

Judge's notes

This was the first of our writing competitions, held in March 2020. Historian, Lucy Bracey, kindly judged the submissions and chose this one, by Lynne Dore, as the winner.

Lucy said, "I thought all the entries were very engaging. Overall, Lynne Dore takes the cake for me. Her entry was engagingly written around the general theme of promenading, taking the reader into the past and back again in a very evocative manner. I was transported from my wintry home isolation of April 2020 to the sunny, populated Collins Street of the 1960s."

Lynne has been sent a copy of *Melbourne's Twenty Decades* as a prize.

PROMENADING COLLINS STREET

Whether 'striding with purpose'ⁱ or slowly promenading down Collins Street, the experience for Melburnians and visitors alike is an exhilarating one. For many, walking the Paris end of Collins Street brings with it vivid reminders of Marvellous Melbourne and its frenzied construction period of the mid-1880s. The beautifully constructed now heritage registered buildings with their decorated facades and friezes, their gilded windows and massive entrance doors are reminiscent of a splendid and extravagant period that people still value and treasure today. While the sun umbrellas and shop awnings of the 1960s have given way to a more pared back streetscape, remnants of Melbourne's early beginnings still manage to captivate all who walk its pavements. From those seeking to purchase the latest couture garment, pamper one's self in a French fragrance or find that elusive fashion accessory, the 'Paris End' of Collins Street continues to offer an exclusive retail experience.

For those who walked its pavement in the 1960s, the streetscape was markedly different and reflective of the period. Wherein today the street displays no standing zones, has large concrete island tram stops and little or no external café furniture, the 60's scape was very different. As the photograph shows, the affordable every man's Australian made Holden car filled the street's parking bays, while the practical foldaway café furniture and brightly coloured sun umbrellas reflected a Parisian style dining opportunity. While the leafy trees still filter the rays of light as they did back in the 1960s and the green ornamental street lamps of the 1920s remain, the long shop awnings and café umbrellas are now gone.

Where etiquette once dictated the fashion of long waisted floral dresses, white gloves and stylish handbags there is a more casual approach evident today. For while promenading Collins Street once meant wearing your best outfit with matching or contrasting accessories and coffered hairstyles, these have now been replaced with a more relaxed style of designer ripped jeans, sneakers and backpacks.

So although fashions have changed, the Holden car is now defunct and the sun umbrellas have disappeared, Collins Street manages to retain its Parisian atmosphere through its heritage streetscape, clanging trams and its boutique retail experiences. To promenade the 'Paris End' of Collins Street is still a unique experience.

Lynne Dore (376 words)

ⁱ <https://www.collinsstreet.com.au/about/collins-st-precinct/>