

Checking in

The newly opened QT Bondi makes it easy for visitors to slot right in to the vibrant beachfront community at its doorstep.

The first things you see when you walk into the lobby of the QT Bondi are a specially commissioned wall of photo collages and two digital installations by artist Shaun Gladwell, who famously burst onto the Australian art scene with his 2000 video piece *Storm Sequence*, in which he performs flips on his skateboard at Bondi's beachside skate park as a wild storm rolls in. In one notable image on the wall a soldier in camouflage balances the tip of a machine gun on his palm as he runs through nonplussed bikini-clad sunbathers at Sydney's most famous beach. "The Bondi landscape was essentially my studio for many years," Gladwell says of the artworks, "and my QT commission really encapsulates the energy and vibrancy of the local context."

As the only boutique designer hotel in the area, the QT is big on local context, actively seeking to engage with this unique beachside community by enlisting Bondi personalities like P.E. Nation designer Pip Edwards to provide insider tips and guides on making the most of your stay – see box, right.

The live-like-a-local ethos extends to eating out. There's no in-house restaurant here: instead the concierge will direct you to the dining hotspots, including QT partner Icebergs Dining Room & Bar overlooking the southern end of the beach, where you can sample Maurice Terzini's seafood-focused regional Italian cuisine and simply charge it back to your room.

The casual beach-chic concept is reflected in the guest suites, which are decked out in a beachy palette of fresh pastels and breezy designer touches. Everything in my room seems oversized, from the massive king-size bed to the walk-in rain shower, unusually deep bathtub and equally deep balcony. None of the suites look out to the beach, but you're unlikely to spend large chunks of the day lounging out on the balcony anyway. Instead hit the dramatic Bondi to Coogee coastal walk, or grab one of the pastel-coloured guest bicycles lined up outside the lobby and explore the boutiques and cafes in the back-streets, browsing the sleek casual wear at Saturdays Surf NYC, next door to the QT in the Pacific Bondi complex, and the selection at Tuchuzy, which stocks local labels Dion Lee and Bassike alongside Acne, Alexander Wang and Rag & Bone. Or you could always stroll across the road to that iconic stretch of sand (and don't forget to ask for a beach towel at reception).

6 Beach Road, Bondi; www.qtbondi.com.au.

LA VIDA LOCAL

Check out the QT Life section of the hotel's website for a series of curated guides for foodies, fashionistas and bar-hoppers by Bondi veterans.

The QT has also partnered with a selection of local businesses to fast-track your immersion in the Bondi lifestyle, including these options – just ask the concierge.

- Heat things up with a morning session of hot yoga at Power Living's Bondi Beach studio.
- Catch a break with a surf lesson by North Bondi-based Let's Go Surfing.
- Grab a table at the breakfast hot spot Porch & Parlour (www.porchandparlour.com), opposite the North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club.



Part of a wall of Shaun Gladwell images at the QT Bondi.



The living room in an Atrium Suite. **Above:** all rooms offer the bespoke QT Gel Bed mattress with a top layer of gel to maximise the sleep factor.

