Sydney

GAY & LESBIAN VISITOR'S GUIDE™





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Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras 2005

Celebrating Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, Bisexual and Queer Culture

Hordern Pavilion, RHI & Dome 10:00pm - 10:00am, Saturday 5th March 2005

Ticket Pricing Earlybird discount before 11th February Full \$99 / NMG Member \$89 / Concession* \$65 after the 11th February Full \$125.00 / NMG Member \$115.00 Concession* (student/HCC/senior/pensioner) \$75.00 Door sales \$140

Bookings www.ticketek.com.au or (02) 9266 4800 *Must provide concession identification at entry to party

tickets available now















Welcome to gay and lesbian Sydney. It's a magical city; friendly, funky and naturally beautiful. It's also home to a thriving gay and lesbian community and a party calendar that includes the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, Leather Pride, Sleaze Ball, and Pride New Year's Eve. Visitors find Sydney to be an open and welcoming city, mixing a laid-back lifestyle with an impressive food and wine culture, happy to share its love of the arts as much as its love of a good time. This handbook is your guide to the best of queer Sydney. Have fun, make new friends, and try a few new dance steps. You'll love every minute of it.

- Dominic O'Grady, Editor

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Design: McGill Design Group

Photos: Tourism New South Wales, Tourism Australia, Mazzimage.com, Justin McMaster, Jamiedunbar.com

Publisher: Gay Travel Guides Pty Ltd

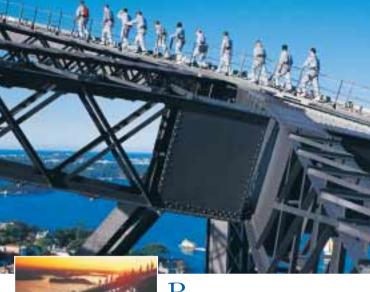
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Sydney is an extremely beautiful city, its large natural harbour gloriously framed by the city's icon buildings: the Opera House and Harbour Bridge. Thankfully this beauty is matched with a decidedly gueer sense of fun and adventure ...

Darlinghurst

Welcome to the hub of Sydney's gay and lesbian community. Darlinghurst is home for some of Sydney's hottest gay and lesbian clubs, cafes, and bars, and it's where many community groups are based. The main strip, Oxford Street, is gueer central: perfect for people watching, nightclubbing and dining. Each year the **Sydney Gay** and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade winds its way along this "Golden Mile", whipping the crowds into a frenzy of delight, amidst a sea of sequins, feathers, and leathers. When the frenzy subsides, the street becomes everyday gay and lesbian again: cruisy and relaxed, an eclectic jumble of restaurants, cafes, bookstores, fetish and Indian takeaway.

Newtown

The edgier alternative to Darlinghurst, this inner west suburb is proud of its street fashions, student mix, lesbian population, second-hand stores and great coffee. King Street is packed with restaurants and cafes, and is also home to the Newtown Hotel where you'll get your fix of top Australian drag. Nearby is the **Imperial Hotel**, made famous in Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, and another staple of Sydney's drag scene.

Paddington

Visit the **Paddington Market** on Saturday, and shop for labels on the main street. Oxford Street. seven days a week. Wander the backstreets and discover handmade chocolates and beautiful

heritage architecture. Paddington is the epicentre of the Sydney art world, housing most of Sydney's best contemporary galleries. Try Glenmore Road for an art overdose, and explore nearby Queen St, Woollahra for antiques.

Kings Cross

Backpackers, sex workers, night clubbers, strip clubs, and the occasional gay clubs. This is Sydney's red-light district. Here you'll find the wealthy and the not-so wealthy doing their thing in relative harmony. But this isn't the place for the faint-hearted or the complacent.

Potts Point

Inner-city style is rampant here. From beautiful art-deco apartment buildings to excellent cafes, restaurants and bars this is one of Sydney's groovy places. Lots of gay boys call this suburb, and nearby Elizabeth Bay, home. Macleay St is our own little slice of Paris: it's soooo cosmopolitan.

Bondi

Not far from the city centre is an all-time favourite, Bondi Beach. Here you can indulge in the great democratic Australian pastime – basking in the sun on a beautiful beach, for free. Check out the talent. go for a swim (make sure you're between the flags), then head off to Campbell Parade for gelato, coffee, or an afternoon beer. Try doing the coastal walk which will take you from Bondi to one of the neighbouring beaches such as Bronte or Coogee. First-timer surfers can learn how to ride the waves Aussie-style with Lets Go Surfing. Don't forget your sunblock.

The Rocks

This is the place where Sydney started. This heritage precinct is crammed with gorgeous colonial sandstone architecture. From here you can join the team of **BridgeClimb** for an exhilarating experience climbing atop the

Sydney Harbour Bridge. Check out The Wharf Theatre for thespian delights or just marvel at the brilliant views from every turn. Nearby you'll find the **Museum of Contemporary Art** and a string of great restaurants and bars overlooking the waters of Sydney Harbour.

Circular Quay and The Opera House

The **Sydney Opera House** is an extraordinary work of art in its own right. It's open to the public every day of the year and a guided tour is a good way to get to see behind the scenes. But to fully enjoy its romance, book a ticket for a night at the opera (or symphony, or theatre). Be sure to get there in time for champagne before the show, and revel in the atmosphere of Sydney's most beautiful - and once controversial – building. Circular Quay is a bustling water thoroughfare affording magnificent views of the city

and harbour and East Circular Quay is home to some very expensive real estate and a lively cafe culture.

Tours

One way to see a side of Sydney you might not otherwise experience is to join a tour. The Sydney Opera House has a backstage tour which takes visitors through the orchestra pits, Green Room and onto the various stages. BridgeClimb provides an unforgettable climb over the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Sydney by **Diva** is a hilariously camp tour led by some of Sydney's finest drag gueens, while Night Cat **Tours** provides an alternative for visiting night owls. Kayaking and sailing tours, plus trips to the Blue Mountains and Hunter Valley, are available through Mount'n Beach Safaris, and Walkabout Tours take visitors into Sydney's heritage areas.





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Look before you book



yourself on the harbour is to take a cruise. There are a number of cruise companies offering everything from luxury cruisers to catamarans and yachts. Take a simple sightseeing tour or have lunch or dinner on board. Captain Cook Cruises, Magistic, Vagabond and Matilda Cruises are just some of the operators to choose from. La Dolce Vita provides the ultimate cruise on a sleek

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Jet Boats

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Sailing isn't fast enough for you? Take a 420hp jet ride you won't forget. Don't blink or you'll miss

the sights on the ultimate sightseeing adventure, roaring around Sydney Harbour at heart-stopping speeds of 70km/h. There are different tours ranging from 35 minutes to almost an hour and a half. Try Oz Jet Boating or Harbour Jet.

For ultimate privacy, hire your own water taxi. A tour can be designed to suit individual needs and introduce a unique Sydney from smart waterfront restaurants in hidden harbour bays to the many harbour islands. Details available on waterfront jetties around the harbour.

One of the popular ways to see the harbour in all its splendour is to take a ferry trip. Whatever route you choose, you'll take in some amazing scenes of Sydney on the way and you'll end up somewhere you'll be happy to spend the rest of the day, such as Taronga Zoo, Balmain, Rose Bay or Manly. Matilda Cruises takes visitors to Shark Island. which is a perfect picnic location in the middle of Sydney Harbour: while the **National** Parks and Wildlife Service arranges visits to historic Fort Denison, which is a great place for brunch. Many of the ferry stops lead to superb scenic walks through Sydney's secluded harbour suburbs. Further details are available from Sydney Ferries.

View from above

If you want to get even higher, indulge in a seaplane flight over Sydney's harbour and coast line which can also be combined with a superb lunch or dinner at a restaurant only accessible by air or boat. Favourite locations

include Cottage Point Inn, and Peats Bite on the Hawkesbury River. Contact Seaplane Safaris, Sydney Harbour Seaplanes or Sydney by Seaplane.

Foreshore walks

Explore some of the many walks along the harbour foreshore. The Manly Scenic Walkway passes through Sydney Harbour National Park. bushland, rainforest, and amazing lookouts. Closer to home, try the walk from the Sydney Opera House through Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, surrounding the harbour's edge, and stretching right up to the

Art Gallery of New South Wales. Take a ferry from Circular Quay to Cremorne and enjoy the walk from Cremorne Point along the waterfront reserve to Mosman Bay. This walk offers fantastic harbour and city views, and glimpses of lovely old houses and attractive gardens.



With over 25 hotels around Sydney including Sofitel, Novotel, Mercure, All Seasons, Ibis, and Formule 1, Accor cover the full spectrum of accommodation needs from budget to luxury, so whatever you're looking for, the search is over..... for the hotel anyway!

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Sydney is a city that loves to party. Rain or shine, summer or winter, Sydney's queer nightlife rocks. Friday and Saturday nights are huge, but the hardcore clubbers make Sunday nights a treat ...

Oxford Street

Venues along or near Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, cater to all colours of the rainbow. The buffed and beautiful crowd hang out at **Arq**, a three floored designer space featuring different styles of music on its two packed dance floors. Across

Cocktail Hour:

- Cool and groovy cocktails: Victoria Bar, Level 1, 235
 Victoria St, Darlinghurst
 Ph 9357 4488.
- Champagne with mod set: The Lotus Bar, cnr Challis Ave and Macleay Street, Potts Point. Ph: 9326 9000.
- Best sunset views in Sydney: ECQ Bar, Quay Grand at East Circular Quay.
 Ph: 9256 4000.

the road the leather and bear fraternity enjoy the dungeon-like delights of the Manacle. Another subterranean space, Palms On Oxford caters to an unpretentious, mixed clientele who like a drag show or two. The **Stonewall Hotel**, attracting a young and fashion conscious crowd features numerous bars and a throbbing dance floor. The Oxford Hotel spans numerous levels. On the street it is a pub with gaming machines whilst higher up it includes the popular Gilligan's cocktail bar and Ginger's private drinking rooms.

Ginger's private drinking rooms.
Further down the street check out the **Midnight**Shift, a huge, recently renovated club with pub at street level and state of the art dance space upstairs. The boys head to the

Phoenix bar, underneath the Exchange Hotel, on a Saturday night for a down and dirty experience, and Colombian Hotel is the bar of the moment for lesbians, gay boys and all kinda friends. Further afield, but close to the strip, check out the Venus Room at Kings Cross for exciting performances by some of Sydney's top drag talent.

Newtown

The buzz here is on King Street, home to Sydney's alternative and grunge crowd. After enjoying a cheap eat at one of the numerous restaurants, head to the **Newtown Hotel**, a popular pub and dance bar featuring top name drag acts. The Imperial Hotel, a short distance from King Street, is a friendly pub and dance space, famous for its appearance in Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. The drag shows here are legendary. While in the area, check out Petersham RSL Club, a huge and formerly straight venue which now caters for a friendly mixed crowd.

Drag Watch:

Sydney's effervescent drag scene boasts a stellar line-up of talent: Verushka Darling, Claire de Lune, Amelia Airhead, Chelsea Bun, Vanessa Wagner, Vanity Faire and Portia Turbo. Venues: Newtown Hotel, Imperial Hotel, and The Venus Room.

One-nighters

Icebox in Kings Cross and mega club home in Darling Harbour have regular gay and lesbian nights, usually on Sundays. Also extremely popular on Saturday is Club Continental at the Civic Hotel, where the likes of Buck Naked and Mark Alsop spin the discs across three levels until dawn. Other regular dance club events include from G.A.Y., for those who enjoy lyrics in their dance mix; the underground ICE parties; and Queer Nation, a very mixed and glamorous dance night held regularly at home.



Sydney's gay and lesbian calendar is chockablock with special events. From the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, through to Leather Pride, through to Pride New Year's Eve. Let's get the party started ...

Hey Hey it's Mardi Gras

The annual **Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras** hits the streets on 6 March 2004 and again on 5 March 2005, with the world famous parade and party. Experience the buzz along Oxford Street as the parade passes you by then dance the night away with a few thousand close friends. Don't forget that Mardi Gras also includes a few weeks of festival activities

Expect plenty of arts, sports, and parties, as well as the crowd-pleasing Mardi Gras Fair Day usually held on a Sunday two weeks

before the parade. Not to be forgotten are the **Harbour City Bears**, who throw some of the city's best parties during Mardi Gras season, and invite visitors to join them on a harbour cruise and beach day. Finally, there's **Sydney by Diva**. This drag-led coach tour of Sydney's queer highlights is unmissable.

New Year's Eve and Sleaze

The **Pride New Year's Eve Party** is always a hot spot on the Sydney calendar, with plenty of dancing and good times to help see the new year in. Sydney Leather Pride stages a week of activities each April to celebrate all things leather, culminating in the down and dirty Inquisition dance party. Sydney celebrates international gay and lesbian Pride in late June with a

collection of community events, while Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras steps into the fray again each October with its annual fundraising dance event, Sleaze Ball. This year's Sleaze Ball is set for 2 October 2004.

Community Balls

Smaller community events punctuate the queer year.
The Polly's Social Club holds dances at Marrickville Town Hall, and the Southern Cross
Outdoors Group (SCOG) bush dances, also at Marrickville Town Hall, are regular crowd-pleasers.
The Canterbury-Bankstown
Social Group holds a birthday bash every September, and
North Shore gay group, Helix, holds its Gay Cruise on Pittwater in October and its Christmas
Party in late December.

Out of town

There are plenty of out of town treats, too. A highlight of the New South Wales calendar is the Queen's Birthday celebrations held each June in the Blue
Mountains by the Three Sisters
Social Group. Celebrations
include a disco, talent quest and
a spectacular fancy dress ball.
Social group Coastal Lynx holds
dances in Coffs Harbour every
March, June, September and
December and party events in
Port Macquarie every long
weekend. The Central Coastal
Connections formal ball is
held every October.

Tropical Fruits

If possible, time your visit to northern New South Wales to coincide with one of the many parties thrown by social group **Tropical Fruits**. The best party times include Easter, New Year's Eve, and the October long weekend. Vivacious gender illusionist, Vanessa Wagner, also stages an occasional party or two, rightly popular with the local queer community and city visitors. Expect a laid-back and funky night out with a queer mix of party-goers.



The Blue Mountains – known to the locals as just "the mountains" – are a World Heritage wilderness of eucalypt-filled valleys, waterfalls, distant peaks and golden cliffs. Walking tracks are plentiful, and the wildlife is abundant. And it's all within easy reach of Sydney...

Visitors have been coming to the mountains for the fresh air and natural beauty since Europeans settled the area in the early 1800s. The mountains make an ideal side-trip from Sydney, or a perfect weekend escape. Adventure-seekers can enjoy the thrill of climbing some of Australia's best cliffs or exploring secluded walking tracks in the Blue Mountains National Park. Those looking to chill-out and relax can do so in very beautiful surroundings. The Blue Mountains have some excellent restaurants and cafes, and boast a proud and active gay and lesbian community.

Around Katoomba

Start your visit by dropping into the Blue Mountains Information

Centre at Echo Point, Katoomba. Here you'll find maps and walking guides, and information on local operators who can take you abseiling, rock climbing, horse riding or four wheel driving. While you're at the information centre, stop and admire the Three Sisters from the viewing platform, a few metres from the entrance. This distinctive sandstone rock formation always attracts a crowd, and if you want to experience the solitude and peace of the bush, take the walk to the Scenic Railway via the Giant Stairway at Echo Point. This walk follows natural steps cut into the cliff line, and then leads to an easy-to-follow track to Katoomba Falls and the cable train. Catch the cable train.

back to the top of the escarpment. More energetic types can walk up the Furber Steps (all 1,008 of them), which take you through temperate rainforest. Other walk ideas are available at the information centre.

Fat out

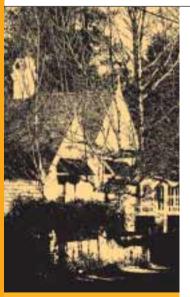
The Blue Mountains offer a huge choice of accommodation from budget to five star resorts. Many of the original guesthouses and grand hotels have been recently restored and offer rooms with unbeatable views, great

service and beautifully maintained gardens. Villages such as Leura, Wentworth Falls and Blackheath offer a quieter alternative to the Blue Mountains main port of call, Katoomba. For top dining experiences, try Vulcans in Blackheath, and Leura

> establishments such as Silkes, Solitary, The Rooster, and Darleys.

Getting there

Trains from Sydney's
Central Station run regularly to
Katoomba and on to Blackheath.
By car, take Parramatta Road and
then the M4 motorway west
from Sydney.



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Ara

16 Flinders St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9380 8700

Civic Hotel

Cnr Pitt & Goulburn St Sydney 2000 Ph: 8080 7000

Colombian Hotel

Cnr Oxford & Crown St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9360 2151

home

Cockle Bay Wharf Darling Harbour 2000 Ph: 9266 0600

Icebox

2 Kellett St Kings Cross 2010 Ph: 9331 0058

Imperial Hotel

35 Erskineville Rd Erskineville 2043 Ph: 9519 9899

Manacle

Patterson Lane Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9360 6373

Midnight Shift

85 Oxford St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9360 4319

Newtown Hotel

174 King St Newtown 2042 Ph: 9557 1329

Oxford Hotel

134 Oxford St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9331 3467

Palms on Oxford

124 Oxford St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9357 4166

Petersham RSL Club

52-60 Enmore Rd. Newtown 2042 Ph: 9557 5044

Phoenix

Exchange Hotel 24 Oxford St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9331 1936

Stonewall Hotel

175 Oxford St Darlinghurst 2010 Ph: 9360 1963

Venus Room

2 Roslyn St Kings Cross 1340 Ph: 8354 0888

Special Events

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

297 Trafalgar St Petersham 2049 Ph: 9568 8600 www.mardigras. org.au

Pride New Year's Eve

104 Frskineville Rd Erskineville 2043 Ph: 02 9550 6188 www.pridecentre. com.au

AIDS Council of NSW

9 Commonwealth St Surry Hills 2010 Ph: 9206 2000 www.acon.org.au

Anti Violence Project

9 Commonwealth St Surry Hills 2010 Ph: 9206 2066

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

9 Commonwealth St Surry Hills 2010 Ph: 9283 8666 www.bgf.org.au

Canterbury-Bankstown Social Group

Ph: 9773 4331 cbd@netlimit.com

Central Coastal Connections

Ph: 0500 551 242 ccc@tpa.com

Coastal Lynx

Ph: 6652 7525 genture@tpg.com.au

Community Support Network

9 Commonwealth St Surry Hills 2010 Ph: 9206 2032 www.acon.org.au

Cronulla **Gay Group**

Ph: 9660 4615

Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby

PO Box 9 Darlinghurst 1300 Ph: 9360 6650 www.glrl.org.au

Gav and Lesbian Tourism Australia

PO Box 1522 New Farm Old 4055 www.galta.com.au

Harbour City Bears www.hcbears.com

Helix North Shore & Beaches Gav Group Ph: 9419 4554

HIV/AIDS Info Line Ph: 9332 4000

Polly's Social Club Ph: 9799 5507

Southern Cross Outdoors Group

PO Box 411 Dee Why 2099 www.scog.asn.au

Three Sisters Social Group

PO Box 7074 Leura 2780 www.thethreesisters. net

Tropical Fruits

www.tropicalfruits. org.au

Bus, Ferry and Train Information Ph·131 500

www.131500.com.au

Captain Cook Cruises

Ph: 9206 1111 www.captaincook. com.au

La Dolce Vita

Ph: 9357 2700 www.waterlimo. com.au

Magistic Cruises

Ph: 8296 7200 www.magisticcruises. com.au

Matilda Cruises

Ph: 9264 7377 www.matilda.com.au

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Ph: 9247 5033 www.npws.nsw. gov.au

Seaplane Safaris

Ph: 9371 3577 www.seaplane safaris.com.au

Sydney by Seaplane

Ph: 9974 1455 www.sydneyby seaplane.com

Sydney Harbour Seaplanes

Ph: 9388 1978 www.sydneysea planes.com.au

Vagabond Cruises Ph: 9758 8433 www.vagabond.

com.au

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5 Cumberland St The Rocks Ph: 8274 7777 www.bridgeclimb.com

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Mount'n Beach **Safaris**

Ph: 9439 3010 www.mountnbeach. com au

Night Cat Tours

Ph: 1300 551 608 www.nightcattours. com

Sydney Aquarium

Acquarium Pier. Darling Harbour Ph: 9262 2300 www.sydney acquarium.com.au

Sydney by Diva

Ph: 9360 5557 www.sydneyby diva.com

Sydney Opera House

Bennelong Point Svdnev 2000 Ph: 9250 7111 www.sydneyopera house.com

Walkabout Tours Ph: 9332 2611

www.walkabout tours.com.au

For further information about your holiday in Sydney www.sydneyaustralia.com



reserve your seat in the mardi gras 'glamstand'

This year, see the Mardi Gras parade in comfort. Reserve a seat in the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation's Glamstand.

For just \$65 plus booking fee. Choose an exclusive seat with access to food, bar and amenities while being entertained by Australia's top performers. All seats have a perfect view of the parade. Ticket proceeds go to support those living with HIV and AIDS through the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, Australia's oldest HIV/AIDS charity.

Don't miss the float, reserve your Flinders Street seat in the Glamstand today.

Tickets through Ticketmaster 7: www.ticketmaster7.com.au or call 13 6100 Now!



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