Shining a red light on the past

Two city lanes formerly known as Juliet Terrace and Romeo Street, both had a very colourful past. Rumour has it these two laneways offered their own tale on romance. Ladies of the night worked on Juliet Terrace (now Lieutenant Street), while the fellow gentlemen of the evening worked on Romeo Street (now Crossey Street).

Today, these streets are peddling more wholesome wares. Liverpool Street (J5) now hosts Asian eateries such as Little Malaysia and Laka Me, the Double Happiness bar that serves fusion cocktails in Chinese socialist propaganda surroundings, and heartily Italian at Pellicani's.

On Crossey Street (J5) you'll find Tin Hall, a history-rich bar and eatery offering home-style European favours. Plus, there's an array of shopping options including: Gibson, Blonde Venus, Gallery Paradiso, On Deck vintage clothing, plus the popular lunchtime spots, Becco, Coops and Gingerboy.

On Bank Place/White Lane (D4) you can mini Melbourne's oldest running pub, the White Tavern Post opened its doors in 1837. Here you will also find wine and dining establishment Vancouver, plus other dining options.

Off Bourke Street

You could very well spend a decent amount of time in just one laneway, Meyers Place (I4), and still claim to have a well-rounded knowledge of Melbourne's nightlife.

Visit the Meyers Place Bar and sip your preferred beverage in a sophisticated architecturally designed environment that welcomes all corners of age. There's also a long with superb audio-visual features, regular screenings of digital, film and other visual art forms – plus great music.

While you're there, you may also want to visit the Bailey Walters Club for a no-nonsense pasta and drop into 1920s-style speakeasy Lily Me, the Double Happiness bar that serves fusion cocktails in Chinese socialist propaganda surroundings, and heartily Italian at Pellicani's.

For those with a sense of adventure, let your imagination guide you to some mystery destinations and lose yourself in laneway culture.

Mystery Tour

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If you have a thirst for experimentation, wander down Croft Alley (H4) in the evening. Keep going, you'll find it. Some might find this drinking hole on Sniders Lane (E3), a little dark and dingy, while others will relish late openings with blurred minds.

Need a break from the retail therapy? Then wander past boutiques aplenty onto the street, as well as hole in the wall taste-fest, Little Big Harvest for tasty organic fare.

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Let your imagination guide you
Before you start

We encourage you to use this information as a starting point for your exploration of Melbourne’s laneways. Part of the joy of Melbourne is its capacity for the unexpected and the unusual.

Let your imagination guide you to other parts of the city as well, where you may discover your own hidden treasures. There are just a few laneways to get you started.

Please note that the map included includes only the laneways mentioned in this brochure.

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City laneways: discovering Melbourne’s secret heart

In 1835, Robert Hoddle had bullocks on his mind. As Melbourne’s original surveyor, Hoddle had to make the daunting task of designing a city wide enough to accommodate bullock teams hauling big loads of goods. As a result, Melbourne’s initial grid design included wide and spacious main streets that allowed for the delivery of large quantities of goods.

This was great news for the bullocks, but for people, many started to find this intimidating. So, enter Melbourne’s laneways. These are entrance points off the main streets that offer exclusivity and respite from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Today, Melbourne’s laneways continue to offer a variety of delights, populated by retail and other businesses, cafes and bars and street art, while some retain their original form, offering rare glimpses into the city’s history.

Many city-dwellers and locals argue that exploring Melbourne’s laneways is the best way to discover the true heart of the city. So go for a walk, get your walking shoes on and start exploring!

Popular and populated

As Melbourne grew in a café-style crowd and go with the express-train flow you would navigate through these two connected classic lanes. Peer down side alleys as you discover an immense street ‘gallery’. Look up to where you may discover your own hidden treasures. Here are just a few of Melbourne’s most popular laneways.

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