd, Middle Park; ☎ 112

Friendly regular pub with 16 beers on tap and popular counter meals, including par-

mas the size of your head. It's park-side and really pleasant for a Sunday afternoon, but it gets very crowded on weekend nights.

### HOTEL NEST Map pp92–3 Pub

☎ 9699 9744; [www.hotelnest.com.au](http://www.hotelnest.com.au); 111 Victoria Ave, Albert Park; ☎ closed Mon; ☎ 1

The Nest's super slick and airy makeover is deeply Vic Ave. As befits the surroundings, the food is pub-plus (ie wagy burgers), the wine list is long, and the beers obscure or imported.

### LONDON Map pp92–3 Pub

☎ 9646 4644; [thelondon.com.au](http://thelondon.com.au); 92 Beach St, Port Melbourne; ☎ 109

This was often a sailor's first (and only) point of call, but today this portside pub is as well known for its food as the coldness of its beer. It's ideal for watching the sunset or the *Spirit of Tasmania* depart.

### BUTTERFLY CLUB Map pp92–3 Live Music

☎ 9690 2000; [www.thebutterflyclub.com](http://www.thebutterflyclub.com); 204 Bank St, South Melbourne; ☎ 5pm–late Wed–Sun; ☎ 96, 112

This eccentric little place remains largely undiscovered; expect acts that aren't really theatre, aren't quite straight comedy and that might just throw in a song. The teeny rooms display an extraordinary collection of kitsch, which adds to the feeling that you're never quite sure what you're in for.

### LINA'S BISTRO A VIN

Map pp92–3 Wine Bar

☎ 9645-5515; 114 Bridport St, Albert Park; ☎ 4pm–late Mon–Fri, 3pm–late Sat & Sun; ☎ 1, 96

Although serving up admirable bistro fare, this Parisian-styled wine bar is loved by locals as a drinking spot, especially the cheery back courtyard. The *vin* selection is comprehensive.

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