



# MADE TO SHINE

**Jennifer Hudson** draws from her own memories for plum roles in the holiday musical *Cats* and an upcoming film about Aretha Franklin.

+ THE UNDENIABLE APPEAL OF SYDNEY

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There's more to Australia's biggest city than its iconic opera house. From urban wildlife to unmarked cocktail bars, Sydney's secrets are yours to explore.

BY Shawn Gilliam  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY Chris Chen

# ESSENTIAL



BELOW:  
Luna Park,  
Sydney's iconic  
amusement  
park. OPPOSITE:  
Chef Lennox  
Hastie of  
Firedoor  
restaurant.

*and Unexpected*

# SYDNEY





door. "The meat pies and sausage rolls are the best in Australia," Boys says. So good that Bourke Street has taken them, along with sweet treats, to its newest outpost—in New York City.

Boys recommends Boon Café for the city's most inventive Thai. "In New South Wales, we have great produce—all the fruit and vegetables and herbs you need," he says. Those related to Thai cooking surround this eating spot, which is tucked into Jarern Thai, a bustling grocery store. Menu highlights include *dtum pbu*, a spicy green papaya salad with pickled crab, and *nahm prik masku*, a smoked eggplant relish with soft-boiled egg, herbs and pickled cabbage on sourdough. "You won't find those sandwiches anywhere else in the world that I'm aware of," Boys says.

The creative cocktail trend is alive and well in Sydney, too, at hangouts like Bulletin Place in the Central Business District. "Instead of just highlighting different distillers or winemakers, they highlight the farmers who grow the fresh fruit they source for the cocktails," Boys says. "They create cocktails around the fruit, not the other way around." The Baxter Inn, a cocktail-scene sweetheart close by, hides away behind an unmarked door on an unassuming side alley. It's known for whiskey drinks such as Rye & Apple; arrive early or expect to queue up if it's Friday or Saturday night. Cocktails also reign at Scout, the first branch of the beloved London bar to open outside of England, which is located on the second floor of the Dolphin Hotel. But don't overlook Dolphin itself for a fresh update of the traditional Australian pub and pints of Tooheys lager (old school) and Grifter pale ale (new).

The drinking trend that most surprises visitors is the prevalence of restaurants that let you bring your own bottles of wine. "BYO is a concept that mostly applies to cheaper Italian and Asian restaurants," Boys says. Sean's Panaroma (the misspelling is intentional), with 45 seats, is an exception. "Go to a bottle shop and get a nice wine, then come here for a lovely meal with a beautiful view of Bondi Beach," Boys says. The menu options, noted on a chalkboard, change daily, but regulars know that they can always count on favorites such as linguini with shredded rocket, lemon, chili and Parmesan.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Ritz Cinema in Randwick; The Thai Town and Desert Tree cocktails from Scout; Interior designer Sibella Court of The Society Inc.**

## Art Deco Architecture

It's not easy to attract the spotlight when you share the stage with world-famous structures such as the Sydney Opera House. The perfect example of this, says Sydney dentist-turned-author, photographer and architectural historian Peter Sheridan, is the city's rich art deco scene.

Sheridan, whose book *Sydney Art Deco* hit Australian bookstores earlier this year, suggests starting at the forecourt of the Opera House. "Glance around at the surrounding cityscape and you will see the Harbour Bridge—and under it, Luna Park [an amusement park] and North Sydney Swimming Pool," he says. "To the left is the Museum of Contemporary Art and then the Circular Quay Railway Station. It's all art deco. Yet these buildings are hiding in plain sight—familiar but commonly unappreciated for their deco features and their significance as part of Sydney's history."

Many of the buildings went up during a population boom between the two world wars. One of the most elegant is the 1936 City Mutual Life Assurance Building in the CBD, now home to Rockpool Bar & Grill. The first private commercial building in Sydney to be fully air-conditioned, the building features the largest and best-preserved art deco commercial space in the city, with sleek stone columns, bronze window frames and streamlined plaster details. Nearby, the 1930 Grace Building—built as a department store and now the Grace Hotel—rises in an altogether different deco Gothic style. Although upper floors with hotel rooms have been significantly remodeled, the exterior and lobby retain their original design features, including stained glass windows and floors and walls sheathed in marble.

Some 60 smaller art deco-style hotels—most of them more like pubs with rooms for rent upstairs—still grace the city, too. "They reflect the male drinking culture in Australia in the mid 20th century," Sheridan says, noting that women's temperance laws earlier in the century made it socially unacceptable for women to drink in public. "There is nothing like these pubs [elsewhere] in Australia or anywhere else." His favorites include the Criterion Hotel, with its elegantly detailed brick balconies, and The Old Clare Hotel, with a flourish of green glazed terra cotta tiles on its façade.

Cinemas also speak to the glamour of the art deco era, and 12 remain in Sydney. Among those still screening first-run mov-

ies are the Ritz Cinema, which retains its original 800-seat theater complete with exquisite metalwork wall details, and the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace, with its colorful deco-style lighting and terrazzo flooring. At the grander deco-Gothic-neoclassical-style State Theatre in the CBD, which now hosts concerts and live theater, the exquisite mosaic floors are a hit.

The most immersive art deco experience, however, is in the largely residential neighborhoods of Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay immediately east of the CBD. "The 1-square-kilometer area with 15,000 residents is a national treasure, with some 100 art deco apartment blocks and little in the way of modern high-rises," Sheridan says, comparing it in scope to Miami's South Beach. Bistros and boutiques occupy many of the buildings' storefronts, particularly on Macleay Street. "There's a special nature to it because it's somewhat fixed in time," Sheridan says. "You can really sense the history and community."

## Riveting Aboriginal Art

More than a dozen *tutuni* (Pukumani grave posts) command a beautiful presence near the entrance to the Australian galleries at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney's largest art museum. Made by several artists, including Bob Apuatimi and Laurie Nelson Mungatopi, *Tutuni* is among the nearly 3,000 works of art by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in the museum's collection. "A handful of works are from the 19th century, but most were made after 1950, when the museum began acquiring works in earnest," says Cara Pinchbeck, the museum's senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

Works rotate periodically in the Yiribana Gallery—*yiribana* means "this way" in the language of the Eora people, on whose land Sydney now stands—with most currently on display centered on the theme of family, highlighting innovations across generations. They range from wood carvings and bark paintings to small watercolors and large-scale installations made from glass. "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is a vital way for indigenous people to bring attention to history, culture and political concerns," Pinchbeck says. Take, for example, *Ngura* (Country), a mixed-media work that includes painting on Australia Post mailbags and a spear made from *puna* (wood) by Kunmanara Williams, Kunmanara Martin and Sammy Dodd. Simplified, its message