

SOPHISTICATED GIRLS' NIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF VIVID SYDNEY
DANIEL BOUD (OPERA HOUSE) DAVID CLARKE (CUSTOMSHOUSE)



Vivid Sydney lights up the harbour foreshore.

IT'S A FAMILIAR Saturday-night scene: flanked by an assembly of pink satin sashes, a bride-to-be tumbles into a taxi, her shoes peeping out of her handbag and a novelty veil perched defiantly on her head. Cue the almighty hens night, that wild celebration to mark your last night of 'freedom' and your final hurrah as a 'single woman'. It's the end of an era, the most important milestone in the lead-up to your married life, so you'd better party like there's no tomorrow... Right?

While it's absolutely true that the occasion calls for letting

your hair down, who says you have to endure a bar crawl or include anatomically incorrect plastic accessories? And who says it even needs to involve a night on the town? The secret to a successful hens celebration lies in creating a memorable and lasting experience that should reflect your personality, be interactive and, most of all, fun!

Here at *Studio Brides* we've done the hard work for you and thought outside the box for the most creative, adventurous, cultural and quirky hens celebration ideas around the country.



NATIONAL FESTIVALS VIVID SYDNEY

Vivid Sydney is one time of the year that Sydney really shines – quite literally! As the biggest festival of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, Vivid transforms the landscape of Sydney into a spectacular canvas of light, music and ideas. It's creatively and visually stunning, and the perfect opportunity to be inspired in the lead-up to your wedding. Highlights include immersive light installations and projections, and performances from both local and international musicians at the Sydney Opera House (why not enjoy some cocktails at the stunning Opera Bar afterwards?). The festival runs each year ending its two-week run on the Monday of the June long weekend, but for 2013 check online for confirmation of dates and events nearer the time.

vividsydney.com





ADELAIDE CABARET FESTIVAL

While there are plenty of cabaret and performance festivals to choose from around Australia, the Adelaide Cabaret Festival is the original. Every year it ignites its namesake city with some of the best local, national and international artists in the cabaret genre. Now in its 12th year, the festival boasts Kate Ceberano as Artistic

Director and will be featuring actor, composer and singer Eddie Perfect (above). From classic to contemporary performances, this is the go-to festival for cabaret afficianados and newcomers alike. The festival is held in June every year so keep an eye online for final dates for 2013.
adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au



ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

Why not organise an evening of Parisian glamour when The Alliance Française French Film Festival brings a little bit of Paris to town? Touring nationally over five weeks in March and April to Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Canberra, the Festival has been running for over two decades and is the largest festival of

French cinema in the world, outside of France. Encourage everyone in your group to dress-up, commence the evening with some French cuisine and champagne, and select something suitably romantic from the Festival schedule. Stay tuned online for final dates and films for 2013.
affrenchfilmfestival.org

ST KILDA FESTIVAL

Melbourne is a fantastic hens celebration destination. The shopping and dining is second to none and, come summertime, the St Kilda Festival showcases the best of Australian music – for free! A cultural hub of the city, St Kilda is renowned for a relaxed beachside vibe. Spanning one full week in February (keep an eye online for 2013 dates), the Festival features some awesome Aussie talent across a program of comedy, theatre, visual art, outdoor cinema, beach sports and loads of music. Be sure to pack comfortable shoes!
stkildafestival.com.au

PERTH INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

It may be considered one of the most geographically remote cities in the world, but Perth's International Arts Festival, which turns 62 next year, strives to engage and connect its audience in a way that creates the sense of community for which Perth is famous. Running through February and March (check online for 2013 dates), the Festival offers a cultural program of film, dance, opera, circus, theatre and visual arts set against the unspoilt backdrop of the city. Of course, a trip to WA wouldn't be complete without visiting Margaret River's famous wineries – the perfect way to wind-down after a busy festival day!
perthfestival.com.au



WORKSHOPS & COURSES

CIRCUS

Run away with the circus at Sydney's Aerialize, which offers circus and aerial lessons tailored for hens celebrations. Workshops can be an intimate experience with just you and your bridesmaids or you can join a larger class. Create a personalised package that includes a specific skill or incorporates a mix of circus arts like aerial ring, static trapeze, hula hoop, acrobatics or juggling. If you're feeling really adventurous, try a contortion class! Make sure everyone brings a change of exercise clothes, and catering can be arranged on request.

aerialize.com.au



CUPCAKE BAKING

Sparkle Cupcakery in Sydney's Surry Hills offers a private two-and-a-half-hour Sparkle Class where you can either focus on baking techniques or cupcake decoration. Bubbles and refreshments are provided

and you'll leave with half-a-dozen of your very own creations. Classes are run either at the Surry Hills bakery or in the comfort of your home. Prices begin at \$89 per person.

sparklecupcakery.com.au/bake-me



CHEESEMAKING

For the true foodie bride, brush-up your gourmet culinary skills with a cheesemaking class. Courses are run all over the country and usually over two days. No experience is necessary and, by the end of the workshop, you will have created 10 varieties of cheese from cheddar to camembert using traditional techniques. At the end of your very busy cheesemaking weekend, plan a special picnic or afternoon in a beautiful location. Ask everyone to bring their favourite wine to enjoy with your cheesy creations! Courses run year-round and cost \$440 per person or \$1,260 for three.

cheesemaking.com.au

MILLINERY

Embrace your inner fashionista with a suitably girlie activity that gives you and your bridesmaids the opportunity to make your own headpieces for the wedding. Choose your theme and colour palette prior to the class commencing. The Wagga Wagga Art Gallery hosts the International Millinery Forum every January. Open to both professional and aspiring milliners, the forum holds workshops catering to all levels of skill. For something more intensive, Rose Organ at the Wagga Wagga Riverina Community College teaches year-round beginner courses that run over several weeks.

waggaartgallery.org; riverinamillinery.blogspot.com.au; rcc.nsw.edu.au →



50s-style workshops with Sydney's Boogie Bop Dames.

VINTAGE STYLING

Dreaming of a vintage-inspired wedding day? Get the girls together for a three-hour 50s-style workshop to learn all the basics for recreating those vintage glam looks. Boogie Bop Dames is Sydney's most respected style saloon. In just three hours, Miss Pixie will teach you how to style your own victory rolls and pin curls, how to incorporate vintage hair accessories into

your wardrobe and how to apply a basic 50s make-up look. The workshop also includes a 50s-style afternoon tea and is \$130 per person. For a more intensive workshop, Boogie Bop Dames offers a six-hour 40s/50s Full Glamour workshop, including a 'full set' using hot rollers, and lunch for \$180 per person.

boogebopdames.com

CORSET-MAKING

There's an art to beautiful lingerie and corsets and they have long been considered the queens of undergarments. Get your group together for a truly vintage art to create beautiful and personalised pieces to flatter and complement your curves. Ana Fataccioli runs the Sewing Workshop in Queensland, offering corset-making courses that run over five weeks, including Saturdays. You will learn to make three garments as well as patterns that fit your body exclusively. Some dressmaking experience is required. Prices start at \$250 for five lessons.

sewingworkshop.com.au



VENUES FOR BEFORE AND AFTER

No hens celebration is complete without a cocktail or two in glorious surrounds. It's the perfect start to an evening of entertainment and glamour or the well-deserved finale for your creative and cultural efforts of the day. Here are some of the most beautiful and sophisticated locations for a bride-to-be toast with style.

SYDNEY THE POLO LOUNGE

An award-winning lounge featured in films and fashion editorials alike, The Polo Lounge combines rich oak and marble interiors with huge windows and a spacious balcony overlooking Oxford Street. You can book the entire venue for a private event, or simply enjoy beautiful cocktails and great music on Friday and Saturday nights.

theoxfordhotel.com.au

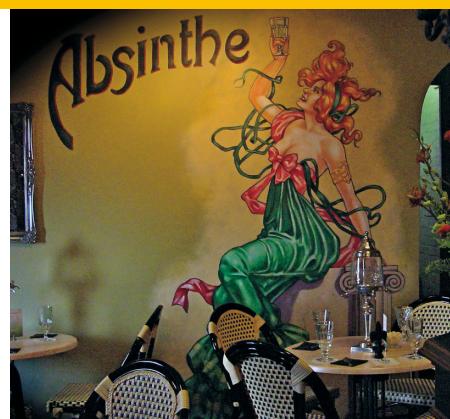


The suave Polo Lounge.
The location for our stunning fashion editorial for grooms, see page 164.

ABSINTHE SALON

For something a little more daring, Absinthe Salon in Surry Hills, Sydney, is an intimate Parisian-style lounge with a capacity for only 30 guests at a time for absinthe 'sessions'. The Salon's knowledgeable and debonair hosts explain everything from selection and history to the ritual of drinking absinthe. It's the perfect introduction to the 'Green Muse'. Bookings are essential.

absinthesalon.com.au

**SYDNEY HARBOUR EXCLUSIVE BOAT CHARTERS**

One of Sydney's best features is the harbour and there's no better way to experience it than on a private motor yacht. Set against the glittering backdrop of the city skyline, and with personal wait staff to

serve cocktails and canapés to you and your guests, Sydney Harbour Exclusive offers a range of packages to suit any number of guests and can tailor the charter to complement the rest of your celebration or as an event in itself.

sydneyharboureclusive.com

MELBOURNE**1806**

With its suitably decadent surrounds, the award-winning 1806 offers the type of table service you'd expect from a dining experience – except the menu consists almost entirely of historically correct cocktails beginning with the very first

cocktail defined in 1806, through to present day. Bar snacks and sharing plates are available, and bookings are essential. If you're feeling interactive, the venue also runs make-your-own-cocktail classes accompanied by gourmet canapés.

1806.com.au

**ADELAIDE****THE APOTHECARY 1878**

This European-style wine bar features beautiful antique interiors and an impressive wine selection. There are four entertainment areas available for private bookings, including an open-air courtyard and intimate cellar, and both formal dinners and cocktail events are catered for. Tapas and supper is served Tuesday through to Saturday, and high tea can be enjoyed by reservation only on Saturday afternoons.

theapotheccary1878.com.au

PERTH BAR ONE

Open for breakfast, antipasti or pasta lunches and share-plate dinners, Bar One's philosophy of all-day dining makes it a casual and elegant experience. If you're looking to book a private event, there are four different areas to choose from, as well as a range of flexible packages for food platters and cocktails. For something a little more casual, once a month on Wednesday nights, the venue samples flavours from around the globe, exploring the food, music and beverages of different cultures – it's a little piece of Euro-style nestled in Perth's CBD.

bar1.com.au

BRISBANE SALON LOUNGE

Tucked away in the suburb of Teneriffe and offering beautifully appointed, richly decorated interiors, is Brisbane's Salon Lounge. Perfect for cocktails, the menu includes delicious grazing plates and fresh oysters, as well as cheese and charcuterie boards. If you're looking for a sit-down affair, there are daily and seasonal blackboard mains specials, which can be enjoyed in the elegant alfresco dining area.

salonlounge.net