

SYDNEY

ENCOUNTER

CHARLES RAWLINGS-WAY

Sydney Encounter

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Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote 'areas of interest' – for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start exploring!

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CHARLES RAWLINGS-WAY

Born in Devonshire and transported to Tasmania when he was three, Charles lusted after Sydney for far too long before mustering the nerve to ask for a date. And to his amazement, she said yes! The city's cool bars and warm beaches proved predictably seductive – lust soon turned into love and an inescapable fascination.

A lapsed architect, underrated rock guitarist, optimistic home renovator and confirmed hedonist, Charles greased the production cogs at Lonely Planet's Melbourne HQ for many moons before hitting the open road as a freelance travel writer a few years ago. Now an Adelaidean, he regularly flees SA for a walk on Sydney's wild side, and to visit his mum.



CHARLES' THANKS

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Above all, thank you Meg and Ione for our truly inescapable fascination.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

With a burning desire to document the unusual, Travis Drever has spent a good part of the last two decades snapping happily at anything that takes his fancy. Shooting for a varied range of corporates including *The Herald and Weekly Times* and *mX* as well as donating his services to *MiniBar Magazine* and *The Green Left Weekly*, he now has a Lonely Planet commission under his belt. Australian-born, Travis has had to clock up many a frequent flyer-point in his plight to find that perfect image: he has travelled throughout Asia and lived in Spain, Sweden, Holland, England and France.

Cover photograph A perfect summer afternoon at Bondi Beach, Mike V/Photolibary. **Internal photographs** p82 by Charles Rawlings-Way; p93 Daniel Boud/Time Out Sydney; p18 Jenni Carter/Art Gallery of New South Wales; p20 courtesy the City of Sydney; p101, p135, p137 Peter Dragicevich; p130 Marie-Louise Holst; p21 courtesy Tropfest; p159 Ben Symons/courtesy the artist and Annandale Galleries, Sydney. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images, and by Travis Drever except p4, p6 Oliver Strewé; p12 Claver Carroll; p19 John Borthwick; p22, p40 Paul Beinssen; p34 Glenn Beanland; p46, p70, p115, p149, p151 Greg Elms; p58 Dennis Jones.

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THIS IS SYDNEY

At the heart of Sydney – Australia’s oldest, largest and most diverse city – is the outrageously good-looking Sydney Harbour. Like a psychedelic supermodel, the city curves and sways through a glamorous maze of sandstone headlands, lazy bays and legendary surf beaches.

The Sydney experience is essentially physical: dunk yourself in the Bondi surf, sail under the Harbour Bridge on a yacht, jog along the Bondi clifftops or just yell yourself hoarse at a rugby match. Outside is where you want to be – the beaches swarm, street cafés buzz and the harbour blooms with sails.

No less culturally complex than it is on the map, Sydney is the landing point for most of Australia’s immigrants. An edgy multiculturalism ignites the city’s food scene and fuels its nocturnal life – you’ll lose yourself in the restaurants, bars and dance clubs just as easily as on the streets. Aboriginal heritage makes an impact through art – a crop of excellent urban galleries celebrating indigenous culture.

Jealous as hell, the rest of Australia stereotypes Sydney as more body-beautiful than bookish, more *carpe diem* than museum – a narcissistic ‘Sin City’ fixated on sunglasses, salons and soy lattes. Sure, there’s a lot of blonde dye in Bondi, but Sydney’s citizens are no prettier than anyone else. The genetic legacy of the British and Irish convicts who built the city is more evident in the city’s dogged self-belief than anything mirror-worthy. Make no mistake – Sydneysiders invest heavily in aesthetics, but their infectious, gutsy energy overrides the glam and relegates big-city cynicism, suburban sprawl and occasional racial friction to the back of their collective mind.

From squalid and desperate penal beginnings, it’s no small irony that Sydney has evolved into a sparkling, progressive metropolis defined by optimism and staggering natural beauty. The rest of Australia is in denial – Sydney is as good as it gets!