

Night Time Entertainment in Dunedin

It's often pointed out that the statue of the Scottish poet Robbie Burns which dominates the Octagon has his back to the kirk and his face to the pub, something of which the strict Presbyterian founding fathers no doubt would have disapproved. Today he faces not one, but almost a dozen watering holes. The Octagon at the centre of Dunedin is also the centre of cafes, bars and entertainment. Here, and in the surrounding streets you'll find everything from bistros and up market restaurants to casual cafes, intimate bars, lively nightclubs and fast food outlets, as well as cinemas and theatres.

Three or four blocks to the south of the Octagon, near the exchange and Queens Gardens, in what was once the city's commercial centre, there are other restaurants and venues worth seeking out.

And about three or four blocks north of the Octagon towards the university, there's a host of cheap Asian eateries as well as some more up-market cafes and restaurants and lively student watering holes.

Clubs

Many of the bars mentioned in the Dining Section have DJs or live music at the weekend, but the city's main nightclub is **Bath St** (1 Bath St, phone (03) 477 6750), with the dubious distinction of being the oldest dance music venue in New Zealand - it's been around for more than a decade. There's no sign - look for the doorman in the tiny street after 10pm. It offers a diet of reggae, drums and base, hip-hop and house, popular with the younger set who dance and drink till dawn.

Also in Bath St is **Tull** (29 Bath St, phone (03) 477 5331) where you'll find old hippies revelling in folk music on Sunday nights.

Arc (135 High St, phone (03) 474 1135) is big on alternative music, especially New Zealand music, and is a great place to hang out.

Crown Hotel (179 Rattray St, (03) 477 0132), around the corner from Arc, has the best rock band room in town next door to a traditional working class public bar.

In Princes St, just south of the Octagon are two more bars, the sophisticated **Isis**, a piano bar specialising in tequilas, with live music on Friday and Saturday nights - great for a wind down. It's also open for lunch (68 Princes St, (03) 477 8001). Alongside that is the noisy **Brimstone** (66 Princes St, (03) 470 1666) that is popular with a younger crowd at night and doubles as a pizzeria during the day.

In the south-eastern quadrant of Moray Pl, at 478 is **Toast Cocktail bar** with live music some nights (phone (03) 479 2177) and in the north-east quadrant you'll find the **Woolshed**, themed, as the name suggests, round farming and the mythical "southern man". Described as "meat and two veg pub and a pick up spot for the over 45s", it features mainly covers bands. (318 Moray Pl, phone (03) 477 3246).

Heading towards the university you'll find **Two Bears Cafe and Bar** (21 Frederick St, phone (03) 477 1816) a "scoring area" for students. And on campus, in the basement of the University Union (640 Cumberland St) **Refuel Bar** (phone (03) 479 5309) competes with Arc for the modern alternative music scene Wednesdays to Saturdays during term time, with a special gay night once a month.

Pit, a lively gay-friendly bar (320 Princes St, phone (03) 477 7626) with thursday night quizzes and other special events from time to time (visit www.pit.co.nz to find out what's on and see photos of its staff and patrons) is run by broadcaster Rex Simpson.

Cinemas and Performing arts venues

To find out what's on in Dunedin, check the **Otago Daily Times** (there's a "What's On" listing of gigs, shows, plays and exhibitions on Thursdays and ads through the week). Also worth checking are the Star community paper, published Thursdays, and Fink, a weekly newsletter found in cafes and other venues. You'll also find posters in many cafes and on the streets.

Dunedin's grandest and largest theatre is the Regent - ornately decorated, the venue for large touring and local shows, home to a couple of annual film festivals and the local **Ticketek** outlet (17 Octagon, phone (03) 4778579). It also holds a famous 24-hour book sale each winter (usually sometime in May or June) at which thousands of people rummage through thousands of second hand books, sheet music and other bric-a-brac.

Dunedin's professional live theatre, the **Fortune Theatre** occupies a historic bluestone building on the corner of Moray Pl and Stuart St that was once a church (231 Stuart St, phone (03) 477 1292). A variety of plays, shows and musicals, from light and frothy to seriously interesting, are staged regularly on the main stage or in the intimate Studio theatre. You'd be pushed to find ice cream more delicious than the locally-made Gourmet Ice Creams available during the interval. (You can also find it in local supermarkets.)

Dunedin has four cinemas. Two are multiplexes - **Hoyts** with 6 screens (33 Octagon, movie information line (03) 477 7019), and **Rialto** with 3 screens and a new DVD cinema (111 Moray Pl, phone (03) 477 2200).

The city's tiniest cinema with just 53 seats is the Metro which shows mainly arthouse films but also some with wider appeal. It also serves decent espresso from a vintage machine (phone (03) 474 3350). It's tucked away in the Town Hall building with its entrance in Moray Pl, right next to the main doors to the Town Hall auditorium.

The **Town Hall** and the smaller **Glenroy Auditorium** (entrance from Harrop St, the narrow street between St Paul's Cathedral and the Municipal Chambers between the upper Octagon and Moray Pl) are run by the Dunedin Centre (phone (03) 474 3614). Concerts of all sorts as well as other entertainment, expos and conferences are held here.

In the university area you'll find the **Academy Cinema** (50 Dundas St, phone (03) 477 9830) housed in a former church. It shows an eclectic mix of films and DVDs, from festival films on general release and drama, to cheesy B-grade horror.

During term time concerts and plays are regularly held at Otago University. Staff, students and guests of the music dept put on lunchtime concerts on Wednesdays in Marama Hall in the historic part of the campus behind the Archway in Union St (phone (03) 479 8886 or (03) 479 8906). Allen Hall Theatre (Corner of Leith and Union Sts, phone (03) 479 8896) runs a lively series of short plays in Lunchtime Theatre on Thursdays and Fridays as well as some evening shows.

The cute **Globe Theatre**, built on to a historic house by Patric and Rosalie Carey in the 1960s, has a long tradition of staging interesting amateur productions. (104 London St, phone (03) 477 3274).

The **Playhouse Theatre**, Albany St, phone (03) 477 6544), home to Dunedin Repertory Society, often stages children's productions during school holidays and is a venue for outside productions from time to time.

Westpac Mayfair Theatre (100 King Edward St (03) 455 4962) in South Dunedin is home to Opera Otago and also often used for visiting productions.