

travel



cosmopolitan bliss

SARAH BLINCO GETS A TASTE OF BIG CITY LIVING AT THE STUNNING SOFITEL BRISBANE.

DURING THESE precarious economic times, we're hearing a lot about holidaying at home.

While vacationers from the Darling Downs or Brisbane may head to the Gold Coast for a short break, where do we go for a change of pace?

There's an ideal cosmopolitan location in the heart of our capital city, Brisbane, where sits a hotel so surprising in its elegance and luxury that it was an absolute delight to discover. The Sofitel Brisbane is vast, supremely beautiful and welcoming. The hotel is right on top of the Queen Street Mall precinct, so you can shop 'til you drop or stay in and enjoy being treated like an A-lister.

If you're like me and love your food, I'm sure you'll agree that the dining options at this sleek hotel are impressive. Pause at Whistlestop Bar for a drink with friends, then treat yourself to dinner at Thyme² Restaurant (www.thyme2.com.au), which delivers an inspiring and entertaining experience within an interactive kitchen. At Cuvée Lounge Bar (www.cuveelounge.com.au), discerning tastes are indulged with labels from some of the world's great Champagne houses, complemented by a delectable selection of wines and delightful martini menu.

Then, of course, there's the unsurpassable Club Sofitel. Located on level 30, towering over beautiful Brisbane City, is the spacious, secluded luxury retreat where Sofitel Club members can unwind at any hour of the day. Make believe you're at the centre of the world as you enjoy anything from a cheeky Champagne breakfast to decadent daytime refreshments and evening snacks. Sit back in a comfy lounge and gaze out to the lit-up city buildings as you make friends with other guests or silently relish in your own thoughts. Equipped with entertainment features and the latest in computer and communications technology, this is one club you'll want to be registered with.

Some may prefer to work off lunch with a walk by the Brisbane River, through the Botanical Gardens or into the sensational city limits where the credit card is sure to be tried and tested – all within minutes of the hotel. There's no need to leave for a fitness fix though. Take a dip in the lavish pool or test drive the new SoFit Gymnasium, open daily from 6am until 9pm. Check out the virtual gym instructor, which will show you how to take full advantage of the cardio equipment, cross-trainers, strength building

equipment and stretch facilities as you tone up to inspirational sweeping CBD views.

Just when you think this stunning hotel can't get any better, you'll discover Stephanie's Spa Retreat (www.stephaniessparetreat.com.au). This sensational spa is unlike any other we've been to. It looks and smells divine and offers an array of treatments to be enjoyed alone or with company. The decadent Opal Rasul Temple steam treatment is a must with your partner, to be followed by a soothing massage or treatment. Pure heaven.

Glamorous, luxurious and a break away from home; if a sexy big city break is what you think you need, look no further than Sofitel Brisbane for all the delights you can imagine, plus so much more. Be sure to sign up online at the hotel's new websites (including those for Thyme² and Cuvée Lounge Bar) because accommodation and dining specials are uploaded regularly along with entertainment news and local deals.

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www.sofitelbrisbane.com.au