# Elska Magazine celebrates Melbourne's gay community... and their bodies



Elska, an international project committed to showcasing the lives, bodies, and voices of gay communities worldwide, has turned its focus to Melbourne for its latest publication. This issue provides an intimate glimpse into the lives of everyday queer men from what is considered Australia’s most liberal city through a series of personal stories and evocative photography.

“Elska Melbourne is our third Australian adventure, following previous issues crafted in Perth and Sydney,” states Liam Campbell, Elska editor and chief photographer. “Even though those other Aussie editions were well-received, we often heard from people asking why we hadn’t featured Melbourne. Initially, I thought these inquiries stemmed from a sense of regional pride, but after consistently hearing that Melbourne is Australia’s queerest, most liberal, and artsy city, I knew we had to explore it ourselves.”

Upon arriving in Melbourne, Campbell and his team found the city lived up to its reputation. Elska’s hallmark is its unplanned, spontaneous approach, capturing subjects in both indoor and outdoor settings, and offering a mix of clothed and unclothed images. However, Melbourne proved unique. “For the first time in our nine-year history, every subject chose to bare all for their photos,” Campbell reveals. “This makes Elska Melbourne, our 48th issue, the first edition to feature exclusively nude photography. I believe this underscores just how queer, liberal, and artistic Melbourne truly is.”

The issue introduces readers to sixteen men from the local LGBTQ+ community, each depicted through a series of photographic portraits and accompanying personal stories penned by the subjects themselves. These narratives offer a profound connection to the individuals beyond the imagery.

Among the stories featured are John H’s reflections on experiencing gay liberation in the early 1970s, Luke B's memories of coming to terms with his sexuality in rural Australia, Zhi Z’s insights into self-discovery through travel, and Jayke F’s account of overcoming insecurities during a visit to a nude beach and finding appreciation for diverse body types.

Elska Melbourne spans 180 pages and is available both in a flagship print edition and as a downloadable e-version. Readers can purchase copies online through the Elska website and select stockists worldwide. Additionally, a companion e-zine, Elska Ekstra Melbourne, offers over 500 pages of outtakes and behind-the-scenes content, adding further depth to the central publication. Subscription services and a list of retailers carrying the magazine are detailed on the Elska website.