

Post



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# A Day on Our Own - April 7, 2025

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## ***SUMMARY***

Took the ubiquitous Green and Yellow Ferry to Manly Beach a ways across Sydney Harbor. Walked along Manly to Shelley Beach so named because it's made of shells. Beers and soft drinks at a beach restaurant then gelato and Asian food for lunch on the Corso. Ferry back to Circular Quay then another ferry to Barangaroo neighborhood. Walked through the Crown Hotel, a high roller casino where penthouse cost \$AUD30,000 a night. (People like Taylor Swift and Drake stay there, not together of course!). Cocktails on the waterfront followed by an excellent, subterranean dinner French restaurant/jazz club. - Karen

## *DETAIL*

### **A day to ourselves**

Since we arrived we've been guided, led around by hand, driven around. Today will not be like that. We're on our own.

Nothing is planned or scheduled (until dinner). It's a "down day", time to relax a bit. We do have some ideas of what we want to do.

We take our time in the room, getting ready. No rush. I work on the blog and we shower. Two times the power goes out, though thankfully only for a few minutes. Not sure what that was about.

Eventually we clean up and head out. The weather is again cooperating again, 68 degrees with sunshine and blue skies, yay! Lune, a pastry shop is our first stop (moon, in French). Out front is a long line of people waiting to get in. Thankfully the line moves quickly. The girls read about this place and know the drill. We get in and point to the croissants we want and order our flat whites. We split each croissants between us and they are, indeed, delicious works of art.

Downtown we catch the express ferry to Manly Beach. Buy tickets? Heck no. Just tap your credit card, they debit the right amount and the barricades slide open for you to pass. So easy.

As the boat eases along side the Manly Beach quay we look around. It's beautiful, not like the middle of a big city but rather like some Caribbean Resort. Blue water and sky, with beautiful houses and condos lined up along the shore. We're just a few minutes from downtown Sydney but in a whole other world.

Off the ferry we follow the crowd. They're all heading in the same direction, across the land to Manly Beach. En route there is no end to the restaurants, cafés, bars, groceries, pharmacies and anything else a tourist could want. At the far end is the beach, a long arcing perfect strip of sand, with tanners dotted here and there, and swimmers and surfers bobbing in the clear water.

We turn right and head towards Shelly Beach, down the way. Just as the Opera House is just that (an opera house), and the Harbor Bridge is just that, Shelly Beach is so named because the sandy beach is full of, well, shells. It's a treat for the eyes and sunbathers and swimmers are milling about, doing their thing. People are snorkeling and scuba diving. It's a scene. We're just there for the view, so we walk and soak it all in. Eventually we stop for a beer to hydrate, find some shade, and take a load off.

At lunchtime we walk back through the main thoroughfare and find something for everyone. Don gets Asian somewhere and Karen and I split a salmon rice bowl somewhere else. We shop for groceries mostly for dried plums, but also to see "jump steak" (a.k.a. kangaroo meat) which we don't actually find. We take the ferry back to Circular Quay (the city center).

Immediately we hop yet another ferry towards Barangaroo. We could have walked, it's not far, but we're finding the ferries to be such a scenic, cost-efficient, comfortable, and easy way to get around. The ferry pilots maneuver these boats like nimble sports cars. And the crews get people on and off quickly. They do it day in and day out, year-round, so many times per day. They've got it down to a fine art. And the passengers also know the part as well (mostly).

In Barangaroo we check out the very tall, very swanky hotel/casino called The Crown. This is where people like Taylor Swift stay when they're in town. The bars are happy to have us check them out. The restaurants and casino? Not so much. To counteract the warm afternoon sun we stop for Aperol Spritzes and a beer.

For dinner we get into fancier attire. We have a reservation at the French restaurant 'Hubert'. It's a little tricky to find and once we do we have to go downstairs and after that go downstairs again. It's an extremely cute, medium-sized, old-timey prohibition style place. It's a bar, restaurant and jazz club. They have a very oversized bar, very fully stocked. Across the room is yet another good-sized fully stocked bar.

A lot of their food is to be split with two or three or four people. If you get the chicken, it a complete full-sized chicken (right at AU\$100). If you get the tomahawk steak (not its real name), it is two kilograms (over four pounds). After you remove the bone it's probably 200 grams per person, for four people. It costs AU\$215. We don't get that.

We have cocktails, Karen and I both have martinis. The drinks come in the cutest frosty little bottles with old writing like during the prohibition. They bring us the wrong drinks so we end up with more drinks than we should have. The girls each order the Gruyere soufflé, I get the chicken and Don has the Beef Bourguignon. It's a lot of food but we do pretty well between the four of us. Such a fun place. And the food and drinks are all superb.

We walk home in the bustle and lights of the city. It's our last night in town. We're going to miss this place.

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## Photos



Our building has quite the history, being built in different sections at different times. It was open to the sky but now it's not. It looks like the outside of a building but we're protected.



The line for the pastries at Lune are worth the wait.



How to order? Point to the ones you want and say how many. Different flavors are introduced from time to time. They really are good.



On the ferry to Manly beach. A few minutes outside of Sydney it's like we're in a whole different part of the world.



Ferry riding is comfortable business.



From the Manly wharf to Manly beach is a short walk. Some doing it have surf boards.



Manly beach is very beach-like. Nice sand, plenty of sun.



On the walk to Shelly Beach (known for it's shells) Don's stopped. An old Austin Rugby player recognizes Don's cap and they stop and exchange war stories.



There's carved rocks along the way as sculptures but we use them as photo frames.



All beaches have these pair for flags. Swim between these two and you'll probably be OK. Beyond them, all bets are off.



Brown Turkey inspect the beach for trash and food to eat. This small child looks appealing...



The city provides electric (gas?) barbecue stations that come on at the push of a button. Very civilized.



The promenade between the beach and the wharf.



Salmon rice bowls for lunch hit the spot.



We're constantly amazed how pretty the views are from the ferries. The natural green area on the left? All man-made. Parking below.



Our ferry stops at the wharf for the fun house. We can imagine this 'greeter' is in the nightmares of many a young Horbart toddler.



Stopping for a refreshing Aperol Spritz with The Crown towering behind us.

## FARNSNIENTE



We see the above ground light rail on the walk home. We never rode it but Don did. Says it's as easy as the ferries. Nice!



Dolled up for dinner.



One of the bars (and some of the dining area) two floors below ground at the the French Restaurant Hubert. Just off to the right is the jazz stage.



One order of the house martini. Actually two standard glasses, it says. They screw up our order and the two of us end up with three bottles. What could possibly go wrong?



My chicken dinner. A full chicken. Delicious and we (almost) eat it all.

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