

A Taste of Slow

Melbourne and Regional Victoria
August 27th - September 9th

Food and cooking fanatics, do you agonise about the merits of this terroir of olive oil versus that and the impossibility of sourcing really fresh non-pasteurised goats cheese? If so, book your tickets to Australia because the mothership is beckoning you with promises of winter feasts and hands-on cooking classes with some of Australia's most respected chefs and food critics at 'A Taste of Slow' (atasteofslow.com.au).

This event showcases Victoria's vibrant culture of quality food, wine and produce. Embracing the philosophies of the Slow Food movement. The foodie festival encourages taste education and debate with events such as slow food cooking classes with leading national and international chefs, food forums and sustainability debates, and regional events celebrating the diverse food cultures in Victoria, using the best local produce grown using sustainable and ethical processes.



Musical Blockbuster Returns

The Phantom of the Opera
July 19th onwards, limited season
Princess Theatre, Melbourne, Australia

Acclaimed as the most popular musical of all time, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* (phantomoftheopera.com.au) makes a triumphant return to Australia having played to more than 80 million people in 124 cities around the world. While the serious critics may loathe it, audiences have continued to flock this gothic musical, (the longest running musical on Broadway and in 2004 the subject of a rather overblown movie, improbably directed by action-movie impresario Joel Schumacher), and tickets are guaranteed to go fast. The Australian production stars Anthony Warlow, reclaiming his career defining role, and introduces Ana Marina as Australia's new Christine.



Shakespeare on the Esplanade, Ian McKellen Makes His Asian Debut

King Lear by William Shakespeare & *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov

Directed by Trevor Nunn

Featuring the Royal Shakespeare Company ensemble including Ian McKellen
Esplanade Theatres, Singapore

July 19th - 22nd

Superlatives fail us – in a huge coup for the country, the Singapore Repertory Theatre (srt.com.sg) has managed to persuade the Royal Shakespeare Company to make the Lion City the one and only Asian destination on their world tour of this extraordinary double-bill.

The production of *King Lear* reunites two towering figures of British theatre – two-time Oscar-nominee Ian McKellen and legendary director Trevor Nunn – with the Royal Shakespeare Company for the first time in 17 years. Their work together at the celebrated company during the 70s and 80s was considered a golden period for theatre.



World Lion Dance Invitation

August 3rd - 5th
Genting Highlands, Malaysia

Witness an explosion of colour and music and dance with spectacular performances by the best lion dance troupes (genting.com.my), who have been invited from all over the world to celebrate Malaysia's 50th Anniversary and the Visit Malaysia Year 2007 campaign.



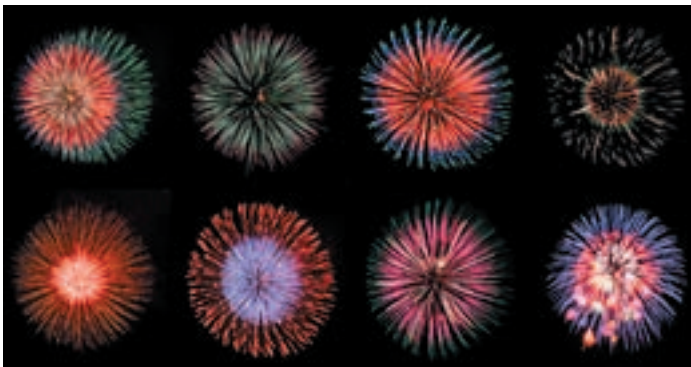
The Ring Cycle Die Walkure

Thailand Cultural Centre, Bangkok, Thailand
July 24th & 26th

Pack a picnic but stay away from the liquids – advice to keep in mind if you’re a fan of opera on an epic scale and plan on seeing Bangkok Opera’s five-hour long production of *Die Walkure* this month (bangkokopera.com).

Thailand is the first country in Asia to present Wagner’s epic ‘Ring Cycle’, begun last year with an internationally acclaimed staging of *Das Rheingold*.

Maverick artistic director Somtow Sucharitkul’s interpretation of Wagner’s legendarily complex masterwork transfers the story to an Asian setting using Hindu and Buddhist mythical tradition coupled with some biting reflections on the contemporary Asian political scenes and the eternal relationship between power and corruption.



Skyrockets over Tokyo Sumida River Fireworks Display July 30th

Said to have originated in the Edo period when members of court would while away the weary hours before television was invented by watching fireworks displays from palace rooftops, this annual event is now best viewed from along the Sumida River which flows through the eastern part of Tokyo. The neighborhood around Asakusa Station in particular throngs with crowds of spectators munching on corn on the cob, downing sake sold by street vendors and thrilling to the traditional rivalry between two of Tokyo’s oldest fireworks company who vie to create the most breathtaking display.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremonies

August 6th
Peace Memorial Park, Hiroshima, Japan
“Let us unite in prayer for peace, regardless of race or nationality”

Join hundreds who gather in Hiroshima and around the world to commemorate the date when an American bomber dropped the world’s first atomic bomb over Hiroshima City. At 8.15 a minute’s silence and prayer is observed for those killed during the bombing and for peace, while later in the evening paper lanterns, lit to console to remember the souls of those who died, are floated on the Motoyasugawa River which flows past the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Genbku Dome.

Art Couture

Montana World of WearableArt® Awards Show

September 20th-23rd, 26th-30th

TSB Bank Arena, Queens Wharf, Wellington, New Zealand

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No it’s a dress... Step into a world where art and the human form combine. Taking the notion of designer threads to a whole new level, the Montana World of WearableArt® Awards Show, or WOW® (worldofwearabelart.com) as it’s more commonly known, has come a long way since rural art gallery owner and sculptor Suzie Moncrieff first took “art off the wall to adorn the body”. Celebrating its tenth birthday, WOW® – winner of the 1999 New Zealand Supreme Tourism Award – has become an artistic and theatrical extravaganza attracting audiences and designers from around New Zealand and the world.

