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Take a guided tour of Sydney's art deco architectural gems

By Peter Sheridan

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As a lover of art deco it seemed to me a shame that books on the subject had been published for cities all over the world, yet Sydney had not been properly represented.

My initial aim was to compile a small book of art deco highlights for visitors to Sydney, but I was staggered by the number of buildings, cinemas, pubs, houses, apartments and statues I kept finding.

The examples I have chosen to represent Sydney in my book are the widest interpretation of the style, taking in an extended time frame from the late 1920s to early 1950s.



The “moderne” style was not universally embraced in Sydney and the city seems to have fewer art deco single dwellings than Melbourne, yet many more apartment blocks. Commonly, art deco was limited to a decorative street facade for an otherwise undistinguished building with simple Edwardian interior finishes.



Luna Park’s entrance pays homage to New York’s Chrysler Building. PETER SHERIDAN

The first true art deco buildings in Sydney date from 1930, although the style is evident in 1920s advertising and fashion. Progress was delayed by the Great Depression in the 1930s, and again by the impact of World War II. While architecture was generally evolving towards the modernist style, art deco lasted into the 1950s.

The art deco world is a diverse one with many streams of interest: the party and dress-up people who love to re-create the jazz and cocktail era, the architecture lovers who travel the world looking at the buildings in the cities they visit, and those who love the visual arts, fashion and design. What unites them all is a shared love of the timeless nature of art deco.

***Sydney Art Deco* by Peter Sheridan is out now.**

This article appears in *Sunday Life* magazine within the *Sun-Herald* and the *Sunday Age* on sale October 13.
