

SYDNEY

This issue, we take to the streets of Sydney to explore the rapidly expanding world of beer in Australia's most famous city. Words by **Sadhbh Warren** and **Gregor Stronach**.



You'd think four tonnes of beer would be enough. But in September 1768, just a month after the Endeavour set sail for Sydney, Captain Cook's vessel was nearly dry. He noted, "Served wine to the ship's company, the beer being all expended to two casks which I wanted to keep some time longer."

Sydney seems determined to ensure the beer never runs out again. The city's passion for brewing is as inexhaustible as it seems inescapable when you realise the sheer scale that even quite a small sampling of local

breweries will get to. But, with planning, it's possible to design a visit that samples Sydney's many delights and many of its brews. Start where the city started, in The Rocks.

This is the oldest part of Sydney; originally a warren of laneways where criminality and debauchery would abound. These days, the criminality has gone – although a glance at some of the prices may make you think otherwise – but up-market debauchery remains with many restaurants and bars serving up sumptuous indulgences.

The Rocks is home to some of Sydney's most noted attractions: the weekend markets, the Sydney Observatory and the infamous but expensive bridge climb. If your budget or vertigo won't allow for that, an alternative is the nearby Pylon Lookout, which gets a family of four almost as high over The Rocks for less than \$30. The Rocks has it all: shopping, eating, culture and, of course, lots and lots of beer.

LORDS, BOXERS AND BUTCHERS

A natural starting point for beer historians is The Rocks' oldest licensed hotel and Australia's oldest brew-pub, Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel. This stately pub combines colonial grandeur with a no-nonsense attitude to serving up great beer. You can contemplate the fermenting brews through the glass walls before requesting some of the finished

product through the taps. The Lord brews six mainstay Ales, including the Quayle Ale, a cracking Summer Ale that's perfect for the warmer months.

Try not to get too Three Sheeted yourself, however, for this is just the first stop in The Rocks. Down the road is the Belgian Beer Café – Heritage and the excellent Harts Pub. This cosy but contemporary heritage-listed pub is the spiritual home of Rocks Brewing Co, which now has a brand-new facility in Alexandria. The new brewery bar in Alexandria offers up a great selection of American-style cuisine, matched to the range of beers produced on-site in the brewery.

Rocks Brewing kegged its first brew, an Irish style Red Ale called The Boxer, in September 2008 and, according to director Mark Fethers, it was no quick process. "It took 16 versions to get it quite right, unlike our Porter, The Butcher, which took two versions. We knew exactly what we were after for the Porter, which definitely helps!"

THE FIRST BEER – OR WAS IT?

It's doubtful that Sydney's first colonists enjoyed such salubrious treats or excellent selection of beer. If you decide on a

The iconic Lord Nelson Hotel and Brewery in The Rocks



The Australian Heritage Hotel. Image courtesy of Tony Yeasties; Tourism NSW.



The upstairs bar at Hart's Pub, The Rocks.

postprandial stroll (or, realistically, waddle) swing through the Domain and the Botanic Gardens. You'll find free outdoor events in the area in summer, from Opera in the Domain to Tropfest, but the gardens are well worth visiting all year round. And you're still not that far from a beer.

Watch out for the plaque near the Rose Garden Pavilion that marks the spot where John Boston is claimed to have brewed Sydney's first beer in 1796. We say 'claimed' because while Boston is heralded as establishing Australia's first licensed brewery in 1795, called Boston's Mill, James Squire is Australia's first known brewer, brewing as early as 1789, and selling beer to NSW Corps from 1793.

There's no doubt that Squire's name is more recognisable, thanks to the Malt Shovel Brewery, which immortalised his chicken-stealing, lothario lifestyle with a range of excellent beers. Malt Shovel also makes seasonal brews under the aptly-named Mad Brewers label, such as the 2014 release, Garden de Paradisi, which is available along with other Malt Shovel brews at the brewers' recommended venue, the Marly Bar in Newtown.

If you're out that way. Be sure to start sampling some of the best new venues to hit the inner west, as Sydney's small bar scene starts to get cracking. Principle among those are the Hive Bar in Erskineville, which offers up a relaxed and super-friendly environment, alongside a great beer list and superb cocktails, as well as great food. Sunday afternoons are the best time to go, for a post-weekend wind-down.

For something a little more raucous, try Mary's in Newtown. A converted two-story warehouse space, it's the go-to place in the inner west for the best burgers in town, and a proper selection of local craft beers – including the unmistakable offerings from Young Henry's. Try the Mary Burger with a Young Henry's Newtowner – and don't forget your big beards and trucker caps. Also in Newtown very worthy of a visit is the craft beer mecca The Union Hotel, and craft beer restaurant Bloodwood.

Down the road towards Enmore is the Midnight Special, a tiny place with a big heart. Jostle up to the bar among the very friendly locals, or get lucky and snag a small booth to sample a really good beer list, and

hear tunes from some of Sydney's rock elite as they bring their vinyl collection in to keep the punters amused.

Also in Enmore, tucked away in a tiny industrial estate, is the home of Young Henrys. It's a working brewery with a handful of long tables nestled up to a bar, where tastings, pints and growlers are on offer. It can be a bit difficult to find, but it's worth the hunt to try Richard Adamson and the rest of the YH crew's core and seasonal ranges.

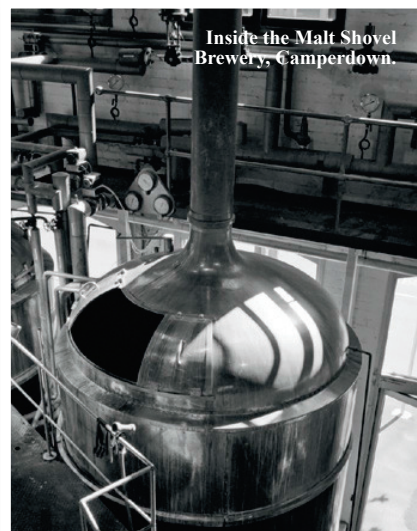
THE CENTRE OF TOWN

Closer to the Sydney CBD is the almost-too-hip suburb of Surry Hills, home to some of Sydney's best beer pubs and bars. A Mecca for chaps who like their beards long and their beers unique is the Royal Albert Hotel, the site of frequent tap takeovers from some of Australia's most interesting breweries. It's also known for its food, with a burger bar inside and a phenomenal dumpling restaurant out the back. Get there early – it fills up quickly most nights of the week.

Down the street and around a few corners, and you'll find the Wild Rover, one of the most exciting new venues in Sydney. Creatively inspired to be a place of comfort, and staffed by experienced and passionate people who really know their craft, it's a must-do for anyone seeking out a brilliant beer list, or something unusual from the whisky roster. The house-made sausage rolls are to die for.

Across the centre of town is Redoak Boutique Beer Café, Australia's most awarded brewery – and home to the 2013 Brewer of the Year, David Hollyoak. It brews more than 40 premium beers, including a magnificent IPA and David's All Day Breakfast, brewed with a special ingredient: Weetbix!

Redoak runs beer-appreciation classes, serving a four-course degustation with six



Inside the Malt Shovel Brewery, Camperdown.

matching beers. The team in the kitchen isn't afraid to push the envelope on what food goes with a brew or even contains a brew. The kitchen is open for lunch from Mondays to Saturdays and beer-appreciation classes are held on the first Saturday of the month (\$85 per person). Bookings essential.

Across the street from Redoak is The Baxter Inn, a recreated speakeasy-style whisky joint with hundreds of whiskies to choose from. There are absolutely no signs outside the venue at all – but it's not hard to find. Just look for the streams of people walking into or out of an otherwise unmarked tunnel between two buildings near Redoak.

Another of Sydney's CBD basement joints is Grandma's, an unashamedly kitsch little place that serves up a great range of 'new



Brewers at Young Henrys, Newtown.



A lunch and a pint at 4 Pines, Manly.

A BEER WORTH THE BOAT TRIP

If it's a typical Sydney experience you want, you'll need to get out on the harbour. There are plenty of options for visitors: take a cruise, catch the ferry from Circular Quay to Taronga Zoo, or to Manly – a very popular destination since the first ferry ran in 1855. Manly is known for surfing and beaches, but even if the weather isn't warm, it's still worth the ferry trip.

You can fill your stomach at the Manly Food and Wine Festival in June, or fill your ears at the Manly Jazz Festival in October. And all year round you'll find it worthwhile visiting the Bavarian Beer Café (one of seven venues across Sydney) or the 4 Pines Brewery. Just minutes from the wharf, 4 Pines has rapidly become a local favourite with its tasty menu, cosy atmosphere and regular live entertainment.

Out in the suburbs to the west of Sydney, in Parramatta you'll find Riverside Brewing with a cellar door open 2-6pm Fridays and 12-4pm Saturdays to taste their flavoursome range via Growler fills or tastings. At the famous Paddy's Markets in Flemington you'll find Paddy's Brewery. Try Paddy's Award Winning Pilsner, or take on the Fat Arsed Bastard. It's well worth the trip out, but if you're worried that you may not want to leave, Paddy's even does accommodation.

In Rouse Hill you'll find the Australian Hotel & Brewery, which opened in 2009 with the aim of providing both great beers and a spot to socialise. The Australian's best offerings are the Extra Hoppy Ale and the Pale Ale – although all of the AB's seasonal brews are worth hunting down.

Whether you're in Sydney to find a good beer, or you're a local, you're in for a treat – the growth of the scene in Sydney has been phenomenal, and it's only getting better. ☒

world' themed cocktails, with a heavy lean towards island culture and – of course – rum.

For the real night owls, the centre of Sydney is now a bit of a ghost town, with 1.30am lockouts and 3am last drinks – but the place to be when the lockout hits is Frankie's Pizza, on Hunter Street. Walk through the doors, and it's wall-to-wall young folk in a pizza shop. Walk through the door by the counter and it's a craft beer and top-shelf liquor joint, with cranking music, pinball machines and frequent VIP visitors.

Down on King Street Wharf, the King Street Brewhouse serves 17 local craft and imported beers on tap, and excellent food, making this one of the most pleasant outdoor venues in Sydney. Nearby, in Darling Harbour, The Pumpphouse stocks more than 100 local and imported beers, plus its own house beers, including the tasty Thunderbolt Strong Ale.

From the city, it's a short hop out towards the iconic SCG – a trip that will conveniently deliver you at the front door of the Local Taphouse in Darlinghurst, which boasts 20 beer taps with a changing selection and some great grub. They're the perfect spots for post-game analysis after visiting the SCG or SFS.



Polling steins at the Bavarian Beer Cafe



The King Street Brewhouse.



Inside the Australian Hotel & Brewery, Rouse Hill.

LINKS

4 PINES – www.4pinesbeer.com.au
 AUSTRALIAN HOTEL & BREWERY
 – www.australianbrewery.com.au
 BAVARIAN BIER CAFÉ – www.bavarianbiercafe.com
 THE BAXTER INN – www.thebaxterinn.com
 FRANKIE'S PIZZA – www.frankiespizzabytheslice.com
 GRANDMA'S BAR – www.grandmasbarsydney.com.au
 HARTS PUB – www.hartspub.com
 HERITAGE BELGIAN BEER CAFÉ
 – www.heritagebarandrestaurant.com.au
 THE HIVE BAR – www.thehivebar.com.au
 KING STREET BREWHOUSE
 – www.kingstbrewhouse.com.au
 THE LOCAL TAPHOUSE – www.thelocal.com.au/SYD/
 THE LORD NELSON BREWERY HOTEL
 – www.lordnelsonbrewery.com
 MALT SHOVEL BREWERY – www.jamessquire.com.au
 THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL
 – www.themidnightspecial.com.au
 PADDY'S BREWERY – www.marketshotel.com.au
 THE PUMPHOUSE – www.pumphousebar.com.au
 REDOAK BOUTIQUE BEER CAFÉ
 – www.redoak.com.au
 ROCKS BREWING CO
 – www.rocksbrewing.com
 RIVERSIDE BREWING CO
 – www.riversidebrewing.com
 YOUNG HENRYS NEWTOWN BREWERY
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Head brewer Dave Padden at Riverside Brewing.

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