



GREAT LOCATION, SOME SERVICE ISSUES, THE HIGH IS THE PIE!

Adelaide Club of Adelaide, Australia

by Lew Toulmin

We stayed at the Adelaide Club (AC) in Adelaide, Australia for seven nights in June-July 2013, and compiled a full report.

History

The first gentleman's club in Adelaide was founded in 1838, when the streets were still a sea of mud and many residents lived in tents and "humpies" – huts made of bark and branches. Various clubs failed but eventually in 1863, 150 years ago, the current Adelaide Club was founded, built its current clubhouse at the center of town, and survived. The club has remained a gentleman's-only club, although female guests are permitted and encouraged. The nearby Queen Adelaide Club is reserved for ladies, and many of the leading government, business and academic couples of Adelaide hold memberships in both institutions.



The AC has about 1500 members, and has reciprocal relations with about 60 clubs around Australia and the world.

Location and Parking

The Club is extremely well located in the heart of downtown, near the main train station, all the major museums, the beautiful Botanical Garden, the Festival Center, the University of Adelaide, and across the street from the Governor-General's mansion. Adelaide was planned very well in the 1830s by Col. William Light, and the Club is near the figure 8 of parks that Col. Light provided around the downtown. The city is a manageable, easy to navigate town of a

million although it feels smaller. The Club has four floors, is built of “bluestone” (really reddish brown stone), with a red portico, and is about 80 feet wide, with no gardens or surrounding land. There is no sign on the club except the address, 165.

Complimentary parking is provided in the small lane just east of the Club, and in the large, locked, Myer Center parking lot a bit further east. Other on-street parking is not practical, and parking on the street or in the lane is not advisable on weekend nights, when car mirrors are occasionally knocked off by disgruntled locals refused entrance to the Club!

Public Rooms and Facilities



The public rooms of the AC are attractive, decorated in a Victorian style, and filled with original art and trophy heads of animals. The rooms include several large meeting rooms, a library, two lounges, a large breakfast room, self-operating laundry room, and a business room with a computer and printer. There is no fitness center, but there is access to two nearby commercial fitness centers. A billiard room has two large billiard tables. Complimentary wireless computer access is provided in all bedrooms. A side entrance allows members and guests who are casually dressed to enter and leave the Club easily and discreetly. As a result, we were able to stay six days and only had to dress up once, for a formal dinner in the club dining room. Breakfast attire is casual.

Bedrooms

Our bedroom, number 3, was comfortable but not gorgeous, with a good double bed, wide screen TV, small refrigerator, desk, bureau, very high ceilings, and good, quiet HVAC. It was a bit dark, and there was no safe. The room was about 16 x 11 feet. There was no convenient place to eat, during a snack or room service. The en-suite bathroom had a large



shower that was quite difficult to adjust. We rated the accommodation as a B. Our room cost \$140 USD per night plus a 10% reciprocal charge. This rate is perhaps 20-40% lower than nearby downtown hotels. There are 11 bedrooms.

Food

Restaurant prices in Australia generally run 50 to 150% higher than in the US, reflecting the minimum wage for temporary workers of \$25 USD/hour (!). Prices in the Club are lower than the general local average, with the Club charging \$13 USD for most starter courses, \$29 for main courses, and \$11 for desserts. The same menu is available for room service and in the dining room. Room service is speedy but often items are left out or mistaken, while dining room service is accurate but quite slow.

Food quality ranges from sublime to below average. The deconstructed lemon meringue pie was the best lemon meringue pie we had ever had (!), with a glorious smooth meringue and really lemony curd. By deconstructing the pie, all gelatin can be left out of the curd, since it does not have to support anything. For once, deconstruction actually makes sense and the resulting dish is much better. Items such as salmon, bread, pepper steak, lamb shank pie, rocket salad, potatoes and puree of cauliflower were excellent. But a few items like veal tortellini, whiting, and garfish were below average to poor. A full cooked breakfast is expensive, at \$17 USD, but a complimentary breakfast of cereal, bread, coffee and fruit is available. Full dining room service is not available on weekends, but continental breakfast is.

Service

Front desk staff were very helpful. The service in the dining area was quite slow but the maître d', from the US, was very knowledgeable and interesting.

Although one source has this club as having "limited reciprocity services," we did not detect that. The Adelaide Club does not offer shoe shine services, a minor matter.



Rules

Business attire (jacket and collared shirt, with tie) is required in most parts of the Club. Jeans and t-shirts are never allowed. According to the rules, women are allowed "in all areas of the Club with the exception of the Main Dining Room, Members' Bar and Large Smoking Room on

weekdays between 10 am and 4 pm, and the Small Smoking Room on Fridays between 10 am and 4 pm.”

In summary, a Club well worth a visit – and get that pie!