

take a bite of the big apple

Top of the Rock: The view of New York City from the Rockefeller Centre.



Who says you can't see New York in three days? NICOLE PARTRIDGE shows how it's possible to do the Big Apple in just that

DAY ONE

HELICOPTER FLIGHT OVER THE CITY

ARRIVING in a city as big as New York can be quite overwhelming. To give us a feel for what we were up against, we opted for a helicopter flight over Manhattan.

Our pick was the Big Apple tour with Liberty Helicopters. In just over 15 minutes flight time, we got a bird's eye view of some of NY's key attractions including the Statue of Liberty, the Chrysler building and the sprawling Manhattan skyline. New York is home to about 18.8 million people.

Flights leave from three locations in downtown Manhattan and New Jersey. **Tip: Book your flight online or at your hotel, or you'll be charged extra.**

Cost: \$A198 for the Big Apple Tour. www.libertyhelicopters.com

BLUE NOTE JAZZ CLUB

IT'S our first night in the city that never sleeps. Braving the cold, we head to Greenwich Village; home to one of New York's most famous jazz clubs – The Blue Note.

Established 25 years ago, the club has featured some of the greatest names in jazz, including Dizzy Gillespie, Stanley Turrentine, Oscar Peterson and Ray Brown.

We pre-booked to see legendary pianist, McCoy Tyner. The club is crowded, dark and filled with jazz enthusiasts. Apart from the music and great atmosphere, sharing a booth with some native New Yorkers is the highlight of the night.

Tip: Book in advance and be prepared to share your table – great way to meet the locals.

Cost: \$A15 plus to reserve a table. Meal and drinks extra. www.bluenote.net

DAY TWO

CARNEGIE'S EATERY

WE surface early and catch a taxi to Carnegie's Deli and Restaurant.

Renowned for its selection of meats and celebrity clientele, it's a

genuine NY experience. Every wall in the cafe is lined with framed pictures of sporting stars, movie stars, politicians and celebrities.

The eatery specialises in pastrami sandwiches piled high on the plate.

And by high, I mean high. The eatery sells monogrammed T-shirts that say: "Not all skyscrapers in NY are made of steel and glass."

"It's worth the taxi ride over there, to hear the overdressed woman with pink hair screech into her mobile phone in a distinct Queens accent: "Ahh, my gaahd, did you hear about Jennifer Anniston!"

Tip: Those who can't stomach the idea of a pastrami skyscraper for breakfast can do what I did and go for the eggs.

Cost: \$A25.40 for mixed deli and eggs. www.carnegiedeli.com

ST PAUL'S AND GROUND ZERO

LIKE many Australians, I can vividly remember watching the Twin Towers collapse on September 11, 2001. Visiting Ground Zero was always high on my list.

Encouraged by the Grey Line bus driver (a great way to travel), we start off with a visit to St Paul's church, directly across the street from the site. Built in 1766, it's the oldest public building in Manhattan.

More recently, the church served as a refuge for the hundreds of volunteers who worked round the clock in the months following September 11.

For eight months, volunteers served meals, made beds, counselled and prayed with fire fighters, construction workers, police and others.

Today, St Paul's displays an interactive exhibit called *Unwavering Spirit*. The stories, photographs and tributes to September 11 are moving and well worth a look.

After spending time in St Paul's, we head across the street to the Ground Zero observation platform.

The viewing area, erected soon after the attacks, is now home to several large billboards, explaining the re-development

of the site, which includes the construction of a memorial and museum and five new towers, one of which will be the 415-metre Freedom Tower.

We also encounter a homeless man who offers to tell the whole September 11 story – for a few bucks, please!

www.saintpaulschapel.org

CENTURY 21

OVER the road from Ground Zero is the multi-level discount department store Century 21.

Established 40 years ago, this shopper paradise sells anything designer at 40 to 70 per cent off the retail price.

Each floor is packed with bargains from women's and men's clothes, hand bags,

shoes, linen, and toys.

I rummage through racks and racks of clothing and emerge with a purple DKNY bubble jacket for \$A70. Hubby walks away with a Ralph Lauren woollen coat for around \$A140.

In 2006, Century 21 was voted the number one discount store in New York.

Tip: Wear flat shoes and eat before you go. You could be there a long time.

www.c21stores.com

BROADWAY

ADDING a bit of that old razzle dazzle to our whirlwind itinerary, we take in a show. With more than 39 Broadway shows available, it's hard to decide which one.

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Valentine's Day

Romance is invited. Reconnect with our special celebration package at Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas



\$175* per person includes accommodation, dinner, drinks AND breakfast

Celebrations are invited. Make your celebrations and parties truly memorable or simply treat a loved one and enjoy a night of 5 star luxury at Australia's premier resort destination. Available until end of March our special celebration package includes luxury accommodation, dinner in either Lagoons Restaurant or IL Pescatore Restaurant, drinks with your meal and North Queensland's best buffet breakfast. A true 5 star experience! Because you don't just stay here. You belong.

For information and to book your celebration, party or personal escape contact Reservations on 1800 818 831 or email res370.portdouglas@sheraton.com Visit www.sheraton.com/portdouglas

STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST™

*\$175 rate is Garden View per person, twin share. \$65 supplement for single. Dinner can be either Lagoons Buffet or 3 course IL Pescatore dinner (usual opening days only). Beverage package is 3 hour standard package. Breakfast is full buffet in Lagoons Restaurant. For locals only - proof of eligibility on check-in. Valid until 31/3/2009. Conditions apply. Subject to availability.