

Time In

Edited by Joel Meares
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The Melbourne Book: A History of Now

The Melbourne Book celebrates the world's most liveable city. Gabrielle Easter goes to Melbournestyle, the design studio behind it

Inspired by the lack of decent gifts available for Melburnians to impart on foreigners, graphic designer, artist and writer Maree Coote began photographing the city.

"I was standing on Swanston Street and I thought, who's Swanston? Why don't I know this? I think it's incredible that we can trundle along and not know who the main street of the city is named for."

That was ten years ago and now she's published the fourth edition of *The Melbourne Book: A History of Now*. It tells the tales of Swanston, Bourke and Myer, the characters who inhabit street signs and buildings. In the book, we learn about Charles La Trobe, marking out areas for parks, and also surveyor Robert Hoddle, insisting streets were made 99 feet wide – enough room for six bullocks and a cart to do a U-turn.

"We're called 'liveable' now because of all the people who came before us," says Coote. "I think if you don't understand history it's really easy to bummer it up."

Included in the latest edition – with more than 700 photographs – are updates on Vegemite, the Melbourne invention which is now American-

owned; biographies on Germaine Greer and Barry Humphries; and features on Coote's choice of the ultimate Melburnians – Sidney Myer and William Buckley.

In Coote's gallery-cum-shop, aptly named Melbournestyle, an eclectic mix of Melburnian paraphernalia fills the shopfront – from scarves and knickknacks to jewellery and cups. She opened it back in 1994 with her husband Lex. Upstairs is a gallery, the walls lined with her bright, fun Ned Kelly prints and images from her latest children's book, *Alphabet City Melbourne*.

The book is filled with letters that hide in everyday parts of the city, from the vibrant yellow 'A' of Ron Robertson-Swann's Yellow Peril to the columns that go up Southern Cross Station and branch out into giant 'Y's. Complete with an app that encourages people to photograph letters from their own cities, it is designed to instil graphic memories of Melbourne from childhood.

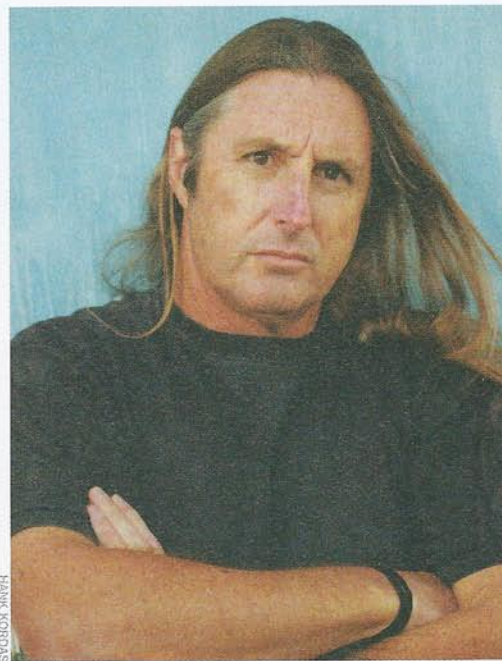
"Hopefully children will look around the city and recognise these things from babies' books that they remember, that become part of their memories as they grow up, giving them that sense of place."

The Melbourne Book is out now, RRP\$55. **Alphabet City Melbourne** is out Fri Nov 1, RRP\$19.95. www.melbournestyle.com.au.



Watch this **The Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray, Aged 33 and 3/4**. Vimeo is crawling with great short films, but we think we've found one of the greatest in the charming and weird *Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray*. Tropfest-winning Brisbane Steve Baker is the guy behind Desmond, a hopeless romantic, creepy spinster and archetypal lonely guy lookin' for love. Watch it at vimeo.com/stevebaker.

Books Tim Winton on Eyrie



We talk to the four-time Miles Franklin Award-winner on the publication of his 11th novel. By Myke Bartlett

Eyrie offers a portrait of Western Australia where the absurd wealth of the mining boom has seen the less fortunate forgotten about and environmental concerns hushed up. Its protagonist Tom Keely is a disgraced do-gooder, living in exile after a very public meltdown.

Tim, *Eyrie* raises the class conflict that we don't like to think exists in Australia. Class is the thing we're not allowed to talk about. That's the only form of political correctness the Right will tolerate. To talk about class is breaking a taboo. We're not allowed to talk about class because that might mean that people who are unsuccessful are unsuccessful possibly for reasons that are beyond their control. A lot of middle-class Australians are doing well on the back of the working poor. There are people living on the streets of Fremantle who are former merchant mariners, former unskilled labourers, for whom there's no place in the new prosperity.

Did you feel a need to bring those people into the light? No, that makes it sound like I was writing with some purpose. I wouldn't mind doing that, but I don't think it would be accurate to describe my method like that.

There is a real sense of anger in *Eyrie*. I had to inoculate myself against that, because I was having to marinate in Keely's anger for so long. You could do your head in. There wasn't any point in using the book to vent. I'm not Keely. But I was watching friends in NGOs, watching people work in social housing, people helping the working poor, in this doomed mission to get political and media attention on that stuff and watching them crash and burn. Here was a kind of a frustration and an opportunity to be in someone else's shoes, someone not just on the cusp of despair, but with two feet over the edge.

Eyrie is out now through Penguin, RRP\$45.