




THE BLUE LABEL BOOK

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THE BLUE LABEL BOOK
THE BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE

Sydney

CITY

AUSTRALIA

34° 15' 0"

'In Sydney Harbour... the yachts will be racing on the crushed diamond water under a sky the texture of powdered sapphires.'

CLIVE
AUTHOR AND BRO



Although steeped in British heritage, Sydney's tastes in food, fashion and design are increasingly being influenced by geography rather than history – as Australia moves to a global stage, its focus is firmly on the world's economic growth area: Asia. Quintessentially, Sydney is a Pacific Rim city undergoing an aggressively expansive phase and Asian fusion happened here a long time before it became hip in Europe. Well-positioned as a major resource and services provider to Asia, the city not only serves a strong multimedia market but is also fast gaining a reputation as a global-finance hub. Despite this entrepreneurial vibe, Sydney is a relaxed place, characterised by 'shirt sleeves and straight talking'. After work, life focuses on fine living, sunshine and water. The city abounds with good food and wine, and with the Harbour Bridge and Opera House at its heart, Sydney is bright, vibrant and alive. Make sure you make the time to board a yacht and see it from the water.

RESIDENCES WATERFRONT BOUTIQUE OR PANORAMIC VIEWS

Nestling beside the Harbour Bridge, the Park Hyatt offers a ringside view of the Opera House and easy access to the business district. Visitors from Bette Midler to Pavarotti choose this discreet hotel in the historic Rocks district. All of Tony Chi's interiors are chic and spacious, but for ringside views of the harbour, choose the 185sq m Governor Suite with its six balconies; the rooftop terrace can host a cocktail party for up to 100 people. Chief concierge Chris Traill is a mine of information on all things Australian, while executive chef Danny Drinkwater brings a keen imagination to the Harbour Kitchen & Bar's modern Australian cuisine – his duck and beetroot tart is a treat. Enjoy lunch with the water lapping beside you (table W7 is best for privacy and views). Fine cognacs, a Cuban-cigar humidor and an open fire can be found in the wood-panelled Club Bar: perfect for a late-night drink.

The InterContinental reflects Sydney old and new. At its heart is the 1851 Treasury Building, with wood-panelled rooms, graceful sandstone arcades and the elegant Cortile lounge. Rising up behind is the new area of the 509-room hotel. The InterContinental is known for its security: Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela have been guests at the Australia Suite on the 32nd floor, which offers a spectacular view of Sydney. Sit in the leafy ambience of the glass-domed Cortile: perfect for casual business discussions and high tea. Or unwind at the Mint Bar and watch the mixologist create cocktails: vanilla and lychee Martini is the current favourite. Club InterContinental members also enjoy the new rooftop lounge, which provides uninterrupted views from the Harbour Bridge to the Pacific.

DINING JAPANESE DÉGUSTATION AND MODERN AUSTRALIAN

Food is an artform to Tetsuya Wakuda, who came to Australia in 1982 with one suitcase and little knowledge of the language. He's now one of the world's most acclaimed chefs. Tetsuya's dégustation menu – 18 dishes – will be tailored to your specific tastes and served with individual glasses of wine. Each plate is introduced with its own story: the list of ingredients used and the way it's been cooked. Alternatively, his signature dish is the confit of petuna Tasmanian ocean trout with konbu, fennel and daikon. It's highly recommended. Wine at the restaurant includes a range bottled exclusively for Tet (as he is affectionately known). Ask about the 'For Tetsuya' cellar range which includes the superb 2001 Pierro Chardonnay from Margaret River. *Maitres d'* Michael Dore and Jerry Jones ensure impeccable but friendly service. Ask for a window seat overlooking the informal Japanese garden.

There's a real buzz at Rockpool every night of the week. Now in its 16th year, Rockpool was voted Sydney's best restaurant within six months of opening. Today, it's a truly world-class dining experience and Neil Perry is one of Australia's most influential chefs. The nine-course tasting menu provides the perfect introduction to his modern-Australian cooking. Or try the Spring Bay scallops with lemongrass paired with the 2004 Joseph Pinot Grigio d'Elena. New dishes are constantly introduced, but Perry's date tart has been on the menu since Rockpool opened and is now a culinary institution. Take time out between courses to sit along the front bar and watch the kitchen: it's a thrilling lesson in speed and efficiency. Or ask for table 23, which offers the best all-round view of the restaurant.

INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE

The Basement Club, 29 Reiby Place, Circular Quay, Sydney (+61 2 9251 2797)
 Bridge Bar, 2 East Circular Quay, Sydney (+61 2 9252 6800) www.bridgebar.com.au
 Cadmus, 2 East Circular Quay, Sydney (+61 2 9252 6800) www.cadmus.com.au
 Establishment, 252 George Street, Sydney (+61 2 9240 3000) www.merivale.com
 Guillaume at Bennelong, Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney (+61 2 9241 1999) www.guillaumeatbennelong.com.au
 The Icebergs Bar, 1 Notts Avenue, Bondi Beach, Sydney (+61 2 9130 3120) www.idrb.com
 InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney (+61 2 9253 9000) www.sydney.intercontinental.com
 Longrain, 85 Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills, Sydney (+61 2 9280 2888)



RENDEZVOUS CHIC AND ARCHITECTURAL OR SET SAIL WITH STEAM

Jørn Utzon, the original architect of Sydney Opera House, has designed the Utzon Room, a new venue within Sydney's most iconic building. The US\$3.5m refurbishment of the Reception Hall features natural timbers, a vibrant 14m tapestry and easterly views of Sydney Harbour. Perfect for an upbeat presentation, the Utzon Room will seat 200 people but is easily configured to smaller groups; it offers excellent lighting and sophisticated technical facilities.

For a more discreet venue, take the most finely appointed charter vessel on Sydney Harbour. First launched in 1901, the Steam Yacht Ena is the only boat of her type in the world. She's 35.4m in length and fitted throughout with honey-coloured teak. Dine with Christofle silver and the Ena's own-*insignia* Royal Doulton china, as she cruises through the water.

DIVERSIONS STAGE, SUNSHINE AND SPORT

For after-work drinks, head for Bridge Bar, then go upstairs to Cadmus to experience modern-Lebanese cuisine, sophisticated décor and panoramic views.

The Sydney Opera House is home to Opera Australia, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Theatre Company and the Australian Ballet. In the main hall, go for seats 24 and 25 in Rows G, H and J.

Australia is one of the world's top sporting nations: watch the rugby at the Aussie Stadium or take in the cricket at Sydney Cricket Ground. Ask your concierge to arrange a one-day ticket for the Spinners Club – which provides an air-conditioned lounge, steward service throughout the match, and the best view in the house: on level four of the Churchill stand.

Yachting is a top Sydney sport: if you are in town at Christmas, go to Shark Island to see the start of the Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race.

For some quiet time, head to the Royal Botanic Gardens (a short walk from the Opera House) and sit under one of the huge Moreton Bay fig trees by the water's edge.

THE MASTER ANDREW BANKS, CO-FOUNDER, MORGAN & BANKS, GLOBAL HR AND RECRUITMENT

'The Icebergs Bar provides a glorious scene of youth and beach culture in the summer, and in the winter you catch the sunset. It's relaxed and "Philippe Starck" in design. For dinner, I like Longrain: it's hip, clean and inspiring – you dine at long tables or at the bar and are encouraged to share dishes. Chef Martin Boetz specialises in Thai and southern-Chinese food: it's healthy, spicy and world class. After dinner, I may go for a cheese plate and a glass of St Estephe in Guillaume at Bennelong and I enjoy Establishment for a late-night drink: it's well known and has a nice, clean atmosphere. The Basement is the best late-night music venue for jazz and blues – but make sure you book a table.'

INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE

Park Hyatt Sydney, 7 Hickson Road, The Rocks, Sydney (+61 2 9241 1234) www.sydney.park.hyatt.com
 Rockpool, 107 George Street, Sydney (+61 2 9252 1888) www.rockpool.com
 Steam Yacht Ena, 119 Willoughby Road, Crows Nest, Sydney (+61 2 9956 3864) www.enasteamyacht.com.au
 Sydney Cricket Ground, Driver Avenue, Moore Park, Sydney (+61 2 9380 0383) www.sydneycricketground.com.au
 Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney (+61 2 9250 7111) www.sydneyoperahouse.com
 Tetsuya's Restaurant, 529 Kent Street, Sydney (+61 2 9267 2900) www.tetsuyas.com
 Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney (+61 2 9250 7111) www.sydneyoperahouse.com