

NEW HEIGHTS \ JO DAVY discovers that fun on rooftops doesn't always involve a drink

UP ON THE ROOF



It's been close to a decade since the opening of Swanston's Street's aptly named Rooftop Bar sent Friday-night drinks skyward during the summer months.

Discerning bar owners took note and Melbourne's rooftops have since become some of the hottest real estate in hospitality, all operating under the baseless theory that drinks taste better at a higher altitude.

So popular is Melbourne's rooftop bar scene that it might come as a surprise to some that fresh air and views do not discriminate against non-drinkers.

From farming to fitness, there's plenty to do up on the roof that doesn't involve a drink in hand.

TWR reveals five activities worth taking the stairs for this summer. \

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1 FOR THE FARMER THE POP UP PATCH AT FED SQUARE

The barren concrete slab topping Federation Square's car park is proving fertile ground among inner-city green thumbs, thanks to an initiative from Fed Square and the Little Veggie Patch Co. The Pop Up Patch has about 140 veggie plots in recycled apple crates, available for inner-city residents and restaurateurs to rent for \$25 a week. Members get a fully prepared patch plus all the tools and seedlings required to ensure a bumper crop. Co-founder Mat Pember hopes to create a community of urban farmers through a calendar of regular social events, but they also encourage visitors, offering plenty of opportunities to get your hands dirty.

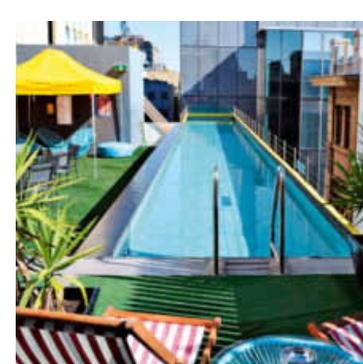
» Car park rooftop, Federation Square, Melbourne



2 FOR THE WARRIOR LASER SKIRMISH

In a scene that is straight out of a video game, Tech Assault Laser Skirmish transforms the Astroturfed rooftop of a city backpackers' hostel into a war zone, where players strategise as a team to eliminate the opposition. Tech Assault runs pop-up laser skirmish sessions all over the city, but co-founder Lee Weller says the sunset and city lights make for a unique battlefield for teams or individuals. "As soon as we put the rooftop option on the table, people started going crazy for it," he says. "We weren't quite prepared for how popular it would be." Tech Assault is yet to confirm dates for the next session, but spots fill up fast so check its website for updates. \

» Discovery Melbourne, 167 Franklin Street, Melbourne. www.techassault.com.au



3 FOR THE SWIMMER ADELPHI ROOFTOP POP-UP POOL PARTY

There's a novelty that comes with swimming out nine storeys above Flinders Lane that has had water babies crammed up one end of the Adelphi Hotel's rooftop glass-bottomed pool for more than 20 years. Closing for renovations this year, the pool is celebrating its last hurrah (in its current form) with a series of Sunday sessions where you can cool off and watch the sun set. Adelphi bartenders have reinvented the cocktail wheel with a contemporary twist on 1970s classics, the perfect accompaniment to gourmet sausages on the barbecue. Weather dependent, the Adelphi pool bar will be open every Sunday until March 29 from 2pm until sunset. \

» Adelphi Hotel, 187 Flinders Lane, Melbourne. 8080 8888



4 FOR THE YOGI ROOFTOP YOGA AT THE OLSEN HOTEL

It's hard to imagine a more perfect spot from which to salute the sun than high above the hustle and bustle of the morning commute. Rooftops in London and New York have been overrun by downward-dogging yogis in recent years so it was only a matter of time before Melburnians were chomping at the bit to master their pigeon poses from on high. Prahran hotel The Cullen had an overwhelming response to a rooftop session with US yoga sensation Patrick Beach last year and has plans to hold similar workshops early in 2015. Keep an eye on the Art Series Hotel Group's Facebook page for dates. \

» The Cullen, 164 Commercial Road, Prahran. www.facebook.com/artserieshotels



5 FOR THE MOVIE BUFF ROOFTOP CINEMA

Surrounded by city buildings, underneath the stars, this could be the most cinematic spot to watch a film in Melbourne. For its ninth season, the rooftop of Curtin House will play host to cult classics and new releases sure to convert even the most indoor of types. Films screen until early April, with Oscar-nominated flicks *The Imitation Game* and *The Theory of Everything*, 1980s favourite *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and Ryan Gosling's abs in *Crazy, Stupid, Love* among the highlights. Lounge back in the deckchairs, enjoy the food and drinks on offer, and spare a thought for the poor sucker stuck at work in the office next door. \

» Curtin House, 252 Swanston Street, Melbourne. www.rooftopcinema.com.au

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