

Funky, it's all here

There is a treasure trove of great reasons to head south as the sun comes out to play, writes **Belinda Jackson**.

SUMMER'S almost here and it's time for prancing in the streets of shopping mecca Melbourne to discover your inner frog and to get funky and fair. It's also the time to head south of the border to visit our country cousins for the best new rustic adventures, talking to the animals and feeding your face and soul.

Bonjour Melbourne

Reckon you're a Francophile? Walk the walk and talk the talk while touring Melbourne's French heart. Discover Parisienne architecture, the city's French history and, of course, you can eat French – crepes, macarons and let's not forget wine.

The latest tour from those canny lassies of Hidden Secrets lets you polish your French language skills, or, crazily, perhaps you're actually French and want to discover Australia's most European city. Check out macaron utopia La Belle Miette, French street artists' work in Hosier Lane and the old Le Louvre in Collins Street, at the Paris end, of course.

And no French tour would be complete without some nudity, provided by the celebrated nymphette, Chloe, upstairs in the Young and Jackson pub, by 19th-

century master Jules Joseph Lefebvre. Tours on demand, from \$50, (03) 9663 3358, hiddensecretstours.com.

Fair-trade and ethical festival

Can the words "inspiration" and "sustainable future" coexist funkyly? The organisers of Fair@Square demonstrate that you can eat well, dress fabulously and live comfortably, in an ethical, sustainable way. In just its third year, the festival turns Federation Square into a moral fairground.

There's an ethical fashion show by local designers, cooking demos using fair trade and local produce, an ethical home and more than 80 stalls including fair trade and ethically produced gifts, food and beauty products.

Live entertainment includes choirs, Aussie rock, Japanese drumming, Afro-Latin, gypsy and Bollywood dance. There's also puppet making, storytelling and printing for kids. Most activities are free. Federation Square, 11am-6pm, December 2-4, moralfairground.com.au.

Ballarat Beer Festival

Beer lovers unite. At the inaugural Ballarat Beer Festival, you can glean



Spoil for choice ... from left, Edna Walling Cottage; Fiona Sweetman

home-brewing secrets, taste-test new beers and learn about beer-food matching. Hosted by home-brewing comedians Charlie Pickering and Danny McGinlay along with Australia's first lady of beer, Kirrily Waldhorn – who promises to "knock your hops off" with her knowledge of beer gastronomy.

Taste-test new beers and local wines – some favour grapes over grain. Kids are catered for with a magic show, jumping castle and stilt walking; adults are discouraged from trying these activities after tasting.

Ballarat City Oval, January 21, tickets from \$30 (adults) / \$47.50 with tasting, kids \$15 (no tastings), ballaratbeerfestival.com.au.

Bookbinding workshop

If you spend too much time in stationery shops sniffing staplers and playing with pencils, take the obsession one step further and learn the ancient craft of bookbinding in a one-day, hands-on workshop.

Under the guidance of an experienced binder, you'll learn the skills required to create a traditional hand-sewn, hardcover binding. You'll make a basic writing or sketch journal, learning to fold, collate and stitch the pages together, brand the book using a hammer and experiment with book cloths and decorative papers such as English marble paper, Japanese yuzen washi and Italian Tassotti paper.

There's also a kit with templates to continue making your own books at

home. The monthly workshop is capped at six people and provides all the materials to create a hand-bound journal. \$250 a person, including materials, morning tea and transport. (03) 5444 5933, sblibris@telstra.com.au.

Night wildlife walk

Do you dare shut your eyes to the world with wildlife? The Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve, 14 kilometres west of Warrnambool, is the site of a guided tour exploring Australia's nocturnal native creatures.

Starting at sunset with a walk of the 90-minute walk is about 1.5 kilometres and encourages you to open your ears and eyes to a chorus, nine species of birds.

Must do's

Sport Australian Open tennis world of tennis is on display as the guns battle it out with the crack at a deliciously racy singles players will pocket \$2.2 million each. January 2012, australianopen.com.

Tours Great Ocean Walk? Luxury house Moorabool and eco-certified Australian Tours have teamed up to offer Comfort in Nature packages regional and organic macramé hampers by a private chef.

Andre's Mews

★★★★★ Luxury Serviced Apartments

Andre's Mews Five Star Luxury Serviced Apartment Hotel is a relatively new and absolutely unique addition to the Melbourne Accommodation Scene.

Situated in Richmond – the heart of Melbourne's restaurant, shopping and sporting precincts – only 2 km from the Melbourne CBD, The Theatre District, Arts Centre, Southbank, Crown Casino and The Tennis Centre, Andre's Mews offers a choice of one and two bedroom luxury apartments for the discerning traveller or corporate executive who requires not only the luxury of a five-star hotel, but also the spaciousness to entertain, do business and to generally make themselves 'at home'.

Each beautifully decorated apartment features its own living, dining, kitchen, laundry facilities, bathrooms and private courtyard or balcony. Andre's Mews is within minutes of Richmond Recreational Centre with a 50m pool, river side cycling, riding and running tracks. Melbourne's famous trams are at the doorstep.

Andre's Mews apartments are serviced daily and include hot and cold breakfast provisions daily. Andre's Mews has a Reception and 24-hours on-site management. On-site parking.



The summer food

Indira Naidoo on the rise
of the inner-city farmer

How to romance
a foodie

Bali belly: cooking
school in paradise

SUNDAY LIFE



The Sun-Jerc

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2011

Des Hasler's
email trail of
destruction

SPORT



Let my daughter help

