

SPEND IT

Many accommodation chains offer branded merchandise, from bathrobes to insignia toiletries, but Dorchester Collection's Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles has taken the plunge with men's boxer-style bathing shorts. And not just any old shorts, but a style by British menswear company and Chanel subsidiary Orlebar Brown patterned with a retro image by photographer Slim Aarons, the master of mid-century luxe style. Snapped in 1957, there are palm trees and long-finned autos of the era, but no sign of Marilyn Monroe. Bungalow No. 1, the star's favourite hideaway, is part of the hotel inventory, complete with "Champagne bath bubble experience". Starry, starry nights. Shorts, sizes 28-40. US\$395 (\$598); online only, plus postage. shop.dorchestercollection.com



SUSAN KUROSAWA

Astonishing views, sumptuous interiors and a touch of golf are the norm at The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, on New Zealand's North Island, but throw in Danielle Alvarez and the food becomes the real showstopper.

From Friday, October 13, the former head chef of stellar Sydney restaurant Fred's will stage a special two-day culinary event to coincide with the release of her new book, *Recipes for a Lifetime of Beautiful Cooking*.

On the first afternoon, attendees will meet Florida-born Alvarez over a cocktail before sitting down to an a la carte dinner. Her philosophy of "considered cooking" and serving seasonal ingredients simply and beautifully will be explained at a breakfast and cooking demonstration held on Saturday morning. That night, a five-course tasting menu with paired wines will provide the perfect opportunity for Alvarez to share tales from her illustrious career over her favourite dishes featured in the book.

During allocated downtime, guests have the chance to explore one of New Zealand's most sought-after destinations. Owned by



hedge fund billionaire Julian Robertson, The Farm overlooks picturesque Hawke's Bay. Guests will enjoy pre-dinner drinks and canapes and full breakfast and lunch daily. The option of a round of golf or a 50-minute spa treatment is also available, along with access to the lodge's facilities, which include gym, infinity pool, Jacuzzi, mountain bikes and more. \$NZ1950 (\$1807) plus taxes a person, twin-share, with two nights' accommodation in a luxury suite. robertsonlodges.com

IMOGEN REID

PS AUSTRALIAN STAR, ECHUCA
Victoria

Those old enough to remember the television series *All the Rivers Run*, starring Sigrid Thornton and John Waters, might want to clear their diary for April 2025 when Australia's first five-star river ship is launched in Echuca in Victoria.

Artist impressions of the paddle steamer's interiors have been released and show a contemporary, rather swish, take on steam-powered river travel. But for history buffs, the new PS Australian Star will retain plenty of vintage charm. It's operated by a hybrid diesel/steam propulsion system that uses a refurbished 1907 steam engine, making it a true rarity – a wood-fired, five-star paddle steamer.

Under construction in Mildura, the \$6.75m vessel will succeed the PS Emmylou. It will offer 19 luxury staterooms, all opening on to the deck and each with an ensuite, wi-fi and TV.

The three-deck vessel (there is an elevator for passengers with mobility issues) is 60 per cent larger than the historic eight-cabin Emmylou, currently operating a schedule of three and four-night cruises out of Echuca.

Stretching 35m in length, PS Australian Star will feature several outdoor relaxation areas, a panoramic lounge and bar, and a fine-dining restaurant with changing daily menus. Riverside barbecues and morning and afternoon teas will complement the formal meals.

As the paddle steamer chugs along the Murray, guests will have the chance to venture ashore to visit wineries, a heritage farm museum and lovely Perricoota Station, where some of *All the Rivers Run* was filmed. It was once home to the largest fleet of paddle steamers in the world. An excursion aboard an expedition vessel is also on the itinerary.

The PS Australian Star will sail three and four-night all-inclusive cruises year-round,

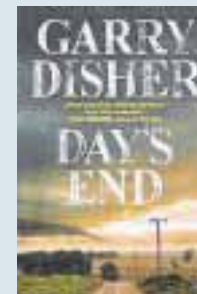


Artist impressions of PS Australian Star, to be based in Echuca.



with passengers able to combine the two for seven nights on the river. Bookings open in spring. Prices to be advised. psemmyloucruises.com

CHRISTINE McCABE



BOOK CLUB

DAY'S END
GARRY DISHER

We're in wheat and wool country in the mid-north of South Australia, about three hours from Adelaide, where the fields of canola blaze gold, shadows are "tricky" in saltbush twilight, and crimes germinate and spread with ease. Garry Disher fans will rejoice in this latest novel starring his character Senior Constable Paul Hirschhausen (Hirsch), a busy and upstanding rural copper. I'm new to the author and to his lead man, but it won't be my last encounter, even though the plot of *Day's End*, about a missing backpacker last seen at Desolation Hill, is a mere thread to the narrative and perhaps a little meagre. Believe me, there is much more going on in this neck of the land, which SA-born Disher knows well and brings to life as an enigmatic character in itself.

Law-breaking and chicanery are afoot, from shoplifter kids to serial car thieves, warring neighbours to dodgy drugs, Covid conspiracy peddlers to Antipodean Storm white supremacy loonies seeking vulnerable and under-educated kids "ripe for radicalisation". Oh, and wild-goat shooters, arson, hateful anonymous letters and a body in a suitcase. Unsurprisingly, the novel fairly barrels along. Hirsch covers a mighty amount of territory on patrol day "singing along with Leonard Cohen about lousy poets" as he drives in broad loops across unyielding territory of "secluded, tucked-away lives lived under rooftops far off the highway". Roughly speaking, his beat is the size of Belgium. Hirsch is a city bloke and an honest cop, demoted to uniform in Tiverton, at a one-officer police station, after being unfairly turned "inside out" as a whistleblower by Internal Investigations. Now he's toeing the line, sort of, and studying his sergeant's exam.

It's the fourth in Disher's series featuring Hirsch, so his role within the community, relationships and interactions with Indigenous elder Auntie Steph Ingram all inform the plot. It's the height of the pandemic and social divisions are "cracking wide open", jobs are scarce and prospects scant. It sounds a bit like the fringes of the South Dakota Badlands with "old cars, starved gardens, hollow-ribbed horses" but there's "fierce beauty", too, in the will to survive and flourish.

I'm planning to circle back to earlier books, *Bitterwash Road*, *Peace*, and *Consolation*, to get my head around Hirsch and his relationships, and to better understand his inner demons. This crime category is dubbed *Outback Noir*. Gotta love a touch of dry humour.

SUSAN KUROSAWA

Day's End (Text Publishing).

FOLLOW THE READER

Good times in store

ELIZABETH BRUCE
INMAN VALLEY, SA

It's 2012 and we are in the Old City of Jerusalem. Narrow sandstone streets and rows of tiny, densely packed shops in all directions. People everywhere of many faiths and every variety of tourist. Vibrant colours and delicious smells from the food stalls.

Men stand outside their shops, trying to lure tourists inside. We see only male

shopkeepers, even in stores selling women's clothing or underwear. They are clever salespeople, skilled at being your instant friend and quickly closing the deal. I have no intention of haggling but when I try to leave a shop in which I've admired a scarf, the merchant twice drops his price. And so there it is, tucked under my arm as I depart.

There are four in our group. Brother-in-law Ian has lived and worked in Israel for many years and is a streetwise, albeit cynical, guide. "Let me see your bracelets," says a shopkeeper to Ian as he passes, taking his wrist, and complimenting him on his silver chains. "These are good, where are they from?" Short pause. "Let me show you something."

"Here we go," Ian says, and not even under his breath. And then suddenly we are

inside the shop, admiring other bracelets. "You English?" asks the jewellery man.

"No, Australian."

"Ah. Do you come from a land down under?" The shopkeeper is looking very pleased with himself. We can't help smiling. "Where women glow and men plunder!" he beams. "I met a strange lady ... she made me nervous." By now I am practically singing

along. "Ha ha! I have a brother in New Zealand!" he shouts.

We are all laughing now. Funny man, great shop, lovely jewellery. He has me in the palm of his hand.

"We have to eat," says Ian, breaking the spell. "Take his card," he says to me, pointedly, and I do. We move on to a cafe for a fabulous mezze lunch. (I still have the card.)



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