

# Melbourne Observer Travellers' Good Buys

with  
David  
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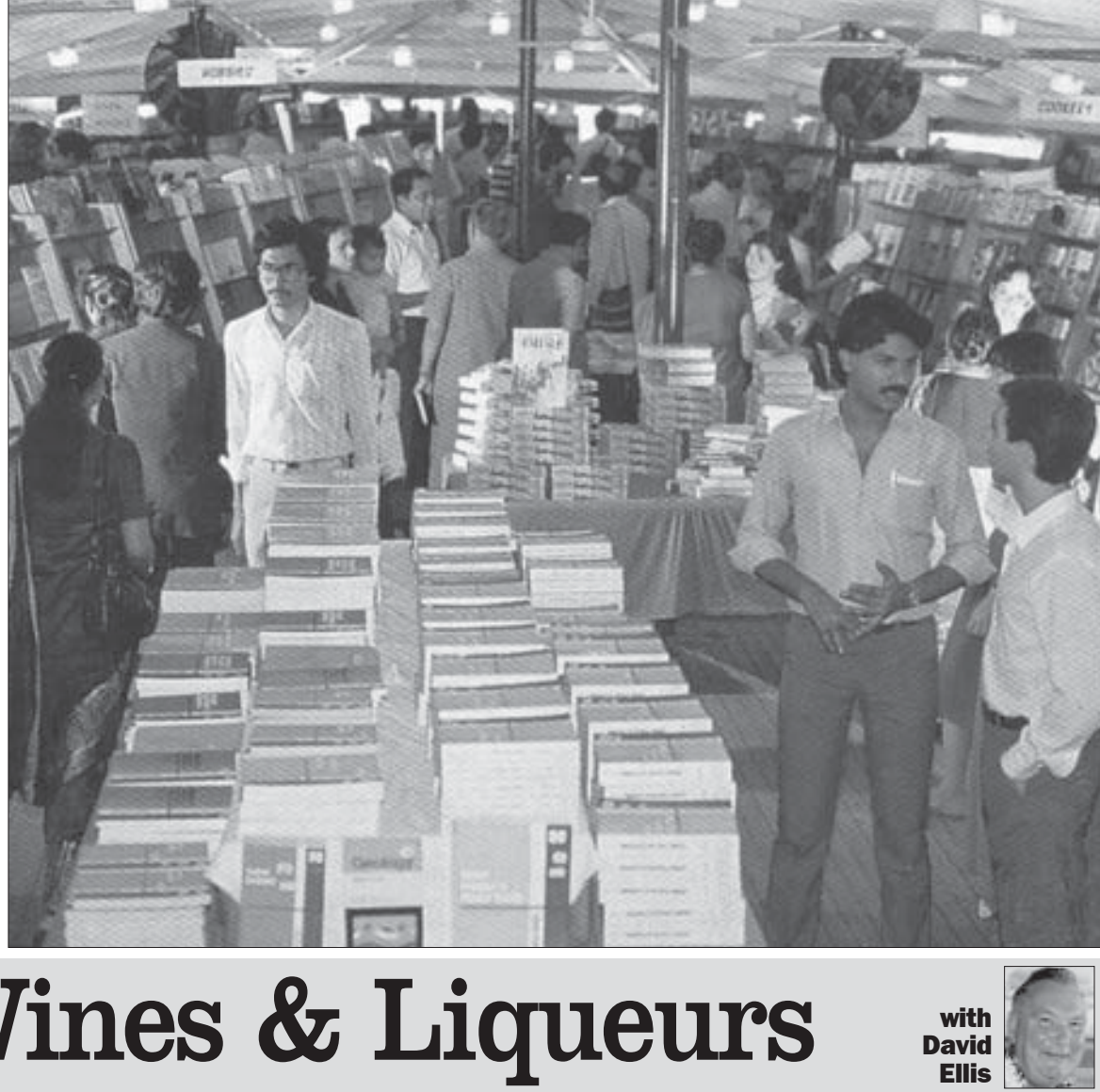
## Modern day slave ship - it's a good read

■ Australia is playing host over the next few months to one of our most unusual maritime visitors, the diminutive 6,800 tonne MV Doulos that's the world's oldest active ocean-going passenger ship.

And while several hundred thousand of us will go aboard for a bit of a sticky-beak as she works her way from Brisbane to Fremantle between now and November, it's unlikely that any more than a handful - if even that - will take up an invitation to sail on her.

That's because this classic little liner, that was originally launched as a freighter in 1914, is no longer a cruise ship - she's the world's biggest floating book fair from which have been sold more than 15-million books in 20 years, providing funds to allow her to give away many more times that number to worthy causes.

Owned and operated by Germany's non-profit charity GBA Ships e.V., Doulos plies the oceans of the world to distribute books and literature resources to the underprivileged, provide medical aid, distribute food and clothing, help with construction projects, encourage inter-cultural understanding, and enthuse young people into becoming



ing more effective in life and service.

And while a major task is to also spread the message of Christianity, Doulos' 330 volunteer crew and staff - from her Australian Captain, Ashley McDonald through to her doctor, engineers, radio operators, seamen, cooks, waiters and laundrymen - do so without "Bible bashing" those they come in contact with.

Doulos was built as the cargo ship Medina in Newport News, USA in 1914 and worked the American coast over the next 34-years, being sold then to a Panamanian company that converted her into a 1000-passenger ship re-named Roma to ferry pilgrims from South America to Italy and back for the 1950 Roman Catholic Holy Year.

Afterwards Roma brought migrants from Europe to Australia, but that short career ended abruptly when she was arrested in Newcastle and laid-up for a year over a dispute about bills.

She was sold by Costa in 1977 to Germany's charitable Good Books for All (subsequently renamed GBA Ships e.V.) and this time re-named Doulos - Greek for "slave."

She's sailed over 350,000 nautical miles, and visited 600 ports in 100 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific. More than 20-million people have visited her library and shopped at her book fair, toured the ship, and enjoyed cultural performances and displays by her 40-nationality officers and staff who, while not doing voluntarily aid or construction work, do similar shows ashore for charities, elderly peoples' homes, schools and hospitals.

Captain McDonald, then an Australian Navy officer, and his wife Alison a speech therapist, met in Darwin and married in 1955. They were living in Fremantle when Doulos first visited there in 1999 and were amongst over 200,000 who toured this unique vessel during her first Australian tour - and a year later with a 21-months old daughter, accepted offers for Ashley to become volunteer 2nd Officer and Alison a voluntary speech therapist. After four years aboard they returned to Fremantle where Ashley rose to Deputy Harbour Master, before in 2005 being invited to this time become Doulos' Captain.

"I didn't need to read that email," Alison recalls. "The look on Ashley's face told me everything." Captain McDonald tossed-in a 6-figure salary to work for free as Master of Doulos, while Alison abandoned her own career to once more work as a volunteer speech therapist on board and at ports they would visit.

Now, with three daughters, like all others aboard they not only work for free, but raise funds to support themselves and Doulos' running, charitable and religious work.

Although of the latter, as the Mayor of Catania in Italy says: "Those on Doulos don't speak about religion - they're an expression of it."

## Melbourne Observer Wines & Liqueurs

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## Yarra Burn fires up a true classic

■ Thirty years ago, with winemaking in Victoria's Yarra Valley still somewhat in its infancy, David and Christine Fyffe released the first wines under their Yarra Burn label, and stood back to anxiously await the reaction.

Any trepidations certainly proved unfounded as the accolades, the trophies and the gold medals that have rolled in ever since still clearly testify.

And in the three decades since that first release, the Fyffe's have created some absolute stunners, while also finding time to pioneer Yarra Valley sparkling in 1983 and Australia's first Sauvignon Blanc Semillon blend soon after.

Their now-released 2007 Yarra Burn Chardonnay is a classic of unbridled tight citrus characters on the palate coupled with sweet ripe fruit, all made the more enjoyable with that fully-developed citrus - and hints of white peach - coming through in the bouquet that almost explodes on pouring.

An excellent choice at \$25.50 to serve with seared tuna steaks and winter vegetables, or at a Sunday brunch of duck terrine, salad and crusty baguette.



### One For Lunch

■ Peter Barry has raised a few eye-brows with the labelling of his Jim Barry 2007 The Lodge Hill Dry Riesling - but he says he's included the word Dry for his international rather than local customers.

"Most Australians expect Rieslings from premium areas such as our Clare Valley to be dry, but more than 90 per cent of Rieslings are markedly sweeter overseas where our Lodge Hill's got a big following," he says.

"At 480 metres - amongst the highest in the district - ours is a Riesling whose palate is dry, with tangy lemon rind and lime fruit flavours, and with a chalkiness that balances the steely, crisp acidity and long limey finish."

Pay \$19.50 and serve with scallops grilled for a minute on the shell, and drizzled with a sauce of soy, ginger, garlic and lemon; top with fresh parsley.

### Pictured

■ No Fear: Yarra Burn's not looked back since its launch three decades ago.

■ Dry approach - telling it as it is for Jim Barry Wines' countless overseas fans.