



Bury the hatchet in Melbourne

Embrace your inner lumberjack and get ready for an ax-ellent time at Melbourne's new urban ax-throwing venue

TEN YEARS AGO, STEVE THOMAS WAS LIVING in Toronto when a friend showed him video footage of what he was getting up to on Tuesday evenings. "My friend was attending ax-throwing competitions," says Steve. "I thought it was the coolest thing ever." Before long, Steve himself was walking down the dark alley to the warehouse to join in.

When Steve moved back to Australia, he missed the sport so much that he decided to open his own venue. Maniax opened in Sydney in 2015 and a second

branch just got going in Melbourne this year. "We were the first urban ax-throwing venue outside North America, but the sport is now booming. There are venues all over the world."

Inside a warehouse in the hip, inner-city suburb of Abbotsford, folks flock to play what Steve calls "darts on steroids". It has the feel of a grungy bowling alley, if grungy bowling alleys came with open metal cages. Despite the slightly

gloomy and spooky appearance — think skeletons wielding axes — Maniax is a place for serious fun. Upbeat rock music plays from the speakers and there are lots of laughs as people try to hit a target five meters away. "We've hosted a number of buck's nights, hen's parties and corporate team-building events," says Steve. "And one of our most popular nights is date night." Just make sure you don't have an argument beforehand.

Maniax Melbourne is at 19–21 Russell St, Abbotsford, and Maniax Sydney is at 1/75 Mary St, St Peters. For more info, visit maniax.com.au.

ASK THE EXPERT

What do first-time ax-throwers need to know?



Follow through: Once you learn the proper ax-throwing technique — as demonstrated by the instructors — the motions come easily. A common mistake is the lack of follow-through. Some people forget to let go of the ax. Make sure to follow the momentum so that the ax flies forward and not downwards into the floor.



Safety first: That means no open-toed shoes, and no alcohol. The axes are also sharp enough to stick into the wooden target, but they aren't deadly weapons. We sharpen the axes to get the nicks out of them, but then we blunt them after to make sure that they're not razor sharp.

—Steve Thomas, founder of Maniax