

lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to lonelyplanet.com/hotels and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

SLEEPING

top picks

- Sofitel (p183)
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SLEEPING

While you'll have no trouble finding a place to stay that suits your taste and budget, for a city that's big on style Melbourne has surprisingly few truly inspirational boltholes and only a handful of atmospheric, individual small hotels. Still, prices are rarely stratospheric and quality is generally high.

For a standard double room in a deluxe hotel, expect to pay upwards of \$350. For a top-end room you'll pay between \$250 and \$300, midrange around \$150 and for budget double around \$80 to \$100. Prices peak during the Australian Open in January, Grand Prix weekend in March, AFL finals in September and the Spring Racing Carnival in November. Midrange to deluxe hotels publish 'rack rates', but always ask for current specials and for inclusions such as breakfast or parking. All accommodation has a 10% goods and services tax (GST) included in the price.

Apartment-style accommodation is easy to find in Melbourne – there are several local as well as national chains – and suits those that want a smart, functional space to relax and stow their shopping, but who don't need full hotel accoutrements. There are also plenty of budget hostels, pubs and B&Bs. Many big hostels offer private rooms alongside basic dorms and Melbourne has an increasing number of 'flashpacker' hostels that provide a raft of comforts while retaining the social hostel vibe.

AIRPORT ACCOMODATION

Melbourne Airport is 25km from the city with no direct public transport links, so odd-hour flights require taxis or a sleepover. There are three main airport hotels, ranging from bells, whistles and direct 'air bridge' access at the **Hilton Melbourne Airport** (☎ 8336 2000; www1.hilton.com; Arrival Drive; from \$225) and the smart but slightly further away **Holiday Inn Melbourne Airport** (☎ 1300 724 944; www.holidayinn.com.au; 10-14 Centre Rd; from \$135) to the **Hotel Formule 1** (☎ 8336 1811; www.formule1.com.au; 12 Caldwell Drive; from \$89), which has basic rooms with bunks and is just over 500m away.

CENTRAL MELBOURNE

The city will please everyone. If you like to take a morning stroll in something resembling nature, choose somewhere towards Spring St for easy access to Fitzroy Gardens, or close to Flinders St for a riverside run. There's a lot of places across all price ranges that will put you in the heart of the action, whether you've come to town and want to shop, party, catch a match or take in some culture. Spencer St has a lot of hotels, historically sited to catch country train passengers; while they're only a

few tram stops away from the city centre (and in spitting distance of Telstra Dome), it's not as atmospheric as staying in Flinders Lane or Little Collins St.

PARK HYATT Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9224 1234; www.melbourne.park.hyatt.com; 1 Parliament Sq; r from \$355

Resembling a Californian shopping mall from the outside, the interior understands luxury to be about wood panelling, shiny surfaces and miles of marble. Rooms are elegantly subdued, and most come complete with supersized baths, clever layouts that maximise your chance of seeing natural light and lovely treetop-level views. There's a lavish indoor pool, plus a great tennis court and whiz-bang business facilities. Perfect if you want to be superclose to the city but also have some park-fuelled peace and quiet too.

WESTIN Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9635 2222; www.westin.com.au; 205 Collins St; r from \$335

An odd mix of ocean liner meets Haussmann-era apartment building design from the outside, inside the Westin gets timeless luxury hotel style right. The any-city lobby, with its high ceilings and sweeping central staircase, is humanised with work by artists such as Bill Henson. Standard rooms feature Country Road furniture and signature (and trademarked) 'heavenly beds'. Not

WORTH A TRIP

Just 20 minutes down the Princes Hwy from the spectacular hump of the Westgate Bridge, among market gardens, abandoned factories and new housing estates, is one of Melbourne's most surprising sleeping options. The **Sofitel Mansion and Spa** (☎ 97314000; www.mansionhotel.com.au) manages to be both stylish and modern and has a leisurely country house ambience. Rooms are small – this was a former seminary – but smartly configured and furnished, but there's plenty of space to enjoy. Relax among the clever collection of contemporary art in the lounge, library or billiards room. Or do laps of the large indoor pool and collapse in the adjoining spa. A short, bucolic stumble away is **Shadowfax Winery** (☎ 9731 4420; www.shadowfax.com.au). Tastings and wood-fired pizzas are available in the stunning Wood Marsh—designed space, or pull up an outside table overlooking the plantings of Shiraz. The **Werribee Mansion** (☎ 9741 6879; www.parkweb.vic.gov.au; K Rd, Werribee), a stolid 1870s edifice brimming with colonial arriviste ambition, is also just next door. The mansion's gracious grounds host the often-controversial Helen Lempriere Sculpture Prize (p13) each March.

all rooms have spire or treetop views; ask when booking.

MEDINA EXECUTIVE FLINDERS ST Map pp52–3 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
☎ 8663 0000; www.medina.com.au; 88 Flinders St; apt from \$320

These cool monochromatic apartments are extra-large and luxurious. Ask for one at the front for amazing parkland views; many have balconies too. There's no room service but the full kitchens are supplemented by a restaurant delivery service.

HOTEL LINDRUM Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9668 1111; www.hotellindrum.com.au; 26 Flinders St; r from \$310-425

This attractive hotel was once the pool hall of the legendary and literally unbeatable Walter Lindrum. Expect rich tones, subtle lighting and tactile fabrics. Spring for a deluxe room and you'll snare either arch or bay windows and marvellous Melbourne views. Nice as they are, some of the standard rooms feel like corners have been cut. But it's still easily one of the city's finest boutique hotels. And yes, there's a pool table.

SOFITEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9653 0000; www.sofitelmelbourne.com.au; 25 Collins St; r from \$270

Guestrooms at the Sofitel start on the 36th floor, so you're guaranteed views that will make you giddy. Corner rooms get you double the panorama. The rooms are high international style, opulent rather than minimal, and much more up-to-date than that of many of its five-star friends. The hotel entrance, despite the superb IM Pei-designed ceiling, is relentlessly

workaday, but you'll soon be a world (or at least 36 floors) away.

WINDSOR Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9633 6000; www.thewindsor.com.au; 103 Spring St; r from \$265

One of Australia's most famous and self-consciously grand hotels, this five-star example of Marvellous Melbourne—era opulence exudes old-fashioned luxury. Beware those whose Victorian tat meter is set to high; if you don't mind a plump, swagged pelmet or two, you'll love the walk-in robes, large marble bathrooms and the old wing's original high ceilings. Service is exemplary while being refreshingly down to earth.

GRAND HYATT MELBOURNE Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9657 1234; http://melbourne.grand.hyatt.com; 123 Collins St; r from \$260

There's change afoot in this famous Collins St five star. At time of writing the extensive public areas were being completely renovated, with the Club Floor bar and lounge being made available for all guests as way of compensation. Despite excellent views and standard luxury comforts, rooms are currently looking a bit tired and will get their turn in 2009.

ADELPHI HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9650 7555; www.adelphi.com.au; 187 Flinders Lane; r from \$245

This discreet Flinders Lane property, designed by Denton Corker Marshall in the early '90s, was one of Australia's first boutique hotels. It helped establish Melbourne's reputation as a design-conscious town, as well as sparking the laneway revolution. Rooms have a warehouse

PRICE GUIDE

\$\$\$	\$180+
\$\$	\$100-180
\$	under \$100

in an architecturally interesting residential building, you're sitting on top of some amazing retailers as well as the cute **Postal Hall Café**, which bustles away on the ground floor facing Russell St. Lofts make for good long-term stays and the larger apartments are a great option for families.

CROSSLEY Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9639 1639; www.accorhotels.com.au;
51 Little Bourke St; r from \$179

The hotel's 80-odd rooms are housed in a '30s building with Deco details, although rooms are decked out rather blandly. That said, it's simple and neat and perfectly positioned a stone's throw from many of Melbourne's best restaurants, great shopping and theatres.

HOTEL CAUSEWAY Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9660 8888; www.causeway.com.au;
275 Little Collins St; r \$165–330

This Art Deco gem, with a discreet entrance in covered arcade Howey Place, will appeal to those who've come to Melbourne to shop and barhop. It's intimate in scale, so don't expect the facilities of a big hotel. Instead you get crisp white linen, light-filled rooms and dark, modern styling. There's a roof garden, smart and helpful staff, and lots of little touches (slippers, robes, apples) that are a rare treat at these prices.

BATMAN'S HILL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9614 6344; www.batmanshill.com.au;
66–70 Spencer St; r from \$165

Recently renovated, this hotel is fresh and comfortable. There are two standards of accommodation to choose from: standard rooms are reasonable, if a little boxy and without views; the family option can sleep up to five, with some offering separate bedrooms. The Club rooms and apartments are in the new wing and feature terrific vistas and new furniture and fittings, not to mention more space.

ALTO HOTEL ON BOURKE Hotel \$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9606 0585; www.altohotel.com.au;
636 Bourke St; r from \$135, apt from \$160

With its conservative appearance, you'd never guess this new kid on the block is promoting itself as a 'green' hotel. The building is fitted with water-saving showers, energy-efficient light globes and

top picks

TOP-ENDERS

- Sofitel (p183)
- Crown Promenade Hotel (p188)
- Adelphi Hotel (p183)
- Hotel Lindrum (p183)

VIBE SAVOY HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9622 8888; www.vibehotels.com.au;
630 Little Collins St; r from \$195

This lovely heritage building at Collins St's western end has been given a bold makeover, though its grand proportions aren't so in evidence in its somewhat truncated rooms. But they do offer a concoction of traditional hotel comforts, bright colours and contemporary furnishings.

JASPER HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 8327 2777; www.jasperhotel.com.au;
489 Elizabeth St; r from \$190

A refurb has done what the Village People did for the YWCA's male equivalent: sexed it up. The old Hotel Y has had a makeover by Jackson Clements Burrows and now sports moody down-lighting, a veritable Pantone swatch-book of colours, louvered bathrooms and some lovely graphic soft furnishing. There's a range of light-filled rooms from standard up to two-bedroom suites, with LCD TVs and wi-fi. Guests have complimentary use the sporting facilities at the nearby Melbourne City Baths. All profits still go to the YWCA's community and welfare services.

PUNT HILL LITTLE BOURKE Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9631 1111; www.littlebourke.punthill.com.au;
11–17 Cohen Place; apt from \$185

Neat and modern apartments have bright colours, balconies and stainless steel kitchens. Lots of light, an indoor lap pool and a cute Chinatown laneway location lift this little place above the ordinary.

QUEST HERO Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 8664 8500; www.questhero.com.au;
140 Little Collins St; apt from \$185

These spacious and well-equipped apartments have fabulous urban views. Housed

SEBEL MELBOURNE Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9211 6600, 1800 500 778; www.mirvachotels.com.au;
394 Collins St; r from \$220

The Sebel is a low-key alternative in the grand Bank of Australasia building, right in the heart of the business district. The clean, minimalist rooms have self-catering facilities and washing machines, and the airy split-level loft suites are spacious. Ask for a room on a higher floor to avoid dim back-alley views.

MANHATTAN Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9631 1111; www.manhattan.punthill.com.au;
57 Flinders Lane; apt from \$205

While not quite avoiding the serviced-apartment furnishing clichés, these loft spaces are set in a former warehouse and have original industrial-age details. Large marble bathrooms, granite-benched full kitchens, a stylish muted palette and prime laneway location make this a good option. There's also a functional lap pool and gym; ask for a room at the back for an outlook.

MAJORCA APARTMENT 401 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9428 8104; www.apartment401.com.au;
258 Flinders Lane; apt from \$200

This is the ultimate in like-a-local living. The Majorca, a single apartment, is one of the city's loveliest Art Deco buildings and watches over a bustling vortex of laneways. It's stylishly furnished, has timber floorboards and the windows are huge. Who needs a concierge when you're right in the centre of things already? There's a two-night minimum and sliding scale according to length of stay; the owners can arrange transfers and provisions if you so desire.

MEDINA GRAND MELBOURNE Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9934 0000; www.medina.com.au;
189 Queen St; apt from \$199

Set up the hill in leafy lawyer-land, the Medina Grand's suites have large windows and are slickly furnished. Legendary Vue de Monde is your local and you're also superclose to shopping and bars. There's an indoor lap pool and gym, with judiciously grand views.

quality, despite spatial limitations. Its fabulous cantilevered rooftop pool juts out above the street and the rooftop club bar has wonderful river views. Its rigid aesthetic can be polarising. The new **Hepburn Spa wellness retreat**, on the other hand, will please all. Teague Ezard's basement restaurant (p128) is not your average hotel diner either. It's worth looking to online room resellers for far better rates than the hotel's own.

GRAND HOTEL MELBOURNE Hotel \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9611 4567; www.grandhotelsofitel.com.au;
33 Spencer St; r \$235–355

This grand Italianate building housed the Victorian Railways administration back in the day when rail ruled the world. Its self-catering rooms were originally offices, and have high ceilings with loft-style mezzanines. All vary in size and layout and are subtly furnished without succumbing to high-heritage frump. Spencer St is not the best locale for shopping and bars, but you're only a short tram ride away from the action.

NAVAL AND MILITARY CLUB Hotel \$\$\$
Map pp52–3
☎ 9650 4741; www.nmclub.com.au;
27 Little Collins St; r incl breakfast from \$220

You once had to be an officer *and* a gentleman to get past the door here, but in these more democratic times you just need a little cash (and be able to find the place). There are only 18 rooms in this fabulously located modernist bunker of a building and they all are light, crisp and well equipped. Rooms with balconies have treetop and city views. You also get access to club facilities: a business centre, health club and a formally landscaped rooftop garden. A hidden gem.

top picks

SHOPPING & BAR HOPPING

- Hotel Causeway (opposite)
- Pensione (p187)
- Jasper Hotel (opposite)
- The Naval & Military Club (above)

double-glazed windows that open. In-room recycling is promoted. Rooms are also well equipped, light and neutrally decorated. Apartments (but not studios) have full kitchens and multiple LCDs, and some have spas (presumably more than one telly and a big bubbling bath is for extra-special treats only).

RENDEZVOUS HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9250 1888; www.rendezvoushotels.com;
328 Finders St; r from \$159

Built in 1913 and heritage-listed, this well-located hotel features a stunning circular interior balcony, sweeping staircases and an understated charm. Contemporary rooms are smart, while heritage rooms have high ceilings and Edwardian flourishes.

STAMFORD PLAZA
Map pp52–3 Suite Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9659 1000; www.stamford.com.au;
111 Little Collins St; r from \$155

The Stamford offers big rooms and suites and loads of facilities at reasonable rates. There's an indoor and outdoor pool plus two 'mini' gyms. Space and professional staff are the draws here (and the location is sweet too). Décor can be a little on the fussy side but slick enough to avoid the granny tag.

MANTRA 100 EXHIBITION
Map pp52–3 Serviced Apartments \$\$
☎ 9631 4444; <http://cityhotels.mantraresorts.com.au>; 100 Exhibition St; apt from \$155

Great midcity location and streamlined apartment facilities. Big windows and the use of blond wood, white and the odd splash of intense colour are a surprise at this price. Nice location between the bustle of Bourke and the calm of Collins.

SOMERSET GORDON PLACE
Map pp52–3 Serviced Apartments \$\$
☎ 9663 2888; www.somersetgordonplace.com;
24 Little Bourke St; apt from \$155

The Somerset's smart, pint-sized apartments are concealed inside a prim heritage building at the top end of town. There's a range from small studios to two-bedroom, all with kitchenettes. A sunny courtyard with outdoor pool is an unexpected bonus in this midcity location.

ATLANTIS HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9600 2900; www.atlantishotel.com.au;
300 Spencer St; r from \$150

Across from Docklands and Southern Cross Station, this place offers two-bedroom suites perfect for families for not much more than the standard room charge. The low-slung rooms are soothingly neutral if not superstylish. A highlight is the proportionally huge bathrooms, which include a shower area with fold-down bench seating, as well as some great Bolte Bridge views from the upper rooms.

MERCURE Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9205 9999; www.accorhotels.com.au; 13 Spring St; r from \$149

The Mercure squats among lofty office towers facing lush gardens. At the sedate end of town, but within stumbling distance of many good bars and restaurants, this link in an international chain offers high-quality, dependable rooms and service.

CAUSEWAY INN ON THE MALL
Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9650 0688; www.causeway.com.au;
327 Bourke St Mall; r \$140-225

Dowdy as the décor is, the Causeway Inn is always busy and often full. It's a pretty simple set-up: small rooms and shower only, but with helpful staff and a location bang in the middle of the city. Note the hotel entrance is actually in the Causeway, a lane running between Bourke St Mall and Little Collins St.

CITY LIMITS
Map pp52–3 Serviced Apartments \$\$
☎ 9662 2544; www.citylimits.com.au;
20-22 Little Bourke St; r incl breakfast \$130

If you can ignore the schizophrenic mix of décor styles, and the self-proclaimed four stars, the staff are welcoming and you're in an ideal Chinatown location. The rooms have small but decently stocked kitchenettes.

ROBINSONS IN THE CITY
Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9329 2552; www.robinsonsinthecity.com.au;
405 Spencer St; r from \$135

Robinsons really is an intimate hotel (there's only six bedrooms), though the comfortable rooms are anything but small.

The building is a former bakery, dating from 1850, but the owners have gone for a modern, eclectic – if not particularly edgy – look. Its location puts you midway between the city and Docklands, and the stroll to the city is a pleasant one. Service is warm and personal; repeat visits are common.

HOTEL ENTERPRIZE Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9629 6991; www.hotelenterprize.com.au;
44 Spencer St; r \$100-140

Hotel Enterprize has two distinct personalities and three different sets of clothes. Confusing? Not really. Well-kept but essentially plain budget rooms are set around a central courtyard decked out with pot plants and ferns. Business rooms are either woody or 'boutique'-style contemporary. It's not cutting edge but it's comfortable.

VICTORIA HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9653 0441; www.victoriahotel.com.au;
215 Little Collins St; r with shared bathroom \$85-95,
with private bathroom \$95-\$180

The original Vic opened its doors in 1880 but don't worry: they've updated the plumbing since then. This city institution offers a flexible range of comfortable, if not exactly stylish, accommodation in an unbeatable location: the heart of the city's designer-fashion and arts precinct. Contemporary Bellerive rooms are a little more soothing. Facilities include an indoor pool.

CITY CENTRE HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$
☎ 9654 5401; www.citycentrebudgethotel.com.au;
22 Little Collins St; r from \$90

Intimate, independent and inconspicuous, this 38-room budget hotel is a find. It's located at the city's prettier end, down a 'Little' street, up some stairs, inside an unassuming building. All rooms share bathroom facilities but the fresh rooms are light-filled with working windows; there's also free wi-fi and a laundry. On the roof there's a fabulous patch of domesticity – swing seats and banana lounges – amid a sea of midcity slick. The service is genuine and genial, and everyone is accommodated, from solo travellers to families.

CITY SQUARE MOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$
☎ 9654 7011; www.citysquaremotel.com.au;
67 Swanston St; r from \$90
Want to feel special? Then look elsewhere. Want to stay in the living, breathing heart

of Melbourne, but spend your hard-earned cash on food, drink and fun (and don't mind a vintage en suite)? Rooms are basic but comfortable and serviced daily; some have deep, old-style baths.

PENSIONE HOTEL Map pp52–3 Hotel \$
☎ 9621 3333; www.pensione.com.au;
16 Spencer St; r from \$90

The Pensione isn't being cute christening some rooms 'petit double'. It's a rare thing for hotels not to be opaque on their room's relative squeezeiness. They've got reasons to be honest. What you don't get in size is more than made up for in spot-on style, room extras and superreasonable rates. This recent refurb and rebranding is a welcome jolt to the Melbourne hotel scene.

HOTEL FORMULE 1 MELBOURNE CBD
Map pp52–3 Hotel \$
☎ 9642 0064; www.formule1.com.au;
97-103 Elizabeth St; r from \$79

Offers a backpacker level of comfort though all rooms are en suite. Rooms utilise the latest in bunk-bed technology to maximise space. The location is perfect for those that want to be in the thick of it.

GREENHOUSE BACKPACKER
Map pp52–3 Hostel \$
☎ 9639 6400; www.friendlygroup.com.au; 6/228
Flinders Lane; dm/s/d incl breakfast \$30/65/80

Greenhouse has a low-key, relaxed vibe and is extremely well run – they know what keeps backpackers content. This includes freebies: daily half-hour internet access, pancakes on Sunday, rooftop BBQs, luggage storage and activities. There's also chatty, helpful staff and spic-and-span facilities. There's double bed bunks for couples in the mixed dorms; solo travellers can opt for single-sex dorms. The location could hardly be better, smack in the middle of one of Melbourne's most bustling laneways.

HOTEL DISCOVERY Map pp52–3 Hostel \$
☎ 9642 4464; www.hoteldiscovery.com.au;
167 Franklin St; dm \$25-28, d from \$85

Housed in a rather grand old building, Discovery offers standard hostel rooms with lots of extras such as a rooftop garden, 'cinema' and a great location just near Victoria Market. There's also lounging areas,

pool tables, a bar and café, which make for a very social atmosphere. Family rooms and en suite doubles are available too.

MELBOURNE CONNECTION TRAVELLERS HOSTEL

Map pp52–3 **Hostel \$**
 ☎ 9329 7525; www.melbourneconnection.com;
 205 King St; dm \$22–28, d \$67–80
 This 79-bed little charmer follows the small-is-better principle. It offers simple, clean and uncluttered budget accommodation with modern facilities, well-organised staff and basement lounge area.

SOUTHBANK & DOCKLANDS

Southbank boasts some of the city's higher-end options, which take advantage of the city views to be had while being just a short stroll across a bridge back into town. Accommodation has sprung up all around Docklands, servicing a business clientele and those who want an apartment with great, if industrial, views of Victoria Harbour and the city. It has its own swag of dining options, and is convenient to the Telstra Dome, but it can be a pain to make your way back to the midcity action, especially at night.

CROWN TOWERS

Map pp64–5 **Hotel \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9292 6666, 1800 811 653; www.crowntowers.com.au;
 8 Whiteman St, Southbank; r from \$355
 Conspicuous consumption and even more conspicuous everything else combine to create one the country's most lavish places to sleep. Rooms pull out all the stops with views, gadgetry, original artworks and contemporary-styled opulence. This being a casino hotel should be a hint to anyone looking for a subdued atmosphere to reconsider. On weekends, most of the guests are here to party.

LANGHAM HOTEL

Map pp64–5 **Hotel \$\$\$**
 ☎ 8696 8888; www.langhamhotels.com;
 1 Southgate Ave, Southbank; r from \$320
 The Langham lobby screams luxury, but its restaurants can feel a little mall-like and the rooms, while perfectly equipped, are past their prime in the style stakes. Still, if you want river views, and can opt for something above the smallest 'King classic', it's going to be a pleasant five-star stay. The Chuan Spa is well regarded.

CROWN PROMENADE

Map pp64–5 **Hotel \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9292 6688; www.crownpromenade.com.au;
 8 Whiteman St, Southbank; r from \$245
 This is Crown's 'diffusion line' hotel and linked to the mother ship by an air bridge. It is much more laid-back than the Towers and offers large, modern and gently masculine rooms with luxurious bathrooms, big windows, flat screens and Sony Playstations. Views vary but many are as breathtaking as the Towers.

DOCKLANDS APARTMENTS GRAND MECURE

Map pp64–5 **Serviced Apartments \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9606 0561; www.docklandsservicedapartments.com.au;
 23 Saint Mangos Lane, New Quay, Docklands; apt from \$230, min 2-night stay
 Spectacular floor-to-ceiling windows make the most of the water and city views. Apartments have balconies, full kitchens with stainless steel appliances and are furnished with pleasing contemporary style. New Quay has lots of good eating options as well as shops to procure provisions.

QUEST DOCKLANDS

Map pp64–5 **Serviced Apartments \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9630 1000; www.questdocklands.com.au;
 750 Bourke St, Victoria Point, Docklands; apt from \$195
 Join the new breed of Melburnians on the Docklands frontier. These apartments are serviced daily and all have a fully kitted kitchen. The interiors' crisp lines are cushioned with subtle, earthy-toned furniture and fixtures, and most have a balcony. Literally on the doorstep of Telstra Dome, so perfect for big-game visits.

TRAVELodge SOUTH BANK

Map pp64–5 **Hotel \$\$\$**
 ☎ 8696 9600; www.travelodge.com.au;
 9 Riverside Quay, Southbank; r from \$154
 You won't be able to forget that this is a Travelodge, but if you can get past the queasy tones of the bedspreads and wall colours, comfort levels are high, and the service and riverside location are quite special. Some rooms also have views that you'll pay a lot more for elsewhere.

URBAN CENTRAL BACKPACKERS

Map pp64–5 **Hostel \$\$\$**
 ☎ 1800 631 288, 9639 3700; www.urbancentral.com.au;
 334 City Rd, South Melbourne; dm/d/f from \$23/90/120

This just-south-of-the-river hostel is pretty much the perfect package. It's neat, new and trendy, and houses bright, white dorms. There's a great bar downstairs (with dangerously cheap happy hours) and the staff are friendly and helpful. You'll need to contend with several floors of fellow guests, but that might be just what you're looking for. Private rooms are offered, and all dorms have individual lockers with internal charge points for your laptop, camera or iPod.

EAST MELBOURNE & RICHMOND

East Melbourne takes you out of the action and has few attractions of its own apart from the splendid expanses of Fitzroy Gardens, peace and quiet and ready access to the MCG. Richmond's ideal if you also want a local feel only a 20-minute walk or short taxi trip from the city.

HILTON ON THE PARK

Map pp68–9 **Hotel \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9419 2000; www.hilton.com;
 192 Wellington Pde, East Melbourne; r from \$200; ☎ Jolimont, ☎ 48, 75
 The brown-brick Hilton building, on the verge of stunning gardens, is a monument to '70s functionalism. Sadly, most guest rooms have some '90s rococo thing going on, but a progressive refurbishment augers well. The freshly done 'relaxation suites' are furnished simply, stylishly and in a way that suits the building's boxy dimensions. The location is superb for sports fans and for those who like to team city life with a walk in the park.

VILLA DONATI

Map pp68–9 **B&B \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9428 8104; www.villadonati.com;
 377 Church St, Richmond; s/d \$170/185; ☎ 70
 An impeccably maintained Italianate villa, Donati is great value. The rooms are individually decorated and all have en suites. Villa Donati doesn't give into the heritage cliché that this type of architecture might encourage; instead it's got personality and an endearingly eclectic, haute-bourgeois style.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE APARTMENTS

Map pp68–9 **Serviced Apartments \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9470 9100; www.knightsbridgeapartments.com.au;
 101 George St, East Melbourne; apt from \$125; ☎ Jolimont, ☎ 48, 75

Rejuvenated studio apartments over three floors each feature a well-equipped kitchen plus furniture and accessories that suggest a higher price bracket. From the chirpy welcome to the free guest laundry, the overall impression is one of 'nothing's too much trouble'. If you don't score an apartment with a teensy private courtyard (rooms 7, 8 and 9), opt for the upper floors for a better outlook and light (note there's no lift).

GEORGIAN COURT

Map pp68–9 **B&B \$\$\$**
 ☎ 9419 6353; www.georgiancourt.com.au;
 21 George St, East Melbourne; r from \$119;
 ☎ West Richmond, ☎ 48, 75
 This gently crumbling mansion has an old-school, relaxed appeal that's proven popular with families for many years. Rooms are diminutive and slightly overwrought but come with shiny bathrooms (shared or private). The breakfast area is reminiscent of prewar Britain, with period furniture, high ceilings, lead-light windows and seemingly bottomless pots of tea.

MAGNOLIA COURT

Map pp68–9 **Hotel \$\$**
 ☎ 9419 4222; www.magnoliacourt.com.au;
 101 Powlett St, East Melbourne; r from \$99;
 ☎ Jolimont, ☎ 48, 75
 It may be a little fussy for some but they've recently done a gentle refurbishing of facilities here and there's plenty of heritage charm and high ceilings in a peaceful location. There's a large variety of room types, from singles to a self-contained Victorian cottage. Staff are sweetly accommodating.

GEORGE POWLETT APARTMENTS

Map pp68–9 **Self-Contained \$\$**
 ☎ 9419 9488; www.georgepowlett.com.au;
 cnr George & Powlett Sts, East Melbourne; studio apt from \$95; ☎ Jolimont, ☎ 48, 75
 These older-style (read frumpy) rooms have kitchenettes and are a 10-minute walk from town through the fabulous Fitzroy Gardens. The low-rise complex, located in the shadows of the MCG light towers, has 45 compact rooms, some with balconies.

FREEMAN LODGE

Map pp68–9 **Hostel \$**
 ☎ 9421 8038; www.freemanlodge.com.au;
 151–153 Hoddle St, Richmond; dm/d \$26/64;
 ☎ West Richmond, ☎ 48, 75
 This kooky little guesthouse (with just 15 rooms) is on the city's notoriously clogged Hoddle St, so light sleepers and asthmatics

take note. But across the road are the MCG and some glorious parkland. And Freeman is around the corner from retail-littered Bridge Rd and Vietnamese Victoria St. Small rooms (from four-bunk dorm to triple) are supplemented by homey communal areas, including a small kitchen.

FITZROY & AROUND

Although Fitzroy hums with attractions day and night, and is seductively close to the city, it sadly comes up short for interesting sleeping options.

METROPOLE HOTEL APARTMENTS

Map pp74–5 Self-Contained \$\$\$
 ☎ 9411 8100; 44 Brunswick St, Fitzroy;
 apt \$205-285; ☎ 86, 112

If you can forgive the mid-'90s façade that blights this heritage strip at the top of Brunswick St, the Metropole is worth considering for its city skip-and-jump location and small outdoor pool. The rooms are large and well equipped, though the beyond-bland interiors will also require quite some forgiveness.

ROYAL GARDENS APARTMENTS

Map pp74–5 Serviced \$\$ Apartments
 ☎ 9419 9888; www.questroyalgardens.com.au;
 8 Royal Lane, Fitzroy; apt from \$158; ☎ 86, 96

This rather dauntingly monumental complex of apartments is softened by hidden gardens, and has recently been updated with new furniture and full kitchens. Situated in a quiet nook of this happening suburb, it's so relaxed you'll feel like a local.

NUNNERY Map pp74–5

Hostel \$

☎ 9419 8637; www.nunnery.com.au; 116 Nicholson St, Fitzroy; dm incl breakfast \$28-32, s \$70-80, d \$95-115; ☎ 96

The Nunnery oozes atmosphere, with sweeping staircases and many original features; the walls are dripping with

religious works of art and ornate stained-glass windows. You'll be giving thanks for the big comfortable lounges and communal areas. Apart from the main building there's also the Nunnery Guesthouse, which has larger rooms in a private setting. It's perennially popular, so try to book ahead.

HOME ON ARGYLE Map pp74–5

Hostel \$

☎ 9419 1119; http://homeonargyle.alphalink.com.au; 109 Argyle St, Fitzroy; prices on application; ☎ 112

This hostel resembles a bright, happily chaotic share house more than a backpackers, and the owners want their guests to feel part of the family. Long-term stays of two to six months are preferred. Not everyone's cup of tea, but they are happy to let you stay a night to see if you like it before committing to a longer-term arrangement.

CARLTON & AROUND

Carlton has quite a few midrange places aimed at the university and hospital crowd, but like Fitzroy it disappoints when it comes to interesting hotel options. North Melbourne has a few budget options, some of them more attractive than others.

RYDGES ON SWANSTON

Map pp78–9 Hostel \$\$

☎ 9347 7811; www.rydges.com; 701 Swanston St, Carlton; r from \$159; ☎ 1, 8

Rydges is a neat little hotel close to the University of Melbourne with neutral styling and a no-nonsense approach. Even standard rooms sleep three and have good facilities and fresh bathrooms. Parkview rooms have just that, as well as more space and, usually, a better layout. A highlight of the hotel is the heated rooftop pool, which includes a large area for lazing around as well as a spa-sauna room.

VIBE HOTEL CARLTON

Map pp78–9 Hostel \$\$

☎ 9380 9222; www.vibehotels.com.au; 441 Royal Pde, Carlton; r from \$150; ☎ 19

This early 1960s motel was once noted for its glamorous, high-Californian style. One wonders how fabulous it could have been in the hands of an individual owner with an interest in its history. Small chain Vibe doesn't live up to the promise, but apart from overexuberance in the public areas,

some period charm does shine through. Rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows and clean lines. There's also a signature '60s central pool. Its Parkville location is pretty (and close to the zoo and golf courses); the city is a short tram ride away and Brunswick or Carlton North cafés aren't too far by foot.

DOWNTOWNER ON LYGON

Map pp78–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9663 5555; www.downtowner.com.au; 66 Lygon St, Carlton; r from \$145; ☎ 1, 8
 The Downtowner is a friendly, popular, perpetually busy hotel at the start of Little Italy. This place has an easy manner and innocuous design. There are a variety of rooms, including secure adjoining rooms for families.

NORTH MELBOURNE SERVICED APARTMENTS

Map pp78–9 Serviced Apartments \$\$

☎ 9329 3977; www.northmelbourneapartments.com.au; 113 Flemington Rd, North Melbourne; apt from \$135; ☎ 55, 59

These light-filled, neat and nondescript apartments come in studio to two-bedroom configurations, and share a communal laundry. The proximity to Royal Park and the zoo make them a good choice for families, and long-term rates are attractive.

MELBOURNE METRO YHA

Map pp78–9 Hostel \$\$\$

☎ 9329 8599; www.yha.com.au; 78 Howard St, North Melbourne; dm/d from \$26/80, apt from \$110; ☎ 55

The defining feature of this place is 'space': from the rooms to the common area it avoids the claustrophobic, cattle-pen feel of many hostels. The rooftop area has seriously breathtaking panoramic views of Melbourne's CBD. Everything's clean and spotless, plus there's a pool table, friendly staff and a travel agency. Unlike most Melbourne accommodation options, prices here aren't hiked for major events.

ARDEN MOTEL Map pp78–9

Motel \$

☎ 9329 7211; www.lygonst.com/ardenmotel; 15 Arden St, North Melbourne; r from \$86; ☎ 55, 57

Sometimes you just need a bed. A bastion of budget accommodation, the Arden is emphatically unfashionable and a tad

weary (though the chaise longues that resemble a 3-D modelled virus are strangely compelling). It's friendly though. Some rooms come with a kitchen, and there's a share laundry.

SOUTH YARRA, PRAHRAN & WINDSOR

South of the river, South Yarra has a number of boutique and upmarket places set in pretty tree-lined residential streets. You'll be close to shopping, parkland, bars and cafés.

COMO Map pp84–5

Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9825 2222; www.mirvachotels.com.au; 630 Chapel St, South Yarra; r from \$295; ☎ South Yarra, ☎ 8

Located at the junction of the city's most hyped fashion streets, Como is requisitely stylish and long beloved by local celebs. The rooms use an ever-reliable burnt umber palette – flattering in any light. The 105 studios and penthouses come in 25 different shapes and sizes: you're bound to find one to fit. The rooftop pool is a treat.

LYALL Map pp84–5

Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9868 8222; www.thelyall.com; 14 Murphy St, South Yarra; r from \$290; ☎ South Yarra, ☎ 8

The Lyall is tucked away in a leafy residential street. The spacious rooms are beautifully appointed, with little luxuries including gourmet cheese in the minibar, laundry facilities, and televisions in the bathrooms. Furnishings are woody but sleek. The Lyall boasts a well-regarded spa, a gym, a swish champagne bar, and a bistro. It's all done to perfection. Plus there's 24-hour room service, including a 'spa menu'.

ROYCE ON ST KILDA ROAD

Map pp84–5 Boutique Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9677 9900; www.roycehotels.com.au; 379 St Kilda Rd; r from \$245; ☎ 3, 16, 64, 67, 72
 Housed in an ornate 1920s hacienda-style building, the Royce's successful mix of period details and stylish modern fit-out extends from bathroom to bed. Room types are not just a matter of scales of space – they also differ in mood from the softly minimal deluxes to the subtly decorative executive suites.

top picks

HOSTELS

- Nunnery (above)
- Urban Central Backpackers (p188)

top picks

LEAFY BOUTIQUE HOTELS

- Hatton (below)
- Lyall (p191)
- Villa Donati (p189)
- Albany (below)

HATTON Map pp84–5 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9868 4800; www.hatton.com.au; 65 Park St, South Yarra; incl breakfast r from \$195; ☎ 8

This Victorian terrace is enjoying a luxurious reincarnation as a boutique hotel. Each room is uniquely styled: waxed floorboards and wooden mantels are matched with stainless steel, while antiques and contemporary local furniture are thrown effortlessly together. The Eastern Balcony suite is particularly opulent with Asian decorative pieces and exclusive use of the 1st-floor balcony.

QUEST SXY SOUTH YARRA

Map pp84–5 Serviced Apartments \$\$

8825 3700; www.questskysouthyarra.com.au; 27-29 Claremont St, South Yarra; apt from \$160; ☎ South Yarra, ☎ 8

A great position just off the Toorak Rd strip, though it's a 'South Yarra at work' street rather than leafy and leisurely. Apartments have the full range of facilities and sport simple contemporary décor. The Yarra's not far if you fancy joining the locals for a morning jog. You're also steps away from great *pasticciera* at Café Veloce; takeaway on your balcony will beat a wan continental breakfast any day.

TOORAK MANOR Map pp84–5 Hotel \$\$

☎ 9827 2689; www.toorakmanor.net; 220 Williams Rd, Toorak; r from \$155; ☎ Hawksburn, ☎ 72

This graceful old mansion sports frills and flowing chiffon in its 18 period-style rooms. Some of the décor is looking a bit tired but you're in a top spot near happening Hawksburn Village, and its only about 10 minutes into the city from the quaint train station.

ALBANY Map pp84–5 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9866 4485; www.thealbany.com.au; cnr Toorak Rd & Millslyn St, South Yarra; r from \$125; ☎ 8

OK, it's a sprawling, generic chain hotel, but the location, a flip-flop's throw from St Kilda

bland. The front is an 1890s mansion with high-ceilinged rooms and a penthouse that recalls late-'60s swinging London. At the back is a motel-like wing with music-vid-style moody corridors and small, basic rooms that have been hit with the Ikea stick and boast excellent beds with lovely linen. The executive rooms are the pick: still not much wiggle room, but they face pretty Millslyn St and have smart new open-plan bathrooms.

HOTEL CLAREMONT

Map pp84–5 Guesthouse \$

☎ 9826 8000, 1300 301 630; www.hotelclaremont.com; 189 Toorak Rd, South Yarra; dm/s/d \$39/76/86; ☎ South Yarra, ☎ 8

In a large heritage building dating from 1868, the Claremont is good value, with comfortable rooms, high ceilings and a fair spread of facilities. Don't expect fancy décor: it's simply a clean, welcoming cheapie. Plus it's in a terrific location for shopping, eating or rambling along the Yarra.

ST KILDA & AROUND

St Kilda is a hotel hub boasting both one of the city's most famed boutique hotels and a budget traveller enclave. Although bay views can be found, don't count on them – but the beach is usually only a short walk away.

PRINCE Map pp88–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9536 1111; www.theprince.com.au; 2 Acland St, St Kilda; r from \$260; ☎ 16, 79, 96, 112

The Prince is Melbourne's best-known 'design' hotel. The small lobby is suitably dramatic and the rooms are an interesting mix of the original pub's proportions, natural materials and a pared-back aesthetic. Larger rooms and suites feature some key pieces of vintage modernist furniture. Onsite 'facilities' take in some of the city's most mentioned: Circa restaurant (p139), the Aurora day spa (p173), bars, band rooms (p158) and even a fabulous wine shop downstairs. Unless you're in party mode yourself, be prepared for the seepage of nightclub noise if you're staying the weekend.

NOVOTEL ST KILDA Map pp88–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9525 5522; www.novotel.com; 14-16 The Esplanade, St Kilda; r from \$210; ☎ 3, 67

OK, it's a sprawling, generic chain hotel, but the location, a flip-flop's throw from St Kilda

beach, and the accompanying views are appealing. And while there are serene bay vistas to contemplate, you're also equidistant from the area's twin action-packed streets.

URBAN Map pp88–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 8530 8888; www.urbanstkilda.com.au; 35-37 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; r from \$185; ☎ 16, 79, 96, 112 Rooms at the Urban (formerly the Marquee) use a lot of blond wood and white to maximise space, and are simple, light and calming. Some rooms have freestanding in-room spas and are Faraway Tree-shaped (ie circular). Staff are helpful, but despite boutique aspirations, the public areas can feel a tad soulless.

FOUNTAIN TERRACE Map pp88–9 B&B \$\$\$

☎ 9593 8123; www.fountainterrace.com.au; 28 Mary St, St Kilda; r from \$155/185; ☎ 96, 112

The seven rooms here are lovingly appointed in honour of famous Australians such as Henry Lawson and Melba (the vintage of which will give you a clue to the style and ambience at work here). All are impeccably presented, with brocades, silks and all manner of frills. The Melba Suite is the most lavish, with access to the front veranda. Our pick is the Edna Walling suite; landscape pioneer Walling's taste for black-and-white photography has inspired a nicely restrained room.

HOTEL TOLARNO Map pp88–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9537 0200; www.hoteltolarno.com.au; 42 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; r from \$145; ☎ 16, 79, 96, 112

Tolarno was once the site of Georges Mora's seminal gallery Tolarno. The fine-dining restaurant downstairs (p139) now bears the name of his artist wife Mirka, as well as her original paintings. Rooms upstairs aren't quite so chic but are brightly coloured and eclectically furnished, with good beds and crisp white linen. Those at the front of the building might get a bit noisy for some, but have balconies, floorboards and enormous windows.

QUEST ST KILDA BAYSIDE

Map pp88–9 Serviced Apartments \$\$

☎ 9593 9500; www.questapartments.com.au; 1 Eildon Rd, St Kilda; apt from \$140; ☎ 16, 79, 96, 112

A link in the very extensive chain of Quest apartments. As usual these come fully fitted with kitchens, bathrooms and living areas. This block is older than some, so if you're a

regular Quest guest don't expect the contemporary style that characterises many of their accommodations. These are, however, in a particularly charming St Kilda street.

HOTEL BARKLY Map pp88–9 Hotel \$\$\$

9525 3354; www.stkildabeachhouse.com; 109 Barkly St, St Kilda; dm/d from \$18/110; ☎ 3, 67

Hotel Barkly is the party; you're just the guest list. Or, actually, the guest. Bright dorms are on the 1st floor; moody, though not luxurious, private rooms, some with balconies and views, are on the 2nd and 3rd. Below is a heaving pub, above is a happy house-cranking bar. Noisy? You bet. But if you're up for it, there's definitely fun to be had. Though perhaps not a lot of sleep.

OLEMBIA GUESTHOUSE

Map pp88–9 Hostel \$

☎ 9537 1412; www.olembia.com.au; 96 Barkly St, St Kilda; dm/s/d \$30/80/100; ☎ 3, 67

Olembia offers impeccably presented, if slightly fusty, rooms at backpacker prices. The small, elegant old house also has a cosy lounge and a spacious leafy courtyard out front. Bookings are advised, especially for the upstairs family room. Helpful staff can provide recommendations and tips galore.

BASE Map pp88–9 Hostel \$

☎ 9536 6109; www.basebackpackers.com; 17 Carlisle St, St Kilda; dm from \$30, r from \$99; ☎ 16, 79, 96

Accor spinoff Base does away with random backpacker challenges like dirty sheets, clashing bedspreads and wet clothes in the communal bathroom. There's streamlined dorms, each with en suite, or slick doubles. There's a 'sanctuary' floor for female travellers. A bar and a full range of leisure options, including a pool table, complete the package. A good-time party atmosphere prevails.

COFFEE PALACE Map pp88–9 Hostel \$

☎ 9534 5283; www.coffeebackpackers.com.au; 24 Grey St, St Kilda; dm/d from \$20/60; ☎ 16, 79, 96, 112

This rambling old-school backpackers has lots of rooms, lots of activities and lots of years behind it. It has a travel desk, communal kitchen, bar, pool tables, lounge and TV room, plus a rooftop terrace with bay views. Dorms sleep from four to 10, with some for women only. There are also private rooms with shared bathrooms.

RITZ Map pp88–9

Hostel \$

☎ 9525 3501; www.ritzbackpackers.com; 169 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; dm from \$19, d from \$50; 📅 16, 79

Above a corner pub renowned for hosting the riotously popular *Neighbours* nights (served with a healthy dose of irony; see boxed text, p35), the Ritz has an excellent location, opposite an inner-city lake and park, and is only a five-minute walk from St Kilda's heart. Women can retreat to their own dorm, which includes a male-free kitchen and bathroom.

SOUTH MELBOURNE, PORT MELBOURNE & ALBERT PARK

The majority of accommodation here is geared towards business travellers who want to be near the offices of St Kilda Rd (and the golf course in Albert Park we suspect). It's also convenient to public transport and both the city and the bay, but doesn't offer too much in the way of nightlife.

SEBEL ALBERT PARK & CITIGATE ALBERT PARK

Map pp92–3 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 9529 4300; www.mirvachotels.com.au; 65 Queens Rd, Albert Park; Citigate r from \$175, Sebel r from \$189; 📅 3, 5, 6, 16, 64, 67

An odd pairing of not particularly dissimilar choices here with a couple of stablemate chain properties occupying the same address. The Citigates 3½-star rooms are new, neat and inoffensive. The Sebel's 4½-star rooms, which were getting the once-over at the time of writing, are bigger and promise to be a little more vibrant. Both sport some rooms with views. Depending on your time of travel, prices can be surprisingly similar.

BAYVIEW EDEN ON THE PARK

Map pp92–3 Hotel \$\$

☎ 9250 2222; www.bayviewhotels.com/eden; 6 Queens Rd, Albert Park; r from \$175; 📅 3, 5, 6, 16, 64, 67, 72

The Bayview Eden is indeed on the park, or just across the road, but is not to be confused with Bayview On The Park, a little further down Queen's Rd. The Eden fronts Albert Park's golf course and is the closest

top picks

BAYSIDE DIGS

- Prince (p192)
- Hotel Tolarno (p193)

to town of this Queen's Rd strip of hotels. Some of its simple, straightforward and comfortable rooms have superb views. There's a 17m indoor pool too.

BAYVIEW ON THE PARK

Map pp92–3 Hotel \$\$

☎ 9243 9999; www.bayviewonthepark.com.au; 52 Queens Rd, Albert Park; r from \$125; 📅 3, 5, 6, 16, 64, 67

The Bayview is one of many large, facility-toting hotels lining Queens Rd, competing for the corporate dollar. The rooms are clean and comfortable, though the pastel colour scheme is dated. Premier rooms and suites do, however, have excellent Albert Park Lake views, and they offer substantial discounts on weekend rates.

BEV & MICKS MARKET HOTEL

Map pp92–3 Hotel \$

☎ 9690 2220; 115 Cecil St, South Melbourne; dm/d \$15/40; 📅 96, 112

In a converted pub, still with a working bar, this hostel is right near the bustling produce market. It's a personable place, thanks to its modest size, though it still boasts a small kitchen and communal area.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Not a usual base for travellers but perfect for an atmospheric seaside break.

PUNT HILL WILLIAMSTOWN

Map p96 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$

☎ 9631 1111; www.williamstown.punthill.com.au; 4-18 Ferguson St, Williamstown; apt from \$180;

Bright and streamlined, this is a fashionable little bolthole in a suburb more known for maritime nostalgia. There are views of the bay from the breezy rooftop spa and BBQ area (though not the rooms) and a variety of one- to three-bedroom apartments, all fully equipped.

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