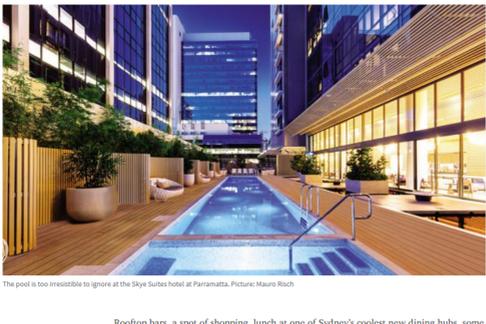


Newslocal > Parramatta

Indulge in a staycation at the Skye Suites Parramatta

Slipping cocktails on a rooftop bar, lunch at one of Sydney's coolest new dining hubs, some chilling by the pool followed by an in-room massage. Welcome to your staycation.

Jeanne Vela
 @Parramatta_News 4 min read December 11, 2020 - 10:07PM Parramatta Advertiser



The pool is too irresistible to ignore at the Skye Suites hotel at Parramatta. Picture: Mauro Risch

Rooftop bars, a spot of shopping, lunch at one of Sydney's coolest new dining hubs, some chilling by a generously-sized pool followed by an in-room massage. Welcome to Parramatta.

If you're going to have a staycation in Sydney before filtering interstate or abroad, the Sky Suites offers a chance to see why a lot of those unfamiliar with Sydney's second CBD keep saying "you can't tell you're in Parramatta".

While construction is hard to avoid thanks to major projects such as the light rail, other developments such as the alfresco dining domain in Parramatta Square are open, and Sky Suites is a good base to discover more about the historic suburb that is the cradle of the nation.

My day begins with a quick dash to Westfield before the Christmas stampede took over but plenty of bargains were ready to be snapped up.



The hotel has a central location in Parramatta's CBD. Picture: Mauro Risch



The plush lobby at the Skye Suites. Picture: Mauro Risch

However, it is a sunbathed day north of 30 degrees and the great outdoors beckon.

I make my way to Harvey's Hot Sandwiches for a casual lunch (the lemonade with the club sandwich was the perfect antidote for the weather) in the \$3.2 billion Parramatta Square redevelopment.

The venue is home to reputable restaurants including Rose Bar & Brasserie, Cicciabella and LilyMu, where head chef Brendan Fong likens the Square to Barangaroo, and London.

His Asian fusion restaurant is winning new fans with dishes including the snapper sashimi and lamb curry, and cocktails to get into the spirit.

I soon collect my bags that were dropped off earlier at the elegant lobby and check into a modern two-bedroom hotel apartment suite ideal for leisure or for those on business thanks to its well-equipped furnishings.

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Perched on the counter of the kitchen is a bottle of red, a handmade coconut and chocolate bar, biscuits, and a mini coffee machine. You will find every utensil you need for in-room dining.

There is little time for cooking for this weekend getaway but for longer stays, a full-sized fridge, oven, stove, microwave and dishwasher are practical drawcards.



Luxury blends with practicality. Picture: Mauro Risch

Rooms are well equipped for business as well as leisure. Picture: Mauro Risch

Each bedroom is replete with spacious built-in wardrobes and the master bedroom has a TV if you want to unwind with movies in the crisp white linen and plump pillows.

The cosy living room has a fetching pool view and, while I was initially reluctant to take a dip in a public swimming pool with my germphobe tendencies heightened during the pandemic, it was too hard to resist a quick frolic.



Flop out poolside for those true holiday vibes. Picture: Mauro Risch

The inviting pool deck is lined with comfy, cushioned day beds you can sink into after a swim that will make you well and truly feel like your stay-cay is a bona fide holiday.

The 25m pool appears longer and feels like the highlight of my mini retreat.

I catch up on some reading and draw myself away from the pool and bypass the gym so the pampering can continue with an in-room massage.

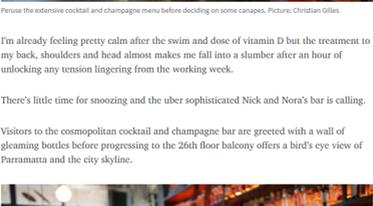


Purse the extensive cocktail and champagne menu before deciding on some canapés. Picture: Christian Gilles

I'm already feeling pretty calm after the swim and dose of vitamin D but the treatment to my back, shoulders and head almost makes me fall into a slumber after an hour of unlocking any tension lingering from the working week.

There's little time for snoozing and the uber sophisticated Nick and Nora's bar is calling.

Visitors to the cosmopolitan cocktail and champagne bar are greeted with a wall of gleaming bottles before progressing to the 26th floor balcony offers a bird's eye view of Parramatta and the city skyline.



The classy Nick & Nora's in Parramatta. Picture: Christian Gilles

The Rhubarb Royale (cognac, rhubarb, saline, bubbles) and Nick & Nora Spritz (vodka, bitter grapefruit liqueur, dry vermouth, soda and bubbles) look impressive but I'm hankering for something tropical and the Melon Trap, suffices.

Others must think so as well judging by the number of fuchsia glasses we see waiters delivering to our fellow drinkers. The beverage is a refreshing mix of tequila, slow gin, watermelon, lime, orange, hibiscus and basil.

Take advantage of the share plates that complement the drinks menu. We tuck into some mouth-watering arancini, Moroccan Bay bagel sliders with toasted bruschetta (with scallions, remoulade, rhubarb sambol) and crispy prawns with sweet lime aioli and lime caviar. All good choices and ideal portions for soaring summer days.

Falafel, oysters and escargot are other temptations while dessert indulgences include the churros with smoked caramel, strawberries, marshmallow and the Peruvian chocolate mousse.

There are two-hour sittings so it's a good idea to book a table just before sunset.

That night many hotel guests are making their way to Bankwest Stadium to see Argentina take on the All Blacks.

Right on the door step of the hotel is one of Parramatta's most popular cafes, The Shed, where coffee and drinks are given equal attention to the fresh and vibrant fare.

Don't miss brunch and dishes such as the iridescent lamb fattoush salad, which I washed down with a macedonia and a watermelon, pineapple, lime and strawberry juice.



The pool opens into the night as well. Picture: Mauro Risch

Allow time to visit the picturesque, 160-year-old Parramatta Park and all its 99-hectare glory with trees more than a century old, a 3.2km walking loop and new picnic tables and playgrounds in the oasis.

Visit the heritage-listed Italianate villa Willow Grove at Phillip St before it is "relocated" to make way for the Powerhouse Museum.

And don't forget to have another swim before checking out.

• *The writer was a guest of Skye Suites Parramatta.*

SKYE SUITES HOTEL
 Where: 30 Hunter St, Parramatta

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