



Above: don't miss trying a wedge of Hunter Valley Gold washed rind cheese from the Hunter Valley Cheese Company in Pokolbin

Sydney

WHERE TO STAY, SHOP, EAT AND RELAX

Carla Capalbo with the lowdown on Sydney, a two-hour drive away

HOTELS

The Grace

This large art-deco hotel is centrally located and it now features 10 super-special rooms for a customised stay. Spoil yourself! www.gracehotel.com.au

Sebel Surry Hills

Place yourself at the heart of the action in this modern hotel with pool, close to some of Sydney's best places to drink, eat and shop. www.sebelsurryhills.com.au

BARS & RESTAURANTS

Bar H



Sydney's bar scene is vibrant, with bar crawls comprising wine or cocktails to share with small dishes before moving on. H is for Hamish, who picks the wines and cooks the food in this trendy hotspot. www.barhsurryhills.com

Bentley Restaurant & Bar

This informal-chic Surry Hills

hangout sees Nick Hildebrandt at the helm of impressive wine and bar lists that complement the chef Brent Savage's innovative food. www.thebentley.com.au

Billy Kwong

Chef and cookbook writer Kylie Kwong has reset the benchmark for Cantonese cuisine by adding farm-fresh organic sparkle to hers, in this tiny, ever-popular Surry Hills restaurant. www.kyliekwong.org

Marque

Mark Best's intimate Surry Hills restaurant offers serious, creative food using ingredients with unmasked purity. An imaginative wine list completes the picture. www.marquerestaurant.com.au

Porteno



Pull out your retro attire and hurry to Surry Hills for Argentinian grilled meats, groovy sounds and a Spanish-focused wine list. A fun place – if you can get in. Kids love it too. www.porteno.com.au

Quay

Top restaurant, top view, centre-stage, between the Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Be wowed by chef Peter Gilmore's culinary flair and comprehensive wine list. An unforgettable experience. www.quay.com.au

Rockpool

Neil Perry is an Australian gastronomic icon with three Sydney restaurants: Rockpool, for well-heeled modern food; Spice Temple, for jazzy Chinese; and Rockpool Bar and Grill for roasts and toasts in the spectacular lobby of a deco bank. www.rockpool.com

SHOPS

Love, Tilly Devine



Hidden in a side street, this tiny dive is named for a brothel madam. It has Sydney's most terroir-driven wine list, plus artisan ingredients and a laid-back atmosphere. www.lovetillydevine.com

Ultimo Wine Centre

Equidistant from the city centre and Surry Hills, explore Ultimo to purchase top wines from several continents. Time it right for free tastings with knowledgeable staff. www.ultimowinecentre.com.au

ACTIVITIES

Aboriginal plant tour



Explore the colourful Royal Botanic Gardens with an Aboriginal heritage guide demonstrating native plants and their uses. www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

Fish cookery class

Roberta Muir's Sydney Seafood School runs fish cookery classes inside the vast Sydney Fish Market, from a high-tech kitchen overlooking the auction market. www.sydneyfishmarket.com.au

Coastal walk

Walk the coastline from Bondi, the quintessential surf beach, past Tamarama to Bronte, ending at the Waverley Cemetery perched on an ocean cliff. It's an energising way to experience Sydney's beach culture.

Below: voted one of the best restaurants in the world, Quay certainly has one of the best views, set between the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge

