and jazz artists, as well as big bands, comedians, exhibitions, music workshops, industry seminars, hi fi and record fairs, and more. Drawcards include John Farnham, Icehouse, Jimmy Barnes, The Angels and The Hoodoo Gurus.

The Sydney Morning Herald thought it 'one of the freshest, most intelligent films of the year'. The Face thought it would have Joe Orton 'wanking in his grave'. Whatever your verdict, the film version of Prick Up Your Ears, the playwright's biography, has been packing them in in Sydney and Melbourne. And the denouement may persuade you never to steal an idea again. Prick Up Your Ears is showing in Sydney at the Roma, George St, City and the Academy Twin, Oxford St, Paddington, and in Melbourne at the Longford Cinema, South Yarra and the Capitol, Swanston St, City. But have dinner after the movie.

If you like seeing white people with shoe polish on their faces, Dancing In The Street: The Motown Story, may be for you. One of a rash of Motown revival items in the last few years, it's directed by Graeme Blundell, and written by Bob Hudson (who should really know better). It's showing at Kinselas in Sydney from January; tickets are $15 from the usual outlets.

Shiatsu Acupuncture Therapy, Basement 12 McKillop St, Melbourne. Mon-Fri 11-7, $18 a session. It's more than a Japanese massage. Based on manipulating and massaging various bodily 'pressure points' — like acupuncture minus the needles. Phone for appointments (03) 670 1266.

If you've ever wondered at the inability of men to leave the toilet seat down, Born To Clean may come as a revelation. The play, by NZ playwright Renee, stars three Amandas in a celebration of triumph over the domestic drudgery of floor polish and toilet ducks. "Gonna make my kitchen shine for Jesus!" sings one of the Amandas in a rhapsodic moment: don't miss it. Born To Clean is playing at the Belvoir St in Sydney until Jan 31.

The San Francisco Examiner waxed lyrical: 'Astonishing, ethereal, entralling, unexpected and bizarre — Circus Ox defies gravity'. Circus Ox are on their tenth anniversary world tour, and if you've never seen them this may be the time. They're jumping, rolling and bounding at Wentworth Park, Glebe, from early January: tickets are $18, $12 concession, $6.50 for kids and $4.40 for families.

Melbourne Comedy Festival. A Myriad of events at numerous venues through most of March. Let's hope the second repeats the success of the first festival, so that Melbourne's title of Comedy Capital of Australia will remain undisputed. All of Australia's funny people will be in town for an orgy of laughs. Watch the media for details.

Two thirds of the wine drunk by Australians is white, but more than three quarters comes from casks. And in fact quality bottled whites — particularly Chardonnays and the newly fashionable Sauvignon (aka Fume) Blanc — do seem expensive. What's more, given the popularity of Asian and Indian cuisines, a lot of white wine bought for going out can be a waste. Often all that can be tasted for those hard earned dollars is a dull wash.

The solutions to these dilemmas aren't, however, too far to seek. With spicy or Asian cuisines (except for seafoods), give the classy dry whites a miss and try a medium sweet or even sweetish style — traminer or traminer riesling, through to the German Auslese or Spatlese styles (oh, and a glass or two of water). Orlando has a range of these styles at around $6; the popular Traminer Riesling choice is Wyndham Estate's reasonable TR2 at about the same.

And for a lighter meal out, when the bank balance is low, skip the vogue styles and try one or two of the nicer Rhine r较小的钱。From Hardy's and Leasingham's at under a fiver, through Tolana's gorgeous 1983 at $6, up to Pewsey Vale's lightly wooded 1987 and Orlando's St Hilda at $8, you can try some of the best (and some of the more average) r较小的钱。money can buy. Or, if it must be chardonnay, Orlando's RF and Seppelt's are very palatable if not exactly exciting at around $6 each.

Oh, and last but not least, absolutely sure to see and be seen at ALR's own Not The Bicentenary bash at Sydney's Harold Park Hotel, January 28, 6pm (see the ad elsewhere in this issue). ALR's shirts and shades are recommended but not obligatory.