

Stay Secret accommodation

Smaller hotels more inviting

Bigger is not always better. **Tricia Welsh** finds hidden gems

RATHER than staying in big city hotels with marble foyers and queues to check in and out, sometimes you want to feel a little more at home, where you are made to feel part of the family and can relax in familiar surroundings.

Melbourne-based French clothing importer Maria Barkley appreciates the value of small hotels.

She travels to Paris twice a year and then interstate to sell her collections.

"As a woman travelling on my own, I love the comfort of staying in places that are quite intimate," she says.

"They notice my movements in and out and it's no trouble for them to do anything for me."

"There's a real sense of loyalty." We have scoured major Australian cities to find a few hidden gems which show that big is not always better.



TREASURES: Eight Nicholson (left) in Subiaco, Perth; and Kathryn's on Queen (right) in Woollahra, Sydney.

Melbourne The Bloomfield, South Yarra

Nestled in one of the city's most desirable residential pockets, this former modest '60s motel and adjoining Victorian corner mansion have been transformed into a perky, colourful boutique hotel with great style and flair. The Bloomfield, formerly part of The Albany, offers warm hospitality, from its ground-floor cafe and bar to the rooftop



swimming pool. The hotel has 32 rooms, from funky studios, deluxe rooms and mansion suites to the fabulous two-bedroom "rock star" penthouse, the Bloomfield Suite – all with Kevin Murphy toiletries.
Tariff: From \$120.
The Bloomfield, cnr Toorak Rd and Millswyn St, South Yarra, 9866 4485.
www.thebloomfield.com.au

Cotterville, Toorak

Cotterville is a lovely 1885 Victorian

terrace house that offers just two rooms upstairs. From the compact garden to the eclectic artwork that lines the walls, the property reflects the creative nature of the well-travelled owners. Great cooks, they will provide meals by arrangement, but more than that they'll make you feel part of the family. Join them for complimentary pre-dinner drinks.
Tariff: From \$130 single to \$160 double including breakfast.
Cotterville, 204 Williams Rd, Toorak, 9826 9105.
www.cotterville.com

Sydney Quest Potts Point

Formerly the uber-chic art hotel The Storrier, this 68-room hotel in the heart of Kings Cross has lost none of its contemporary charm or appeal since being taken over at the end of last year by a major hotel chain. It has five categories of rooms, some with courtyards and balconies, from charming petite studios to sophisticated executive twin suites with twin queen-size beds.

Tariff: From \$155.

Quest Potts Point, 15 Springfield Ave, Potts Point, (02) 8988 6999.
www.questpottspoint.com.au

Kathryn's on Queen, Woollahra

Memories of Kathryn Bruderlin's courtyard breakfasts (think poached peaches and eggs and smoked salmon) linger long after you've departed Kathryn's on Queen in inner eastern Woollahra. This beautifully restored National Trust-listed terrace house is flanked by antique shops and designer boutiques. The genial hostess pampers guests in her three delightful rooms: a double room with flower-filled balcony, a romantic attic with city rooftop views and a larger room with antique french bed and balcony on to Queen St.

Tariff: From \$180 to \$260 including gourmet breakfast.

Kathryn's On Queen, 20 Queen St, Woollahra, (02) 9327 4535.
www.kathryns.com.au

Brisbane Chester's Guest House, Fortitude Valley

When Maria and Peter Gittoes converted their contemporary five-bedroom family home in Fortitude Valley into Chester's Guest House, they weren't sure how it would go. However, it was such a success they have just added five more rooms. In what resembles a modern-day warehouse with polished cement floors and lofty open spaces, they have created a welcoming hip space with great artwork.

Tariff: From \$170 including breakfast.

Chester's Guest House, 26 Chester St, Fortitude Valley, (07) 3852 2218.
www.chesters.net.au

Quality Hotel The Inchcolm, Wickham Tce

An old-style Otis cage elevator, meandering corridors and wood panelling are evidence that the elegant 1920s building once housed medical suites for Brisbane medical specialists. It's also home to one of the city's top restaurants, Seasalt at Armstrongs, run by crack chef Russell Armstrong. All 36 rooms have a mini-bar, kitchenette and ensuite bathrooms.

Tariff: From \$152.

Quality Hotel The Inchcolm, 73 Wickham Tce, (07) 3226 8888.
www.inchcolmhôtel.com.au



DESIGNER STYLE: The Clarion Hotel Soho in Adelaide's CBD has a reputation as a hip establishment.

Adelaide Clarion Hotel Soho, Adelaide CBD

Named after London's arty district, the privately owned Clarion Hotel Soho opened at the end of last year and has already gained a loyal clientele who appreciate its slick designer style, discreet service and the

exceptional modern Australian cuisine served in its snazzy Decant restaurant. Relax by the rooftop jet pool overlooking the city lights or be pampered with an in-room Soho spa treatment using Australian-made organic products.

Tariff: From \$165.
Clarion Hotel Soho, 264 Flinders St, (08) 8412 5600.
www.clarionhotelsoho.com.au

Adelaide Parisienne Apartment, Adelaide CBD

Sitting on the third-floor balcony of this stylish CBD apartment, you could be forgiven for thinking you were somewhere on the Left Bank in Paris, for it's full of antiques, original artwork and luxurious French amenities. Experienced hospitality couple and restaurateurs, owners

Tricia and Wyndham House have equipped the full-size kitchen with double fridge-freezer with ice-making machine, imported stainless-steel dishwasher, stove and oven and, more importantly, a Gaggia coffee maker for comfortable self-catering. Among larder supplies are homemade biscuits, Twinings tea, Baci chocolates and romantic tea-light candles.

Tariff: From \$350.

Adelaide Parisienne Apartment, Level 3, 39 Grenfell St, (08) 8563 1123.
www.jacobscreekretreat.com.au

Perth Eight Nicholson, Subiaco

Regular guests at Eight Nicholson in Subiaco suggest staying at this small deluxe property is like being members of a private club. Housed in a gracious historic home that has been given a contemporary makeover where chandeliers mix with African art, it is opposite Kings Park, around the corner from Subiaco's smart Rokeby Rd and within walking distance of the CBD. There are just four king-size bedrooms with ensuites, all slightly different – some with open fireplaces, one with a bath (Room 1 is the best) – but all with individual charm. There is complimentary broadband, wifi and soft drinks in the minibar.

Tariff: From \$248 single to \$293 double including gourmet breakfast.
Eight Nicholson, 8 Nicholson Rd, Subiaco, (08) 9382 1881.
www.8nicholson.com.au