

## Business, the Australian Way

Review by Peter Myers

**Qantas' new Business Class is three years old, but remains one of the comfiest rides in the sky. Compound this with their ever-so-chic Business Class lounge in Singapore, and trans-global travel has never been so bearable.**

It is always refreshing to return to Aussie-style hospitality after a long break, and I had forgotten the way Qantas manages to somehow attract and foster the most down-to-earth crew (from chummy handshake-before-take-off to warm-smile-upon-disembarkation), and equally importantly, down-to-earth passengers.

Another down-to-earth feature on Qantas these days is their International Business Class, and its exceedingly ergonomically-pleasing, lie-flat sleeper seat, Skybed. Don't think dentist chair, think iPod generation bed which doesn't just adjust itself every which way, but also has built-in back massagers. In-flight, loop-system entertainment comes via a 26cm seat-back screen with high-quality noise reduction earphones. SMSs can be accessed via the in-seat telephone handset (with an innovative in-flight reply facility). A PC power outlet, clever storage options (including a shoe cupboard and glove box for spectacles and travel documents) and a water bottle holder nearly complete the picture.

So where the bloody hell was I? Oh yes, within this personal-cocoon-style seating, one has one's own space, to a certain extent (there's a privacy screen between seats) - especially when lying flat for serious down time - thus

The Internet has radically redefined tourism distribution channels and booking patterns. Qantas, for the second year running, tops the list of travel websites visited in Australia with an estimated 1.490 million visitors in an average four weeks, according to recent data from the Roy Morgan Tourism Monitor.



making airline travel bearable for those who find it increasingly difficult to share confined spaces with complete strangers.

Those who do like sharing (including, on my flight, rather overly-social, but positively charming, economy class passengers who preferred to keep sipping than sleeping) will love the self-service business bar, positioned between Business and Economy, which offers a nice range of snacks and beverages.

From self-service to silver service, a room-service style breakfast means that you select your menu before going to sleep on Qantas - and sleep comes easier now that the airline has launched an innovative cabin lighting system which relies solely on LED technology, coinciding with cabin activities and time of day to try and create a more relaxed and less intrusive in-cabin mood.

If you need to transit on Qantas, Singapore is the place to do it. Their year-old Qantas & British Airways Lounge is huge (2,000 sq.m), with seating for 400 customers. The design is spectacular, with dark timber accents and slatted timber dividing walls to give it an Asian flavour, contrasting with a cool limestone floor. Luxe bathroom facilities with 20 fully appointed shower suites are reached through a spa-like entrance way. A stylish, serviced bar offers a choice of seating - bar stools, lounge chairs or ottomans. Flat screen computers boast free internet access (it is incredible how many business lounges don't offer this mandatory service), and six well-equipped private workstations mean that eager-corporate-beavers need never be without printing, photocopying, phone and fax services. 🌐

*lifestyle + travel flew courtesy of Qantas (qantas.com) from Singapore to Sydney, then on to Auckland.*