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THE STORY OF THE DAY

We're sure there's someone out there who doesn't like Sydney, but we've yet to find him and certainly wouldn't want to hang out with him if we did. Even the shortest of stays has most people falling in love with Australia's most fabulous city. Of course you can't miss the Opera House or take a climb up the Harbour Bridge, but here's the inside track on where else to go in Sydney right now.

DO

If you love fashion and want to find that one really unique piece to complete your wardrobe, you won't want to miss the Fashion Secrets tour that takes you on a guided walk to discover Australia's established and up and coming designers. The 3-hour excursion is \$95 (including lunch and a glass of champagne) and takes you through the hipster enclave of Paddington where hot designers like Lisa Ho (a favorite of JLo and Tyra) and Camilla (Beyonce is a loyal client) are just down the block from Collette Dinnigan and burgeoning star Hanna McNicol. We were excited to run into milliner to the rich and famous, Neil Grigg in his very cool little shop, where he was busy creating hats for brides and princesses alike (and some brides who think they are princesses!)

There are also tours for design and food lovers too, and the best thing is that if you have a limited amount of time, Urban Walkabout does all the work for you and helps you discover gems you may never find on your own. <http://www.urbanwalkabouttours.com/>

STAY AND PARTY

You know that any hotel that offers you Bulgari soap and shampoo is going to be a high end luxury property. We loved the Establishment. It's small, very sophisticated but never stuffy. Our beautiful suite featured a sunken tub that looked out over the living area and raised platform bed. It's also centrally located and an easy walk to many of the favorite tourist venues. <http://www.establishmenthotel.com/>

Next door is the huge Establishment club, which had practically everyone up and dancing to a rumba beat on the night I wandered through. Upstairs is the more low key Hemmesphere Bar. With its comfortable leather lounges, it's a great place to have an after-dinner cognac. <http://www.merivale.com/>

Just up the street is Ivy—the hottest nightclub in town and a favorite of Lady Gaga and other musicians whenever they are touring down under. There's also a huge complex of restaurants and lounges here. Don't miss it. <http://www.merivale.com/>

EAT

A virtual who's who of Aussie celebs, from Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman to Barry Humphries (aka Dame Edna) have lined up to eat at Swell restaurant at Bronte Beach. They come in part for the great modern Australian cuisine (they serve a casual lunch and breakfast too) and in part because of the charms of the oh-so-friendly owner Sandy Bruns. The restaurant is right across the street from the beach and there's a wonderful coastal walk that will lead you to Sydney's famous Bondi Beach. <http://www.swellrestaurant.com.au/>

At Bondi check out the upmarket Icebergs Dining Room and Bar (definitely make a reservation if you plan on going for dinner). Australia is known for its fantastic seafood and we're thinking that whoever first said that must have eaten here. Plus the views of the ocean are just about perfect from every seat in the house. <http://www.idrb.com/>

Take incredible local produce and combine it with the best in modern Italian cooking and you'll find Otto Ristorante on the pier in Woolloomooloo. The tuna seared in black peppercorn and honey glaze was the best we've ever tasted. Russell Crowe has a home in the Blue Complex where its situated and we're told its not unusual to see him jogging by. <http://www.otto.net.au/>

~ Lisa Arcella

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