

Post



Scott Farnsworth

Apr 12, 2025 · 5 min read

Marvelous Melbourne Magic Show - April 13, 2025

Updated: Apr 18, 2025

SUMMARY

Despite the fact that “Winter is Coming”, it was a very hot day in Melbourne.

Having no organized activity scheduled, we spent it entirely outside. Forty-five minutes of it was spent standing in line at Lune Croissanterie. They do AMAZING things with croissant dough and it is totally worth the wait! Strolled the famous, graffiti-filled laneways then hiked around several gardens including Melbourne’s version of the Royal Botanical Garden. Took a Yarra River boat cruise which was a bit of a bust since it mostly was viewing the freight docks. -

Karen

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DETAIL

We're of mixed feelings when we have a day to ourselves. When we're on a tour there's some local with a car who knows what's fun to see and how to get there. Today we're on our own. Success or failure is up to us. When I get up the clock says 6:15, which seems plenty long to sleep... time to quietly make myself a coffee while Karen sleeps. Woken up by the caffeine I remember that the clock is set one hour late. It's actually 5:15. Oops.

Once Karen's up and dressed we head out to get some steps. In the 1800s gold was found nearby and the city became wealthy. From that it got the nickname 'Marvelous Melbourne', which is a moniker it still wears proudly to this day. Being wealthy, at least back then, there was a lot of attention paid to making the buildings fancy and the boulevards grand. Well some of them. You have the big fancy, wide boulevards and then every other one is a more normal street for workers and delivery drivers. There's Burke Street (and then Little Burke Street), Collins Street (and then Little Collins Street), Lonsdale Street (and then Little Lonsdale Street),

Flinders Street and then, whoops!
Flinders Lane. Doh. Oh, well.

Back in the day, the smaller streets were utilitarian. Now they're magnets for hipster shops and cute cafes. They attract crowds of tourists sightseeing and locals visiting their favorite haunts for a quick bite. Some of the alleys are just bricks on both sides and those have been surrendered to graffiti artists and their spray paint. They're now celebrated. Instagrammers pose for the perfect shot with the angry graffiti as a backdrop.

We spend time in a huge, super cool Italian Bakery that started in 1956. They have an amazing assortment of pastries, cakes, cookies, sandwiches, etc. etc. They have a big pizza oven with a big rotating interior. Their Negroni Bar begs further investigation later in the day. We forgo it all (for now) but plan to return later with Tricia and Don.

We do want breakfast and know there's one of those LUNE Croissanterie shops that we loved in Sydney. There we join the line outside and inform Tricia and Don of our whereabouts. A short 45 minutes later we're inside ordering croissants and coffee. They don't disappoint.

After more touring of downtown, we make a bee-line for the Royal Botanical Garden. It's a ways away but we're walking through this garden or that royal greenbelt. There are big trees that provide some shade and we aim for those as we walk. There are lots of hike and bike trails and lots of bikers and joggers out. Quality of life here seems to be a goal they've succeeded at.

After a long walk around the Royal Botanical Garden, we retrace our steps back downtown and install ourselves at a restaurant on the river for beer and lunch. The river's name, it's said, comes from when the early settlers asked the local aboriginals what the river was called. The answer "That's a river" (in their native tongue) was taken not a type of thing ("a river") but its name. Whoops!

After more walking (and shade seeking) we head to the departure point for our scheduled cruise up and down the river. Along the way we stop to watch a sidewalk magic show and both Don and I get pulled into the act. Soon, alas, due to our scheduled river tour, we have to disappear.

Rivers are traditionally conveyances for goods transport, access for goods storage, and disposal for industrial waste. As such the river views are not the prettiest. Early on, in the 1800s, the settlers felt that the river wasn't flowing as well as it should. The aboriginal people were fine with it but the settlers felt (and acted on) the belief that the pesky waterfalls at the end of the river were slowing things down. Some dynamite will surely help. It didn't and the once blue river is now, to this day, brown. :-/ For this reason it's been called The Upside Down River, with the bottom (the brown) on the visible top and the blue somewhere (presumably) further down (out of sight). Sigh.

Back to the hotel after our cruise for some downtime before our evening plans: drinks and bar food dinner at Lui Bar on the 55th floor of the Rialto Tower in the CBD (Central Business District). The view from the bar is spectacular, with lights visible in all directions. The walls are tall glass panels and we're seated by them at a corner. Below us the Crown Casino does a brief show every hour with towers of flame along river. Impressive from this high up.

We order an assortment of things for dinner, including Kangaroo Snag (slang for sausage). We're told they mix the very lean, somewhat gamey kangaroo meat with other more conventional animal protein to mask some of the taste. It's fine. At least now we can say we've tried it (some of us). Our servers are sweet and efficient. Post drinks we inquire as to where they're from. Of course: France, Spain, and Italy. No Aussies working here.

Fun day taking care of ourselves, but now Uber back to The Windsor Hotel. Tomorrow we're back to being babysat and driven around. Yay :-)

Photos



First food stop of the day LUNE Patiserie. 45 minute wait but worth it.



Graffiti filled alleys? Some love it. I see toxic paint wielding vandals. Not my call.



One of the many glass display cases at Brunetti's Bakery, a definite stop when in Melbourne.



The river's been cleaned up and has tree covered walking paths on both side. Very pretty.



A waterfall in a man-made grotto on our way to the Royal Botanical Garden. Nice and cool right here.



Across the way from where we're walking are lots of sporting venues, including the Rod Laver Arena where the Australian Open is held.



The Royal Botanical Garden, at last!



The ladies were impressed by this plant with leaves as long as Tricia and Karen are tall!



Like a painting: picnickers and a gondaleer taking parasoled ladies around a pond.



Lots of the city's municipal works are also works of art, like this popular pedestrian bridge.



Lot's of pay phones. How quaint! (How do you access Google with one of these things??)



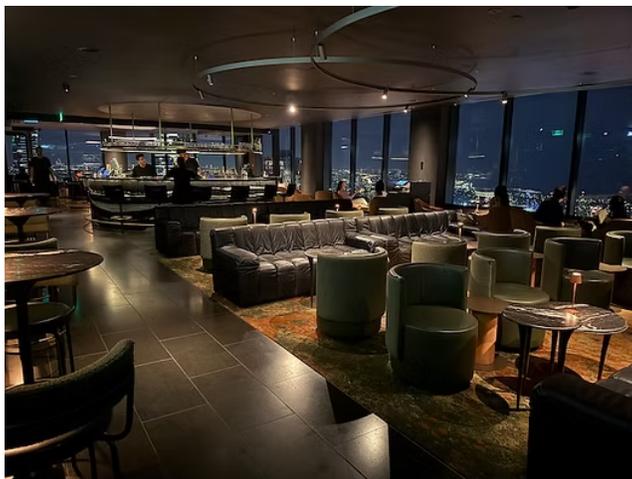
First I get roped into the magic show, then Don, then we had to disappear to catch our river tour.



Captain, our captain.



Some of the more picturesque parts of the river tour. Hm.



On the 55th floor of the Rialta Building, and Lui Bar.



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A group photo is a must!



And dinner. Fried chicken, some tart thing, and a BBQ snag (sausage). Yum, I must say.



To cap off the evening, part of the fire show along the water at the Crown Casino.

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