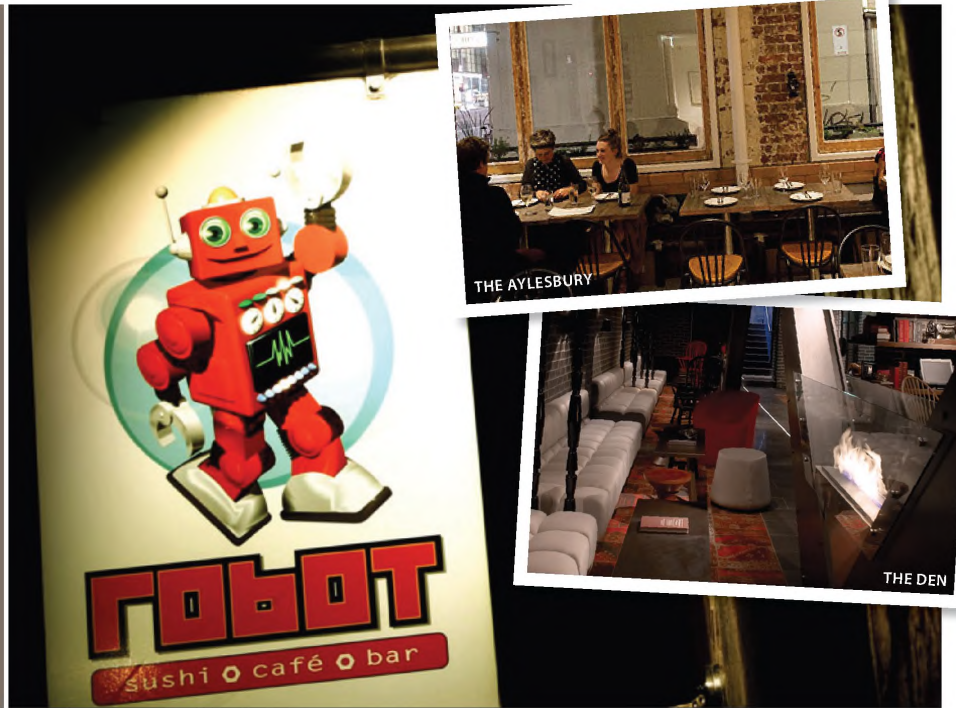


# The bars to haunt

We're back this month with three more city drinking spots for young lawyers to try. All have earned our stamp of approval. In this edition, we're looking at small intimate venues, each with their own quirks and charms. They're all hidden down alleyways and above or below restaurants and ideal for a quiet winter evening.



## The Aylesbury Rooftop

Level 5, 103 Lonsdale Street  
[www.theaylesbury.com.au](http://www.theaylesbury.com.au)

This small rooftop bar above The Aylesbury restaurant is one of the best kept secrets in Melbourne. You reach it via a lift to the fifth floor. It feels a bit like you're visiting someone's apartment, which is apt given the size of the place.

This is by no means a large bar – maximum occupancy is capped at 60 people – and most of the available space is taken up by the rooftop terrace with long and large group tables, and bar stools around the outer edge.

The views of the surrounding buildings, which are all much taller, make you feel like you've found a secret sanctuary among the imposing corporate world. It's not the highest rooftop in Melbourne, but it could be the most charming.

The drinks list is fairly standard for this type of bar, with a decent selection of cocktails and a few distinct beers and ciders. Prices are also fairly standard. What isn't standard is the ambience, which is a pleasant combination of cool and casual, without any of the usual hipster pretence.

## Robot Sushi Bar

12 Bligh Place (off Flinders Lane)  
[www.robotsushi.com](http://www.robotsushi.com)

This tiny bar is, in typical Melbourne fashion, hidden at the end of a laneway. They've definitely made the most of their small space, with two levels and the ability to open things out into the laneway on warmer evenings.

If you're after a sake (Japanese rice-wine), this is the place to come. They have a many and varied selection and the Japanese bar staff will happily talk you through the differences in varieties, flavours and intensities.

Robot also has a generous assortment of imported Japanese beers. Prices can be a little high, but the quality is excellent.

Robot hosts anime nights on Tuesdays from 9pm and is open until very late (i.e. until you're ready to go home) on Friday and Saturday. It never seems to get too crowded so you can always find somewhere to sit. A great spot for a night out with a small group.

## The Den @ The Atlantic

Crown Promenade (Ground level, between Queensbridge and King Street)  
<http://theatlantic.com.au/the-den>

Yes, this is at Crown. But hear us out, because this tiny bar, hidden underneath The Atlantic restaurant, is fantastic and nobody knows it's there.

You enter by descending a small, nondescript staircase, and have to walk through a fancy restaurant to get to it. There's a high chance you'll have the place to yourselves, and you'll certainly have no problem finding a comfy seat.

Most importantly, a good chunk of the available floor space is taken up by a baby-grand piano, where you'll find a pianist on Friday and Saturday evenings. He'll even play Billy Joel's greatest hits if you slip him a tenner.

The drinks are a bit on the expensive side, however this is a happy compromise when you have a pianist tinkling the ivories in the background. It's the perfect place to start or finish an evening. ■

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