



Where to hibernate

Toasty ... the Three Weeds (left) and Carrington Inn. Photos: Marco Del Grande, Glen McCurtayne

Lenny Ann Low finds the snug bars and boltholes with dim interiors and crackling fires.

AS THE chill sets in, thoughts turn to warming tipples before roaring fires in cosy pubs and bars. Warm your toes, quaff a hot toddy and snack on hearty bar food at these inviting and snug drinking establishments.

Carrington Inn, 21 Malbon Street, Bungendore, 6238 1044

Inside the Carrington's 123-year-old main building is a small 180-year-old mahogany bar imported from England. Framed by lit candles, twinkling wall lights and shelves of glass beer mugs and bottles, the polished bar stands beside a crackling log fire. Warm your back on the tall wooden chairs at the counter or nestle on the nearby ornate antique sofa. This former bordello, general store and Cobb & Co inn has five adjoining restaurant rooms with roaring fireplaces, candle-lit tables, antiques and velvet drapes.

Settlers Arms Inn, 1 Wharf Street, St Albans, 4568 2111

Built in 1836 from convict-hewn sandstone, the Georgian-style Settlers Arms Inn is one of the oldest hotels in the country. It used to be a stop-off for Cobb & Co coaches. It is easy to imagine weary travellers imbibing

ale before the broad fireplaces. Convict tools and images of St Albans during the 19th century decorate the sandstone walls and there is another snug drinking room across the entrance hall, with a crackling fire. For a scenic drive from Sydney, catch the car ferry at Wisemans Ferry, turn left and follow the sometimes unsealed road next to the meandering Macdonald River.

The Three Weeds, 197 Evans Street, Rozelle, 9818 2788

Walk through to the back for a toasty sandstone open fireplace, soaring ceilings, dark timber floors and beams and lacy wooden chandeliers. The mood is modern chic meets ye olde pub, with long communal tables, chunky bar stools, views to an abundant walled garden and specialist beers on tap. Those after intimate chats can recline in the wine bar's leather club chairs, or amid the lounge's lush salon featuring velvet banquettes and a twinkling chandelier.

Madame Fling Flong, Level One, 169 King Street, Newtown, 9565 2471

Perched high above the grunge and bustle of King Street, Madame Fling Flong is an

intimate cocktail lounge filled with overstuffed retro lounges and armchairs upholstered in velvet and flocked fabric. Fringed table lamps and art nouveau and art deco light fittings spread a rosy glow across a gold-coloured, studded padded bar, lush window drapes and tomato-red walls fixed with old fashioned mirrors and delicate ladies' fans. Hearty plates of grilled chorizo, marinated olives, marinated mushrooms and stuffed peppers are delivered from the bar's sister establishment, Soni's, on the ground floor. On Tuesday nights, the armchairs are clustered into rows for movies projected on a screen pulled from the ceiling.

Nude at the Australian Youth Hotel, 63 Bay St, Glebe, 9692 0414

The walls are crammed with paintings of nude or nearly naked women and the venue used to be a brothel. Nude, an inviting upstairs wine and cocktail bar, has red and chocolate-hued couches, velvet curtains and chandeliers. DJs create a cordial, jazzy mood. Snuggle up beneath large paintings of semi-clothed nurses and reclining brothel madams while sipping an S & M cocktail's blend of cognac, cinnamon, cream and vanilla.

Sir Stamford at Circular Quay, 93 Macquarie Street, city, 9252 4600
Sink into richly upholstered fabric and leather couches by the impressive open fireplace in The Bar, a genteel room with a lovely old-fashioned feel. Boutique-sized, The Bar has multiple cosy seating spots, antique paintings, engraved table lamps, Italian silk wall coverings, Persian rugs and a grand piano tucked in at the entrance. Splurge on various high teas or order an Irish coffee or a polar bear (hot chocolate, sambuca and Baileys) while pondering the wintry tree branches beyond this five-star hotel's tall front windows.

Bambini Wine Room, 185 Elizabeth Street, city, 9283 7098

A European-style bar with flagstone floors, leather banquettes, dark wood fittings and fabric lamps fixed to caramel-hued walls, Bambini is snug and elegant. The menu of Australian, French and Italian wines is extensive and bar snacks such as whisky cured salmon gravlax or dips with toasted Turkish bread are filling. Such a Parisian-style wine salon is rare among the CBD's mostly hard-edged and flatscreen TV-choked drinking holes. It can be tricky getting a seat in the warm and dimly lit interior, or at the footpath tables under gas heaters, but this is a perfect city winter bolthole.