

word *of* mouth

FEBRUARY 2008 *Playing swapsies in London's Shoreditch . . . France's unlikely new city of cool . . . Swimming to the center of the earth . . .*



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Let there be light:
At L.E.F.T. boutique, on Melbourne's Gertrude Street, designers include Yohji Yamamoto and Carpe Diem.

MELBOURNE

Gertrude Street

Melbourne has long played cultural hipster to Sydney's pop princess, and nowhere is this more evident than on Gertrude Street, which is evolving into a stylish stopover with indie art galleries, boutiques, and bistros. The revival of the once scruffy strip—often overlooked in favor of Brunswick Street, which runs perpendicular to it—began with a series of new eateries, including **Gertrude Street Enoteca**, an all-day café serving homemade food such as tarts and terrines, with an excellent choice of new-world wines (No. 229; 61-3-9415-8262; entrées, \$18–\$25). Then came the chichi renovation of the **Builders Arms Hotel**, >

the
BUZZ
(the neighborhood)

Photograph by Cameron Grayson

a former hangout for local ruffians that now has a retro-mod dining room peddling contemporary Middle Eastern fare such as tagines and harissa-coated prawns (No. 211; 61-3-9419-0818; entrées, \$18-\$26). Offering the finest in antipodean avant-garde fashion is the second branch of **Alice Euphemia**, with labels like Mala Brajkovic, Life With Bird, and Tina Kalivas (No. 114; 61-3-9417-4300), while **L.E.F.T.** carries international designers Yohji Yamamoto and Carpe Diem (No. 161; 61-3-8415-1363). For fans of offbeat movies, books, and music, **Title** is a must-visit, and particularly strong on '60s and '70s pop and reggae (No. 183; 61-3-9417-4477). The street is one of the best areas to explore Melbourne's vibrant art scene. Head to **Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces**, a public gallery that displays edgy installations. Next month, its "Oblivion Pavillion" will showcase some of Sydney's most talented young artists of all disciplines (No. 200; 61-3-9419-3406). And beginning in June, the **Gertrude Association** will turn the street into a solar-powered gallery, adorning building exteriors with light projections (thegertrudeassociation.com).



Come fly with me:
A Tiger Airways stewardess.

Brian Finke's Flight Attendants

(Buzz) book They were taken over the past two years, but Brian Finke's portraits of flight attendants—with their retro uniforms, immaculate updos, and rictus grins—look as if they belong to a bygone era of aviation. Finke, whose previous subjects included cheerleaders and football players, snapped his muses at work on domestic and international flights with such carriers as Delta and Cathay Pacific, and he also visited a flight attendant school, which yielded pictures of students fighting faux fires and flanking stairways to nowhere. The result, *Flight Attendants*, is a tableau that's part documentary, part caricature (PowerHouse Books, \$35).



CHINA

Grape Expectations

(Buzz) trend

The Chinese have a new fave tippie: vino. The nouveaux riches' purchasing power and Europhile tendencies have catapulted the popularity of grape wine and spawned a new Communist party-endorsed profession: wine tasting. By 2009, 766 million bottles will be swigged in China annually—a 79 percent increase since 1999—and even Wyclef Jean is rapping about it (in "China Wine," with songstress Ho Yeow Sun). Vintners to watch: Swarovski's **BODEGA LANGES** (86-335-218-6828; bodegalanges.com), Remy Cointreau's **DYNASTY FINE WINES** (852-2918-8000; dynasty-wines.com), and **HUADONG WINERY** (86-532-8387-4889; huadongwinery.com). Sip on that.



Nuru 32 ring by Sevan
(Barneys New York,
N.Y.C.; barneys.com).

Istanbul-based jewelry designer Sevan took cues from the Bosphorus and his city's time-worn mosques to dream up this lemon topaz and diamond ring, which took seven months to create. "I'm surrounded by rich history every day," says Sevan. "Inspiration comes easily."



By Oscar Niemeyer's Le Volcan.

(Buzz) city

FRANCE

Le Havre

The Atlantic port once derided as "Stalingard-sur-Mer" for its postwar poured-concrete buildings is now touted as a tour de force of modernism and has become a getaway for hip Parisians. Attractions include the perfectly preserved **APPARTEMENT TÉMOIN** in a 1950s high-rise (1 Pl. de l'Hôtel-de-Ville), the **MUSÉE MALRAUX**'s outstanding Impressionist collection (2 blvd. Clémenceau), Niemeyer's **LE VOLCAN** cultural center (Pl. Charles de Gaulle), and Jean Nouvel's new **LES BAINS DES DOCKS**, a waterfront complex with beaches, pools, and spas.

Zaha Hadid and Chanel's Karl Lagerfeld have teamed up for **MOBILE ART**, a traveling pavilion featuring 20 artists' take on ▶