

## long weekend



Andaluz's laneway courtyard OPPOSITE Test Tube, one of Mt Lawley's quirky designer shops



## PRIME movers

Perth's entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well, judging by the city's latest collection of fashion, food and bars

WORDS Sally Feldman



**H**ow long is a long weekend? When it means travelling for more than a couple of hours to a destination such as Perth, then it's definitely a good idea to clock off on Thursday. While there's far more than a weekend's worth of newness to explore, some experiences should always be revisited – a sunset over the ocean, the broad sweep of the Swan River, and the sheer spaciousness of the city, no matter the time of day, or day of the week.

**THURSDAY: TOUCHING DOWN**

In the east of the CBD, the **Sheraton Perth Hotel** (207 Adelaide Tce, (08) 9224 7777, sheraton.com/perth) is an easy stroll from everything, including the Swan River. And since it upped the ante with four new Executive Club floors – plucked from drab office-space obscurity and transformed into modish and un-executive-like accommodation – it's the freshest option around. The rooms and suites are spacious and well equipped (love the huge bathrooms), most with views of that wide, glittering ribbon of water. The Executive Club Lounge is a welcome respite for breakfast, afternoon tea and a pre-dinner drink with canapés, especially after a long flight or day of meetings. The fragrant Rose Moon Massage & Day Spa (the owner's name is Rose Mooney – a woman surely destined for spa-dom) is another lure.

If you're staying at the Sheraton, take a late-afternoon stroll east along the Swan River foreshore to Point Fraser, a section of reclaimed land that's been replanted as it would have been before settlement. For an urban area, it's weirdly quiet, disturbed only by the rustling of native grasses, a flock of galahs pecking at nearby lawns and the occasional whoosh as one of Perth's ubiquitous cyclists tears past.



In West Perth, and minutes from the city's other natural treasure, Kings Park, is the **Richardson Hotel & Spa** (32 Richardson St, West Perth, (08) 9217 8888, therichardson.com.au or preferredboutique.com). This independently owned, 74-room establishment oozes class and has rightfully earned accolades in Australia and overseas. The apartment-style rooms are designed for long or short stays, all with self-catering options. Their golden tones and warm wood finishes are sumptuous, and the feel is of supreme comfort – it's like being in the home of a wealthy aunt with a penchant for contemporary art. Mind you, she wouldn't have executive chef Todd Cheavins on hand. He's in charge of the beautiful restaurant, Opus at The Richardson, which is definitely worth a detour. The hotel's spa is still the only one in Australia offering glam UK brand ESPA products in their treatments – almost worth throwing away this itinerary for. Plus, its adjacent indoor swimming pool, which opens onto a palm-fringed courtyard, is just the place to cool off.

Once you've unpacked, experience Perth's new lease of life (and rash of new small-bar licenses) by cosying up at **Andaluz** (21 Howard St, (08) 9481 0092). This basement-level, wine/cocktail/tapas bar opened early this year to the delight of anyone with a yen for pre-loved leather Chesterfields, vintage Spode ware and good local ingredients. Manager Ryan Gregory and young chef Brenton Pyke (ex Just Bar) have brought some much-needed laneway style to this part of town. Just don't mention Melbourne...

Meanwhile, hot on the tapas trail, David Coomer, of Shenton Park's revered Star Anise, will be taking a new tack at **Pata Negra** in Nedlands (26 Stirling Hwy, (08) 9389 5517). Still to open as we go to press, the diner will be headed up by chefs Kurt Sampson and Matt Stone, and will feature a woodfired oven and gutsy Spanish/Moorish flavours – a far cry from Star Anise's Asian-influenced fine-dining menu.

If you fancy something a little more luxe, succumb to the warm embrace of **1907** (26 Queen St, (08) 9436 0233, 1907.com.au). In its sexy downstairs bar, manager Mark McKenzie not only mixes, but makes many of the cocktail ingredients, including liqueurs, bitters and sorbets. Above, the restaurant is an elegant oasis of velvet banquettes, silky service and a suitably glamorous menu – think hand-minced beef tartare, duck yolk wonton and soy-dashi dressing, or duck breast with vanilla-poached peach and foie gras emulsion.



FROM TOP The Richardson Hotel & Spa; 1907 restaurant; an Executive Club Studio, The Sheraton



Courtyard at The Richardson Hotel & Spa



Cafe seating at Zekka, whose men's fashion collection forms a backdrop



FRIDAY: COINC DOWNTOWN

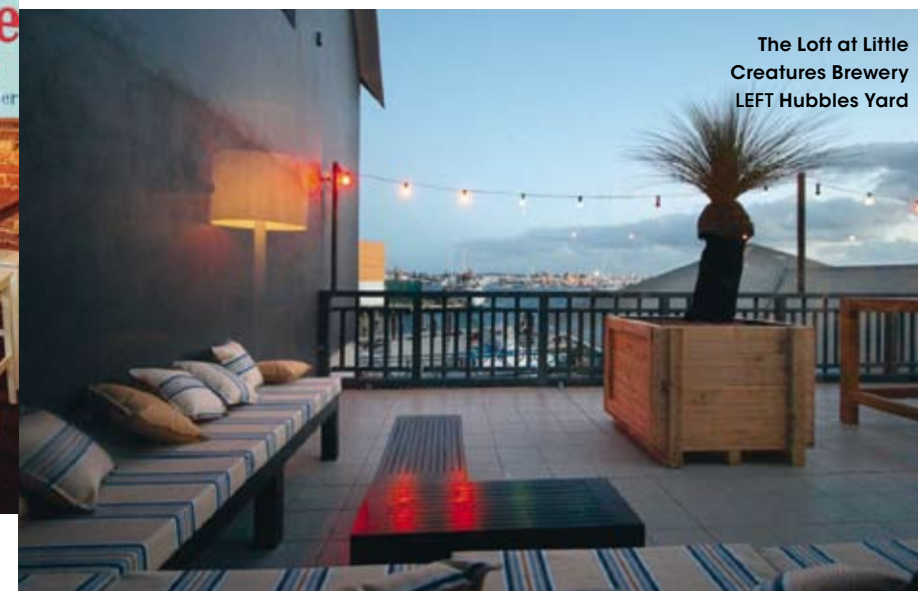
Perth's old rag-trade district, the 'West End', continues its chic revival. King Street is a who's who of international and local labels, from **Gucci** (cnr King and Hay Sts) and **Bally** (no 31) to Perth's own rock-star, **Wheels & Dollbaby** (no 26), and the home-grown red-carpet glitz of **Tarvydas Store** (no 32). Follow the waft of locally roasted Crema coffee up **Zekka's** sloping laneway (nos 74-76) to its little light-filled open-air cafe. Stop here for brunch or coffee before heading inside to check out the edgy Euro-style menswear and accessories. Upstairs, a quirky little all-white 'atelier' has just opened exclusively for the girls.

**Love in Tokyo** (Shop 2, no 90) is designer Sheree Dornan's latest store (her first is in Fremantle), where you'll find reworked kimono prints, shimmering silks and cute shoes by Minx and Studio 56. Around the corner, you'll find **Dilettante** (575 Wellington St), where you can browse international designer threads for 'hommes' and 'femmes' against a backdrop of raw brick and fake climbing roses.

Nearby, tiny Shafto Lane is home to indie fashion and accessory stores (Tú, Pigeonhole and Rumpler) and the great new **Burger Bistro** (Shop 16, (08) 9485 1729), which is wowing punters with its organic Angus beef, Mt Barker free-range chook and New Norcia Bakery sourdough.

Settle in for lunch at **The George** (216 St Georges Tce, (08) 6161 6662), the CBD's new kid on the block. It's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, serving up classy, mod-gastro-pub fare (though on Fridays it's shared plates only for the after-work drinks crowd). The extravagant interior, with its beaded curtains swathing circular booths, is large, but can get noisy, so people-watching from the pavement tables might be a better option.

PHOTOGRAPHY (HUBBLES YARD) SIMON FURLONG



The Loft at Little Creatures Brewery  
LEFT Hubbles Yard

SATURDAY: OUTWARD BOUND

Get up early and take the scenic route to Fremantle along the Swan River through the leafy, mansion-studded suburbs of Dalkeith, Peppermint Grove and Mosman Park, where Prix d'Amour, Rose Porteous's monolithic love shack, is now but a toothy gap on the clifftop. Stop for breakfast with the locals at **Hubbles Yard** in East Freo (50 George St, (08) 9339 5850), a century-old restored corner shop set in a pretty, village streetscape. Across the road is the equally picturesque **Wine Liaisons** (no 48), where, apart from exploring its capacious cellar, you can stock up on house-blended olive oil or local cheeses.

Unless you're dead set on another pair of macramé earmuffs, avoid the clamour of Fremantle Markets. Instead, soak up the atmosphere and architecture of the quieter back streets on the way to the waterfront, before sampling a reviving ale at **Little Creatures Brewery** (40 Mews Rd, (08) 9430 5155). If you're settling in for the afternoon, order a pizza and wait until Little Creature's smaller, loungey area, The Loft, opens at 5pm and watch the sunset Mykonos-style.

Otherwise, head back to Perth via the coast and Cottesloe, where you could snack and shop at the latest in WA food maven Kate Lamont's portfolio, **Lamont's Wine Store** (12 Station St, (08) 9385 0666) or slaver over the produce at **Boatshed Fresh Food** (40 Jarrad St, (08) 9284 5176), which, apparently, is Simon Johnson's favourite Australian providore.

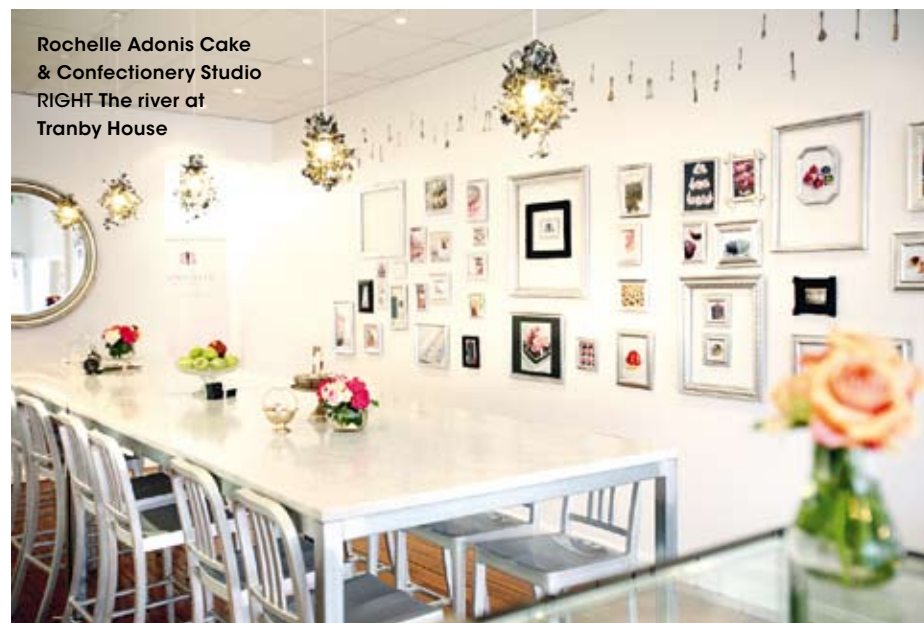
Be it morning or afternoon, divert to Northbridge for tea or a perfectly brewed plunger of another local roaster, Fiori's, coffee at **Rochelle Adonis Cake & Confectionery Studio** (193 Brisbane St, (08) 9227 0007).

Before you head back for a siesta, cross the road and walk through the massive jarrah doors of No 225 St Georges Terrace. The building, one of a handful of such splendid Gold Rush legacies, has a magnificent entrance hall. Walk through to a tiny formal garden, one of Perth's prettiest secrets, and take a few deep breaths.

For pre-dinner drinks, shimmy up to the exclusive **Must Champagne Bar** (519 Beaufort St, Highgate, (08) 9328 8255). This tiny, dimly lit lounge above the acclaimed Must Wine Bar (which has recently opened a branch in Margaret River) is a haven for Champagne lovers, even if you don't know your Billecart-Salmon from your Egly-Ouriet. Order a bottle of something frisky, settle on a leather chaise longue and make friends with the locals over a dozen oysters.

And while you're thinking local, book dinner at **Cantina 663** (663 Beaufort St, Mt Lawley, (08) 9370 4883). Co-owned by chef Michael Forde and Alex Cuccovia (who's also involved with fashion hotspot Department on Beaufort at no 667), this shabbily chic, packed-out eatery is a little bit Italian, a little bit Spanish and a little bit rock and roll, its tables spilling out to a dim little arcade. Entrées are best shared - Ortiz anchovies, lemon and charred bread, and manchego saffron fritters, perhaps - followed by house-made pappardelle with braised oxtail and orange gremolata or the fluffiest gnocchi with roast pumpkin, chestnuts and goat's cheese. Breakfast is said to be legendary, too, so refuel here before you spend a morning exploring offbeat Beaufort Street gift and fashion stores including **Test Tube** (Shop 6, no 595), **Behind the Monkey** (no 479) and **Billie & Rose** (2-3, no 672), which has also just opened up on King Street (no 68).

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Rochelle Adonis Cake & Confectionery Studio  
RIGHT The river at Tranby House



Adonis is a pastry chef par excellence – formerly of Moran’s and Aria in Sydney – and makes exquisite pâtisserie and the best nougat in Christendom to take away or eat at marble-topped benches.

If you’re staying at The Richardson, pop into **Pure Bar** (331 Hay St, Subiaco, (08) 9382 3330) for a cocktail on the way out to dinner. It’s called Pure because so many of its daytime regulars hail from nearby gyms and like their breakfast omelettes without yolks, but the minimalist white interior also helps. Have no fear, though, manager Sheldon Hendry’s a seasoned mixologist, and will set you on your merry way – treadmill be damned.

Go easy, though, as dinner is at **Restaurant Amusé** (64 Bronte St, East Perth, (08) 9325 4900), an elegant, degustation-only dining room seating just 45 people. Husband-and-wife team

Hadleigh (chef) and Carolynne (maitre d’) Troy have put together a gorgeous package of innovative food, impeccable wine matching and knowledgeable, personable service. The menu changes monthly, and so good is Amusé, that our WA Champagne dinner will be held there this July (see page 28).

Top off the evening with a bit of live speakeasy-style action at the spanking new **Ellington Jazz Club** (191 Beaufort St, (08) 9228 1088). Great acoustics, a cool, mixed crowd and, best of all, one of those little cubby holes through which a blonde bombshell checks you out and takes your money. Like, wow.

## SUNDAY: TAKING DOWNTIME

Okay, there are a couple of options here. The crazy, impetuous one would be to jump on a train to Fremantle and pick up the ferry to **Rottnest** for the day (rotnestexpress.com.au). Pack your bathers, hire a bike and cycle to any number of stunning, crystalline bays. Snorkel among the reefs, eat locally caught fish and chips on the waterfront, pick up freshly baked iced buns at the bakery to take home, and of course, make friends with the quokkas. Maybe next time, when it’s warmer...

Instead, we’ve an **Indigenous Heritage Tour** booked in Kings Park with Nyoongar guide and tour proprietor Greg Nannup (bookings, WA Visitor Centre, (08) 9483 1111). Kings Park spans a massive 400 hectares of bushland, including thousands of species of native wildflowers within its Botanic Garden, a spectacular treetop walkway and, since last July, a humungous, 750-year-old boab tree, which was transported 3000km from the Kimberley with much fanfare and at great expense. It now stands, surrounded (rather poignantly)

by a metal fence, resplendent with new growth and commanding a fabulous view over the river and city.

Start with a leisurely brunch at **Botanical Cafe** (Fraser Ave, (08) 9482 0122). Try and nab one of the outside tables with a similarly boab’s-eye view.

The hour-and-a-half heritage tour is fascinating, encompassing Dreamtime stories, bush medicine and tucker, and Aboriginal history of WA’s south west. Nannup is an engaging and informative companion, with an uncommon knack for weaving ancient stories with contemporary life. There’s also a boat tour that charts the traditional connections with local Aboriginal tribes and the Swan River. Book both and make a day of it.

Finally, make your way to a dreamy spot to watch the shadows lengthen. It’s a 15-minute drive north-east of the city to **Tranby House**, the oldest surviving dwelling in Perth (2A Johnson Rd, Maylands, (08) 9272 2630). Built in 1839 as a farmhouse, it’s set on a crook of the river that’s so unspoilt you’ll feel like you’re in the heart of the country. In its grounds, you’ll find the recently spruced up **Peninsula Tea Gardens** (unlike Tranby, which is badly in need of a generous patron, (08) 9272 8894).

The service here veers towards evangelical enthusiasm, and why not, when the range of afternoon tea options (or “spoilt specialties”, as our exuberant friend describes them) are such a knockout. Fresh-as-a-daisy finger sandwiches, fluffy scones with whipped cream, and dainty cakes all served on pretty tiered stands are accompanied by an impressive selection of black and green loose leaf teas. Pull up a rattan armchair under the trees and watch the ducks file home in the softening light, before you have to do the same.

For more information on Perth or Western Australia, visit [westernaustralia.com](http://westernaustralia.com). VE+T



Sheldon Hendry at Pure Bar