

Styletravel Melbourne

Australia's hottest city in fashion terms, if not temperature, Melbourne has a distinctive, laid-back style all of its own

Written by Laura Dixon





Melbourne is Australia's most fashionable city. As the host of the country's hottest fashion shows, it has firmly knocked Sydney's coat hanger off the rail by drawing the industry's top names to its events. And little wonder. With a mélange of trendy eateries, relaxed café-bars and stylish boutiques, Melbourne leads where Sydney follows.

What makes Melbourne different from its Australian counterparts is its cultural blend. The city is incredibly cosmopolitan; it has the largest Greek population outside Athens and enjoys a noted Asian and Pacific influence, not only in its cuisine.

While the stereotypical Australian style may be Ugg boots or flip-flops worn with surfwear chic, in Melbourne there is no one 'look'. People here strive to be individual, celebrating creativity and personal style.

The city may not offer the big tourist attractions of Sydney, or even the awesome appeal of Uluru (Ayers

Rock), but no matter. Melbourne attracts visitors for its atmosphere and lifestyle. Its food is considered to be the finest in the country, using those unique influences to create fantastic fusions, the beachfront bars and cafés are as friendly and trendy as you'll find anywhere and the boutiques capture that individual and creative spirit to sell creations you won't find anywhere else.



THE BLOCK ARCADE

FASHION CENTRAL

The first stop for any self-respecting fashionista in the city has to be the South Yarra area around Toorak Road and Chapel Street. The area is full of fashionable cafés and stylish boutiques and it's the kind of place that you're likely to run into a *Neighbours* starlet or two dressed up to the nines. Melbourne native Cate Blanchett has been seen out and about in Richmond, another glamorous suburb just across the river from Toorak.

RETRO CHIC

St Kilda, Melbourne's retro zone, is equally popular but for a different kind of vibe. The roads of this grand bayside suburb are lined with laid-back cafés, second-hand clothes shops and unique designer boutiques. The area has proved popular with more off-beat celebs, such as Drew Barrymore. Down by the beach, Donovan's (see far right) is a popular haunt of former Melbourne girls Kylie and Dannii Minogue.



The Café That Cares

100-MILE CAFE

Level 3, Melbourne Central,
211 La Trobe Street, Melbourne
(00 61) 3 9654 0808
100milecafe.com.au

Green is officially the new black, so why not join the fashion pack here at 100-Mile Caf? It sources all of its food within a hundred miles of Melbourne (as far as possible) and serves it up in a modern Australian

style with a hint of Japanese influence. Even the miso is grown locally, rather than being imported from Japan. Expect great chrome coffee machines, an airy dining space and floor-to-ceiling windows – all the better for people-watching. On the menu are woodfire-roasted free-range chicken with mushroom, baby endive and home-smoked paprika or tea-smoked rainbow trout with a pear dressing, plus all kinds of bread.



The Bar

BOUTIQUE

134 Greville Street, Prahran (00 61)
3 9525 2322 boutique.net.au

Worth dressing up for – all capiz shell lampshades, patterned wallpaper and gilt-framed mirrors – and bang in the centre of Melbourne's trendy Prahran district. Friday is Flash Eighties night. Saturday is the fashionista's favourite, with the elite of the industry gathering to gossip. Recent A-list visitors have been Paris Hilton, Duran Duran and James Blunt.



The Restaurant

DONOVAN'S HOUSE

40 Jacka Boulevard, St Kilda,
Melbourne (00 61) 3 9534 8221
donovanshouse.com.au

No, not Jason's house. This unique restaurant was remodelled from the Twenties bathhouses that were built on the seafront. Italian chef Robert Castellani's menu is diverse: yankee fried quail, oysters with spinach and parmesan and plenty of pasta. You can sip aperitifs on the terrace overlooking the beach.



The Hotel

THE ADELPHI

187 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (00 61)
3 9650 7555 adelphi.com.au

Winning international awards and acclaim for its architecture and interior design, the Adelphi fits right in on Flinders Lane. Once the home of the city's rag trade, now the hub of Melbourne's contemporary art scene, the chunky façades of this area house cool bars, apartments, and artisan and designer boutiques. The Adelphi's oblong swimming pool is one of the most photographed in the world. It hangs over Flinders Lane and swimmers can take a peek at the street below through the clear Perspex floor. Being in this former warehouse is like being in the middle of a Mondrian painting, where shards of bright colour intersect with walls of steel and glass.



HUSK



MyMelbourne
MARAIKA
VAN WESSEM

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

I live in west Melbourne. I bought a warehouse there last year because I was raised in Balwyn in the boring east Melbourne suburbs and always wanted to be in the midst of all the action. Now I have a pub on every corner, and the Docklands and Vic [Queen Victoria] market are all just a stroll away! The Vic is the best street market in the entire city.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE CITY'S STYLE?

Cosmopolitan. Melbournians wear fewer pastel colours than our Sydney counterparts and men look more 'rock star' here.

WHAT'S A HOT LOOK IN MELBOURNE RIGHT NOW?

For women, colours are bright and contrasting: hot pinks, oranges and yellows for dresses and footwear. The maxi dress is here for summer, worn with flat, woven sandals or flip-flops, and accessorised with a belt – best in bright colours too. The boys are experimenting with open-buttoned shirts (best worn without too much chest hair!), with deconstructed jeans. Tailored vests and Havana hats are looking hot on the blokes too.

TheBoutiques

HUSK

176 Collins Street, Central, Melbourne;
 557 Malvern Road, Toorak, Melbourne;
 (00 61) 3 9663 0655 (Collins Street);
 (00 61) 3 9827 2700 (Toorak)
husk.com.au

For the urban bohemian in you, Husk is a lush boutique with heaps of Australian and international designerwear and homewares. The Toorak store also has a nurturing café, which is designed around the concept of sanctuary.

MEET ME AT MIKE'S

63, Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne
 (00 61) 3 9416 3713
meetmeatmikes.blogspot.com

A treat for vintage fans, Mike's is a haven for pre-loved designer clothing, where you can pick up everything from recent decents by the likes of Sass & Bide, Marc Jacobs, Citizens of Humanity and Paper Denim & Cloth to eclectic items from the Twenties to the Eighties.



HUSK



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