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LATTES AND LUXE HOTELS

Sunday Telegraph, Sydney

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Global Roaming

LATTES AND LUXE HOTELS

Check in for a Melbourne mini-break

Dilvin Yasa

WITH ITS HIP CAFE CULTURE, uber-cool architecture and robust art scene, even the most fanatical Sydneysiders would agree that the city often ranked one of the most liveable in the world would be pretty darn perfect were it not for all the monochromatic clothing.

Add to that a calendar of March festivals and sport that makes every other city look staid – from the Virgin Australia Melbourne

Fashion Festival and Formula 1 Grand Prix to the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival and the Comedy Festival – and it's a no-brainer.

Following in the steps of Brisbane's recent metamorphosis from "Brisvegas" to the hottest destination in the country right now, Melbourne is also experiencing an injection of fresh blood – mainly in the form of luxury hotels which have either opened in recent months or are slated to open later this year.

Thinking about taking a Melbourne mini-break? Let the following properties tempt you further.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

There's no doubt about it, 2019 started strong with the opening of Shadow Play by Peppers, in Melbourne's Southbank arts and entertainment quarter, and Zagame's House, a boutique design hotel – part of the Zagame portfolio – on Lygon St, Carlton.

When highly anticipated, five-star Hotel Chadstone (which comes under the MGallery Sofitel brand) made its debut right next to the gargantuan shopping centre in November, however, it seemingly sounded the

bell for many more to throw open their doors. peppers.com.au, zagameshouse.com.au, hotelchadstone.com.au

COMING SOON

There's no shortage of big names coming to Melbourne's cobblestone streets, but much of the buzz has so far been fixed on W Hotel, the design-focused, five-star hotel set to open in Collins St later this year as part of the Collins Arch development, and the Zaha Hadid-designed Mandarin Oriental, also on Collins St. While opening dates for the latter property are still hush-hush, it's rumoured 2023 could be the year we'll all be sipping cocktails on its rooftop terrace.

Not to be outdone, Ritz-Carlton will open on Spencer St later this year, while Hilton Melbourne Little Queen Street – on the Equity Chambers building site on the corner of Little Queen and Bourke streets – will open shortly.

Other names to look out for this year include AC Hotels by Marriott Southbank, Vibe Hotel Melbourne, and Novotel & Ibis Styles Melbourne Airport, while Accor has just announced a 2023 debut date of SO/ Melbourne – set to be part of a mixed-use development overlooking Flagstaff Gardens. marriott.com.au, mandarinoriental.com, ritzcarlton.com, hilton.com, vibehotels.com, ac-hotels.marriott.com, sofitel.accorhotels.com

MELBOURNE MUST-DOS

Resting your weary head on a 1000-thread count pillow is never tiresome, but it helps to find plenty of activity to exhaust yourself in the first place. There's no "one size fits all" itinerary for any destination of course, but activities to consider include:

- Taking a tour of the city's famous street art with Melbourne Street Tours. melbournestreettours.com
- Meander around the Queen Victoria Market, best described as the love child of a produce market and a trash and treasure bazaar.
- Mingle with those who take their espressos just as seriously as you by booking a cafe tour



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with Melbourne Coffee Tours.

melbournecoffeetours.com.au

- Take the free City Circle tram between Melbourne's most famous sightseeing attractions, such as Federation Square (a great spot for people-watching) and the Old Treasury Building.
 - Enjoy a meal (or a vino) on Degraves Stt, one of the city's best laneways. Don't forget to wear something black.
 - Catch the Keith Haring- Jean Michel Basquiat or KAWS exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria before they close April 13.
- ngv.vic.gov.au

MORE visitmelbourne.com



Hotel Chadstone Melbourne –
 MGallery by Sofitel.
 PICTURE: ACCOR HOTELS