Devastated, dismayed and distraught after the Great Crash of 1987? No? Perhaps you even feel like celebrating the festive season or the imminent demise of capitalism? (See our startling prediction on page 43.) Well, while the bottom may have fallen out of the market for Moot and Chand on Toorak and Belserve Hill lately, you can still indulge in some very palatable bubbly indeed for just a fraction of the price. Old reliable for budget conscious revellers is of course Seaview's Brut and Cuvee at $4 to $5, though Mildara's Windsor Brut Chardonnay at $5 or so pushes it close (and even has a whiff of real Chardonnay fruit). Even better value, though, is the discount chain Farmer Bros' own Cuvee Clara, a fine flavouresome drop and a steal at $7. Or, if you're really trying to impress, there's the $10-12 wines such as the redoubtable Yellowglo, Edmund Maza, Tyrrell's Ashman and the predictably garish labelled Wolf Blass. Charge your glasses, please.

Melbourne is a veritable treasure trove of live entertainment over November and December. Here are just a few of the attractions:

Gertrude Stein and Companion. November 4 to December 6. Universal Theatre, Victoria Street, Fitzroy. Miriam Margyles and Pamela Rabe explore the fascinating life of one of this century's greatest characters.

The Victoria State Opera presents 'The Flying Dutchman' by Richard Wagner, conducted by Richard Divall. Nov 9 to 25. State Theatre. Tickets $25, $32, $42, concessions available. 'Wagner in his most darkly romantic mood'.

Weevils In The Flour. Nov 11 to 29. La Mama, 205 Faraday St, Carlton. This play is based on a collection of oral histories of the Great Depression of the same name, written by Wendy Lowenstein. The book was great. The play is a must-see.

The Three Musketeers, performed by the Australian Ballet and the State Orchestra of Victoria. Nov 13 to 26. State Theatre. 'A sparkling, swashbuckling success story...' Knowing the ending won't interfere with enjoying the dancing.

Tokyo Rose. Dec 2 to 20. La Mama, 205 Faraday St, Carlton. What doesn't happen in real life can happen in the theatre. Vera Lynn and the Andrews Sisters meet Tokyo Rose in the war ravaged Japanese capital. What begins as a lark for US-born Iva Togun (Rose) turns sour when she becomes the first American woman to be tried for treason against a background of postwar racism and McCarthyism. A comedy-drama with songs by you-know-who.

Wogs Out Of Work. Athamean Theatre, Collins St, Melbourne. WOW is rapidly becoming Melbourne's version of London's Mousetrap: it's been running for ages with no end in sight. Make sure you're not the only person in Melbourne to miss is.

Home movies is how British director Derek Jarman likes to think of his films. The man who established the iconography of punk on film with Jubilee (1977), put his latest film, The Last Of England, together out of home movies and Super 8, and filmed his newest Australian release, Caravaggio, in a noisy London warehouse.

Caravaggio, a life of the Renaissance artist, was seven years in the making and chewed up eighteen scripts. Yet, according to the critics, it's 'one of the most visually handsome of British films' (Times), 'brooding, sensual and pagan in the extreme' (Nowweek) and 'passionately erotic... a treat for the eyes throughout' (London Financial Times). Definitely not one for confirmed pilgrims of agitprop.

Caravaggio opens at Sydney's Academy Twin, Paddington, on Oct 30 and will run for four to six weeks.

Xmas ho!s approaching and kids on your mind? Brave the Jaffas and Choctops and be dragged along to the movies; but watch your step — kids movies ain't what they used to be. You'll probably be unable to avoid Beverley Hills Cop 2 (Greater Union), which somehow manages to make Eddie Murphy unfunny (but not, alas, unviolant). Dragnet (Greater Union), a mild spoof with Dan Ackroyd, will have the kids asking you about the original.

La Bamba (Hoyts), a sentimental journey through fifties Hispanic rock'n'roll, may do likewise. Or, you could treat the little terrors (and yourself) to the marvellous My Life As A Dog (Roma), (old, dear, it's not like ALF), the kitsch cure for confirmed Chordonnay fruit. Even better than the old movies, however, is One For Confirmed Pilgrims of Agitprop.

But they don't make movies like the old ones any more... Films from the National Film and Sound Archive. Nov 18 from 3.30pm. Glasshouse Cinema, RMIT Union House, Swanston St, Melbourne. A selection of early Australian films, including Australia's first sound feature. A Showgirl's Life, directed by Norman Dawn: A Corrispondent's Course (sounds terribly risque) and Those Terrible Twins, a rare silent feature based on the Ginger Meggs comic, accompanied by a live pianist! All films from the golden days of Oz filmmaking.


 RELAXATIONS

Cappuccino Culture. When in Sydney... try the froth-tops at the Roma (Hay St, Sydney); the Cafe Zambezi and Cafe Latte (King St, Newtown); The Riviera (Parramatta Rd, Leichhardt); Bar Italia (Norton St, Leichhardt); and the Pudding Shop and Badde Manor, Glebe Pt Rd, Glebe. But no stirring...

Fishing Boat Hire. Every Sunday from 6am, St Kilda Pier, Melbourne. Bookings 521 444. A pleasant way to forget the world and cut food bills at the same time. But be sure to take the umbrella — after all, it is Melbourne!