

This Neighbourhood Guide is produced by VisitCanberra, part of the ACT Government, in collaboration with HerCanberra.com.au.

Illustrations by Juliette Dudley

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Contents

Welcome to your Neighbourhood Guide to Civic—an up-close-and-personal way to explore the neighbourhoods around your accommodation, uncovering hidden gems and local secrets.

When Walter Burley Griffin first designed Canberra, he coined the term 'Civic' to refer to its city centre. We've grown since then, and Civic is joined by two other thriving commercial precincts in close proximity, Braddon and Acton. Together, they form the beating heart of Canberra City, melding diverse sights, sounds, tastes and experiences—all within walking distance of each other.

Braddon

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Barrio Image: VisitCanberra

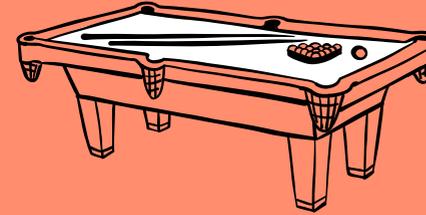


Braddon

Local tip

Looking for a park?
Grab a spot in the
Canberra Centre and
wander the short distance
to Braddon, admiring
the shopfronts
as you go.

Barrio Image: Kara Rosenlund



Bison Image: Nathan Harradine-Hale



Sancho's Dirty Laundry Image: Pew Pew Studio



From a grungy strip of car yards to the hippest city precinct within a mere decade, Lonsdale Street in Braddon and its surrounding streets have undergone a renaissance to house everything Canberrans hold dear to their hearts—good coffee, fine food and boutique shopping.

Located just off the CBD, Braddon is a bustling place to refuel or while away a sunny Saturday morning. After dark it is a pumping strip of bars and eateries happily centred by a giant rainbow roundabout which celebrates Canberra's love of love, and diversity.

Live like a local



Image: Lean Timms

Loulou Moxom

Owner of florist Moxom & Whitney and local legend, shares her essential Braddon experiences.

I first moved onto the strip in 2012 when the Lonsdale Street Traders worked out of an old warehouse—we were surrounded by mechanics and car yards, and there was precious little to eat or drink in the vicinity.

Now you can grab your turmeric-laced green smoothie with charcoal, kombucha, and activated raw frothed acai pretty much anywhere.

But jokes about the hipster invasion aside, I feel blessed to work on a street where there is a common bond of pride and love. It's a community, a neighbourhood, a hub, and a vibe.

So, where do I go when I am not creating floral artistry or teaching the fine art of flower arranging to the masses?

Firstly, I will be drinking my early almond flat white from **Elemental** next door. I love this little family-run joint and you'll often spot a Raider or cool politician or two there.

At 7.45am it's also dog central so if you need a woofier cuddle it's the place to be.

Shopping on our street always means buying something different, something thoughtfully curated, something handmade by bespoke creators.

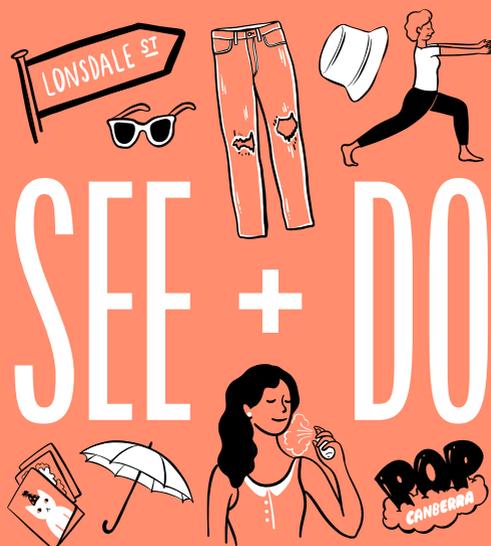
Shops like **Hive**, **Timber & Tailor**, **Enigma Chocolates**, **Blissiimo**, **Bisonhome**, **KIN**, **Sancho's**, **Lellow**... and that's just the first half once you cross the rainbow roundabout. Yes. You read that right. It lights up at night too.

And food. Try **Sweet Bones Bakery** for my vegan loves or **eighty/twenty** and **Barrio**... And that's just morning to arvo treats. For lunch and dinner you will find me every week having a burger with Mr Moxom at **Grease Monkey**, and we always love **Zaab**, **eightysix**, and **Rizla**.



But, wait. Did you know that Lonsdale Street is also a place for getting yourself beautified? Whether that means a blow-dry, tattoo, colonic or tan, we have everything you need.

Once you're looking hot, try **Assembly** for great food, drinks, a cheeky outback garden and proper good people watching. Do this too at **Tipsy Bull** but inject gin and Spain into the mix and also **Hopscotch** but minus the Spanish part and inject cheeky Aussieness instead. Back over the road and always the best—ye good olde **Civic Pub** please! Steaks, pool, darts, front beer garden... noice.



SEE + DO

Some of the city's signature creatives sell their wares from Braddon, providing the perfect opportunity to pick up a local souvenir that would look at home in any magazine. From vintage to designer to hyper-local fashion, some of the city's best shopping happens here—with plenty of opportunity to stop for sustenance along the way.



Shop

BISONHOME

Ceramicist Brian Tunks has created a bespoke brand known the country over. Bison bowls and plates give any meal an aesthetic edge with their heft and beautiful colour palette. The shop also showcases ever-evolving ranges of glassware, as well as kitchen implements and table linens.

bisonhome.com

HIVE

An inviting shop which focuses on unique homewares and gifts with a touch of whimsy. From statement Alev candle holders to lamps, ceramics and body care, you will also find yourself chuckling at the huge range of quirky cards suitable for any occasion.

hivebraddon.com.au

TIMBER + TAILOR

Here you'll find a curated range of designers' and makers' products sourced largely from Australia, including homewares, jewellery, furniture, skincare, linen and some delightfully local products which will help elevate any room in the home.

[@TimberandTailorShop](https://www.facebook.com/TimberandTailorShop)

BLISSIIMO

Blissiimo is Canberra's maximalist haven for scent addicts. Stocking a huge range of bespoke and cult brand perfumes, candles, diffusers as well as art deco trinkets, here is a shop in which to immerse your senses. And a place to buy a signature scent that no one has ever heard of... yet.

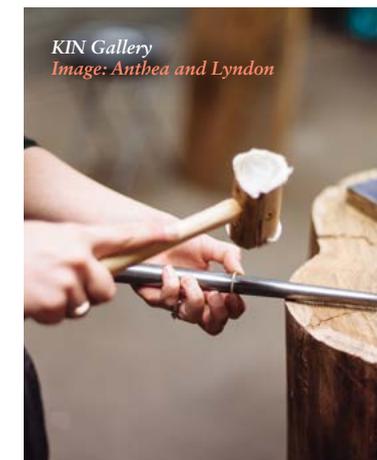
blissiimo.com.au

KIN GALLERY

Pitching itself as a store and workshop producing 'serious jewellery for the young at heart', KIN is a creative makers' hub as well as a shop for all the beautiful and sparkly things. And if you can't quite find the perfect piece, their artistic community can make a commission.

kin.gallery

*KIN Gallery
Image: Anthea and Lyndon*





Sancho's Dirty Laundry
Image: Pew Pew Studio



Lost Vintage
Image: Pew Pew Studio

LELLOW KIDS

From designer outfits to footwear, toys, bedroom accessories and games, Lellow is where the cool kids (and their fashion-forward parents) like to hang out. Providing a wide range of Australian-made and international labels for those in the 0-10 age range, the shop is run by a local mum with a great eye for style.

lellowkids.com

SANCHO'S DIRTY LAUNDRY

Indie T-shirt lovers and proud supporters of the ever-growing Canberra DIY mentality, these guys support independent brands, both local and worldwide, as well as the artists and designers behind them. You'll find clothes to graphic artist supplies, vinyl art toys, zines, books, magazines, stickers, accessories, art and more.

sanchosdirtylaundry.com

LOST VINTAGE

Lost Vintage started off as a DIY passion project, built on a budget using only recycled materials and second-hand furniture, but has quickly grown into a staple for locals and visitors searching for that perfect vintage piece.

lostvintage.com.au



Me-time

Braddon is busy from dawn 'til dusk, but there are small nooks for self-care and slowing down away from the throngs. Book in at **Saloon** for a blow-out and a professional makeup job, happily accompanied by a glass of bubbles before a big event.

If you'd rather stay in than go out, book a yoga, barre or Pilates class at any number of studios including **SOULution**, **Flourish** and **Yoga Mandir**. You can always tell when a class has ended as the street is temporarily overtaken by lithe people with yoga mats tossed over their shoulders.

Locally-created wellness brand **Adytum** has broadened to offer a flagship wellness space. You would never know you are in the middle of a bustling commercial district as you enjoy a full-service spa with Finnish sauna and Japanese bathhouse. Pick up something from their signature line of products to recreate the experience at home.

A final option for me-time is to take a stroll through **Haig Park** for fresh air spiked with the scent of Monterey Pines which line the park in dramatic rows. Planted by Canberra's founders in the early 1920s, this really is a beautiful place to contemplate blue skies and often hosts events. Of course, if you are there on a Sunday, be prepared for a huge spike in activity when the **Haig Park Village Markets** are on—the perfect excuse to rejoin the hustle and bustle.





POP Canberra

Image: Tim Bean

A taste of Canberra

Canberrans love local, and Braddon is home to some of our most successful niche brands. **Enigma Fine Chocolates** takes the humble cacao bean and transports it into art. The workshop/store is a great place to taste before you commit. Or maybe get some of everything.

BentSpoke Brewing Co. pours award winning brews from their brewpub (18 of them, all brewed on the premises too!). Want to taste the country's top craft beer? Order the Crankshaft IPA and enjoy (they also do a cracking cider!).

If your tastes run more to grapes, **Blackhearts & Sparrows** is technically a Melbourne-based wine specialist, but its Braddon store celebrates all local vintages—from the famed Clonakilla to MADA, Ravensworth Estate and Collector Wines. Head on in for some specialist advice on what's best to drink and when.

And if you're in the market for Canberra-specific merchandise, you can't go past **POP Canberra**—a former pop-up shop which seeks to support makers, artists and local business which is now a permanent bricks and mortar emporium of Canberra's best things. Take a little piece of the city home with you—perhaps a 'bus shelter' pin, Canberra candle or even a local gin.

If that doesn't quite hit the spot, head down to the end of Lonsdale Street and into **Haig Park Village Markets** for a Sunday market experience that will provide everything from fresh flowers to home-grown vegetables, fruit from local orchards, and delicious speciality foods.



GATHER

A community-minded locavore's delight. Gather delivers a nutritious menu sourced as close to the café as possible. This includes Sonoma sourdough and coffee beans baked and roasted on the same street and micro herbs from the next suburb of Ainslie. This café promises inner health and environmentally sustainable practices.

cafegather.com.au

CHEZ FREDERIC

Don't be fooled by the name, this is a buzzy Italian joint (underpinned by French passion) promising hearty fare to eat in or take away, and a casual vibe. Crowds give away how delicious this food is and the fact it is both generously served and generously priced.

chezfrederic.com.au



Casual cool

GELATO MESSINA

Since arriving in Canberra in 2018, this ice-cream pitstop on Lonsdale Street has become the busiest in the entire Gelato Messina empire. Queues have been known to stretch down the street. Promising outstanding flavour combinations and a gourmet approach to the humble two scoops on a cone, it's always a fun end to a meal.

gelatomessina.com

EIGHTY/TWENTY

The deal with the name and philosophy is that clean, natural and unprocessed food should be eaten 80 per cent of the time so that the remaining 20 per cent of food can be a little more cheeky. Either way, the meals here are beautifully presented and leave you feeling refuelled in the best way.

eightytwentyfood.com.au

GREASE MONKEY

A crowd-pleasing and often thumping burger joint with a Brooklyn-style bar and massive beer-garden right opposite the Rainbow Roundabout, Grease Monkey has a very loyal clientele. But if burgers aren't your thing, there's always a deep-pan Detroit pizza to keep you satisfied.

greasys.com.au



EAT + DRINK

Some of the city's best and brightest eateries and bars are nestled into this relatively small parcel of inner-city real estate. It means competition is strong and there is always something new and delicious to tempt your taste buds and ignite your culinary imagination.

LAZY SU

One of Canberra’s most popular restaurants, Lazy Su melds the best tastes of Japan, Korea and America in a fast-paced and delightfully kitsch setting. If you are in the market for fusion food like Wagyu Cheesesteak Springrolls or Fried Chicken Ramen, they have you covered.

lazy-su.com.au

RYE

If you are after a Scandi-styled café with a big focus on the perfect breakfast or brunch then Rye is for you. Heavy on options including rye bread, knäckebröd, and gravlax, you’re taken far into Nordic culinary territory. There’s also a sun-drenched front terrace perfect for whiling away a few hours with the papers on a weekend.

ryecafe.com.au

SWEET BONES

There’s no doubt vegans are having their moment in the sun, but this little spot has been churning out delicious fare for more than a decade now, attracting a fan base from every culinary religion. Their cakes and sweet treats are moreish while their savoury offerings rely on earthy Mexican flavours.

sweetbonescompany.com

WHITE CHACO

Tucked in a tiny corner of the Nibu Building, White Chaco packs some Taiwanese and Japanese culinary punch for such a small spot. Popcorn chicken, bao and ramen (try the truffle ramen) are go-tos but the compact menu is exceptional.

whitechaco.com

ZAAB

Lao-Thai Street Food served up in what is designed to look and feel like a tin shack, Zaab is low on formality and big on energy and flavour, with a menu designed to be shared. Before ordering, take a seat at the long bar to order a cocktail from their inventive list.

zaabstreetfood.com.au



Zaab
Image: We Are Found

Looking to keep it really casual? Lazy Su’s younger sibling (aptly named Baby Su) is the perfect choice for tasty, fast fare. Think Bao-gers and burgers, fried chicken and nourishing bowls.
baby-su.com.au



Lazy Su
Image: Pew Pew Studio

Emma Macdonald

Associate Editor, HerCanberra

As a committed cafffiend and fiercely devoted resident of the inner north, top of my list of Canberra's best coffee establishments is the pared back and uber-friendly surrounds of **Barrio Collective Coffee** on Lonsdale Street. Using their own roasted blend, the baristas prepare all manner of brews served in Canberra region **Sawpit Studio** ceramic mugs. And nothing goes better with a Barrio coffee than a toastie (that will be cheese and pickle for me please and thank you.)

Across the road is **Lonsdale Street Roasters**, an institution which helped kick-start Canberra's coffee revolution more than a decade ago when founder Alistair Evans put his new roastery on a street formerly known for car yards and mechanics. Now his brand of coffee is sold all over the region.

A third serious player resides on Lonsdale Street at the **Kyō Coffee Project** a relatively new kid on the block which is fast attracting a loyal flock. Tucked away in a laneway in the Palko Building, Kyō ably brews Single O coffee from within a tiny brick cube facing a busy courtyard.

If I ever leave Lonsdale Street, it's usually only to be lured away to my office in the nearby NewActon precinct, passing **The Cupping Room** en route in City West. A concept café from Canberra's very own international barista champion, Sasa Sestic, The Cupping Room delivers a steady stream of ONA coffees to the eager masses—alongside a thoughtful menu.

If the queue is too long there, I'll often head over to the picturesque corner of NewActon that is home to **Močan & Green Groat**, where the smell of freshly ground beans is matched only by the aroma of herbs in giant tubs growing outside. The dining experience is as intimate and pleasurable as hanging out in your friend's kitchen as they whip up something memorable while you watch in awe.



Braddon Merchant
Image: Iconic Hotels by Geocon



Elevated dining

BLACK FIRE

‘Fuego Nero’ ensures the meats, seafood and vegetables of this popular restaurant are rustically cooked on an open fire roast, a wood fire oven or charcoal grill. You can smell the deliciousness emanating from within as you walk down the street. While carnivores are obviously a big section of the clientele, there really is no better way to eat seafood or vegetables than straight off the grill.

blackfirecanberra.com.au

BRADDON MERCHANT

Staking out a prime corner underneath Midnight Hotel on Mort Street, here is a bustling place which is part restaurant, part deli, part grocer. The focus is on locally sourced seafood and meat which is cooked and presented at the fine-dining end of the spectrum. The faro and buckwheat risotto with local mushrooms, truffled Pecorino and burnt sage butter gets a special mention.

braddonmerchant.com.au

CORELLA

Fine dining with a decidedly Australian bent—where else would you go for a starter of sourdough and butter mixed with a hint of Vegemite? Don’t knock it until you’ve tried it. The native and bush flavours are incorporated right through to desserts and work beautifully in a small space (just 30 seats) with interiors which echo the bush palette. This place is a little gem. Impressive cocktail and wine list too.

corellabar.com.au

EIGHTYSIX

The restaurant that signalled Braddon’s reinvention into a dining hotspot, *eightysix’s* Caramel Popcorn Sundae graced the cover of *Gourmet Traveller* in 2016 and is still a firm favourite. Order from the blackboard wall before the dish you want runs out, or put yourselves in the hands of the chefs with their tasting menu. Our pick is the black chicken with buttermilk coleslaw. Always.

eightysix.com.au



Italian and Sons

ITALIAN AND SONS

Canberra was built by migrants and has proud Italian heritage, and Pasquale Trimboli has set the bar sky high at this iconic eatery. Italian and Sons puts a touch of finesse on rustic Italian fare and is so popular you’ll need to book early. If you don’t leave room for the tiramisu then you have no one to blame but yourself. We love ending the meal with a digestif at Bacaro, the gorgeous little bar out the back.

italianandsons.com.au

SAGE DINING ROOMS

A gorgeous slice of heritage within the Gorman House Arts Centre, this fine diner is consistently ranked amongst the city’s best. Pushing the envelope on Mod Oz dining, it regularly runs Taste and Test sessions where diners get to sample new ideas and rate them for possible menu inclusion. Cutting-edge dishes from within one of Canberra’s original buildings—if only the walls could talk.

sagedining.com.au



Raise a glass

ASSEMBLY

Home to the city's coolest beer garden, Assembly is a place to see and be seen. A huge bar runs down one side while booths and tables spread across this expansive venue. The menu is more than your classic pub feed, featuring kingfish, charcuterie boards, and rotisserie chicken or lamb shoulder to share. And there is no end of beverage options to keep you out until late.

thepeoplespub.com.au

CIVIC PUB

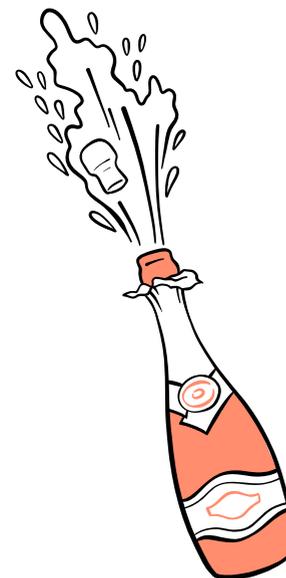
If old school pub hospitality is your thing then look no further than the Civic Pub, where beer, pool tables and a sizzling grill are at your disposal. Sit out the front and enjoy watching the passing crowds from a seat in the sun, or in cooler weather head indoors to the Whiskey Room.

civicpub.com.au

HOPSCOTCH

A gastropub which always has a crowd, Hopscotch is thankfully spacious indoors and out. Featuring an expansive beer garden complete with outdoor spit, it's a good spot for a casual drink and boasts the largest range of whiskies in Canberra, which you can enjoy after a meal cooked on their imported wood-fired Argentine Grill.

hopscotchbar.com.au



MIDNIGHT BAR

Lowered slightly below street level, this bar allows you a subterranean view onto Canberra's central thoroughfare. Elegant, curved banquettes line one side, while a sunken courtyard paves the way out from for summer cocktails. Speaking of which, their cocktail menu caters to a diverse range of tastes—we love the gin bowls.

midnightbar.com.au

RIZLA

Tiny. Outdoors. And yet oh-so-well thought-out on every level. Andy Day and his team have an affinity with Riesling (hence the restaurant slang Rizla), but that doesn't stop them knowing their way around other varietals. The menu is bespoke and never fails to hit the mark. The tuna tartare on potato crisps is excellent, as is the charred corn with chilli, coriander and lime butter. And those are just the starters and sides!

drinkrizla.com.au

TIPSY BULL

A perennial favourite for food and THE place in Canberra to explore gin. We love snaring a seat in the sun and deliberating on our gins—not only do you choose any one of a multitude of spirits, but they are accompanied by specific garnishes, all of which come artfully placed on a wooden paddle for you to mix and match.

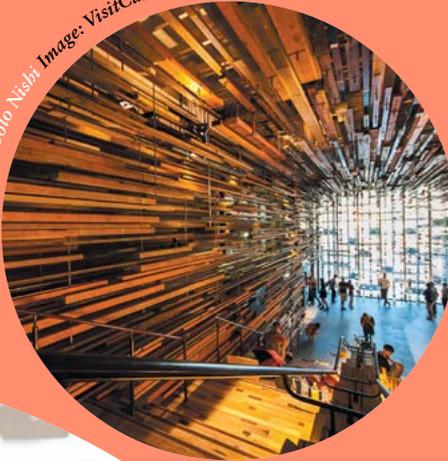
tipsybull.com.au



Rizla Image: Pew Pew Studio

Acton

Grand Stairs, Ovolo Nishi Image: VisitCanberra



Parlour Bar Image: Damian Breach



Rebel Rebel Image: Tim Bean



With soaring offices draped in living greenery, low-rise heritage buildings, bars, restaurants, cafés and hotels, Acton and its hipster slice, named NewActon, is a precinct ripe with cultural experiences and a perfect base from which to launch an expedition into greater Canberra.

It also houses one of the city’s greatest natural treasures—the Australian National Botanic Gardens—a must-see for visitors. Opened in 1970, the gardens give you the opportunity to explore approximately one-fifth of Australia’s diverse and spectacular flora in a bushland setting—with more than 4,300 species set within 35 hectares.

A visit would also not be complete without a moment to reflect on the Nishi Building. Canberra’s most sustainable building, it won International Project of the Year at the 2015 Building Awards in London and also houses a most Instagrammable timber staircase.

Close to the lake, on the edge of The Australian National University campus and a stone’s throw from the CBD, Acton has it all.

Art + culture

AMBUSH GALLERY

Multi-award winning aMBUSH Gallery is much more than a physical exhibition space. It's an innovative program of site-specific, project-based art activations stemming from a unique fusion of philanthropic and commercial impulses. You can't miss this gallery suspended above the popular Harry Hartog's bookshop—something is always on.

ambushgallery.com



aMBUSH Gallery
Image: Enzo Amato

DRILL HALL GALLERY

Built in 1940 to train soldiers for the Second World War, the building that would ultimately become Drill Hall Gallery was remodelled in 1984 to create an art gallery and recognised with a Heritage Order 20 years later. Housing temporary collections while the capital waited for the National Gallery of Australia to be completed, the ANU took it over in 1992 as a showcase for its own impressive art collection including Sidney Nolan's nine-panel panorama, Riverbend (nominated among the 10 must-see art treasures of Canberra).

dhg.anu.edu.au

LLEWELLYN HALL

Home to Canberra's Symphony Orchestra, Llewellyn Hall is Canberra's premier concert hall and one of the finest acoustic venues in Australia. Home to local and international acts, Llewellyn Hall also attracts contemporary music, comedy, dance and public lectures. Part of the ANU's School of Music, the brutalist building is a link between the university and city centre.

llewellynhall.com.au

PALACE ELECTRIC CINEMA

Palace Electric is the place for international cinema; arthouse and quality new release films. Eight theatres with luxurious amphitheatre seating and the latest in digital projection and sound ensure a state-of-the-art cinematic experience. Enjoy a drink at the Prosecco Bar and time your visit with any one of the international film festivals which take place there.

palacecinemas.com.au



Need an artistic fix? Keen for a cultural experience or to expand your understanding of the world? This neighbourhood houses some of the city—and country's—preeminent cultural jewels. The fact that you can walk between them while enjoying lush greenery only adds to their appeal.



National Film and Sound Archive



National Museum of Australia

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

The National Museum is a Canberra landmark, its bold façade jutting out over the lake. It brings to life the rich and diverse stories of Australia through compelling objects, ideas and events. The focus is on Indigenous histories and cultures, European settlement and our interaction with the environment. A must-see, particularly for young visitors.

nma.gov.au

NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE

The National Film and Sound Archive is the nation’s living archive, with a collection of more than three million items spanning a century of film, sound and broadcast. All meticulously preserved, you can search collections depending on individual interest, or enjoy the rolling program of exhibitions that introduce you to something new. From Kylie Minogue, to Skippy, all your favourite Australians are represented.

nfsa.gov.au

THE SHINE DOME

This distinctive Canberra landmark was the first Canberra building to be added to the National Heritage list. Don’t pass by without snapping a photo of its distinctive curved roof, which has received international recognition since it was completed in 1959 and nominated to the World Register of Significant 20th Century Architecture.

shinedome.org.au



THE STREET THEATRE

The Street is a hub for Canberra’s creative community and a venue dedicated to contemporary performance, presenting bold work from inquisitive artists who have something to say about the world. Performance styles range from interactive live-streamed think tanks to acoustic rock, and everything in between.

thestreet.org.au

Johnathan Efkarpidis

Director of Molonglo Group and creator of the NewActon precinct.

Jonathan Efkarpidis has been raising the bar for thoughtful design in new developments across Canberra for decades, his passion for placemaking as fierce as his dedication to Canberra's unique and vibrant arts scene.

"A cultural experience for me can be something small that is enjoyed in a matter of minutes, or something ongoing or repeated like going to the theatre," says Jonathan. Here he shares five of his favourite cultural activities in the Canberra city.



1 1914 MERRY-GO-ROUND

The 1914 Merry-Go-Round which was purchased for Canberra in 1973, the year of my birth. It holds special moments for me when I was a child and my mother worked in a shoe shop nearby, and now the same experiences I had as a child I share with my kids.

2 AINSLIE'S SHEEP

My next favourite would have to be sitting on or admiring Ainslie's Sheep, a sculpture which was installed during my mid-20s. I recall the odd moment when being out with friends and having a little too much to drink, we stumbled across them and had a short rest there.

3 CANBERRA THEATRE CENTRE

I would then move on to the Canberra Theatre Centre (opened in 1965), specifically the feel of watching theatre in the Playhouse or the intimacy of the Courtyard Studio. I especially enjoy watching the Short + Sweet Theatre festival.

4 THE TIME THIEF

The Time Thief is a sculpture built in NewActon around a vintage clock, and surrounded by greenery and cobblestones. Not only is it a beautiful piece, but it is meaningful to me as it is dedicated to one of my closest friends who I lost in 2011.

5 PALACE ELECTRIC

And finally, for me, there's nothing like the opening night of one of Palace Electric's film festivals. I particularly enjoy the Italian, French and Greek festivals. You can mingle with old and new friends before the film, which is preceded by interesting (and often comic) speeches by film buffs and the odd ambassador.



Culture culture



Image: Pew Pew Studio



EAT + DRINK

Acton has some of the city's most innovative and eye-catching restaurants and bars as part of its renaissance as a cultural precinct. From the acclaimed Monster, to the leafy surrounds of Pollen, there is something for every appetite.

ILY
Image: Christopher Pearce



CAPITOL BAR + GRILL

Located at the base of the QT Hotel, this vast space oozes fun, energy and style. Broken into sections including a breakfast buffet and cosy bar flanking a fireplace, the sleek dining room serves up prime cuts and wood-fired theatrics. Slide into a luxe corner booth and get a taste of modern Canberra dining with slight Italian accents.

qthotels.com/canberra

ILY

Pretty and pink-hued, the decidedly funky ILY (short for I Love You) promises home-style simple food which will make you feel warm and fuzzy inside. The brainchild of those clever folk behind inner south hotspot XO, ILY is strong on brunch offerings (Breakfast Gnocchi, anyone?), also offering lunch and dinner. It's hard not to feel the love.

ily.com.au

HIGH JINKS

We love an underground bar. High Jinks takes out a cosy concrete bunker underneath ILY restaurant. Settle into a table and order something brooding, like the Low Rider, using Patrón Silver tequila, Poor Tom's Imbroglio, mezcal, ginger and pink peppercorn with a dash of fresh ruby grapefruit and lime. Tapas-style snacks are on hand, as are cheese platters.

highjinks.bar

BICICLETTA

Bustling Italian fare sourced locally and cooked seasonally, Bicicletta (within Peppers Gallery Hotel) is the perfect place to enjoy great coffee, homemade pizzas, pasta and gelati. Choose your seat on the floor, at the Library Bar or the sculpture-laden outdoor courtyard (with blankets in winter).

bicicletta.com.au

High Jinks
Image: Nathan Harradine-Hale





*Monster Kitchen + Bar
Image: Zachary Griffith*

MOČAN & GREEN GROUT

If you love watching your friends throw together a meal in an open kitchen then this is the place for you. More home dining room than commercial restaurant, there is an air of warmth and informality here, with an added bonus of expert cooking. The menu is small but perfectly formed, but who cares when you can just look over and see what is being rustled up at the bench and take your pick that way.

mocanandgreengrout.net

REBEL REBEL

Soaring ceilings ribbed with salvaged beams set the scene for an almost religious experience. But the restaurant run by Chef Sean McConnell and his wife Jenny Harders has a vibe which is decidedly non-conformist once the food arrives (just like the David Bowie song which inspired its name). Flavours are bold and treatment is simple. Professional service and a harmonious wine list will soon have you singing from their song sheet.

rebelrebel dining.com.au

MONSTER KITCHEN + BAR

Come for the staircase, stay for the food and ambience. Monster has been consistently pushing the culinary boundaries in Canberra since it opened as the show-stopper venue within the Ovolo Hotel. Monster gets props for both its menu and wow factor with its luxe industrial fitout.

monsterkitchen.com.au

PARLOUR

If you want to be swept away in the romance of old Canberra, Parlour is the place. A beautiful rich interior design—think velvet sofas, heavy drapes, art deco furniture—it really feels like you've entered a grand manor. But things get interesting when you find a cocktail in your hand and can choose from the Spanish-inspired tapas menu.

parlour.net.au

POLLEN

Truly a destination place to eat, Pollen is set amid the magnificent plant life that constitutes the Australian National Botanic Gardens. It promises a small but delicious breakfast and lunch menu to enjoy while you look out from the large deck onto wildlife happily cavorting in the sunshine. A selection of local wines enhances the tranquillity that this setting provides.

pollencafe.com.au



*Mocan & Green Grout
Image: VisitCanberra*

Civic

The Cupping Room Image: VisitCanberra



Kingspin Image: Pew Pew Studio



Verity Lane Market Image: Pew Pew Studio



Oh Canberra! How your CBD has grown. From a tiny collection of traders huddled within the landmark Sydney and Melbourne buildings in the 1920s to a multi-faceted precinct stretching far and wide and changing every day, the heart of the city beats strongly.

Landspeed Records Image: Pew Pew Studio



INKA Image: The Mark Agency





You can buy almost anything in the city centre, but did you know you can get an aesthetic fix while you're at it? Civic (the actual suburb name and how locals know it) is home to a number of galleries and cultural features, all worth taking time out from commercial activities to find and enjoy.

Appetite for the arts

AINSLIE + GORMAN ARTS CENTRE

Built in the 1920s to house Canberra's first builders and public servants, the heritage-listed buildings protect two beautiful internal courtyards and are home to some small but much-loved arts groups such as Canberra Youth Theatre, Australian Dance Party and Canberra International Music Festival. There's always something going on in their workshops or gallery spaces.

agac.com.au

CANBERRA THEATRE CENTRE

Rock, classical music, comedy, Shakespeare, dance, theatre—if it's doing the rounds nationally and internationally, it will feature at Canberra's premier performance centre. Just over 1200 audience members fit in the large, sloped auditorium, while the adjoining playhouse seats more than 600. They are linked by a giant bar for those intermission breaks.

canberratheatrecentre.com.au

CANBERRA MUSEUM AND GALLERY

Canberra Museum and Gallery cares for a collection of some 5000 social history and visual art objects which help tell the stories of the Canberra region. Showcasing a permanent collection in the Canberra Stories Gallery, there are five other gallery spaces for a variety of changing exhibitions.

cmag.com.au

NANCY SEVER GALLERY

The passion project of noted arts specialist Nancy Sever, this gallery has a lively program of exhibitions which showcases Australian contemporary artists, and some of the most exciting and innovative practitioners working on the international contemporary art scene. After immersing yourself in fine art, pop next door to King O'Malley's for an art-inspired cocktail.

nancysevergallery.com.au

CRAFT ACT

Craft ACT Craft and Design Centre is a not-for-profit which supports local artists, craft practitioners, designers and makers at every stage of their careers. There's a retail space, exhibition gallery, a rolling calendar of events and an annual DESIGN Canberra festival. Something's always happening, whether it's a floor talk, workshop or exhibition.

craftact.org.au



Family fun

DENDY CINEMAS

With 15 cinemas spread across two floors, you can be assured there is a cinematic experience suitable for you or the rest of the family at Dendy. There's also not one, but two, premium cinemas—recline in your plush seat and have gourmet food and drink brought to your chair amid all the action.

dendy.com.au

CITY WALK MERRY-GO-ROUND

There are few Canberra kids who don't have happy early memories of their time astride one of the glossy colourful steeds of the carousel. A local institution, the former Melbourne merry-go-round has been operating in the city since 1974. While you wait for your ride, wander through the beautiful plant and seating installations that flow down City Walk.

City Walk, Civic

KINGPIN

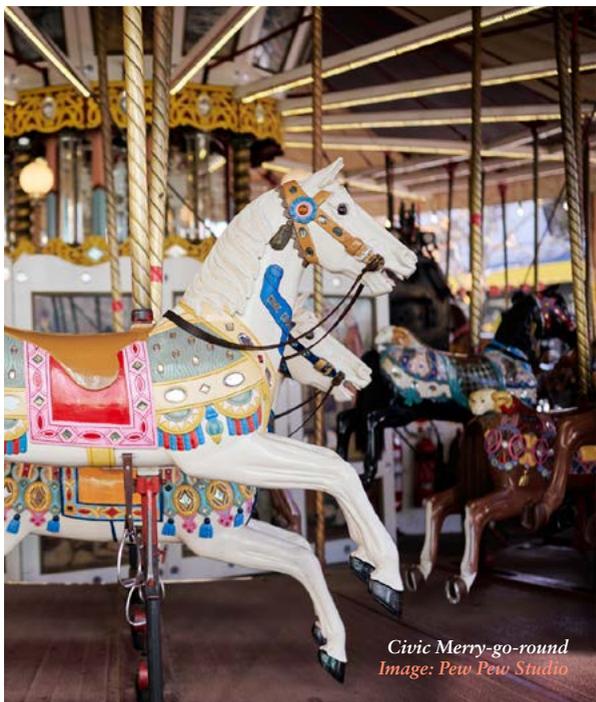
So much more than a bowling alley, Kingpin boasts more than 100 arcade games, from classic games through to the latest high-tech VR experiences. There's also a fully licensed bar, the latest music, escape rooms, karaoke, Kingpong, huge projection screens, and pool tables. And if all that makes you hungry, there's an impressive food and cocktail menu to satisfy all appetites.

kingpinplay.com

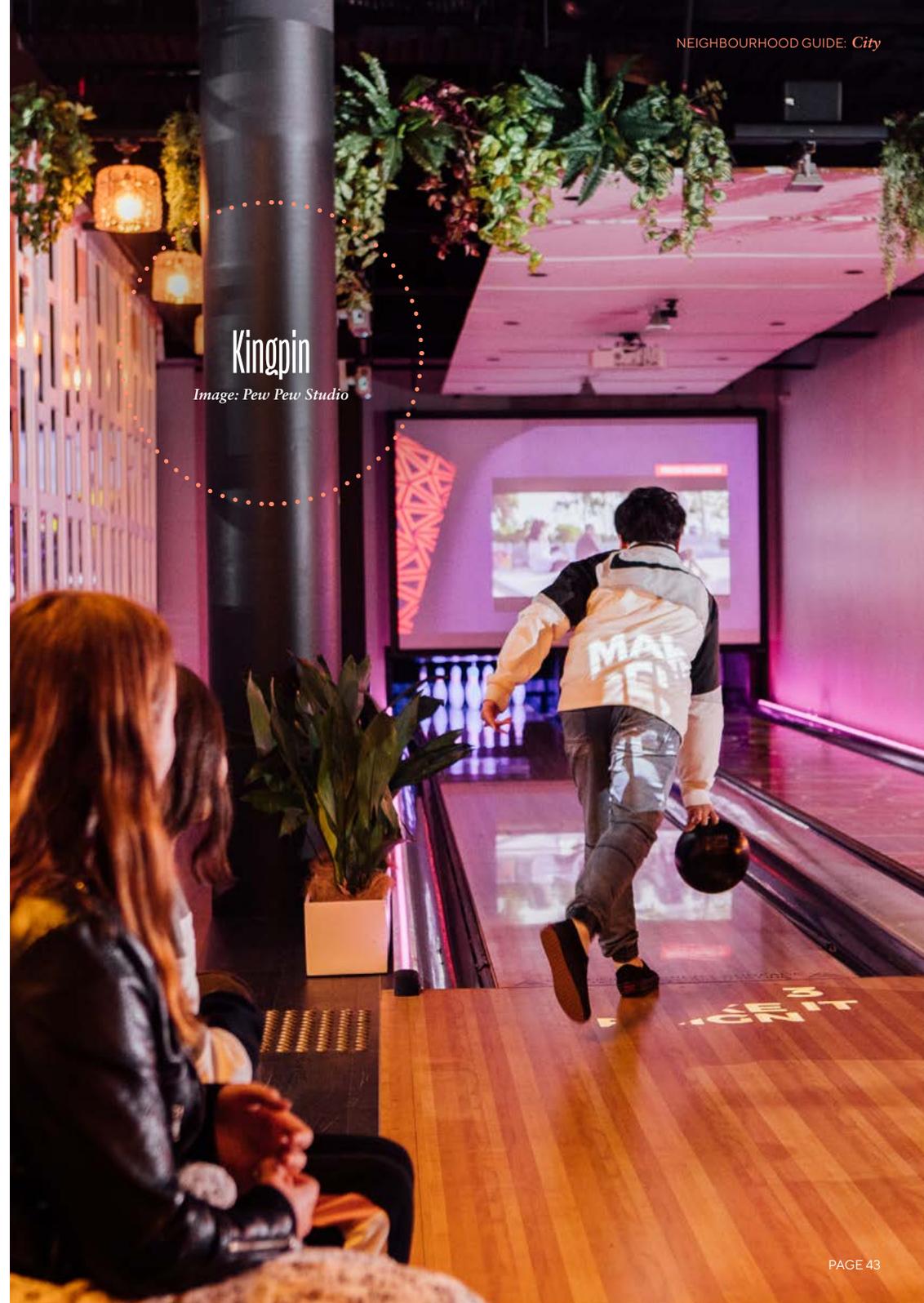
GLEBE PARK

Catch your breath in this lush city oasis. Like the rest of Canberra, Glebe Park was designed to transform with the four distinct seasons. In the summer the English elms and oaks provide welcome shade, in autumn they glow like molten gold. The park offers a playground, sculptures, artwork and irrigated grass so you can enjoy feeling the earth beneath your feet.

**Coranderrk Street,
Civic**



*Civic Merry-go-round
Image: Pew Pew Studio*



Kingpin

Image: Pew Pew Studio

Retail (+) therapy

Image: Jamila Toderas



Fiona Keary

Founder of image consultancy service Style Liberation Fiona Keary has the inside word on all things fashion and beauty.

Canberra Centre is my go-to when shopping with clients, as there are so many fantastic options under the one roof. From premium international brands to Australian heavy weights like **Oroton** and **Sass & Bide** to high-street favourites like **Zara** and **H&M**.

The number one piece of advice I give to clients is never discount any store. You just never know what gems you'll uncover. For accessories with a difference check out **Pepe's** (pepespaperie.com.au) in the Monaro Mall precinct. They stock contemporary Australian brands such as ELK, Status Anxiety and Rare Rabbit. It's the perfect place to pick up a great gift for a friend (or yourself).

For shoes and bags, **David Jones** and **MYER** hit the spot, with designer and high street brands you'll be spoilt for choice. One of the important contributors to

looking good is feeling good, so I'm a constant fixture at **Mecca Maxima** to peruse their skincare and cosmetic lines.

When time permits, I book in for some concentrated 'me time'—the city has a wonderful range of spas and salons, including **Endota Spa, Saloon, Thai Bliss**, and **Rationale**.

Nearby, a showcase of Canberra's creative talents is all in one spot (and for sale) at **The Craft ACT shop** (craftact.org.au). It boasts pieces from an acclaimed cohort of makers and designers, from award-winning wares from brands like F!NK, Alison Jackson and Chelsea Lemon to pieces from emerging designers. With jewellery, homewares, woodwork, kitchenware and textiles on offer, it's a chance to take a little of the local arts scene home with you.



Landspeed Records
Image: Pew Pew Studio

LANDSPEED RECORDS

Landspeed Records has been a much-loved fixture in Garema Place for nearly three decades, and is a must-visit for music lovers. But it's not just about vinyl (although the range is jaw-droppingly impressive). Head to the back to get your fashion fix from their fabulous mix of vintage and new clothing and accessories. Be sure to check out their house label, Things We Lost.

landspeed.com.au

A little quirky

If you're craving something unique, Canberra City doesn't disappoint. From vintage to vinyl, take a look at these edgy boutiques.

IMPACT COMICS

Starting its life as a small shop in the historic Sydney Building in 2004, Impact Comics is something of a Canberra institution—fans of all ages beating a path to its door for the latest comics, graphic novels, manga and more. You'll also find a range of limited edition collectibles and hard-to-find action figures, as well a massive range of imported tees.

impactcomics.com.au

Lover of LEGO®?
 Hold onto your bricks,
 a dedicated store can
 be found in the
 Canberra Centre.

THE GREEN SHED

Tucked away in Garema Place, head downstairs to find subterranean second-hand clothing heaven. Lose yourself in row upon row of pre-loved fashion, shoes, accessories, CDs and DVDs, crockery, board games and much, much more. Pop upstairs for a second store crammed with more bric-à-brac than you can poke a lava lamp at!

thegreenshed.net.au



Impact Comics
Image: Pew Pew Studio



Chances are if you have a hankering for a particular dish, you will be able to source it from the city. Civic is home to the city's greatest concentration of restaurants, cafés and bars, and the diversity is such that you will be able to source the perfect meal. All you need is a map and an appetite.

Caffeine fix

ARC

If you worship at the altar of caffeine, then consider this a very swanky shrine indeed. Redbrick Coffee's ARC, in the Canberra Theatre precinct, has prime street frontage from Canberra's A for Adina hotel so customers can sit within dramatic curved glass and watch the world go by. Brew is from the La Marzocco KB90 coffee machine, only the second of its kind in the world.

arccoffee.place

COFFEE LAB

The team at Coffee Lab view their work as science and are always experimenting to discover the latest developments in coffee. Beans come from all over the world and can be brewed in an astonishing number of methods. And if coffee isn't your thing, there are plenty of alternative local specialities to drink and eat.

[f @coffeelabcanberra](https://www.facebook.com/coffeelabcanberra)



EAST ROW SPECIALITY COFFEE

This coffee house takes its offerings very seriously. Serving up expertly made ONA Coffee, there's a focus on breaking the café menu mould—for instance, Pork Benedict is a plate of succulent pulled pork shoulder with poached eggs, hollandaise, crispy kale, chickpea and paprika dukkah and pickled cucumber on white sourdough. It's worth a visit for this dish alone.

eastrowspecialtycoffee.com.au

GREEN HOUSE

Just because it's located in a shopping centre doesn't mean Green House isn't a serious coffee player in Canberra. Serving the capital's best ONA blends, Green House is a beautiful oasis in which to stop a while and refuel. They blend up a mean fresh juice too.

[f @GreenHouseCoffeeAndFood](https://www.facebook.com/GreenHouseCoffeeAndFood)



Little fuss, big flavour

BRISCOLA PIZZERIA

Unpretentious and delicious, what more could you want in a local Italian restaurant? Briscola focuses on all the traditional favourites—from bruschetta to an array of pastas (Nona Enza's Ravioli gets a special mention), there is something to suit every age and taste. Finish off with some gelato or Sicilian lemon tart and feel like you've hopped a plane to Europe.

briscolapizzeria.com.au

VERITY LANE MARKET

Verity Lane has turned a disused section of the heritage-listed Sydney Building into a European-style food hall bringing people together over different styles of cuisine and a series of cooler-than-cool bars. Live music, a giant deck into a laneway, wine bars and fine diner upstairs means this place has everything you might need for a night's entertainment.

veritylanemarket.com.au

KOKOMO'S

This ambitious two-storey restaurant and watering hole occupies a central corner of the city and always draws a crowd. There's a tropical oasis meets disco theme where the décor is concerned but the trans-Pacific food takes itself very seriously—and the kingfish crudo is seriously good. Here is a place that really gets going after dark.

kokomos.com.au

AKIBA

A crowd-pleaser from the get-go, Akiba consistently serves 'New Asian' food in its best form. It's almost impossible to narrow down our favourite dishes but the king prawn fried rice and the soft shell crab buns are beyond compare. Pair with a cocktail or something off the extensive sake menu.

akiba.com.au

KINN THAI

Fast, friendly service, consistently good food in a light and airy space, Kinn Thai is a popular spot offering fresh and expertly prepared Thai dishes in a space that feels decidedly fun. We like a balcony seat as we order our favourites which include the green chicken curry and a fiery beef salad. A good pre-movie or theatre choice.

kinnrestaurant.com.au/canberra

MOOKIE BURGER

Canberra has its fair share of burger joints, but Mookie stands apart with its Japanese fusion approach. Whether it's fries loaded with oozy cheese sauce, maple smoked bacon bits and fresh guacamole, or it's a vanilla frozen concrete that's packed to the brim with whipped cream, fruit loops and other rainbow treats, Mookie has something to tickle everyone's fancy.

mookie.com.au

SAMMY'S KITCHEN

A traditional Chinese/Malaysian kitchen, Sammy's has decades of rusted-on diners who often don't mind a queue to get in. Staff work furiously to make sure everyone is accommodated and orders are taken quickly. Be rewarded with an excellent Shantung chicken, sizzling king prawns or a damn fine laksa. Vegetarians are well catered for also.

sammyskitchen.com.au

AMICI

They had us at the ornate silver Negroni fountain which bubbles on the long marble counter. Amici has become our firm friend and our go-to for platters of delicious cheese or charcuterie, or to stock up on Italian gourmet supplies. The hand-stretched pizza dough straight out of the pizza oven does mean that once you enter, it's hard to leave without staying for a bite. You've been warned!

amici.bar



Verity Lane Market



Amici's Negroni fountain Image: Pew Pew Studio

Amelia Bidgood

As founder of Eat Canberra—a digital guide to the Canberra region’s food and beverage scene—founder Amelia Bidgood has eaten her way around the city (in the name of research, of course). She shares the dishes you need to try before you leave.



*ILY's breakfast gnocchi
Image: Christopher Pearce*

Take a walk down Braddon’s popular Lonsdale Street and stop at **Zaab** to try their Lao-style warm beef jerky with sesame and coriander seed. It’s a delicious and moreish snack.

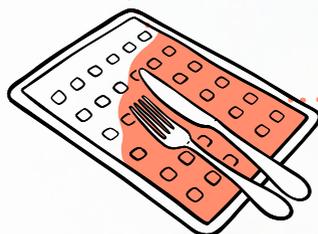
And if you’ve never had pasta for breakfast, now’s the time. **ILY** in NewActon is serving up their breakfast gnocchi, combining the breakfast staples of poached egg and bacon with pillowy potato dumplings, pea, pecorino and chives. So good.

Find the tiny **White Chaco** tucked away in the Nibu building and enjoy a bowl of their delicious ramen or soup dumplings. The flavoursome broth is topped with tasty toppings and the black or red ramen are my favourites.

If you love banana and caramel you need to visit **eightysix** to try their banoffee pie. Sweet, salty and creamy in one delicious package, it’s one of—if not the best—banoffee pies I’ve ever eaten.

Akiba in the city is the place for Asian fusion food. I love the salt and Sichuan pepper squid with an onsen egg—rich and unctuous.

**Want more?
Book a walking
food tour at
eatcanberra.com.au**



Don't leave without trying

ESPRESSO
THEN
PROSECCO

Image: Pew Pew Studio



INKA
Image: The Mark Agency

The finer things

COURGETTE

Awarded more hats than it could conceivably store in its cloak room, Courgette is one of clutch of Canberra restaurants that truly practises the art of fine dining. Quiet, elegant, and intimate, sit back and let chef James Mussillon focus on the art of food. À la carte or degustation menus cover every option and the wine list is comprehensive.

courgette.com.au

INKA

INKA serves up Nikkei cuisine—a fusion of Peruvian and Japanese. You can't miss the soaring staircase draped in an ancient quipu shroud. Flavours are bold and often feature the charred signature of a robata grill, such as the eggplant and feisty little green peppers. Sushi, ceviche and BBQ all feature in abundance.

inka.com.au

MEAT & WINE CO

It's got an impressive slice of real estate in the New York-inspired Constitution Place development near the Canberra Theatre Centre and it has a fit-out to match with guilt-dipped flags creating a central boma. This Afro-centric steakhouse with a decidedly glamorous edge is a carnivore's paradise.

themeatandwineco.com

RAKU

This sleek, modern Japanese bar and restaurant offers some of the most beautiful dishes across the city. Executive Chef Hao is a master with the sushi blade—behind a long bar you can watch as he expertly crafts artful plates of sashimi, nigiri and maki rolls, whilst the robata grill produces meat, seafood and vegetable dishes that burst with the flavours of the flames.

rakudining.com.au

TEMPORADA

Clever, contemporary and cool. From the edgy interiors to the pared back menu, Temporada shows confidence in its ability to hit all the right notes—which it invariably does. Even the music is extra. From the citrus marinated king prawn, furikake, and lime to the charcoal grilled lamb rump, Merguez sausage, tahini yoghurt, and sugarloaf cabbage, each dish is bold and delicious.

temporada.com.au

MEZZALIRA

The big brother of Italian and Sons, Mezzalira's southern Italian 'Cucina Rustica' has satisfied generations of Canberrans. Set in what was once a 1920s bank, tables look onto the curved arches of the historic Melbourne Building. The food is excellent, from the squid ink linguine to the slow cooked lamb rump and everything in between. It also offers one of the city's most awarded wine lists.

mezzalira.com.au

MU OMAKASE

In Japanese Omakase dining, customers entrust their meal entirely to the Chef, who selects and serves a menu based on the best-in-market that day. Mu delivers that highly intimate dining experience to just 10 diners at a time—a series of small plates served over 12 to 20 courses. Pop next door to Cicada Bar for considered drinks, sustainable dishes and soft beats.

chairmangroup.com.au



Raku
Image: Tim Bean



DRINK



Did you know Canberra was a dry city for the first 20 years of its existence? Never fear, prohibition ended in 1928 and we've steadily built up a vibrant bar scene to make up for that lost time. Whether it's beer, wine or spirits, Canberra's brewers, vigneron and distillers are creating a name for themselves nationally.



Sideway Image: Lean Timms

Brews + tunes

BLACKBIRD

A fresh-faced favourite, find Blackbird's nondescript door in the Sydney building and descend down the wood-panelled stairs to find a dimly-lit hideaway. With photos of jazz legends adorning the walls, a '70s vibe and plenty of cosy corners to tuck yourself into, it's made for intimate drinks with live-music lovers.

blackbirdbar.com.au

KING O'MALLEY'S

King O'Malley's Irish Pub was named after a colourful politician and former insurance salesman. The irony? This same man advocated for an alcohol ban across Canberra in the early 1900s. Head on into this unpretentious drinking hole for a pint of lager and pub grub, and some authentic Irish charm.

kingomalley.com.au

SIDEWAY

Sideway is an intimate music bar tucked upstairs in the Sydney Building which prides itself on exciting wines, seasonal cocktails, local froths and a warm hi-fi sound system. The vibe is hip and the music is current—this, in other words, is where the cool kids go for a late night of frivolity. Comedy acts and open mic nights are a regular.

sidewaybc.com

BREW NATION

With 80-plus beers on offer, 12 on tap and a constant rotation of kegs, the chances are Brew Nation will have the perfect beer for you. This inner-city bar is the most specialised craft beer supplier in Canberra and boasts a handy link to all the food offerings of Verity Lane Market.

brewnation.com.au

PJS IN THE CITY

PJs has long been a place to relax and unwind, either outside in their beer garden or inside in The Olde Bailey Room or the Harp Bar. Head on down for a cheeky pint or a meal, or settle in for some sport. On Friday afternoons PJs winds back the clock and goes retro—Midori Illusion, anyone?

pjsinthecity.com

SMITH'S ALTERNATIVE

The grungy jewel in Canberra's artistic crown, Smith's Alternative is the beating heart of the city's community cultural scene. From live music to poetry readings, book launches and anything experimental, here is a place which accepts all with open arms. Frankly, there is nothing else quite like it.

smithsalternative.com



Highball Express Image: Pew Pew Studio



I wanna dance with somebody

88MPH

If you feel the need to belt out your best Wham! song or practice your moonwalk, we know just the place. 88MPH is THE place for karaoke in Canberra, and once you are warmed up, you can hit the dance floor and try to keep up with the flashing lights beneath your feet. When your energy flags, it's time for pizza and more cocktails. Did someone say Duran Duran?

88mph.bar

FICTION CLUB

From concerts to club nights, exhibitions, theatre, live art and innovative performances, Fiction Club pushes boundaries in terms of Canberra's sedate image. There's a steady stream of live acts to book into and DJs who will transport you into the early hours of the morning. There's also space to let loose if you so choose.

fctn.com.au

HIGHBALL EXPRESS

Canberra's only Cuban-themed cocktail bar, Highball Express transports you to a where Ernest Hemingway would have felt quite at home. With a soundtrack of Latin and Afro beats and a big, breezy balcony perfect for cocktails, it's the next best thing to a trip to the Caribbean. Highball champions rums from around the world and elevates them with originality—ask for the El Presidente or the Tijuana Sunset.

highballexpress.com.au

MOOSEHEADS

Mooseheads is a nightclubbing rite of passage for most young Canberrans and always guarantees a party. Stay upstairs for music that's old but gold, top 40, dance, R&B, and more. Or head downstairs for pool tables, a foosball table and the ultimate mix of rock, old and new school tunes.

mooseheads.com.au

ZOO BAR

Here's a venue promising to meet every need. There's a bar and grill to start, a gala event zone, the Hustler Pool Hall, the No Vacancy Cocktail Lounge, and the rooftop Mile High nightclub. There's also a sizeable food menu to keep you sated. Dare we suggest a bar crawl without leaving the building?

zoobar.com.au

KNIGHTSBRIDGE PENTHOUSE

'Knighy' as it's affectionately known, is a chameleon of a bar that manages to blend relaxed lounge and late-night vibes with aplomb. Head there earlier in the evening for perfectly blended cocktails and watch as it transforms into a RnB and 'old school' dance party as the night progresses.

[@knightsbridgepenthouse](https://www.facebook.com/knightsbridgepenthouse)

Cocktail hour

Images: Thorson Photography

Phillip Jones

Few people know the city's bar scene better than Phillip Jones aka The Martini Whisperer. He shares his favourite spots for a tipple.



We're not only living in the golden age of quality booze made with innovation and smarts, but there has never been a better time to enjoy a fine cocktail in Canberra. Inspired by great products, and embracing seasonality and ingredients, the city's bar teams offer creative passion and some fine inspiration in a glass.

A good cocktail is always greater than the sum of its parts, but the location and atmosphere are equally important.

In Braddon, **Zaab Street Food** has led the way with an integrated cocktail and food program with cocktail creations to accompany the contemporary Laos and Thai cuisine. Last time I was there I loved their take on the South of the Border—Espolon Blanco Tequila, mezcal, their own secret liqueur, lemon, lime, agave.

Hippo Bar upstairs in Garema Place has been an industry leader in the city for years and its cocktails are always excellent. Ask for the Old Smoke which contains a harmonious mix of smoked spiced rum, honey, lime and their house made ginger soda.

Just downstairs you'll find **Beirut Bunker Bar**, where Soumi and the team have a fresh and fun take on cocktails. Ask for the Wasabi Martini—wasabi-infused vodka, muddled Lebanese cucumber, vanilla gomme to get your night going.

On Northbourne Avenue, the comfy **White Rabbit** offers high teas and some playful and delicious concoctions, such as the Wonderland, complete with fresh strawberries, Frangelico, white chocolate liqueur, lemon and cranberry juice, and a chaser of mini cupcakes!



Just over in the Sydney Building, **Dear Prudence** offers a Euro vibe and is the place to sip a Negroni and dream of faraway places.

Upstairs on London Circuit, the award-winning **Bar Rochford** is ever on point with cocktails and food to match served with unpretentious intelligence. Ask for one of the team's favourites – a delicious blend called the Lucien Gaudin, featuring Ironbark Cascara Gin, Marionette Curacao, Okar Tropical Bitter and Dry Vermouth.

Finally, ever-classy **Molly** makes for one very fine Martini experience—let their expert team guide you into the mysteries of my personal favourite. Just look for the wooden door to gain entry to this moody speakeasy.

visitcanberra.com.au