



SAMARA COLUMNIST

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WINING AND DINING AS A FOOD LOVER

BY ALANA LOWES

Don't ever let anyone tell you that a business meal is not about the food or that it is essentially an extension of what otherwise would have been a dull, serious office meeting – they are wrong! When a meeting request pops into my inbox, I quickly scan the details and hone in on the location. I buzz with excitement knowing that a meeting will be somewhere deliciously gratifying.

Unlike the French who will wine and dine clients with a stuffy three courses, the obligatory cheese platter and, of course, champagne to celebrate closing the deal (I know, it doesn't sound so bad but read on), there's a way to wine and dine your clients just as lavishly while giving them more of a special experience.

Here are my five-star hotel picks and why I love them:

Vintaged Bar & Grill, Hilton Brisbane

Chic and savvy

With a striking backdrop of a dry aged meat cabinet and an illuminated Himalayan Rock Salt feature wall, as you walk in, first impressions are certainly exciting. If this doesn't already have you salivating, then a quick turn and you're faced with a floor-to-roof glass wine and cheese room, which will make any foodie business women (which I am sure all of you are) weak at the knees. Executive Chef Jeremy Clark and his team handpick seasonal produce and have been awarded a Good Food Guide Chef's Hat for their meticulously delicious but relaxed menu.

Why I love it:

The 5.5m long wine table features a stunning end-to-end ice well illuminated by LEDs, which is perfect for a wine tasting event.

Why you will love it:

\$20 set lunch menu featuring five signature dishes to choose from and a glass of wine or craft beer, plus the free wifi. There's also a high-tech business centre adorned with original sketches from renowned modernist, Harry Seidler.

www.vintagedbarandgrill.com

Aria Bar & Lounge, The Langham Melbourne

Classic and refined

There is just something so special about taking tea in an elegant hotel. From the moment you step inside The Langham Melbourne, you feel as though you have been warped back in time to another era of elegance and sophistication.

As you ascend the grand stairs to Aria Bar, you inhale the luxury and scent of freshly baked scones. If you have a little tête à tête and you would like a beautifully informal setting, this is definitely my pick.

Why I love it:

The signature Langham ^{LOWE} Afternoon Tea (High Tea) with finger sandwiches and luscious sweet treats for only \$49 per person on weekdays.

Why you will love it:

Meeting rooms with views across the Yarra River and you can arrange for catering if needed.

www.ariabar.com.au

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Blu Bar on 36, Shangri-La Hotel Sydney

Casual cocktails and jaw-dropping view

Nothing is more impressive than sweeping 180-degree views of Sydney Harbour while sipping a sophisticated and expertly prepared cocktail. If you're after a more casual affair, Blu Bar on 36 – on the 36th floor of the Shangri-La – is wonderfully remarkable. The cocktail list has been created by talented mixologists, and with drink names like 'Fields of Gold' and 'Glenlivet Smash', you are bound to have a successful business meeting here.

Why I love it:

What's not to love about the 'Harbourside Rose' cocktail: a mix of gin, watermelon liqueur, grapefruit, lychee, egg white and spiked with rose syrup. Oh and there's a selection of tapas to snack on as well.

Why you will love it:

18 meeting and event rooms for small and large groups, many with harbour views featuring the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

www.36levelsabove.com.au



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