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## SURF AND THE CITY

By James Cameron

"Only a surfer knows the feeling" is the famous line used by a famous surf company that pretty much captures it all. Even then, mention the idea of surfing to someone that has never done it – or even seen the ocean – and they're still fascinated, still intrigued to know what it must be like.

Without getting all spiritual and going off on a tangent, it's pretty magical and until you've given it a try, it is extraordinarily hard to describe just how good it is to feel the wave surge below, and to know that the board has the momentum and flow to allow you to stand up. Then to trim your way down a wall of water, to feel the mist and splash as you rock from rail to rail, racing the lip, taking in the power of the wave, using it and harnessing it, riding it out till all its energy has passed and you fall off the back, riding into flat water behind the wave. On a good day, you can have about six 'last' waves. It is like nothing else.

Surfing could never be accused of not being cool, but right now surfing and its essence – the basis of the original counter-culture movement of the 60s and 70s – has made a return. Boards have shortened and expanded into the twin fins of yore or become plumper, thicker and longer in search of simplicity and ease. Attitudes have softened from the competitive and aggressive nature of the last 25 years into free surfing watermen and women interested in more than just slashing a wave to pieces. And the hope

that the wave will still be there in 20 years and that the surf clothes we're wearing aren't damaging the very environment they promote have become high priorities.

Shops like Rhombus Surf Shop in Fitzroy have echoed these sentiments and are following in the impressive footsteps of Brooklyn's Mollusk in giving surf to the city. Or vice versa.

The rise of the city surf shop and surfer is more than a culture gone mainstream, and in some ways is the very rejection of it. A few

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years back, mainstream surfers realised they had more than just a coastal market and they started opening stores in the CBD. This is no bad thing really, as anything that promotes the beach and the outdoors has to be good right? But it's a shame to see so many mainstream surf stores exhibiting hypocrisy in their practise, with a complete lack of environmental concern in regards to the manufacture of their products. The point is: we won't have the outdoors if we continue like this.

This goes some way to explaining the 'new surf' culture, the new wave if you will. It's a lot more sophisticated these days. It has grown

up and matured and is a lot more considered. Surfers take their reference and lead from a wider and more varied pool of resources and this has given rise to the new surf shop, and a new surfer sub-culture. They are savvy, aware and well travelled; their search for the obscure, original and different has become the modus operandi. All of sudden small trends – like the short twin-fins of the 70s – have become the fixed gear bicycle of the surfing world. Old and retro shapers like Neal Purchase Jr, Donald Takayama and Bob McTavish have found new relevance with this retro-focused sub-genre, their skills and techniques looked upon with fresh eyes and new appreciation.

You would be excused for thinking that stores like Rhombus are stalwarts of the halcyon days of counterculture surfing of the 70s, given their attitudes, board shapes, colour palette and requisite facial hair. But their minds are squarely in the present.

Angus Wilson, of Rhombus, returned to Melbourne from New York a few years ago to find his love for surfing wasn't being fulfilled here. He decided to do something about it, but he didn't want to compromise on the other things that mattered to him, the things that kept him in the city. He worked out what it is he loves about the sport, speaking with shapers, makers and providers, and earlier this year opened Rhombus Surf Shop on Brunswick Street.

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## The Premises

By Jane De Graff

Long time coffee industry veterans have opened a terrific little cafe in Kensington.

For Alex Anderson and Kate Holloway it took a while to find the right location for their new cafe, The Premises. From London to Melbourne's north to finally settling in the west, there were a few false starts but eventually the right spot for this hospitality veteran duo came along – and seeing the Kensington cafe at brunch rush, you couldn't imagine the team working their magic anywhere else.



It's not quite perched on a corner, rather wrapped around it, with a shop frontage on either side of the neighbourhood florist, all fitting together like a lovely little puzzle. Inside, it's an assembly of found objects, reclaimed timbers, polished cement floors and racing green-toned splashbacks: a comfortable mixture of rural general store and inner-city cool. But despite their slipping easily into the local atmosphere, the west wasn't always where these proprietors wanted to be.

"Originally we were looking more in the north," says Alex, taking time off the rush of afternoon coffees to talk about the choice of location. "North Carlton, places like that. We were living in North Fitzroy, so we wanted to do something around there," he says with a

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# VINO

By Hilary McNevin

*Strawberries, cherries and an angel's kiss in spring. These summer wines may not be made of all these things, but we think they're worth a look for the warm months ahead.*

For those of us who like a drink, a glass of wine on a summer's eve seems more than a little appropriate. Delicate or bold flavours, complexity or simplicity and food and friends to accompany the bottle sounds like a blissful end to a warm day. There are some lovely, quirky varieties of white wine out there in the marketplace that are affordable, accessible and are drinking very well right now. We got sipping and found a few gems.

Vermentino is gaining attention here as a wine that grows well (and drinks well) in our climate. It originates from Sardinia in Italy and grows well in sunshine and sea air. The 2009 Chalmers Vermentino is a treat of a wine. Made near Mildura by the Chalmers family (who are producing some other really interesting varieties too), this white wine has a wonderful savoury depth to it, with good hints of fleshy grapefruit, some herbal notes and a saltiness reminiscent of the sea air.

Pinot Gris is another variety we have seen available for some time now and has more weight and complexity than the Vermentino. In a commercial sense, New Zealand gets more attention for its Sauvignon Blancs but Pinot Gris from New Zealand are, in simple terms, delicious. The 2010 Wither Hills Pinot Gris from Marlborough is a bright example of this wine from this region. There's gentle stonefruit – nectarine and peach – and floral touches, which lead to a lovely roundness and texture but it's not a sweet wine at all. The wine holds its structure, leaving a clean, dry finish on the palate and making it a



## HOUSEMUSEUM

By Caroline Clements

*The largest private collection of contemporary art in Australia is nestled in the quiet suburban streets of Kew, where 'Arthouse' takes on a new meaning.*

Several years ago Corbett Lyon sat in his office at Lyon Architects looking up at the artwork on his walls, a very small portion of his vast collection. This art was part of the largest private collection of contemporary Australian art in the country, and most of it was in storage. It seemed a shame so little of his collection was on display, all tucked away for nobody to see, so in 2004 he came up with the solution. He would build a house on a property in the suburbs his family had owned for over 30 years; it would be his new home, but it would also be his art's home. They would live there together, side by side, the art on display in his house, where patrons would be able to visit and view the work as they would in a gallery. This would be a 'housemuseum'.

*It is a fantastic work of architectural design that intentionally blurs the line between art gallery and domestic environment.*

Citing inspiration from a lineage of private collections in domestic settings such as The Guggenheim Museum in Venice, The Frick Collection in New York or, more locally, Melbourne's Heide Museum, Lyon wanted to take this concept of 'art in the home' one step further. He wanted to create the very first location – to his knowledge, in the world – where a family could live in a contemporary gallery; where a private space, such as the home, would co-exist as a public art space.

The Lyon Housemuseum took five years to design and two years to build. It is a fantastic work of architectural design that intentionally blurs the line between art gallery and domestic environment.

Eight kilometres from the city on Cotham Road, the Lyon Housemuseum does not draw attention to itself; it doesn't feel out of place in its suburban surrounds. Up close the fence appears as a clean pattern of brickwork, but from afar you see the names of the streets it sits on spelt out in the bricks (Cotham and

Florence). A pink polyurethane sculpture – a Christopher Langton piece titled *Swell* – may also pop up above front fence when it inflates in the sun.

Once inside the difference is clear. As a domestic setting the Lyon Housemuseum is a home where Lyon lives with his family; as a gallery it has some of Australia's most notable contemporary artists sitting in its wings, hanging from the hallway walls, and sitting in the living room, behind the dining room table, near the kitchen and in the garden. This collection is made up of paintings, sculptures, textiles, collages, installations, photographs and prints by some of the most notable Australian artists of our time – many of them Victorian – including Howard Arkley, Peter Hennessey, Andrew Brook, Callum Morton, Anne Zahalka, Rose Nolan, Caroline Rothwell, Jon Campbell and Patricia Piccinini.

Much like in any home, there are signs of everyday living here too; bits of homework lying on the dining table, sheet music on a bench under the stairs, a birthday card propped up on some coffee table books. This is a most

deliberate hybrid, creating ambiguity between house and art space. With the exception of the bedrooms, this home is a public place. Some rooms heighten the feeling of being in a gallery, encouraging gallery-like behaviour, hushed voices and careful footsteps; other rooms feel more homey allowing for a more comfortable, laid-back demeanour, as though you are visiting a friend for tea, albeit in their very clean house.

At either end of the house is a white and black cube, the two anchor points of the building. The white cube is the most gallery-like space, at the moment displaying a video installation and photographic prints by Patricia



Piccinini, titled *Shen* (2007). Piccinini is currently the featured artist, so there are several pieces by her around the house: a large bronze sculpture, *The Uprising*, in their formal living room; *Panel Work* in the hallway; *Truck Babies* watching TV in the living area; and another video installation, *Lustre*, in the black box, where there are also some *Car Nuggets*. The black box doubles as a home cinema, where a large screen is tucked away in a cupboard.

There are no didactics on the works anywhere, which would feel strange in a home; this makes a guided tour by the homeowners an integral and personal part of the visit. And with only 20 percent of the art on display at any one time, the gallery is on rotation, changing every couple of years, never permanent.

It feels strange to think of this home as a gallery which is why the term 'housemuseum' is so suitable, especially as it allows for a space to combine architecture, art and family life in a single setting, in a way that no one has done before.

Lyon Housemuseum  
219 Cotham Road  
Kew  
lyonhousemuseum.com.au

The Lyon Housemuseum  
is available to view by  
appointment only. Bookings  
through the website.



Illustration: Helen

lovely match to simple dishes like whitebait fritters or fried calamari dusted in sumac.

But let's move to France and pour a pretty glass of Rosé. Every year around this time, this blush-coloured wine is written about extensively, as it makes great hot-weather drinking. The 2009 Riotor Rosé, from the Cote du Provence in France, is a Grenache blend and can be a little too easy to drink. This rosé is very light on the palate and very user-friendly; just sit back and enjoy its subtle strawberry, fruity nuances and crisp length.

And while you're staying festive in the sunshine, break out the bubbles with a non-vintage Jansz Premium Cuvee from Pipers River in Tasmania. Tasmania is renowned for its sparkling wines and this is a fine example of a fresh sparkling with good fruitiness and a lovely creaminess that meanders on the palate to a clean, dry finish.

2009 Chalmers Vermentino rrp \$25  
2010 Wither Hills Pinot Gris rrp \$22  
2009 Riotor Rosé rrp \$26  
NV Jansz Premium Cuvee rrp \$25