

**ALR's
guide to
what's
on,
where
to see it,
where
to eat,
and
where
to buy
it...**

“ Lovers of fair-dinkum pubs would be hard pressed to locate such an animal in Melbourne at the moment. The rapid onslaught of inner-city gentrification has hit hotels hardest, turning formerly warm and friendly hostelries into sterile and pastelled retreats for the monied.

Thankfully, there are some pubs scattered across the city and suburbs that still put character and integrity above awful decor, patronising service and prices high enough to drive you to drink.

Starting in the shellshocked Central Activities District, it would be hard to walk past the landmark **Young and Jacksons**, opposite Flinders Street station. There's the famous **Chloe**, a glass-bottom view of city bustle and plenty of old diggers propping up the bar with tales of an earlier Melbourne.

Walk down Flinders Street to the **Duke of Wellington**, tops for frosty pots but occasionally haunted by mildly psychotic country and western fans. Another block down, the **Phoenix Tavern** is useful for observing the slaving jackals of

the press falling down steps and serenading pot plants and fire extinguishers.

Up on Spring Street, the **Imperial** (opposite Parliament House) has an excellent array of caricatures decorating the walls and a cosy public bar. Opportunities for poking fun at the plethora of MPs skulking and scurrying nearby are endless.

Elsewhere in town, there's the early-opening **Waterside** on King Street, replete with colourful dockside identities and young bucks having a technicolour yawn on the freshly-scrubbed footpath; the filthy-but-fun **Sherlock Holmes** in Collins Street; and the **Canada**, high up Swanston St and popular with battle-hardened union officials.

Carlton, once a bohemian mecca, has been overrun by cocktail-consuming airheads. But liquid salvation is at hand in the laid-back, erratic **Lemon Tree** in Grattan Street; the genuine and homely **Clare Castle** up Rathdowne Street (brilliant food); the inimitably Irish **Dan O'Connell** (beware of Guinness-soaked pseudo-literate reprobates); and the friendly **Fenwick**.

Music with your liver damage is Fitzroy's specialty - top jazz at the **Tank** (**Tankerville Arms**, Nicholson Street), young and slightly disturbed rock with a corresponding clientele at the **Punters' Club** in Brunswick Street and boppy R'n'B at the

Royal Derby. The charming **Marquis of Lorne** (George Street) and the **Lord Newry** are also worth a visit.

Richmond and Collingwood are overflowing with top pubs, mostly tucked away in sidestreets but worth the extra shoe leather. Among the gems are the **Retreat** in Abbotsford, Swan Street's **Richmond Club** and **Swan** hotels and the **Royal** in Burnley Street (good, cheap counter meals).

Down south, grunge awaits at the **Prince of Wales** in Fitzroy Street. Avoid the human detritus on Friday and Saturday nights; instead, pop around to the **Esplanade** for stunning bay views and enthusiastic security staff. The **St Kilda Inn** at the end of Grey St is a rough diamond - but don't bad-mouth NZ.

South Melbourne has the jazzy **Limerick Arms** in Clarendon Street and breathtaking bay views from the window of the **Victoria** in Beaconsfield Parade. Pop around to Port Melbourne's **Prince Alfred** for a proletarian pot or two, too.

Naturally, this is but a sketchy outline of Melbourne's impressive resume of fine drinking holes. Careful crawling may give you Russ Hinze's spare tyre and Don Lane's nose, but you'll have damn good fun at the same time.

Happy elbow bending! ”

Simon Troeth

Jenny Coopes

The Last Word

