

PIANO ROOM

HEAD TO THE BRIGHTEST LIGHTS OF OUR BIGGEST CITY WHERE YOU'LL FIND PIANO ROOM
NESTLED NEATLY UNDER THE NEON COCA-COLA BILLBOARD IN POTTS POINT.

For most Sydneysiders the celebrated Coke sign, located at the top of William Street, has long been a household name. Whether it be a tool for navigation heading into Sydney's bar district Kings Cross, "just turn left at the Coke sign", or a place of nostalgia where *Strictly Ballroom*'s Scott Hastings and 'just Fran' fell in love – the red and white neon Coca-Cola billboard has undoubtedly become a Sydney icon. So, for clever and savvy hotel entrepreneurs, Mim Salvato and Greg Magree, what better place to locate your new bar than neatly nestled "underneath the Coke sign".

As we make our way through the dim-lit interior of Piano Room, it is instantly clear that this is a Sydney interpretation of a New York style bar. Perched up on an oh-so-comfy velvet lined sofa and looking out the open window onto Sydney's renowned and ever-buzzing William Street, it's easy to see why the thriving bar has been so popular since opening earlier this year. On weekdays, Piano Room is a fine venue for a quiet after work wine-and-dine session. On weekends, the venue ups the anti and reinvents itself, becoming a perfectly splendid hotspot, ideal for a boogie on the dance floor and a night out in the heart of Sydney.



With the interior designed in a mix of striking materials, Piano Room successfully combines the likes of velvet, leather and marble to create a décor that whispers wealth. When co-owners Salvato and Magree set out to create the bar, it appears they had the aim of combining the beckoning worlds of music, old Hollywood and modernity. In theory, it could resemble what one might imagine the home of a bower bird to look like – considering its assorted treasure-trove of vintage lamps, art deco bird cages filled with candles, leopard statues and emerald green upholstered lounge chairs. Yet, in practice, it works. Overall, the chic venue fruitfully presents itself as an opulent blend of timeless 1920s charm, armed with an edge of stylish modern glamour.

VIPs flock to the venue, and have included Silverchair’s Daniel Johns, Director Baz Luhrmann, *Australia*’s very own Hugh Jackman, *Sex and The City*’s Chris Noth, and local model Cheyenne Tozzi (just to name a few). To say the demographic is selective is an understatement; the crowd is personally handpicked by Piano Room management in an attempt to assure only the desired patronage is allowed in. Perhaps for this reason, Piano Room has been the venue of choice for various eminent Sydney events, and has hosted some exclusive bashes, including the Rosemount Australian Fashion Week closing party and the David Jones American Express Card launch.

Whilst Piano Room is not particularly known for its cuisine, the Chandon degustation menu is nothing short of superb! From the delicious appetisers of chipotle spiced calamari or grilled quail with coriander dressing to the more filling dishes of chargrilled scampi or seared Wagyu with chestnut mushrooms, the food does not disappoint. The diverse range of Chandon wine that accompanies each course does not go astray either! Each course was served by the friendly staff, who in addition to being nice on the eye were also friendly, well-informed on the bar’s background and up-to-date with the food and beverage menus. Surprising enough, this can be a rarity in Sydney bars.

Looking at the abundant selection of cocktails that are available, it is easy to become dizzy with sensory overload. Whether it be “The Rat Pack Martini” - a tribute to the original Vegas party animals – or “A Sloe Car named Desire” – a post-modern twist on the classic sidecar, they all sound great, they all look great and whilst my alcohol tolerance would not allow me to try them all, the ones I did try, tasted great!

Piano Room has remained true to its name and central theme, music. Every Wednesday from 8pm the bar holds ‘Singers and Songwriters’, a series of live performances designed to showcase up and coming musicians. On Thursdays, Glynis Traill-Nash, renowned Sydney journalist and now performer, takes her position next to the baby grand piano. As Tshe takes the stage, the chatter between the intimate crowds, of predominantly thirty-something patrons, ceases in chorus as all guests wait eagerly to hear the voice of the striking redhead adorned in sparkles. She performs an eclectic mix of popular jazz numbers, and her voice is soothing and sexy; and unlike many other bars, it is not so loud that you cannot hear yourself think.

As we finish our cheese platter (which was delicious torture, knowing yet a few more flights would need to be climbed on the step machine tomorrow), we depart our cosy lounge area and are on our way to leave the venue. As Traill-Nash begins the classic song “The way you look tonight”, a sense of angst washes over me. Realising just how many of those luscious cocktails are still yet to be tasted, Piano Rooms’ seductive energy persuades my guest and I to make yet one last stopover at the bar – I think this time I will try the “Piano Man”, it sounds tasty and according to the menu, ‘we are all in the mood for a melody’!

BOX BRIEF

- PIANO ROOM ■ “Underneath the Coke Sign” - Corner of Kings Cross & Darlinghurst Roads, Potts Point Sydney. 02 9326 0633 www.pianoroom.com.au
- PRICES ■ Chandon 5 course degustation menu, wine included \$55 per head. Cocktails range from \$14-30
- OCCASION ■ From 6.30pm all nights, perfect for quiet dinner and drinks with friends/family/colleagues. On Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10pm perfect for a great night out with fantastic tunes!
- GOOD POINTS ■ Drinks, although quite pricey, are worth every dime. The food is delicious, the music fantastic and the staff friendly and professional
- NOT SO GOOD POINTS ■ Whilst it did add an extra element to the night, we counted five police cars/ambulances speeding past with sirens blaring as we ate, but there has to be a price for such a handy location!