



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



Northbridge, Perth

This trendy pocket of the city, once renowned for its less-than-salubrious nightlife, has been revived into an eclectic, multicultural mix of edgy boutiques, sleek bars and hipster cafés

Trendy **Bivouac** (198 William St, bivouac.com.au) is a favourite with the pre-theatre crowd stopping by for a glass of wine and a dish from the seasonal menu. Be ready to queue outside **Northbridge Chinese Restaurant** (26 Roe St) on a Sunday morning, where locals flock for a dim sum fix. With a fast turnover, it won't be long before you're filling your belly with delicious char siu sou and shumai.

For slick designer threads, check out **Periscope** (274 William St; periscopeclothing.com.au). Housed in a heritage building, they stock a range of quality local designers. For vinyl collectors, **Safari's Record Shack** (189 William St; facebook.com/safarisrecordshack), a pint-sized goldmine filled with hard-to-find funk, disco, reggae, jazz and '80s indie pop records.

Watch the world go by at **Mechanics' Institute** (222 William St; mechanicsinstitutebar.com.au), a rooftop watering hole overlooking William Street. If you feel peckish, **Flipside restaurant downstairs can deliver gourmet burgers to your table. Gin lovers delight at Frisk** (103 Francis St; frisksmallbar.com.au), a small bar sporting an enviable collection of the much-loved spirit.

It's backpacker central in Northbridge, with hostel accommodation on almost every block. For a more peaceful stay, try a serviced apartment at **Quest on James** (228 James St; questapartments.com.au), just a couple of blocks from the Northbridge nightlife hubbub. **ibis Styles Perth** (15 Robinson Ave; ibis.com) also offer low rates and a comfortable base.

WHAT'S BREWING?

The thirst for boutique beer down under has shown no signs of abating. Enjoy a jar at these three top Aussie craft breweries

SYDNEY » Tucked away in friendly Marrickville, the industrial-style **Batch Brewing Company** welcomes beer aficionados in each Thursday, Friday and Saturday



afternoon to sample new brews and refill their "growlers" (takeaway bottles). They serve up tasty grub, too – try the wood-fired pizzas and pork belly buns.

GOLD COAST » An hour south of the Gold Coast is the much-loved **Stone & Wood**. Keeping things slow and simple, the laid-back vibe of coastal town Byron Bay has crept into everything they do.



Tours and tastings are on Wednesdays and Fridays. They've opened a second brewery in picturesque Murwillumbah. stoneandwood.com.au

PERTH » Beer nerds flock to **Feral Brewing** for Hop Hog IPA (it regularly tops best-beer lists across Australia) and hearty



beer food (Southern-style chilli chicken wings and whole crispy fried squid). This is a must-visit in Swan Valley, a half-hour trip from Perth. feralbrewing.com.au

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SYDNEY
18-26
Oct

Further proof of the craft beer craze is **Sydney Craft Beer Week**. Organisers expect some **10,000 patrons** at their events this year – a **big jump** from the **100 beer nuts** who attended in 2011