

Regional News

Issue 255

October 21, 2025

yes to *ton*



News

As they love it



The Lion in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Otari School. Photo by Brian Scurfield, Memory of Light Photography.

Forget like it – they love it. Shakespeare that is! Hundreds more tamariki are engaging with Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand (SGCNZ) to perform in its 12th *Primarily Playing with Shakespeare* programme. The play this year is *As You Like It*, where Rosalind, banished from her uncle’s court, escapes into the forest with her cousin Celia. There, Rosalind (aka Ganymede) and Celia (aka Aliena) meet various characters in the Forest of Arden, a composite name of ‘Arcadia’ – conceptually a tranquil pastoral utopia – and the ‘Garden of Eden’, a Biblical place of solitude and great beauty. It is also the name of a forest, mainly in North Warwickshire, near where Shakespeare was born.

Enjoy sharing the frolics performed by the tamariki from Clifton Terrace Model School, Crofton Downs Primary School, Karori West Normal School, Miramar North School, and Ridgway School on the 6th of November in the Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington Memorial Theatre. Kenakena Primary School, Maidstone Intermediate, Otari School – Te Kura o Otari, Te Aro School, and Wilford School will perform on the 12th of November in the Members Gallery at Sky Stadium. Bring your lunch and, from 12:30pm to 1:30pm, see for yourself how much these young people gain from the whole experience.

“All our programmes are about mentoring and providing life skills-enhancing opportunities through Shakespeare,” SGCNZ CEO Dawn Sanders says. “As the Hon Erica Stanford reiterates, the benefits of learning about grammar, figures of speech, derivations of words, as well as all the accompanying social skills through this collaborative and confidence-building process, cannot be stressed highly enough.”

SGCNZ alumnus Dryw McArthur has been appointed by SGCNZ to be the mentor and co-director, offering a little gentle guidance to the teachers directing and rehearsing the tamariki in their own schools. The first and only full rehearsal is the morning of their performance day. They finish off with the delightful SGCNZ PPWS jig!

Beware!



Sean Burnett Dugdale-Martin. Photo by Charlie Jewell.

Buck Scourge is on the loose!
Unless...
We’re trapped in his living nightmare.
Thunder cracks, a clown horn honks in the distance...

With a menagerie of characters comprising a cool pope, a mellow mechanic, and a dastardly speed cop, the devilishly cheeky clown Buck Scourge dances playfully on the line between being genuine and performing for others in *Buck Scourge: Living Nightmare*.

This is a show for people who are quite happy not to understand what’s going on and those keen to yell at a stranger, says creator Sean Burnett Dugdale-Martin, adding that part of the philosophy of this character is to keep things light and provide escapist relief.

Despite Kiwis consistently enjoying clowning performances, it remains an underrepresented artform in Aotearoa according to Dugdale-Martin. Thus, the character was born after they recently returned from France after training at the revered École Philippe Gaulier, which they continue to bring up, unprompted.

Under their production company Ruff as Gutz, Dugdale-Martin is also responsible for other chaotic successes like the infamous *MILK* saga, the award-winning *ratKing*, and other ever-confused but certifiably different sketch shows such as *The Devils Are Coming* and *Dogs In The Hole*. Dugdale-Martin received five nominations at the 2024 New Zealand Fringe Festival for their startlingly human performance in *blackpill*, a verbatim solo show about incels, but due to “being snubbed” at the awards, has turned their back on earnest performance forever and returned their gaze to meticulously crafting more mayhem incarnate.

Enter: *Buck Scourge: Living Nightmare* at The Hannah on the 1st of November.
Honk, honk!

Cover: Soloist Katherine Minor. The Nutcracker, Royal New Zealand Ballet. Photo by Ross Brown.

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WITCH The Hannah

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Amélie THE MUSICAL

★★★★★ The Times

“THIS CHARMING ADAPTATION IS A TRIUMPH”

Based on the motion picture Amélie written by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Guillaume Laurant

Familiar and fantastical



Soloist Jemima Scott as the Sugar Plum Fairy.
Photo by Ross Brown.

The classic Christmas adventures of Clara will come to life in *The Nutcracker* but reimagined through a distinctly Kiwi lens in the Royal New Zealand Ballet's original new production of the timeless tale, premiering at Wellington's St James Theatre between the 30th of October to the 8th of November before pirouetting around the motu along a nationwide tour.

Set against the golden glow of a 1950s New Zealand summer, the RNZB's *Nutcracker* is a love letter to growing up in Aotearoa, blending the landscapes, traditions, and nostalgia of days spent at the bach with the magic of the much-loved story and Tchaikovsky's score, performed in Pōneke by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Being a story borne from the Northern Hemisphere, *The Nutcracker* is far removed from our own experiences of Christmas, the festive season, and the summer holidays, RNZB artistic director and choreographer Ty King-Wall says, adding this production is recognisably of the place we call home. "Our distance from the rest of the world is our strength. It gives us a creative distinctiveness that's reflected in every moment of this ballet".

This is the RNZB's first *Nutcracker* in seven years. Breathtaking lighting design by Jon Buswell, state-of-the-art visual effects from POW Studios, and glittering handcrafted costumes and intricate sets by award-winning designer Tracy Grant Lord collide to craft a world that sweeps the audience into the fantastical adventure of young Clara.

It's Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum family bach, and Auntie Drosselmeyer – a retired ballerina – arrives with a handcrafted Nutcracker doll, a gift that sparks a magical adventure. Clara journeys through the majestic Central Otago, a Land of Sweets bursting with chocolate fish, hokey pokey ice cream, lolly slice, and pavlova, and well beyond before settling beneath the pōhutukawa that shelters her family's bach. As for the Rat King's army, they take the form of invasive weasels, stoats, and possums!

Aotearoa is woven into the very fabric of this ballet, but as a story of hope, family, and unbridled imagination, King-Wall hopes audiences "have a sense of wonder and awe, of pure escapism to a world that is both reassuringly familiar and completely fantastical".

What's meant for you



Careen through the career of Canadian country crooners Cowboy Junkies. The alt-country, blues, folk, and rock band are set to make their triumphant return to our shores to celebrate their 40th anniversary with a setlist lassoing their big hits, fan favourites, deep cuts, and everything in between at The Opera House on the 6th of November.

Cowboy Junkies formed in Toronto in 1985, when singer Margo Timmins was joined by siblings Michael Timmins on guitar, Peter Timmins on drums, and Michael's lifelong friend Alan Anton on bass.

"I've known Alan longer than I've known Pete," says Michael, who isn't kidding – they were friends before Pete was even born!

Remarkably, over four decades and a whopping 29 albums – including 1988's beautifully reflective *The Trinity Session*, which features the stunning cover of The Velvet Underground's *Sweet Jane* and went on to sell more than a million copies – Cowboy Junkies have never broken up or even taken a sanity-saving hiatus. Respect and appreciation underline their time and everything they create together.

"It's that intimacy and understanding of what each one of us brings to the table," Michael says. "The expectations and responsibilities of our roles are a big part of the band's ethos. We're still amazed that we're doing things our way and continuing to grow the band, but the longer we are at it, the more fun it's become. We don't take it for granted."

"We do what we do, and it feels right for all of us", agrees Margo, who's known for her feathery alto. "After 40 years of playing together, the band and its music are more important to us than ever. The music we make brings each of us a great sense of contentment, a knowledge of place, and a sense of doing what we were meant to do."

And it shows. As *Progressive Ears* writes, "Cowboy Junkies remain one of the best bands to ever come out of Canada and have lost nothing over the years".

SNIPS

No trains

All Metlink rail services will be replaced by buses over Labour Weekend (October the 25th to 27th) as KiwiRail carry out infrastructure upgrades. Find timetables at metlink.org.nz

Water plan

Five councils – Hutt City, Porirua, Upper Hutt, Wellington, and Greater Wellington – will work in partnership with mana whenua iwi Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika to form a dedicated organisation called Metro Water. As part of the Local Water Done Well programme, Metro Water will take over from Wellington Water and be responsible for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services across the region from July 2026.

Mini artists

BATS Theatre is offering the next gen the chance to be featured in their official calendar! Three to 13-year-olds can paint or draw a bat, the BATS building, or anything theatre-inspired and submit their A4 creations to admin@bats.co.nz or in person on Kent Terrace from the 24th of October to the 2nd of November.

Primarily Playing
With Shakespeare 2025
presents

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LIKE IT**

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VUW Memorial Theatre

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sky STADIUM
WELLINGTON
12.30-1.30pm

Champagne and stars



Are you ready, old sport? The green light is on for Wellington Repertory Theatre's production of *The Great Gatsby*, which will coat Gryphon Theatre in lavish opulence even as it peeks behind the curtain from the 29th of October to the 8th of November.

A story that requires little introduction, F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel is set in Jazz Age, prohibition-era New York during the roaring twenties – the summer of 1922, to be precise – and was written exactly 100 years ago in 1925. Interestingly, it wasn't a commercial success, selling fewer than 23,000 copies in its first year. Today, it is widely celebrated: a tale of love and loss, greed and envy with an instantly recognisable aesthetic that continues to sparkle and shine on screens and stages around the world. Ken Duncum's adaptation brings it to life in a way that is faithful to the original, director Catherine McMechan says, but that also makes for compelling theatre.

"In bringing this adaptation to the stage we hope to give audiences a better understanding of a story that is often misunderstood, thanks to a superb script that focuses on the drama and the tragedy behind the glitz and the glamour."

Well-known New Zealand playwright Duncum has indicated his aim was to make this adaptation 'light on its feet'.

Wellington Repertory Theatre aims to honour this intention, but with a cast of 14 and a stellar production team, they'll also dazzle with the aesthetic audiences have come to expect of *The Great Gatsby*.

Advice from Alan

Telecommunication disputes

by **Alan Knowsley, consultant, Rainey Collins Lawyers**



If you have a dispute with your phone or internet provider that you have not been able to resolve directly, you can complain to Telecommunications Dispute Resolution (TDR) to help resolve the problem.

TDR is a free service for consumers and was set up in 2007 to resolve complaints. It consists of an independent chair, three industry representatives, and three consumer representatives. The actual dispute resolution process is run by Fair Way, which specialises in dispute resolution, managing complaints, and providing dispute resolution practitioners. The resolution service covers telecommunications providers for around 95 percent of consumers. Consumers have three years to raise a complaint to TDR and as the terms and conditions a customer agrees to will be very important in resolving any dispute, it is vital that these can be provided if a complaint is made. Members of the scheme should ensure they retain records for at least that long so they can be provided if necessary.

Those terms and conditions must have been made available to the consumer at the time services were offered. This might be by providing a copy or providing a link if there is proof that this was done.

The relevant terms will be those brought to the customer's attention and applying at the time of the event giving rise to the complaint.

Complaints can include things such as billing, faulty equipment, service levels, and repairs. The TDR process can involve four phases: talking to the consumer about their complaint to understand what the issues are and how the consumer would like them resolved; facilitating a solution by direct communication between the consumer and provider to reach an agreed outcome; mediation with a Fair Way mediator to assist the parties to agree on an outcome; and adjudication, where a decision will be made after considering evidence and submissions from the consumer and provider. Decisions of the adjudicator are binding on the communications provider, but consumers can still take their case to the Disputes Tribunal or courts if they are not satisfied with the outcome.



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Perfect Day with The Saints



“Rock music in the 70s was changed by three bands”, Sir Bob Geldof says. “The Sex Pistols, the Ramones, and The Saints”.

The Saints ’73-’78 carry on where the original Australian punk rock godfathers left off in 1978, performing material from (*I’m Stranded* (1977), *Eternally Yours* (1978), and *Prehistoric Sounds* (1978). The band features founding Saints members, guitarist Ed Kuepper and drummer Ivor Hay, alongside honorary Saints: former The Birthday Party and Bad Seeds guitarist Mick Harvey, bassist Peter Oxley of Australia’s legendary Sunnyboys, and singer Mark Arm of Seattle rockers Mudhoney.

“The Saints’ first three albums rank among the best records ever made”, Mark raves. “They have been a part of my life since stumbling upon them in the early 80s. Their influence looms large in Mudhoney world. I am stoked, stunned, and humbled that I get to join in on this Rock ‘n’ Roll Reality Camp with Ed, Ivor, Peter, and Mick!”

Put the incendiary musicians together and you have “no tribute band... no hackneyed cabaret act”, but “a band on fire”, *Backseat Mafia* writes. Meanwhile, Sean Sennett of *Time Off* calls The Saints ’73-’78 “guys reaching for magic, devoted to the moment, and delivering one of the greatest final furlongs I’ve seen in four decades of watching live music”.

Following their wildly successful Australian 2024 tour, where they played to crowds of 12,000 people across 12 shows, The Saints ’73-’78 will make their New Zealand debut this spring, eternally yours at Meow Nui on the 1st of November.

Stoking the fire *by Madelaine Empson*



Wellington rock band This Silent Divide has been on the local scene since 2018. Today comprising Shaun Jones (vocals, guitar), Kieran Williams (lead guitar, backing vocals), Jonatan Jaworski (bass), and Tim Wright (drums), they dropped their debut EP *Tall Stories* in 2021 alongside a series of singles across 2023 and 2024.

2025 is really lighting up. This Silent Divide’s recent singles *City Lights* – described as “a lively piece of modern rock with a twist of punk attitude for a dirty and mean edge that packs a meaty punch” by *Loud Enough? Magazine* – and *Rockets* – “incendiary and with touches of a curiously alluring darkness” (*Music for All*) – were picked up by streaming rock radio stations internationally and have blazed the path for *The Fire EP*.

“Lyrically *The Fire EP* explores themes around the obsession with things you can’t control, the inner drive to push through adversity, and precarious situations that could ignite at any moment”, Jones says. “Sonically we aim to mix driving drums, wall-of-sound guitars, and melodic overtones to create catchy, high-energy songs. It’s about trying to create dynamic shifts across the songs and so things really take off when the chorus hits.”

This Silent Divide will celebrate *The Fire EP* one week after its release in a great night out for rock lovers on the 24th of October.

“Moon is an awesome Newtown venue,” Jones continues. “We’re really looking forward to playing these new songs, and are stoked to have Kaletta and Adult Friends joining us as support”.

Boots ‘n’ bops

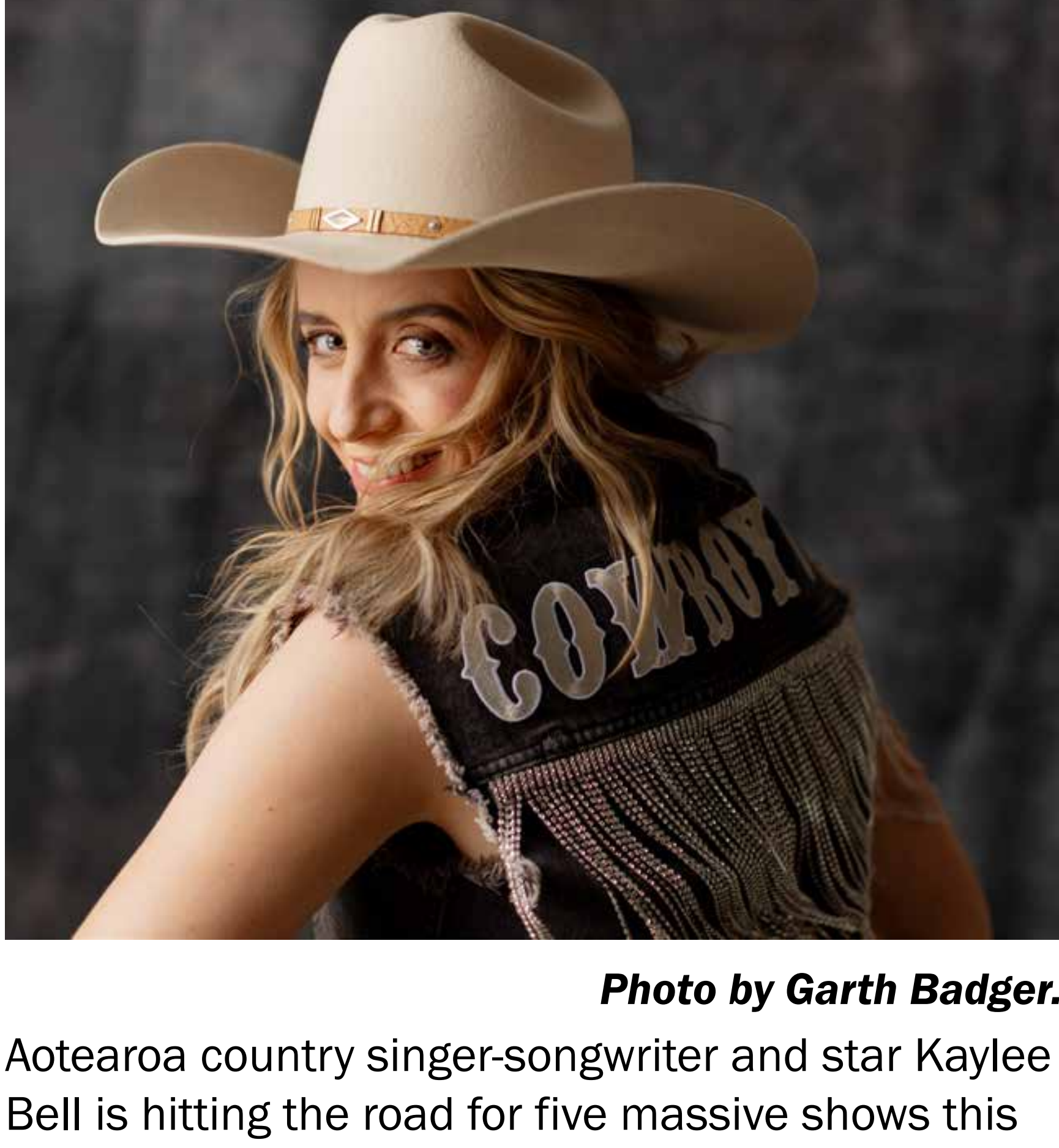


Photo by Garth Badger.

Aotearoa country singer-songwriter and star Kaylee Bell is hitting the road for five massive shows this November, springing into Michael Fowler Centre on the 4th of November with her brand-new album *Cowboy Up*.

Embodying the spirit of her small-town roots and big-city dreams, the eight-track radio smash sees Bell explore life as an artist and, more recently, a mum.

“This was written in the moments after finding out I was pregnant, when everything shifted in an instant”, Bell shares. “It captures the shock, the wonder, and the overwhelming realisation that life as I knew it was about to change forever. Writing it was my way of processing all those feelings, the joy, the fear, and the deep sense of love that was already forming.”

Bangers and bops meet beautiful ballads built on solid rhythmic backbones and brimming with contrasting narratives of vulnerability, love, and self-worth. Bell’s storytelling stands front and centre, anchored by her trademark powerhouse vocals, Nashville flair, and playful swag. Let’s not forget the hat tips to some of the musical moments and icons that shaped her ever-blossoming career.

Song For Shania opens with the lyrics “I was in the backseat, six years old / ‘Still the one’ playing on the radio / Was just a little girl but it changed my world”, while her rendition of Natalie Imbruglia’s *Torn* marks a full-circle moment for a singer who grew up belting along to the hit 90s song.

Cowboy up and giddy on down, *Boots ‘N All*, with Kaylee Bell.

Stand up and dance

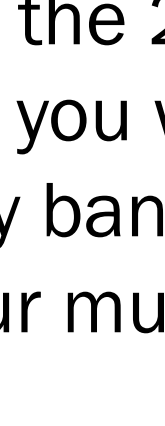


20 years ago, OdESSA kicked in the back door of Aotearoa mainstream music with their explosive debut *Oak Park Avenue*. The 2005 indie-funk record came crashing into the top 10 of the national charts and set the wheels in dizzying motion for the funk, soul, and rock proponents, heralded “the band that can make all of New Zealand stand up and dance” by *Sunday Star Times*.

Stacked with classics like *Bring the Money Back*, *Baby Don’t Go Home*, *Promises Promises*, and *Sugar Pop*, the landmark album of high-octane grooves and infectious hooks captured the atmosphere the boundary-breaking band brought to the stage. It’s the kind of raw energy that saw OdESSA play the 2006 Big Day Out Festival, the red-carpet parade of the *King Kong* world premiere that same year, multiple Cuba Street Carnivals and Newtown Festivals, and with the likes of Fat Freddy’s Drop, Kora, Connan Mockasin, Trinity Roots, Goldenhorse, and more local ledges.

Up till they separated in 2009, and with extra thanks to their 2007 sophomore record *The Prize*, they were regarded as one of the country’s most outstanding live acts, with singer Matthew Pender named by the music press as “one of the greatest front men NZ has ever produced”. Reforming in 2020 with Pender back on vocals and bassist Paul Mouncey from the original lineup, OdESSA have a new album in the works and a San Fran show set down for October the 26th to celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Oak Park Avenue*. Whether you were there in 2005 or just discovering the Welly band for the first time, come celebrate a slice of our music history!

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Close, but... by **Madelaine Empson**

Close but no cigar – almost, but not quite successful. Riffing off New Zealand’s tall poppy culture, a breakout five-piece Kiwi band named themselves after the famous idiom.

“The self-deprecating nature of us taking the first jab at our artistic venture makes it less impactful when others come at us”, the genre-blurring indie, surf, alt-rockers explain, admitting that the name originated from a cool surfing vid they found on YouTube. “It was a great video, and was a fun name. We had it as a backup in case we came up with something better. We came close to finding one, but.. So we stuck with it. NO CIGAR.”

With their 2023 sophomore album *The Great Escape* spending more than 74 consecutive weeks on the NZ Top 20 Albums Chart, their hit *Concubine* voted the 10th best rock song of 2024 by listeners of *The Rock*, and their highly anticipated third album *Under The Surface* making waves since the day of its release in July this year, NO CIGAR needn’t have worried.

“Feedback from the new album and the response to the tour has been immense”, the band buzzes. “Selling out our largest headline show with months to go was epic. It has us all fizzing for the upcoming run of shows and a busy summer.”

With a rep for unforgettable, magnetic performances, don’t come close to missing their biggest shows on home soil to date. The electric tour reaches Meow Nui on the 7th of November.

Cheers for cheer



Laughs, libations, and Celtic wit collide at *Booze & Craic*, a night of Irish and Scottish comedy that will leave Whisky & Wood audiences with stitches in their sides and sláinte on their lips this October on the 30th.

This cheeky and charm-laden comedy showcase unites top-tier comedic talent from Ireland and Scotland. Hosted by Dubliner Alan McElroy, who won Best MC at the 2025 NZ Comedy Guild Awards, *Booze & Craic* features Shane Mulvey alongside Scotland’s own David Stuart and Samantha Hannah.

Dubbed one of the “funniest ladies on the planet” by *Remote Goat*, Hannah blasted onto the comedy scene in 2018 by trying to find a husband in a year and then writing a show about it. Lucky for us, the 2026 Billy T nominee found a Kiwi lad, and now Aotearoa gets to enjoy the fringe benefits of her happily ever after. Describing himself as “effortlessly beautiful”, Stuart rounds out the Scottish contingent at *Booze & Craic*. He got fired from a job, moved to NZ, and is now a 2025 Billy T nominee.

Queenstown’s Irish powerhouse, Mulvey has a unique perspective on life, covering everything from Mexican jail cells to fatherhood in his sets.

Sharing tales from their homelands, culture clashes, or the quirks of life in New Zealand, McElroy sees the evening as more than just stand-up – it’s a meeting between two rich comedic traditions, he says, “Celtic humour filtered through modern Kiwi experience”.

Ready your bellies for bevies and banter, juice and jests, tipples and teasing at *Booze & Craic*.

Razor-sharp riot



Whether you recognise him from Snapchat or mainstream TV, stages or cinema, Tom Sainsbury has become a household name in Aotearoa. The multi-talented comedian, actor, and writer has a portfolio as diverse as they come, but one thing remains consistent: his distinctively Kiwi, weirdly specific, and totally unforgettable style of comedy.

There was a time – circa 2017 – when Sainsbury was best known for his social media skits and political impressions. So much so that he became known as Snapchat Dude. Whether he plays a dodgy small-town mayor, a boomer dad, a passive-aggressive flatmate, or captures the eccentricities of the likes of Simon Bridges and Paula Bennett, his nigh-on daily videos get thousands upon thousands of views to this day.

As for TV, Sainsbury has starred in *Taskmaster*, *Snackmasters*, *Shortland Street*, and *Wellington Paranormal* as ghost-hunting assistant Constable Parker, plus he’s appeared in Kiwi feature films like *Guns Akimbo*, *Breaker Upperers*, *Baby Done*, and *The Rule of Jenny Pen*.

There are over 30 plays he has written listed with Playmarket, plus 34 writing credits on his IMDb portal, including for *7 Days*, *Wellington Paranormal*, *Loop Track*, the Taika Waititi-directed *Super City*, and the new TVNZ show *Warren’s Vortex*. His awards and accolades? Too many to list!

You can catch the star shining on stage in his new stand-up show *Lessons Not Learnt*, sauntering into Te Raukura ki Kāpiti Coastlands Theatre on the 1st of November before finishing his nationwide tour at The Opera House on the 2nd.

Side-splitting stardust



Kiwi star Raybon Kan has skyrocketed back onto the stage to celebrate 31 years of out-of-this-world jokes and sky-high laughs. *Raybonanza* will melt down the award-winning comedian’s side-splitting stardust into a high-octane show of stratospheric proportions at The Hannah on the 31st of October.

From lawyer to columnist to meteoric comedic success, Kan’s journey to stardom was anything but ordinary.

“The first time I performed stand-up was a quiet Sunday evening in Wellington at Bar Bodega in 1994,” he reminisces. “There was no tradition of stand-up in Wellington at the time, and the evening was a loose gathering. The performers, a handful, outnumbered the crowd”.

Before delivering the lines he’d written on an A4 piece of paper, Kan recalls being parked outside the venue for what seemed “like an age, staring longingly at the motorway onramp – the beckoning escape route”.

He may not remember what happened on stage that night, but the rest is history. Since his debut, Kan has appeared at Melbourne Fringe Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Just for Laughs in Montreal, and at the New Zealand International Comedy Festival. He has written for *Wellington Paranormal*, was twice awarded Funniest Column by NZ Comedy Guild, and was voted Best Comedian by *Metro Magazine* and *North & South*.

Now, Kan is ready to embark on the career-capping victory lap of belly laughs that is *Raybonanza*.

“This is my *Eras Tour*”, Kan says. “The show will be a greatest hits compilation – a medley of all the favourite jokes I can still remember”.

Can of worms



Photo by A. Moore.

Get ready for a graveyard smash at *Monster Mash*, Wellington’s wackiest comedy extravaganza coming back from the dead on the 29th of October.

Bringing spine-tingling absurdity to The Pow Wow Room, *Monster Mash* is an unfiltered experiment packed with sketch, improv, and all-out alternative comedy carnage that features a cast of unhinged funny fiends. After earning a 2024 Wellington Comedy Awards nomination for Show of the Year, *Monster Mash* is gnashing its teeth to bring more mayhem to the stage.

“We wanted something weird, wild, and totally unforgettable”, co-creator and performer Mo Munn says. “This year’s show is a full-on descent into delightful madness. We’re breaking the format, breaking the fourth wall, and maybe summoning something wild while we’re at it.”

Joining Munn, who recently took home Best Newcomer at the NZ International Comedy Fest, is Best Joke 2024 winner Summer Begalka, Billy T-nominee Kipling DC, 2025 Wellington Raw Comedy Quest runner-up Aaron James Douglas and finalist Q Potts, and razor-sharp rascal Oliver Pol alongside special guests Keegan Thomas, Ralph Hilaga, and Adam Moore.

“It’s not just a comedy show – it’s a full-on Halloween experience and a monster of a show in every sense,” Munn says, adding that DJ Reyneil will be “spinning ghoulish bangers and Halloween remixes before and after the show to keep the vibes high and the energy spooky”.

Light your pumpkins and prepare your funny bones for *Monster Mash*.

Saucy Samhain



When the sun goes down and the moon comes up, jump on your broomsticks or ride your headless horses down to *The Willies: Halloween Drag Show* for a cracked compilation of sexy scaries and terrifying treats that will leave you screaming for more and chilled to the bone.

On the 31st of October and the 1st of November, the trick or treating will come knocking on The Fringe Bar door in the form of glamorous ghouls and sensual skeletons, vixen vampires and bawdy banshees, wanton witches and erotic entities. Scary meets sexy at this Samhain show featuring everything from death drops to sky-high stunts, comedic capers to freakish feats.

Monster mashing it up at *The Willies: Halloween Drag Show* are Aotearoa’s Anti-Pageant winners Araceli and Myrtle Montgomery alongside Mx Capital Drag winners Faux Femm, Eddie D’amore, and Willy SmacknTush, plus Ultimate DIY BurlesKiwi winner Ms Weeds, Māori political fashionista Misty Frequency, and the gender-destructionist glam-rock pretty boy Rocky Rhodes.

Gather your coven and dress up for the occasion yourself. Whether you’re keen for a group fit or you’re flying solo, costumes will be rewarded, so spooky or scary, sexy or silly, take a stab at shapeshifting this Samhain.

Don’t hide in the shadows on Halloween – howl at the moon, haunt the streets, devise devious deeds, and take a bite out of *The Willies: Halloween Drag Show*.

Drag Christmas *by Alessia Belsito-Riera*



Fright meets fabulousness at *Nightmare on Cuba Street*, Ivy Bar & Cabaret’s Halloween drag show starring glittering ghouls Faux Femm, Adamant Eve, Ness Quick, Veronica Heart, Judas Kiss, and Rocky Rhodes. The spooktacular evening of camp, comedy, and killer performances will feature wickedly good looks, hair-raising numbers, and a hauntingly fun atmosphere. I asked organiser Faux Femm what tricks and treats she has up her sleeve for the 31st of October.

What makes dressing up for Halloween so fun?

Halloween is your get-in-drag free card! You can be as confident, geeky, or scary as you want, because everyone around you is also doing it. You can be your favourite TV show character, a sexy version of just about anything, or even a horrendous meme come to life.

Will the Nightmare on Cuba Street costumes be sexy or scary?

They’ll definitely make your stomach drop, your eyes pop, or your heart stop – ideally all three! It’ll be a fever dream where the Corpse Bride, Black Swan, and Jennifer’s Body have a turbulent love triangle, all while Jigsaw and the Bride of Frankenstein try to outdo each other in severed body parts.

What should we get excited about?

Halloween is like drag Christmas! You get to be messier, scarier, and nastier than any other time of year. We have a stellar cast, half of whom have been in Anti-Pageant, an annual horror drag competition. There will be brides, blood, and beasts; creatures, features, and screechers – so come to the lab and see what’s on the slab!

Bringing spooky back (yeah)



Photo by Isabella Murray.

Artwork by Revena Correll Trnka.

Grab the ice bucket, coz it’s about to get hot. We don’t mean your typical summer’s day hot... we mean hellfire hot.

Demons are among us. They rose to the surface in a blazing inferno, leaving their home, Hell, sitting empty. They’ve got business on Earth, see? They want to play DnD.

Wellington-based Dungeons and Dragons podcast *Last In Initiative* has paired up with local theatre company Duct Taped On to bring spooky back. Come Hell or highwater, the team are locked in and ready to deliver two all-new hellish, hellarious, and almost certainly heretic-filled adventures to BATS Theatre on the 24th and 25th of October.

Dungeons and Demons: We’re All Going To Super Hell is like Dungeons and Dragons live, but with a gnarly twist. Four budding demonologists – player and podcast co-host Isabella Murray and players Ruby Kemp, Teag Mackay, and Tristram Domican – are on the hunt. Guided by dungeon master (DM) and podcast co-host Revena Correll Trnka [pictured], watch as they stumble their way into a summoning ritual, argue with a devil, and embark on an action-filled romp to Hell and back.

Last In Initiative is a tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) podcast with a rotating cast of local talent bringing you a selection of short, arc-based games. Their collaborations with Duct Taped On have produced the successful shows *Dungeons and Decades: Time is Just a Number*, *Dungeons & Delinquents: Be Gay Do Crime*, and a sold-out Fringe run of *Dungeons and Da Vinci: The One With Art*. Now, *Dungeons and Demons* promises to be a game equally full of chaos and bad name puns.

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News

A word from Maddi...

Long Live little Luna

by **Madelaine Empson**



There's a running joke I make (with myself) that my column is largely about Taylor Swift and/or my cat. When sitting down to write this issue's public journal entry, I pretended to try to think of different topics, but the truth is, my one brain cell is currently dividing its time between those two very things as we speak. There's a reason I'm writing about both though, this time at least. One: Taylor Swift has a new album out. Two: Luna is very sick. If I didn't like Taylor Swift, this would be a prime opportunity for a great joke: bad news all round then.

I can't make that joke because I love Taylor Swift and I'm not *Mean*, but when it comes to *The Life of a Showgirl*, it seems I'm in the minority. What has really interested me about her 12th studio album is the vitriol the internet has spewed about it and her since its release on October the 3rd. People who claim to find her sooooo annoying, harp on and on about how overrated she is, and are irritated by how much space she occupies in the media (and in the world, really) are the ones who can't seem to stop talking about her online. As Tay would say, it's *Actually Romantic*, all this time they've spent on her. They're the ones who claim she only ever writes about love and exes, as if Ed Sheeran, Bruno Mars, or, like, any other male popstar doesn't do exactly the same thing. These folks aren't just mean but memeable too, so here's a compilation of memes in their honour: Normal people when something is not to their taste: unbothered, moisturised, happy, in their lane, focused, flourishing. People who don't like Taylor Swift:

IN THIS ESSAY I WILL.

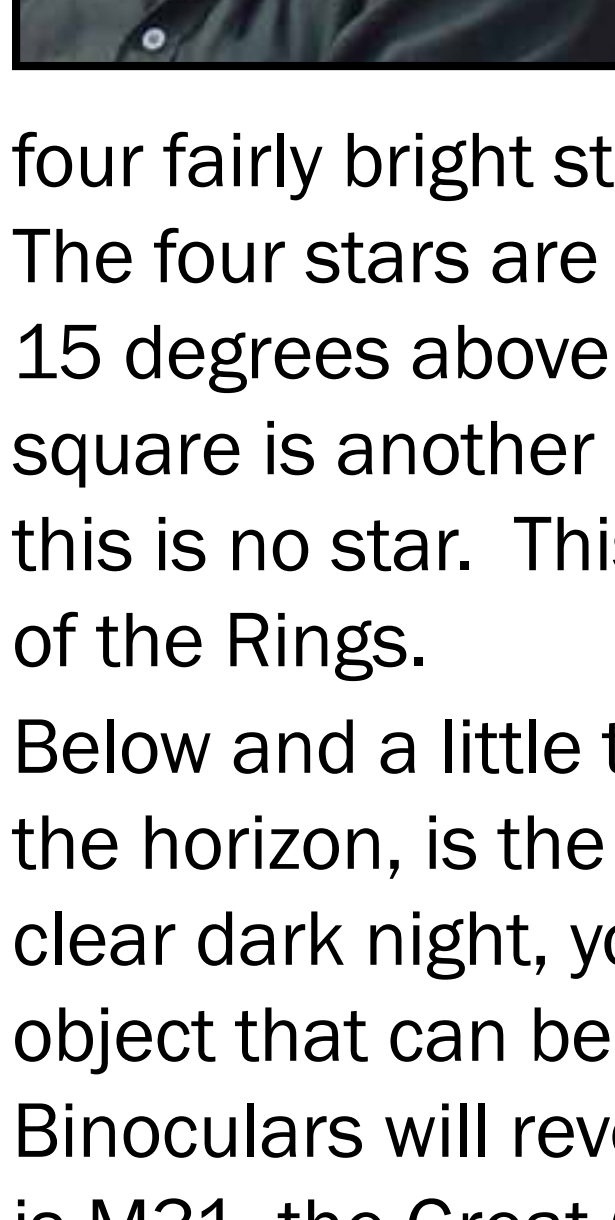
The new album is sparkly and silly and fun and fabulous, and I am obsessed with it. As soon as it came out, I listened to it four times in a row with my cat (how's that for a segue).

Little Luna has been diagnosed with triaditis, which, put simply, means 'three things wrong'. So, she is not focused nor flourishing like Meredith Grey, Olivia Benson, or Benjamin Button – Taylor's cats – but I just know our *Love Story* is not over.

Cosmic conversations

Andromeda nemesis

by **Richard Hall, astronomical communicator**



On a spring evening, the constellation of Scorpius is setting in the west. The Scorpion, which is embedded in the Milky Way, is our sign of winter. Orion, our sign of summer, is rising in the east.

Looking to the north, the most prominent feature is a group of four fairly bright stars that form the Great Square.

The four stars are about 15 degrees apart. About 15 degrees above the upper right-hand star of the square is another star of similar brightness. But, this is no star. This is the planet Saturn – the Lord of the Rings.

Below and a little to the right of the square, close to the horizon, is the constellation of Andromeda. On a clear dark night, you may glimpse the most distant object that can be seen with the unaided eye. Binoculars will reveal an elliptical patch of light. This is M31, the Great Galaxy in Andromeda.

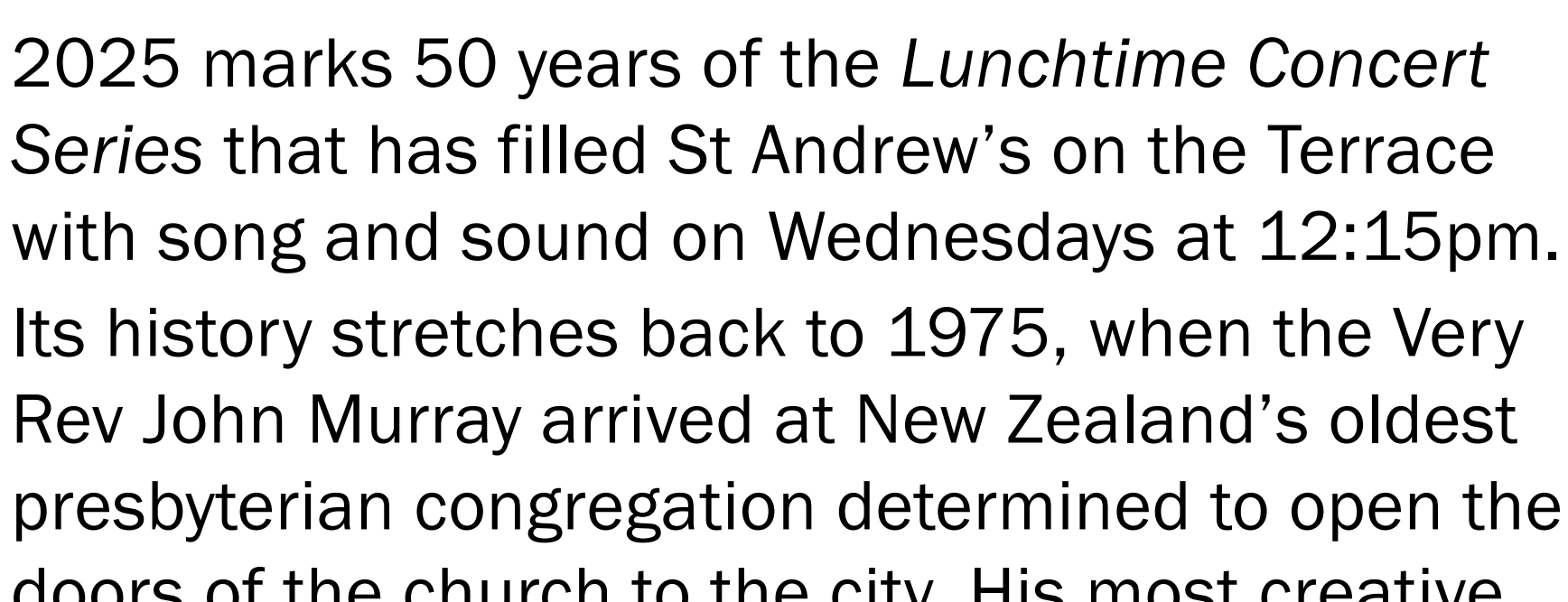
M31 is similar to, but slightly larger than our Milky Way galaxy. It has a diameter of 152,000 light-years and contains a trillion stars. It appears elliptical because we see it almost edge on. It is faint due to its colossal distance of 2,537,000 light-years.

The colours of M31 are generated by the dominant bright stars in two separate regions. The core and central region are illuminated by ancient red giants. The dominant visible light radiated by these stars is yellow, orange, and red. The outer spiral arms, on the other hand, are dominated by young blue giant stars. If we could view our Milky Way galaxy from afar, it would exhibit similar colours.

M31 has at least two satellite galaxies. The brighter, to the lower right of M31, is designated M32. It is an elliptical galaxy of 30 million stars with a diameter of 660 light-years. Our Milky Way galaxy also has satellites. These are the Magellanic Clouds in our Southern sky.

The Andromeda galaxy is on a collision course with our Milky Way galaxy. It is approaching us at a speed of 110 kilometres per second. However, its current distance is so great that the collision is not due for another four billion years. When this occurs, an inferno of energy will be released. Stars, probably including our Sun, will be hurled in all directions. The two galaxies will eventually merge to form a large elliptical galaxy... like M32, but on a much grander scale.

Lunchtime legacy



Roy Tankersley.

2025 marks 50 years of the *Lunchtime Concert Series* that has filled St Andrew's on the Terrace with song and sound on Wednesdays at 12:15pm. Its history stretches back to 1975, when the Very Rev John Murray arrived at New Zealand's oldest presbyterian congregation determined to open the doors of the church to the city. His most creative initiative was the introduction of a concert series that would feature local musicians at lunchtime on Wednesdays. Though the concerts didn't become a weekly occurrence until 2005, Murray noted that the Wednesday gathering was so popular, it had grown larger than the Sunday congregation!

When Murray completed his tenure in 1993, the concerts remained, with Vivien Cryer and Celia Lampe stepping in before Marjan van Waardenberg took over the volunteer role in 2000. Marjan made the series a weekly occurrence, growing audience attendance and performer waiting lists so much so that sporadic Thursday concerts were added. The baton was passed to Kris Zuelicke, a musician and teacher who has built on Marjan's legacy, in 2020.

Today, concerts see more than 100 attendees per week and feature performances from members of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Wellington, Royal New Zealand Air Force Band, university music students, children's groups, choirs, and local musicians.

The 50th anniversary celebration will feature Roy Tankersley, who was instrumental in the *Lunchtime Concert Series* legacy when he was one of the initial organisers when serving as the church's organist and music director in the 70s and 80s. He will perform works by Bach, Satie, and New Zealand composer Lyell Cresswell on the Croft and chamber organs on Wednesday the 22nd of October at 12:15pm on the dot.

Hair-raising, heart-pumping



Frights, fun, and floor-shaking frequencies will be unleashed at *Rave to the Grave – Fund-Raise the Dead*. Two legendary Wellington institutions – BATS Theatre and RadioActive.FM – have teamed up this Halloween to deliver a night so unforgettable that Wellingtonians have snatched up every last ticket to the hair-raising, heart-pumping rave.

But that doesn't mean you can't help BATS and RadioActive.FM raise the vital funds they need to keep their doors open and their creative voices alive through their online auction. With an epic collection of art, exclusive experiences, vouchers, and more up for grabs from local artists, makers, and organisations, you can help bold independent theatre and iconic local broadcasting survive and thrive by simply placing a bid.

The first auction drop has already been snapped up, but you can bid on the second drop until the 26th of October and the third drop between the 23rd and 31st of the month. They include artwork, workshops, advertising campaigns, Tall Blacks vs. Australia double passes, signed rugby jerseys, show tickets, a VIP experience with the Tokomanawa Queens, and more.

The auction gives everyone a chance to be a part of the celebration, and while the need for ongoing community support remains critical, the past and current fundraising events have highlighted the essential role Wellingtonians play in sustaining their city's arts and music scene.

This is your chance to show up for two creative powerhouses. Head to the BATS website to join the waitlist to attend the rave on the 31st of October.

by Madelaine Empson

A continuation and a new beginning



As Brian Wood stepped into the role of director at New Zealand Portrait Gallery Te Pūkenga Whakaata on the 18th of August – one he previously occupied during outgoing director Jaenine Parkinson’s parental leave in 2021 – he says it seems “like both a continuation and a new beginning”.

“It feels incredibly special to return – not just to a place I know and love, but to a role where I can help shape the gallery’s future,” Wood says. “Stepping into this role feels like coming home, but with a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. I had a fantastic experience in 2021 and achieved a lot during my time there. I’m looking forward to building on that momentum and continuing the strong exhibition programme. I deeply value the gallery’s role as a storyteller of Aotearoa’s people.” Since his last time in the director’s seat, Wood has stayed closely connected to the arts and cultural sector, though in vast and varied roles like managing a performing arts company, serving as a trustee for an arts charity, reviewing funding applications, curating exhibitions, and “even working in the wine industry”, which seems surprising without knowing he resides in the beautiful South Wairarapa. This is on top of his previous work spanning marketing, fundraising, curation, and managing public programmes, events, and private art collections.

Originally from the Kapiti Coast, Wood has lived and worked in Wellington on several occasions, as well as in Dunedin, where he studied at Otago Polytechnic, in Auckland, across the ditch in Melbourne, and on the other side of the globe in London. He has held positions with The Dowse Art Museum, Te Omanga Hospice, Royal New Zealand Ballet, City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi, and Museums Wellington, all of which have deepened and diversified his portfolio in preparation for his current position at New Zealand Portrait Gallery, which he has big plans for.

“I want the gallery to be a living, evolving space – one that not only reflects New Zealand’s identity but helps shape, inspire, and challenge it,” Wood beams.

With a passion for our histories and a penchant for innovation, he tells me more about his plans for one of the nation’s most preeminent creative spaces.

Thinking back, what made you want to pursue a career in the arts? What do you still love about it?

I have always been a creator and therefore loved the arts. When I was younger, I was living in Australia and saw an exhibition at the Ian Potter Gallery, which was part of the University of Melbourne. I knew then that I wanted to make a career in the sector and followed this impulse by moving to Dunedin to complete a fine art degree. Working in the sector has only increased my passion for creating exhibitions for others to enjoy.

What have been some career highlights?

One major career highlight was working on the first Kiingi Tuheitia Portrait Award in 2021. Such an amazing kaupapa supporting young Māori artists and a really rewarding experience to be part of. It’s great to see this award is going from strength to strength and I am looking forward to the next one in 2027.

Did you think that the journey would lead you to where you are today?

The end goal was always to be a director of a regional gallery or museum, and I am happy that I have achieved that goal. I am dedicated to making things happen and over the years have worked in marketing, project management, fundraising, and curatorial and exhibition development roles, which have all led me to my current role.

What do you hope to achieve as New Zealand Portrait Gallery director?

I have ambitious plans for the gallery. Essentially, I want the gallery to celebrate and champion Aotearoa’s artists and creativity, stimulate conversations about our national identity and who we are, strengthen and foster belonging and cultural connection, give a voice to underrepresented communities, and connect people to New Zealand’s art, culture, heritage, and diversity through portraiture that illuminates our histories and shared future. I am also keen to reach new audiences through our digital programmes, public programmes, and touring our exhibitions to the regions. On top of all this, I am looking forward to working with our amazing Friends Group on some new fundraising initiatives.

What does being the director of a hugely reputable and influential institution entail?

There are lots of aspects that make up the role and there are challenges ahead. Fundraising is a big part of it, along with looking at the forward programme of activity, leading a small team, purposefully growing our small collection, working directly with artists and collaborating with other institutions, and publishing exhibition catalogues, plus supporting the team with all the amazing projects that we are working on.

Outside of work do you collect art?

Yes, I do! I am a collector at heart, and I always encourage others to collect. Spend within your means, even if you only buy one item a year – over time you can build a lovely collection. I have a few themes that run through my collection, which includes small paintings, textiles, ceramics, and, of course, portraits. By collecting you are very directly supporting the whole arts ecosystem.

What would you say to someone who has never been to New Zealand Portrait Gallery before to convince them to come check it out?

We are very approachable; our front of house team is run by volunteers who are very welcoming. The gallery has changing exhibitions that focus on people and place. Our tagline is ‘Encounter stories of New Zealanders through the art of portraiture’ and that sums us up in a very contemporary way. Our exhibitions include photography, painting, drawing, video work, and sculpture and we are always free entry for New Zealand residents. We look forward to welcoming you!

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Thursday October 30

12 noon
Old St Paul's 34 Mulgrave Street.

"ESTABLISHMENT & EXOTIC CHURCHES IN WELLINGTON"

A Talk by Peter Lineham, emeritus professor, Massey University.

1.30pm **WELLINGTON CATHEDRAL OF ST PAUL** 2 Hill Street.

3pm **CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART** 40 Hill Street

4.30pm **ST ANDREW'S ON THE TERRACE**, 30 The Terrace

Friday October 31

9.45am **CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH**
46 Boulcott Street

11am **ST MARY OF THE ANGELS**
17 Boulcott Street

12.15-12.45pm
Unity Books 57 Willis Street.
WHY DOES WELLINGTON HAVE A REPUTATION AS GODLESS? talk by Peter Lineham. No charge.

1.30pm **BETH EL ORTHODOX JEWISH SYNAGOGUE & HOLOCAUST CENTRE**
80 Webb Street

3pm **THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**
19 Marion Street

4.30pm **ST PETER'S ON WILLIS**
211 Willis Street

5pm
'WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT RELIGION IN WELLINGTON?' A talk by Peter Lineham.

6.15pm St Peter's Garden Room, 211 Willis Street. **A PIE AND A PINT** (and other refreshments)

Saturday November 1

9am **ST JOHN'S IN THE CITY**
170 Willis Street

10.15am **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE READING ROOM** 197 Willis Street.
Morning Tea available.

11.15am **WESLEY CHURCH**
Taranaki Street

2.45pm **GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL**
3 Hania Street, Mt Victoria.

4pm **SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**
7 Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria



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Unlock a world of possibilities



In a central location, St Mark's is an independent, Anglican School that offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) to boys and girls from Preschool to Year 8.

The PYP represents a model of world-class educational practice, setting up our tamariki to respond confidently to the challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing world.

Led by Tumuaki, Mrs Betty Brown, tamariki from St Mark's have been making their mark in Wellington this year – winning Central Zones, Swimming Championships, Regional Tournament of Minds Competition, NIWA Science Fair, and Central Zone Speech Competitions.

“We are incredibly proud of our students for these outstanding achievements. Their success across such diverse disciplines – speech, STEM, and sport is a true reflection of our holistic approach to education. Our students are not just excelling in the classroom; they are demonstrating excellence in all aspects of their lives. These wins underscore St Mark's School's role as a small school with a big impact, nurturing talent and celebrating success within the Wellington community.”

Our programme fosters compassionate and knowledgeable students who are ready to take on the world!

Join us on Dufferin Street on Friday the 7th of November from 10am to 12pm. Register now at www.st-marks.school.nz/enrolment-enquiry/open-days or get in touch to organise a Principal's Tour for your whole whānau now.

Be swim safe




Summer in New Zealand is synonymous with swimming. Whether that's at the beach or the pool, in lakes or rivers and streams, every kid deserves to come home safely from a swim. Learning valuable skills for water safety makes this possible.

Drowning and water-related injuries are preventable tragedies, yet many school children are unprepared. It's important that they learn how to be safe, swim confidently, recognise hazards, and call for help. Confidence in the water should be as natural as confidence on land – and safety should never come at the cost of enjoyment.

Enrolling your tamariki in swim classes ahead of the summer season will ensure that they learn to swim confidently, but they also need to know how to respond if the unexpected happens. One of the most important skills anyone can learn is how to float. In the event of a rip or any form of trouble, floating on your back while relaxing and breathing normally will significantly increase chances of survival – that's why it's one of the first things to teach children.

If your kids already know how to swim, brush up on some safety tips before the summer begins. These include finding the safest place to swim by assessing conditions and finding the lifeguard flags, if in doubt staying out, and always swimming with a buddy. It's also important to know how to get help if needed: simply raise your arm and call out!



It's time to


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2025

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NZSD contemporary dance student, Molly Walker. Photo by Stephen A'Court.

Vino venture



Vistas, vines, and good vibes collide at the biggest small school fundraiser in New Zealand. Round the Vines is Martinborough School's iconic 10 or 21-kilometre fun run and walk through the scenic wineries dotted around the town. Open to all ages and abilities, get your costume and your crew ready for the 1st of November.

First held in 1995, Round the Vines is just shy of celebrating its 30th anniversary due to COVID cancellations in 2020, but that didn't stop the team from making the 2025 event extra special with a brand-new course map. For returning runners, that means this year will feature a whole new collection of vineyards that have never before had their grounds open to the public. Explore a whole new side of Martinborough along the route, plus enjoy sips of sensational wines from Dry River, Luna Estate, Palliser Estate Winery, Te Kairanga, Moy Hall, McLeod Vineyards, and Ata Rangi.

Live music will be pumping from themed hydration stations positioned around the course, while the finish line is in the centre of Martinborough Square. Prizegiving, live entertainment, a raffle, and delicious food and drinks will be keeping the Square popping from 1pm, with prizes for the first three men and women to finish the course as well as for best dressed. The fan-favourite end-of-day Wharekauhau Luxury Lodge spot prize will be up for grabs again in 2025.

Wander the wineries at your own pace or be in it to win it at Round the Vines.

A mighty legacy



Photo courtesy of WellingtonNZ.

Zealandia Te Mārā a Tāne never forgets its origins, some 30 years ago now when a band of determined Wellingtonians pushed to turn the city's former water reservoir into a fully fenced ecosanctuary. Now, we have staff at the sanctuary who grew up in the capital hearing and seeing kākā, kākāriki, and tīeke/saddleback around the city and in their own backyards. These remarkable creatures were missing for a century, along with tuatara, the prehistoric reptile that has also found sanctuary within the mammalian predator-exclusion fence that encompasses Zealandia.

It all started in the late 1990s when, in a world-leading effort, 13 species of introduced predators were removed from the valley. When species such as kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi, kākā, and tuatara were reintroduced to Wellington after being absent for so long, people clearly recognised the sanctuary's value.

All this was only possible because of a clear vision, a stubborn determination, and the expertise and sheer hard work of so many people from our origins through to now. We continue to rely on the generosity of our wonderful supporters. Zealandia Te Mārā a Tāne is now a celebrated and award-winning destination, which is recognised for its commitment to regenerating the forest and to caring for the wildlife living both within and without. We have a 500-year vision, but already after its first quarter of a century Zealandia Te Mārā a Tāne has left a mighty legacy. For ways you can help, visit donate.visitzealandia.com



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Family membership includes 2 adults + 3 kids.
Ts and Cs apply. See website for details. Add additional adults to a family membership for just \$32 and additional kids for just \$15. Family members must reside in the same household. Photo by Just Lapsley Willey

Competition for creative children



A new photography competition for ages eight to 18 in Greater Wellington has tamariki and rangatahi out snapping photos for a chance to win epic prizes.

The Young Photographers Competition by Nōku te Ao Capital E encourages photographers to think creatively as they interpret the theme Ako Kori Hanga, Learn Play Create. Photos can capture one, two, or all three of these ideas.

Three winners will each take home an epic prize valued at over \$1500, including a photography kit gifted by Rubber Monkey, which includes a Canon EOS R50 camera with 18-45mm lens, a 64GB SD card, a Canon backpack, and a \$100 Rubber Monkey gift card. The three winners will also participate in a Wellington Museum Retail Experience, developing their photo into a retail product sold at Wellington Museum.

Rubber Monkey, who will be on the judging panel, say the device children use to take their photo doesn't matter too much, as the competition isn't just about technical skill. "When we look at the photos, we want to feel some emotion. If a child can be creative with the theme and make us go 'Wow that's cool' then they'll have a great chance at impressing us."

Tamariki can submit up to two photos via a webform on Nōku te Ao Capital E's website. Entries are open now, with submissions closing at 5pm on Sunday the 7th of December.

Learn more about the Young Photographers Competition at www.ntace.nz

Kiwi country carnival



Spring has sprung, and with it New Zealand's countryside has burst to life, making now the best time to celebrate the spoils of the season. Dedicated to Kiwi country living, the Wairarapa A&P Show honours New Zealand's farming roots and celebrates our continuing agricultural excellence.

Now in its 146th year, the fair, exhibition, and competitions along with a wide variety of trade stands will take up residence in the Clareville Showgrounds north of Carterton from 9am on Saturday the 1st of November until 4pm on Sunday the 2nd, providing excitement, revelry, and *shear* joy with something for everyone.

This year's celebration will be bigger and better than ever, with all the traditional events on the schedule accompanied by a few new ones to boot. Visitors can enjoy the typical animal classes and competitions including sheep shearing, woolhandling, pet lamb and calf judging, and equestrian sports, as well as the beloved Goldpine Pet Corner where attendees can see farm animals up close. The woodchopping, fencing, and dog trials competitions are always highlights, as are the children's art show, scavenger hunt, and lawnmower racing.

The carnival will be in full swing from Friday the 31st at 5pm, so come on down and watch the schools Top Teams competition, zip around on the rides, try your luck at the games, and take a spin on the merry-go-round. Don't forget to grab a treat from one of the food trucks to keep spirits and energy at an all-time high!

Young Photographers Competition

WIN a Canon EOS R50 kit and more epic prizes!

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featuring Hollie Smith

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 **PHANTOM**
ELECTROPHONICS

Family – Wairarapa

Has it all



Queen Elizabeth Park, Masterton.

Photo by Jet Productions.

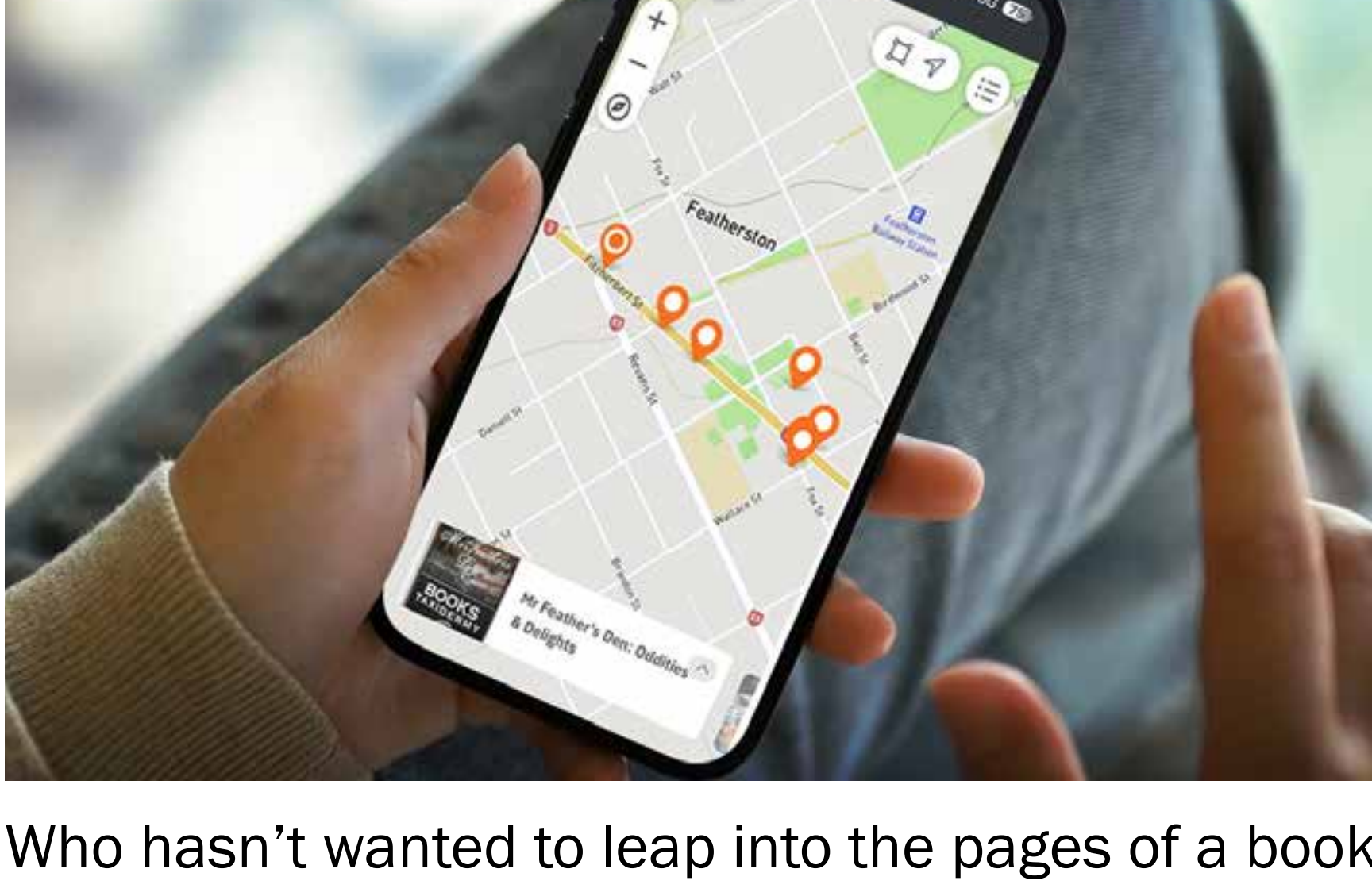
Starry skies and sparkling seas, glimmering forests and rolling pastures await in Wairarapa.

Ubiquitous throughout is breathtaking scenery, plenty of entertainment, cultural capers, and the bush, beaches, and beauty that Aotearoa is famous for. Wairarapa encompasses swaths of forests, plains, and coastline, with no shortage of picturesque hotspots. Explore the great outdoors by camping, fishing, horseback riding, rafting, climbing, biking, hiking, boating, and multi-day tramping.

The towns of this region are as varied as its inhabitants. Featherston is characterised by antique stores and bookshops. The wine haven of Martinborough or boutique Greytown are both refined and quirky. Masterton offers big city business with a country edge, while Carterton enjoys a thriving event calendar.

Wherever you go in Wairarapa, there are some things that you'll find everywhere: delicious cuisine made from the freshest local ingredients, picturesque postcard-worthy scenery, and, come nightfall, twinkling stars.

Cycle story

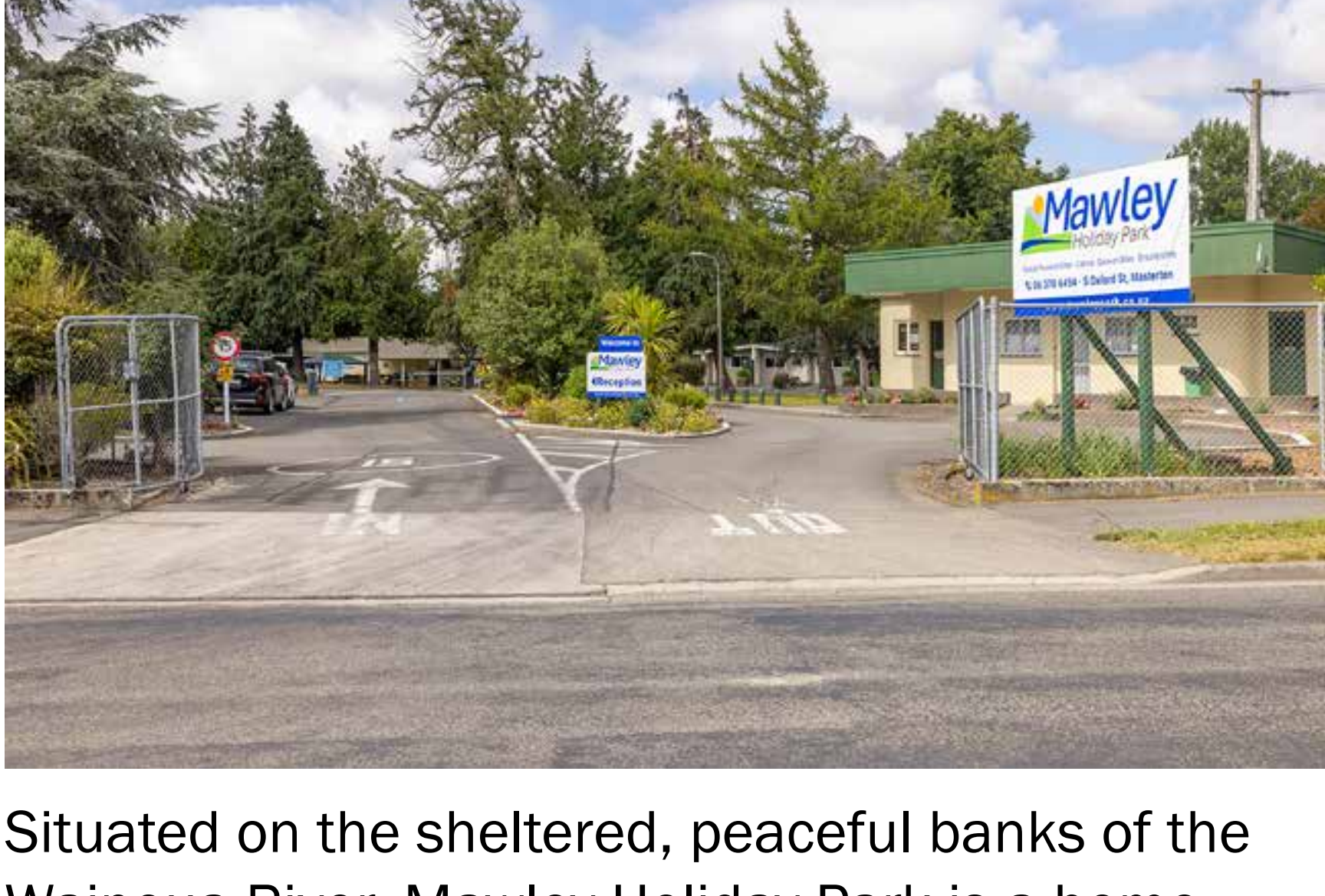


Who hasn't wanted to leap into the pages of a book and explore its world from the binding to the back cover? The Booklover's Trail Te Ara Kai Pukapuka guides cyclists from one book shop to the next, showcasing Wellington, Wairarapa, and Hawke's Bay as vibrant destinations for those interested in touring the country from a literary perspective.

The free app provides an alternative lens to view these regions, away from the normal food and wine tours, music festivals, and markets on offer throughout the year. Each bookshop is individually unique and lovingly curated by the owners with a mix of new and pre-loved books. Walking through the welcoming doors of all these bookshops, you will be enveloped in a magical world of paper, ink, illustrations, and stories to take you away to another world.

Follow the whole Booklover's Trail or do it in sections and turn the page on the story of a lifetime.

On your doorstep



Situated on the sheltered, peaceful banks of the Waipoua River, Mawley Holiday Park is a home away from home in Wairarapa. A perfect base from which to explore everything the region has to offer, the beautiful grounds feature a range of accommodation options to suit every traveller.

Guests can enjoy the BBQ area, which sits alongside a communal kitchen featuring ranges, gas hobs, a microwave, fridge/freezer, and power points. There are also plenty of bathroom blocks and a lounge area offering access to TVs, a library, and dining spaces. The onsite playground provides hours of entertainment for little ones, while the Trust House Recreation Centre just down the road has heated pools, spas, and a hydroslide.

There is room for campervans and tents on both powered and unpowered sites, while cabins and self-contained units come in different shapes and sizes depending on your needs. Whichever option you choose, you'll be met with birdsong in the morning and twinkling stars at night.

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Wairarapa A&P SOCIETY

1-2 NOVEMBER 2025

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CHILDREN \$5 | UNDER 5'S FREE

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Mawley Holiday Park

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- Walking Tracks • Queen Elizabeth II Park

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Mawley Holiday Park 5 Oxford Street, Masterton

Ph: 06 378 6454 | E: info@mawleypark.co.nz | www.mawleypark.co.nz

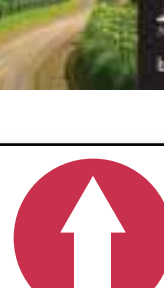
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Download the free Booklover's Trail Te Ara Kai Pukapuka audio app and start your literary journey along SH2 from Wellington through the Wairarapa and into the Hawke's Bay!

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Hop aboard and feel the deck vibrate beneath authentic steam power. Watch the paddle wheel turn as it did in the 19th century and hear tales of the past. This is slow travel at its most meaningful, where every bend reveals how the past meets the present.

The experience reaches beyond the boat itself. Before or after your cruise, settle into Ngaporo, our riverside coffee bar. Hire a bike and follow the riverbank trails at your own pace. Gather your group for an intimate charter or simply soak up the dockside atmosphere as steam rises and stories come alive.

Whether you're here for history, discovery, or a taste of something local, the *Waimarie* offers an experience that captures the essence of this place: authentic, creative, and unique.

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Choose between a step through or high bar bike complete with a front basket to help you carry your things.

Pick up your bike from the Riverboat Centre and head off to explore Whanganui at your own pace.

Available between 8 am and 4pm Wednesday - Monday or by arrangement.



info@waimarie.co.nz | 06 347 1863 | www.waimarie.co.nz

Celebrating Kapiti

Somewhere special



A place that champions quality over quantity and enjoyment of the simple things, the Kapiti Coast is special – largely due to the passionate locals who call it home, care for it, and always strive to make it the best it can be.

From museums to galleries, retail to eateries, exciting outdoor activities to welcoming indoor spaces, every business brings its own unique personality to the table. It's clear from their enthusiasm and genuine passion that the owners, managers, and staff love living in this coastal paradise. They take pride in what they do and how they contribute to their community, almost always lending a helping hand to make sure their little slice of heaven is looked after, growing, and thriving. Businesses volunteer, families get involved, and everyone has something to offer.

Kapiti is within easy reach of Wellington City, yet still has everything you'd need right on your doorstep. It's worth celebrating for that, and for the one-of-a-kind experiences and unique lifestyle that set it apart.

Coastal creativity



There is a lot to love about the Kapiti Coast. Long, sandy beaches, excellent eateries, creative spaces and boutiques, and an abundance of wildlife and natural beauty all come together to shape a district overflowing with personality. There is a little bit of everything dotted throughout the seaside towns of Paekākāriki, Waikanae, Raumati, Paraparaumu, and Ōtaki – each one chocka with character, charm, and its own community.

To celebrate the coast's creativity, local artists come together each year for the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail. Running over the weekends of the 1st and 2nd and the 8th and 9th of November in 2025, the 25th anniversary festival is a wonderland of artist studios, galleries, and creative corners waiting to be explored.

The Kāpiti Coast Art Trail showcases over 140 artists in studios and shared spaces, while others will be represented in 13 galleries, bringing the total number of participating artists up to 300 this year. Some are award winners with national and international profiles; others are emerging talents or established artists showcasing their work on the trail for the first time. You'll see everything from the conventional to the quirky in many different media spanning myriad materials, including painting and pottery, photography and fine line drawing, jewellery and textiles, and so much more.

As a self-guided trail designed by you to your tastes and interests, you can wander through creative spaces and coastal gardens across the district that pique your interest. You can even book a boat to visit a gallery on Kapiti Island.

Take your time along the Kāpiti Coast Art Trail, make a weekend

of it, and enjoy everything that the coast has to offer. Visit www.kapiticoastarttrail.co.nz or pick up a trail guide to plan your itinerary.

Jane Santos Mosaic Artist

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www.janesantosmosaics.com

SARAH THE SCIENTIST Lots of fun science kits for sale!

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Waikanae

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Discover NZ on a bike



Lake Dunstan Trail, Central Otago. Photo by Geoff Marks.



Pou Herenga Tai – Twin Coast Cycle Trail.



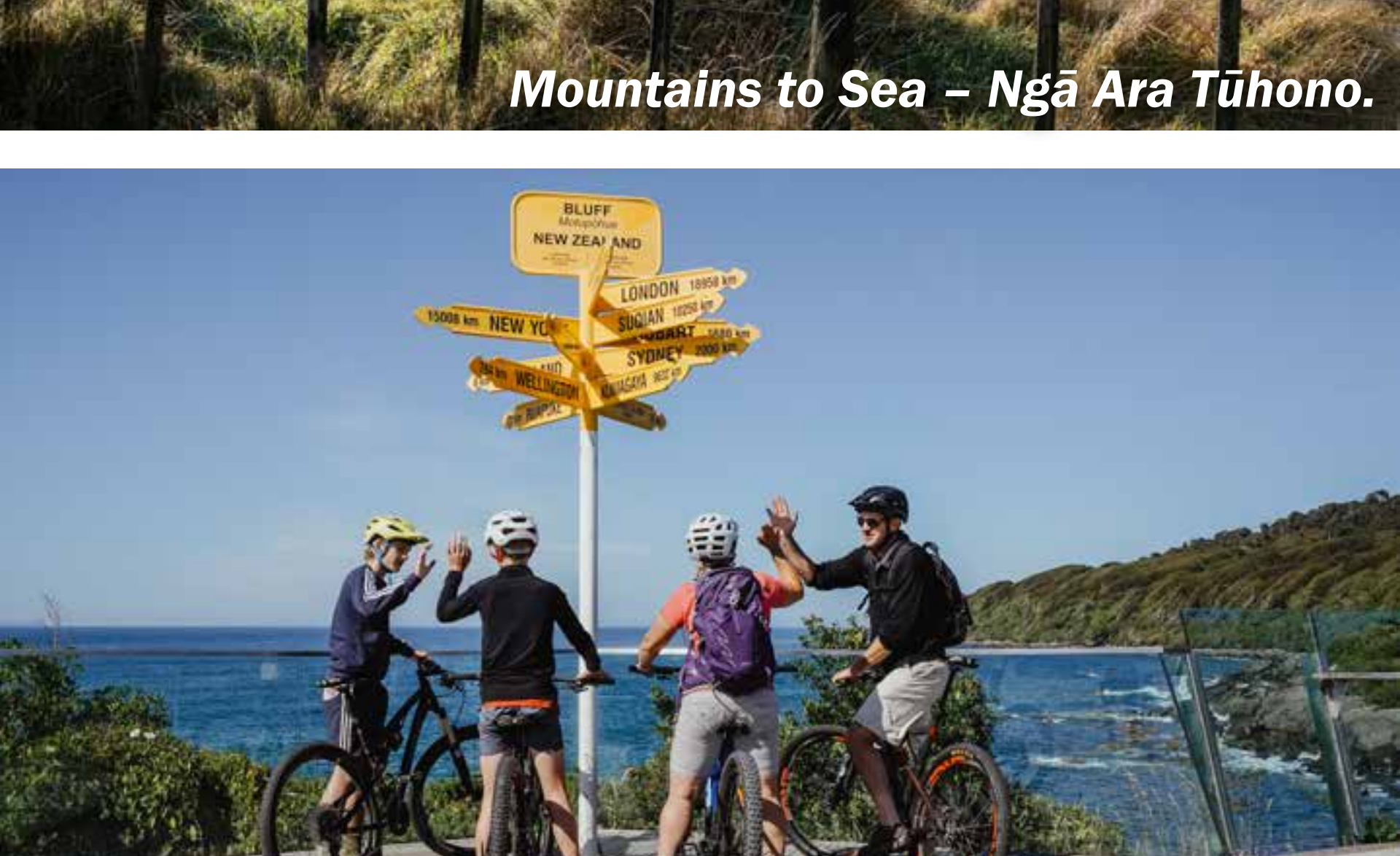
West Coast Wilderness Trail. Photo by Jase Blair.



Great Taste Trail – Ngatimoti and Pokororo section. Photo by Chocolate Dog Photography.



Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono.



Stirling Point. Photo courtesy of Great South.

ŌPŌTIKI HOLIDAY PARK

We are located on the banks of the Waioeka River adjacent to the town wharf and boat ramp. The nearby Waioeka and Hukawai beaches are popular for fishing, swimming and surfing. Relax in a rural setting, only 200m from the Ōpōtiki town centre with a range of cafes, restaurants and shops. Enjoy a dip in our swimming pool, kayak along the river, fish from the wharf or enjoy a native bush walk. Our accommodation ranges from park motel to cabins to suit every budget, along with plenty of spacious power and tent sites.

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Discover NZ on a bike – Northland

Nature and history



Of New Zealand's 23 Great Rides, Pou Herenga Tai – Twin Coast Cycle Trail is the only one that allows cyclists to cross from one side of the country to the other. The 87-kilometre trail is nestled into beautiful Northland and stretches from the Bay of Islands to Hokianga Harbour. This scenically spectacular cross-country journey offers a mix of relaxing riding, access to some seriously significant heritage sites and stories, and four distinct sections that can be explored in either direction.

It takes roughly two days to complete the entire trail, depending on your pace and how much time you'd like to allocate to side quests. Whether you're starting from the Bay of Islands or Hokianga Harbour, the central point is Kaikohe and from there the trail descends to the east and west coasts.

Many cyclists opt to spend the night either in the centre point or in the nearby Ōkaihau. Generally flat with gentle climbs, Twin Coast Cycle Trail is mostly Grade 1 and 2 and suitable for most abilities.

Weaving through subtropical vegetation, Pou Herenga Tai riders will pass forests of native bush, glimpsing kauri trees and plenty of ponga. It may look like a scene from *Jurassic Park*, but you'll mostly encounter beautiful native birds.

As for humans, their stories are woven into the landscape. New Zealand's earliest Māori and European settlements can be found in Northland – storyboards dotted along the trail bring the local history to life.

To plan your adventure, visit www.twincoastcycletrail.kiwi.nz

KAIKOHE FIRE MUSEUM

Explore model fire engines, vintage firefighting gear, and the history of the Kaikohe Volunteer Fire Brigade – all at Kaikohe's Original Fire Museum!

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Step into a prehistoric world at Wairere Boulders – a geological phenomenon where stunning nature meets adventure.

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Phone 021 434 669 | wairereboulders.co.nz



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476 Puketi Road, Bay of Islands, Northland



EXPERIENCE NEW ZEALAND'S MOST NORTHERN GREAT RIDE

The Twin Coast Cycle Trail stretches 87 km from Ōpua on the east coast, includes a short train ride, then cycle across heartland to Hōreke on the Hokianga Harbour on the west. The trail tells the story of an emerging nation, capturing the history and heritage of Māori and European activity and settlements. Enjoy a taste of Te Tai Tokerau Northland, its quaint towns, untouched rural landscapes, and picture-perfect coastlines.

twincoastcycletrail.kiwi.nz



Discover NZ on a bike – Hauraki



A sensory summer escape



There's something magical about swapping city streets for country air – the crunch of gravel beneath your wheels, the scent of wildflowers in the air, and the promise of good food waiting at the next stop. Just a few hours north of Wellington, the Hauraki Rail Trail offers an easy escape where cycling, culture, and cuisine collide.

One of New Zealand's 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides, this flat, family-friendly trail winds through farmland, coastlines, native bush, and historic towns. Each section tells a story of pioneers, artists, and passionate locals who've poured their heart and soul into their corner of the trail.

In the north, browse the Miranda Farm Shop, Café, and Gallery, where painters, printmakers, and ceramicists capture the essence of rural life and the unique coastline inhabited by the world's most travelled birds.

From Thames, follow the Arts Trail to Kōpū, where sculptures from the Thames Public Art Trust turn the landscape into a rolling gallery. Refuel at The Cheese Barn at Matatoki with an award-winning platter or creamy gelato before rounding off the day with a gin tasting at the Coromandel Distilling Co. and a toast to adventure.

Learn garden-to-plate magic at The Falls Retreat in the Karangahake Gorge and visit the Waikino Station where local artisans sell their goods. Heading south, discover sculptor Adrian Worsley's mind-blowing recycled creations – they're proof that art lives everywhere here.

This summer, let the Hauraki Rail Trail feed your curiosity, appetite, and soul.



The perfect refuel stop, with a wide range of cabinet foods and all day menu, and only a short distance to the Hauraki Rail Trail.

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Escape, Explore, and Indulge - Where art, flavour, and nature unite. Let the Hauraki Rail Trail feed your curiosity, appetite, and soul.

For up-to-date track information and things to see & do visit:
www.haurakirailtrail.co.nz

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Discover NZ on a bike

– Hawke's Bay



Par2 Minigolf

Minigolf has been a staple of Napier's Marine Parade since the 1940s. What began simply as a large putting green has developed into Par2 Minigolf, guaranteed fun for you and the kids. Located adjacent to the local isite, you'll enjoy panoramic views of the coast of Hawke's

Bay while you compete on one of two courses: Pacific Pro-Am or Deco Drive. The former is a quintessential minigolf course, full of wacky angles, tricky water hazards, and tree obstacles. Deco Drive is a complex course with organic curves and harsh slopes.



MTG Hawke's Bay

There is always something new and exciting to discover at the MTG Hawke's Bay. This award-winning museum is made up of three distinct buildings – an art deco masterpiece, a modernist gem, and a light-filled gallery that looks out across the Pacific Ocean. The museum's

collections tell historic stories of the region and beyond, including the 1931 earthquake that devastated the region and the legacy of art deco architecture that is still celebrated today. Their fabulous shop also sells a range of beautiful cards, gifts, books, and mementos.



Faraday Museum of Technology

Ignite your imagination at the Faraday Museum of Technology, where hands-on adventures await visitors of all ages! Discover interactive exhibits where you can touch, play, and explore the wonders of science, technology, and history in exciting ways. From historic appliances and

engines to energy sources and games, there's so much to see and uncover. A magical place where history comes to life anew, the Faraday Museum of Technology offers an experience you won't forget that's perfect for families and anyone with a curious mind!



The National Aquarium of NZ

The National Aquarium of New Zealand is home to saltwater, freshwater, and land animal exhibits from New Zealand and around the world. The 1.5-million-litre Oceanarium, which you can experience with a walk through an underwater viewing tunnel, showcases the variety of aquatic species

that exist in Hawke's Bay, including stingrays, kingfish, hāpuku, snapper, and more. Watch the famous little penguins feed and play in the Penguin Cove, and connect with native wildlife like tuatara and kiwi. **Photo by Molly Rose Nilsson.**



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i site

Visitor Information

NAPIER

Discover NZ on a bike

– Hawke's Bay



Kennedy Park

Located near the heart of Napier, Kennedy Park is an accommodation option that's fun for the whole whānau. There is so much to do onsite that you'll be tempted to spend entire days on the premises. Kids and adults will love the heated swimming complex, basketball half court, and giant outdoor

chess board. Stroll the gardens or relax at the café while the tamariki let loose at the adventure playground and on the colourful jumping pillow. Spend time in the games room playing pool, table-top games, or air hockey together as a family.



Hawke's Bay Farmyard Zoo

Known for its unique atmosphere, Hawke's Bay Farmyard Zoo provides a safe, clean environment with informative signage, limestone walkways, and a picnic area to accommodate large groups such as birthday parties and work functions. The animals at the zoo include pigs,

sheep and calves, ostriches, alpacas, turtles, peacocks, and many more, and kids will have the opportunity to get up close and feed some of them. With a playground, train rides, and pony rides available, the hardest part will be getting the family back into the car.



Napier Aquatic Centre

You don't have to wait for hot summer days to enjoy a day in the water. Napier Aquatic Centre is open year-round for water-based exercise and fun. Three pools means everyone can jump in – choose from the five-lane 25-metre lap pool for walking and lane swimming, the disability-friendly six-lane

Ivan Wilson Pool, or the learners' pool complete with toddler pool and mini waterfall. The complex also features waterslides, a spray park open from October to March, a beautiful outdoor area, and relaxing spas. Jump in and have fun!



Ocean Spa

Ocean Spa is Napier's premier heated pool and fitness complex located on Marine Parade. Boasting open-air, heated, and chlorinated pools and spas with panoramic ocean views, visitors can enjoy a range of options from the toddler pool to therapeutic pools with water fountains and pool

jets. Visitors can unwind in spacious outdoor spa pools and refuel with a coffee or bite to eat at Bach Café. Centrally located, Ocean Spa is the perfect spot to relax and re-energise, rain or shine.

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Discover NZ on a bike – Central Plateau

Ride the adventurous heart of the North Island



Timber Trail.



Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono.

Ride the adventurous heart of the North Island along two Great Rides connected by the Whanganui River.

At the centre of the North Island lies a landscape shaped by fire, forest, and flowing water – a place where two of Aotearoa’s Ngā Haerenga Great Rides meet at the heart of the Ruapehu District. Linked by the living waters of the Whanganui River, the Timber Trail and Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono tell a story of connection between mountain and sea, people and place, past and future.

The Timber Trail is a journey through time. Winding 85 kilometres through the ancient podocarp forests surrounding Mount Pureora, the Grade 3 Great Ride follows the historic Ellis and Burnand tramway. Riders cross towering suspension bridges, explore heritage viaducts and tunnels, and glide through lush, regenerating forest alive with birdsong. It’s a ride through history – from pioneering timber days to the thriving biodiversity of today – offering shorter day rides or the full two-day backcountry experience.

Mount Pureora, at the trail’s northern end, forms the beginning of the Whanganui River, connecting this forested haven to the great awa that winds its way to the Tasman Sea.

Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono is defined by a map of connected pathways. Stretching from the slopes of Mount Ruapehu to Whanganui’s black-sand coast, the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride is a network of over eight interconnected sections, offering everything from short scenic rides to full multi-day adventures.

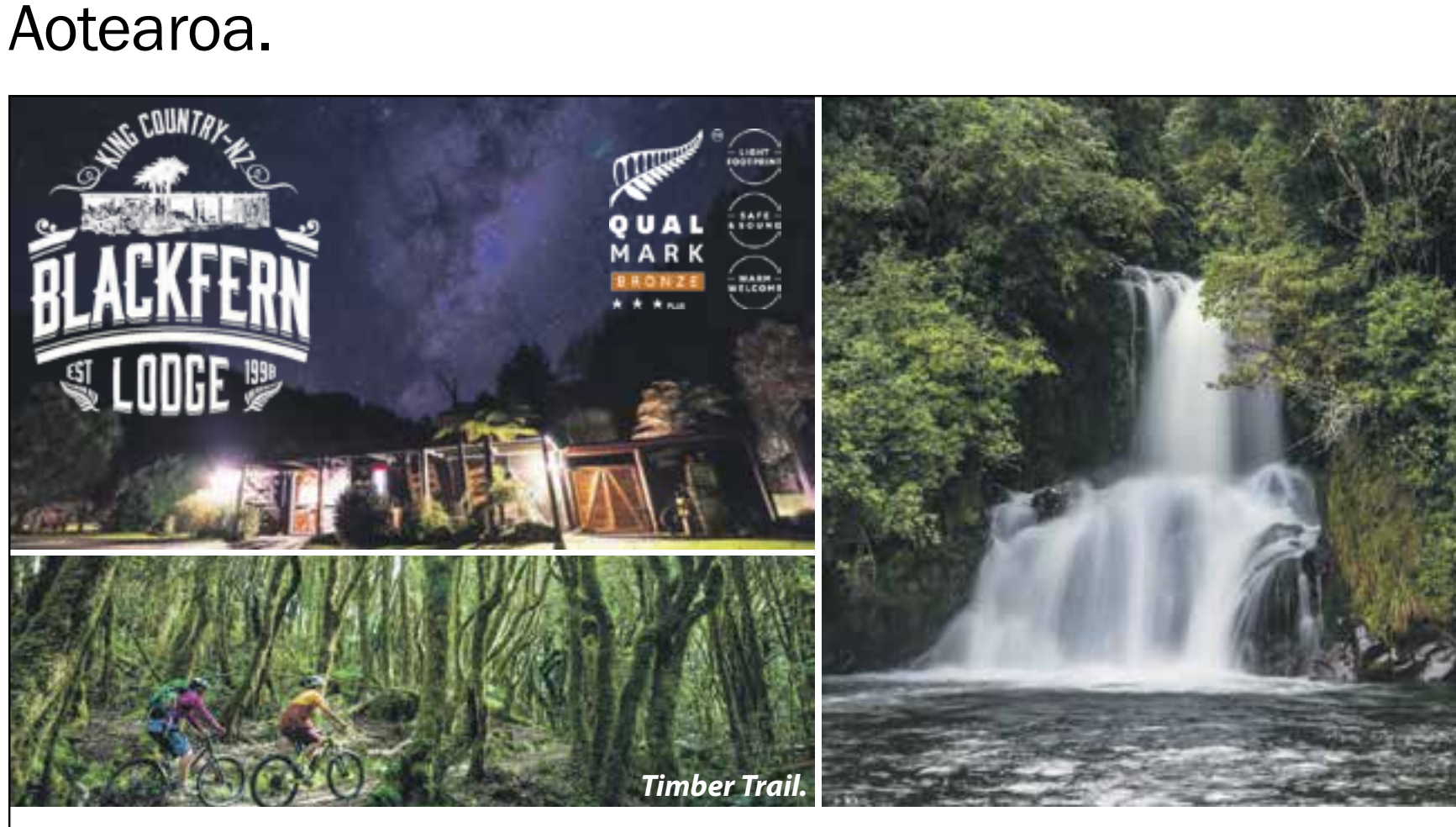
The journey traverses a UNESCO World Heritage Park – Tongariro National Park – and concludes in Whanganui, a UNESCO City of Design, capturing the essence of Aotearoa’s cultural and natural heritage.

Riders descend from the alpine majesty of Ruapehu, across the historic Ohakune Old Coach Road, through remote valleys and forested gorges to the legendary Bridge to Nowhere before following the Whanganui River all the way to the Tasman Sea. It’s a journey of contrasts where volcanic landscapes, tranquil awa, deep history, and warm community hospitality collide.

Together, the Timber Trail and Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono foster a spirit of connection. Connected by the awa, they link people, landscapes, adventures, and stories across the heart of the North Island.

Trail Manager Lynley Twyman and the dedicated teams behind both Great Rides work tirelessly alongside iwi partners and communities to ensure every section is maintained to world-class standards, so visitors can experience the beauty, culture, and mana of this extraordinary region.

Discover the rides that flow with the spirit of the Whanganui River, where every turn of the wheel takes you deeper into the adventurous heart of Aotearoa.



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Discover NZ on a bike – West Coast



Winding and wonderful



The West Coast is known for its rugged shorelines, lush landscapes, intrepid journeys, sordid stories, and hidden treasures. You can discover this wild region along the West Coast Wilderness Trail – a 133-kilometre cycle route that stretches from Greymouth to Ross.

The smooth and accessible Ngā Haerenga Great Ride is mostly Grade 2 with sections of Grade 3, making it suitable for a range of levels. Most cyclists spend three to four days to complete the trail, taking their time to explore all the hotspots and hidden gems along the way. If you're short on time or want to see a couple key attractions, you can pop in and out of the trail at your leisure.

On your trusty bike you'll wind your way through ancient rainforests, along glacial rivers, around moody lakes, and across impressive wetlands. Perfect for nature nuts, the West Coast Wilderness Trail is a haven for history aficionados too. Traverse early bush tram lines and water races passing former goldmining towns and workings, historic bridges, and much more.

If you're keen for the whole shebang, bike from Greymouth to Kumara along the coast on day one. Day two takes cyclists into the Southern Alps to Milltown. Wind up in Hokitika by the end of day three, passing Lake Kaniere along the way. The final stretch on day four has a little bit of everything from coast to creeks, wetlands to wild bush and even offers views of Aoraki/Mount Cook.

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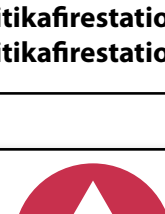
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Discover NZ on a bike – south

Cycle your way



The top of the South Island is one of New Zealand's most picture-perfect destinations. With iconic beauty, a temperate climate, an excellent culinary scene, and attractions aplenty, one of the best ways to explore everything there is to see and do in Nelson Tasman is by bike.

The Tasman's Great Taste Trail is one of New Zealand's 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides. Relaxed and meandering through the charming countryside and along the gleaming coastline, this one to four-day cycle gives riders a taste of the region in more ways than one. Pedal past top attractions like Moturoa / Rabbit Island, Māpua, Kaiteriteri Beach, and through Spooners Tunnel exploring beautiful natural hotspots without missing out on the opportunity to stop and take in the views at local world-class and farm-to-table eateries.

Other leisure cycle trails suitable for all levels include the Railway Reserve, which follows the historic train route; Wakefield Quay, a scenic saunter along Tāhunanui Waterfront; Matai River Walkway, which passes through Nelson city and beyond; and, of course, the endless network of tracks and trails in the famous Abel Tasman National Park.

Cycle Nelson can get you kitted out for whatever ride you're about to embark on or take the reins and guide you on the cycle tour of a lifetime along the Great Taste Trail, into Abel Tasman, out into the bush, past the coastline, or anywhere else you had in mind. Find out more and plan your next adventure at www.cyclenelson.co.nz

A rewarding romp



Located in the South Island's iconic Marlborough Sounds, the Queen Charlotte Track is punctuated by some of the most gorgeous, mystical, and unique vistas in New Zealand. Stretching from Ship Cove to Anakiwa, this 73.5-kilometre trail can be completed within two to three days by bike.

The Queen Charlotte Track has been built on a network of pioneer bridle paths. Development started in the 1980s, and today it has gained a worldwide reputation as one of New Zealand's Ngā Haerenga Great Rides. The undulating terrain is punctuated by vast panoramas framed by the endless inlets and blue-hued mountains fading out into the distance. As the longest piece of continuous single track in the country, it is divided into three sections which can be ridden separately or one after the other. There are options to stay overnight on the track with accommodation options including camp sites and lodges along the way.

The route from Meretoto/Ship Cove takes about four to six hours and is a Grade 3 and 4 ride that starts with a gentle climb out of the cove. Day two goes from Camp Bay to Torea Saddle. The four to five-hour tract is Grade 3 to 5 and requires expert levels for downhill sections. Torea Saddle to Anakiwa is mostly Grade 3, with a steep Grade 5 climb that is rewarded with stunning views.

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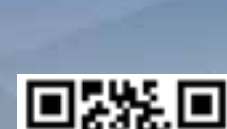
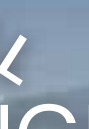
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Discover NZ on a bike – Alps 2 Ocean Meet the locals



Welcoming you at the end of the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail like a beacon is Ōamaru. Quirky by nature and chocka with charm, culture, and a cracking culinary scene, Ōamaru is the perfect place to end up after completing the longest of New Zealand's 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides.

Step back in time in Ōamaru's historic precinct, where stunning Victorian buildings crafted from local limestone house a world of experiences.

Enjoy a pint at a local pub, savour a meal at an award-winning restaurant, peruse the galleries and boutiques, or find comfort in a beautifully renovated historic home.

A short stroll from the precinct, head to Ōamaru Penguins to meet the town's famous locals: the kororā/little blue penguins.

Experience the new interactive Discovery Centre where you'll find yourself in a penguin's paradise. Designed to bring the science of penguin conservation to life, the centre is kitted out with engaging exhibits and visuals to amaze and inspire adults and children alike.

While the Discovery Centre is a daytime delight, it's the evening viewings that steal the show. As the sun dips below the horizon, visitors gather along the shoreline, rugged up against the coastal breeze, waiting for the town's smallest residents. Guided by expert penguin specialists, you'll witness the nightly ritual of little penguins waddling ashore as they return from a busy day of fishing at sea.

Book now at www.penguins.co.nz

Take the long way



The longest of the 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides is the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail. With trailheads nestled at the foot of majestic Aoraki/Mount Cook in the national park or at beautiful Lake Tekapo, this mixed-terrain track traverses some of the most beautiful landscapes in the South Island before meeting on the shores of Lake Pukaki and snaking through stunning vistas to Ōamaru.

Upon reaching Lake Pukaki, cyclists will thread their way towards Twizel and Lake Ōhau before climbing to the trail's highest point, where they can take in the magnificence of the Mackenzie Basin before dropping down to Ōmarama. Next, they'll fly past the Waitaki Valley, home to The Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark, vineyards, picturesque lakes, tumbling rivers, and quaint towns towards the shimmering Pacific Ocean.

The Alps 2 Ocean is broken up into nine sections, making for an easy and intermediate multi-day experience. Cyclists can pop on and off the trail at various points to enjoy a few hours of relaxed biking between activities or embark on the adventure of a lifetime and complete the entire 306-kilometre route in five to seven days.

New Zealand's longest Great Ride is a treat the whole way through. From mountains that scrape the heavens to valleys and crevices that plunge deep into the Earth, wonders of nature and feats of humankind, the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail is an epic adventure through the South Island like no other.

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Discover NZ on a bike – Otago

Rest and recharge



Photo by Miles Holden.

While pedalling across Central Otago by day is as good as it gets, what makes it even better is knowing you'll have somewhere luxurious to rest your tired legs at night. Olivers Collection in the historic gold mining town of Clyde has been welcoming locals and weary travellers alike for almost two centuries.

Beginning its life in the 1860s to serve those who sought their fortune during the Otago goldrush, Olivers continues the age-old tradition of offering warm Kiwi hospitality to this day. Comprising a beautifully restored lodge and boutique hotel, an award-winning eatery, a brewery, and a bakery, this luxury accommodation experience is ideal for those biking the Lake Dunstan Trail and the Otago Central Rail Trail, or anyone passing through.

Olivers Lodge & Stables offer two distinct styles. The five stable rooms feature schist walls, plush furnishings, ensuites, and access to a sunny courtyard, while the lodge enjoys an elegant interior and old-world charm. The Lord Clyde is in the historic precinct and is defined by beautifully decorated rooms bathed in light. Wherever you choose to rest your head, breakfast will be served come morning.

Olivers Restaurant & Bar and Victoria Store Brewery are just across the street from The Lord Clyde, serving up freshly cooked meals and pouring crisp brews made locally. Don't forget to swing by The Merchant of Clyde bakery for a sweet treat ahead of a day of adventurous cycling.

The trip of a lifetime



Cycle New Zealand's original Great Ride, the Otago Central Rail Trail, with the Bike It Now! As the region's premier bike hire and tour service, you're guaranteed the trip of a lifetime.

The beautiful trails, sweeping landscapes, and picturesque vistas of Central Otago are best explored by bike. Cyclists will pass towering peaks and deep valleys, shimmering lakes, ancient forests, and historical artifacts. Cellar doors and eateries can be found along the way, as well as quaint towns brimming with history and charm.

With locations in Wānaka, Clyde, and Cromwell, Bike It Now! offers door-to-door pickups from Queenstown and drop-offs leaving Clyde each day, which gives the passionate and customer-focused crew the opportunity to recount the area's history.

Whether you're keen to jump onto the Great Rides the region is known for, or you'd rather coast down the less-beaten tracks, Bike It Now! has a range of options to suit all levels, interests, and timeframes.

Choose from short single-day trips, two-day adventures, three to five-day excursions, and six to 10-day experiences ranging from Grade 1 all the way up to Grade 3. Mix, match, and combine famous tracks like the Lake Dunstan Trail, Otago Central Rail Trail, Roxburgh Gorge Trail, and Clutha Gold Trail with local routes to craft a tailored adventure.

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Roxburgh Gorge Trail, Photo by Will Nelson

Lake Dunstan Trail, Photo by Will Nelson

Discover NZ on a bike – Wairarapa

Cruise the coast



Embark on an adventure that will feed your soul with Rahu Coastal Loop – an e-bike experience unlike any other.

The Loop-de-Loop adventure is the ultimate excursion, traversing 65 kilometres of breathtaking terrain over three days. Starting out in Tinui, the first day takes you on an easy, leafy ride through the valley and up the hill to The Sows Ear in Rahu, where dinner is set. On day two, you'll cover 34 kilometres of ground, travelling up and down hills and past beautiful panoramas to Castlepoint. On the last day, you'll complete the loop with a solid 27-kilometre ride. If you're not ready to leave, you can even extend your stay at the beach for another night.

The three to four-hour Day-Tripper option is perfect if you're limited for time but still want a taste of the full experience. Whatever you have in mind, Rahu Coastal Loop will take you over hill and dale across some of Wairarapa's most scenic spots and luscious landscapes.

Brew-tiful legacy



The team behind Masterton hotspot The Farriers Bar & Eatery have recently reopened the doors to the adjoining Horseshoe Taproom, which serves up a curated selection of 12 revolving locally made craft brews, plus wine, gin, and food that showcase unique Wairarapa flavours and high-quality ingredients.

An institution since it first opened in 1951, Horseshoe Taproom has been closed for a decade, but Trust House CEO John Prendergast saw a gap in the market for a dedicated Wairarapa brewery and knew it was time to reopen the famous local haunt.

At Beervana in August of 2025, Horseshoe Taproom's Wairarapa IPA, made in collaboration with Dale Cooper of Fortune Favours Brewery, took home the People's Choice Award in every session – coming out on top of over 350 beers! With Dale at the helm of the brewing, it's safe to assume Horseshoe Taproom will be carrying on the property's 70-odd-year legacy as one of Masterton's most beloved hangouts for decades to come.

Cycle, sip, savour

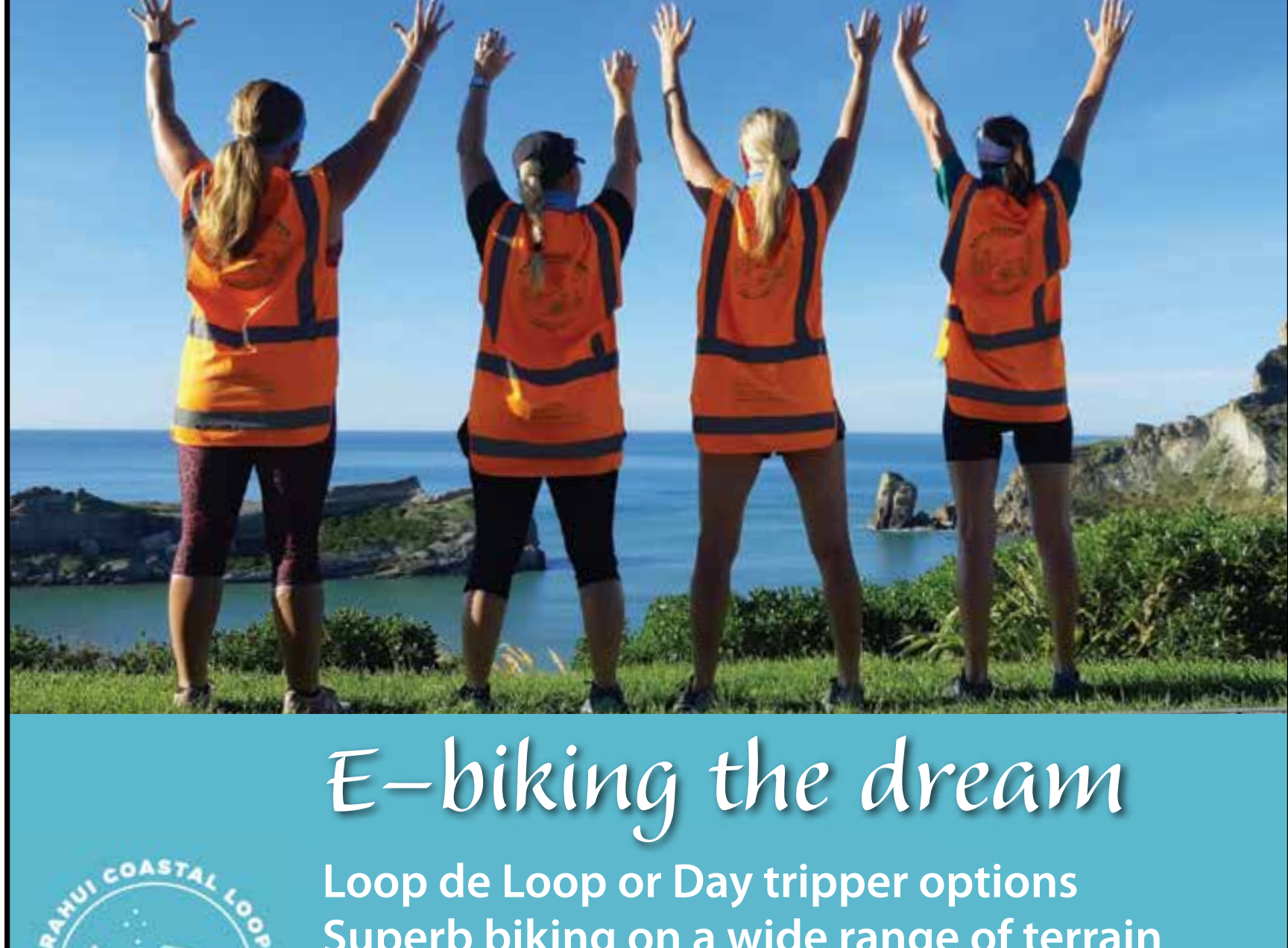


Picking you up in the morning in Wellington, the Moose Bikes team will drive you to Hawke's Bay or Wairarapa for a wine tasting cycle tour.

Once arrived at your chosen destination, you'll saddle up on the provided bikes. You and your crew of six to 18 people can visit three to four cellar doors before stopping for barbecue-cooked burgers and nibbles come lunchtime. After fuelling up, get back behind the handlebars for another couple of pit stops.

Traversing five to six kilometres of terrain, it's up to you how many wineries you visit. If you like one in particular, you're welcome to stay. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to sample locally brewed craft beers and ciders, gin, and even olive oil.

Your Moose Bikes guide will follow in the van all day, so if you're done with cycling, you can catch a ride to the next location. Or you can simply sign up for the van tour. Plan your next tippie trip with Lynden at moosebikes17@gmail.com



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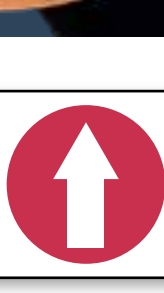
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Bloom, wilt, regrow



Josefine Grönkrans.

Ever since picking up clay for the first time in 2023, Wellington-based Swedish ceramicist Josephine Grönkrans has been elbows deep in it. “Clay is so forgiving; it will guide you and be guided by you,” she says. “You’re making something that will last and sustain yet can be recycled over and over again until it meets its first firing.”

Though describing the process as meditative, Grönkrans is quick to add that things don’t always go to plan with clay. “You learn quite quickly not to get too attached to a piece until it’s truly finished. That’s also part of the charm with ceramics, it keeps you humble, the studio messy, and your spirit filled with laughter”.

Grönkrans is thrilled to present her first exhibition at Vincents Art Workshop until the 4th of November. *Made to Bloom* is guided by Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, which underscores that there is a time for everything.

“I think life is beautiful in its times of joy, but also in the times of struggle, where we can grow and learn”, Grönkrans says. “Just like a flower grows, starts forming a bud, blossoms, withers, and then repeats the cycle, so do we. I’ve always had hope through difficult stages of life as I know I will grow from the experience”.

Using flora found all over the world and on her doorstep to shape her artwork, Grönkrans hopes that visitors are reminded that life has its seasons, and that “even when it feels like life is withering, there’s always the promise of new growth. We’re all *Made to Bloom*”.

Positive poetic cohesion



Men Ladies by Kathy Bartlett.

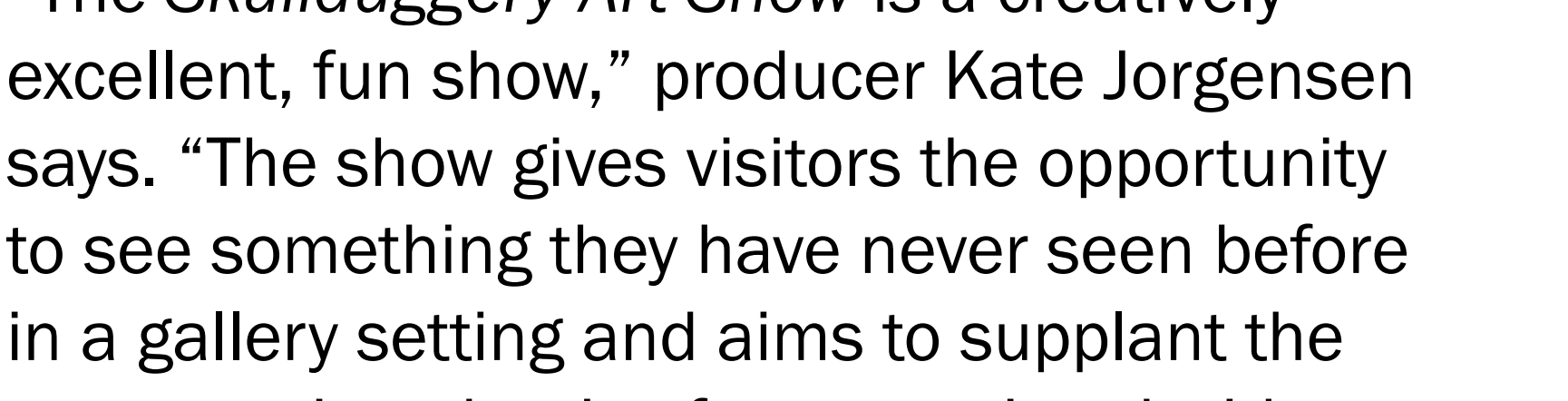
Never Better is a celebration of practices that overlap, evolve, and accompany one another. It honours connection, collaboration, and the simple but profound act of making side by side. The exhibition at Hunters & Collectors until the 4th of November brings together seven women whose practices span painting, quilting, textiles, ceramics, and photography and speak through material, memory, and form.

“We wanted to put together a show that celebrated making and connection,” co-organiser Pam Brabants says. “The work is diverse in mediums but there is a poetic cohesiveness in its positivity.”

Brabants draws on pre-1980 record album covers for her multidisciplinary work. She is joined by co-organisers Greta Menzies, who crafts multidisciplinary works that dance between absurdist and existential, and Virginia Woods-Jack, who explores place, memory, and material through photography. The exhibition also features Marilyn Jones, who combines drawing, patternmaking, and textile work; painter Kathy Bartlett, whose practice focuses on scenery and everyday life; Ruby Joy, who uses a range of mediums to delve into the complexities of relationships; and Chloe Mason, who bridges natural environments and darkroom processes to explore non-human entities.

“Each artist brings their own visual language and there is a flow between the works. Some of them are portals that draw you in, some of them are wistful vignettes, some are funny”, Brabants says. “*Never Better* could easily be interpreted as a sarcastic term, given the state of some parts of the world right now, but there is hope in play, making, and community, so we mean it earnestly for this show”.

Wellington gets weird



Artwork by Christian Pearce.

As the moon rises on another Halloween season, the *Skullduggery Art Show* emerges from its sepulchre until the 26th of October. This wickedly fun annual exhibition features over 60 artists celebrating the spooky season with Samhain and horror-inspired creativity.

“The *Skullduggery Art Show* is a creatively excellent, fun show,” producer Kate Jorgensen says. “The show gives visitors the opportunity to see something they have never seen before in a gallery setting and aims to supplant the consumerism that is often associated with Halloween with quality art”. Presented by White Cloud Worlds, which was founded in 2009 by Arkus Studios creative director and co-founder Paul Tobin and Wētā FX art department manager Jorgensen to build a collective in Pōneke where artists could connect, Jorgensen says that *Skullduggery* “gives this community the opportunity to present their work in a quality group show and to network with sponsors, artists, and the audience”.

Despite spanning a variety of mediums, including painting, sculpture, models, and crafts, *Skullduggery* is cohesive thanks to intentional curation around a central theme inspired by all things horror and supernatural, Jorgensen continues. “Halloween is a great theme because it is something that visitors to the gallery already know about, but it is broad enough to give artists the opportunity to explore its light or dark side.”

Most of the artists in question work in Wellington’s local film, television, and games industries. Don’t miss them knock, knock, knocking on the door this Halloween for a trick or treat.

Botanicals and beyond



Spring still life by Sue Lund.

Spring has sprung, and like the leaves on the trees and flowers in the grass, artworks of all kinds and colours have blossomed in Wellington Cathedral of St Paul. The New Zealand Academy of Fine Art’s (NZAFA) *Spring Exhibition* is a joyous celebration of the season and a riot of colour and distinctly Kiwi character.

“This marks a return of this popular seasonal exhibition after several years,” NZAFA president Wayne Newman says. “The exhibition looks stunning and is a fitting testament both to the talent and skills of the selected artists and to the hard work of our curatorial team”.

Blooming until the 9th of November, member and non-member artists have “responded to the seasonal theme with lots of flowers,” the curatorial and exhibition team say. “There is a real mix of styles showing how wide the range is for contemporary artists. The art is a mixture of established artists delivering very accomplished works in their chosen styles and emerging artists still exploring their medium and style”.

Ranging from photorealism to vibrant modernism to still life botanicals and beyond, Newman says that flowers “in every shape and hue, exultant and welcoming after so many months of greyness, rain, and cold” are ubiquitous throughout the *Spring Exhibition*.

The team hope viewers will “discover an artist whose style they like” and appreciate the work on display. “Curating this type of exhibition is always more challenging, but the mix of subjects, media, and style makes it a more vibrant and exciting exhibition”.

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Buy – build – renovate

Legacy of excellence



11 years on and Legacy Contracting continues to operate with the same drive, passion, and quality that set it apart from the rest in its early days. The progressive company with a reputation for excellence prides itself on high-calibre workmanship and delivering demolition, civil, excavation, drainage, cartage, and transport services that exceed expectations.

Founded by Nick Rowell in 2014, Legacy Contracting comprises 35 employees with decades of experience. Nick has worked in the industry for well over two decades and his passion for the job remains steadfast. With comprehensive knowledge gained from working in his hometown of Wellington and across the region, he keeps the wheels of his company turning with a hands-on approach both in operations and onsite behind the wheel of a digger.

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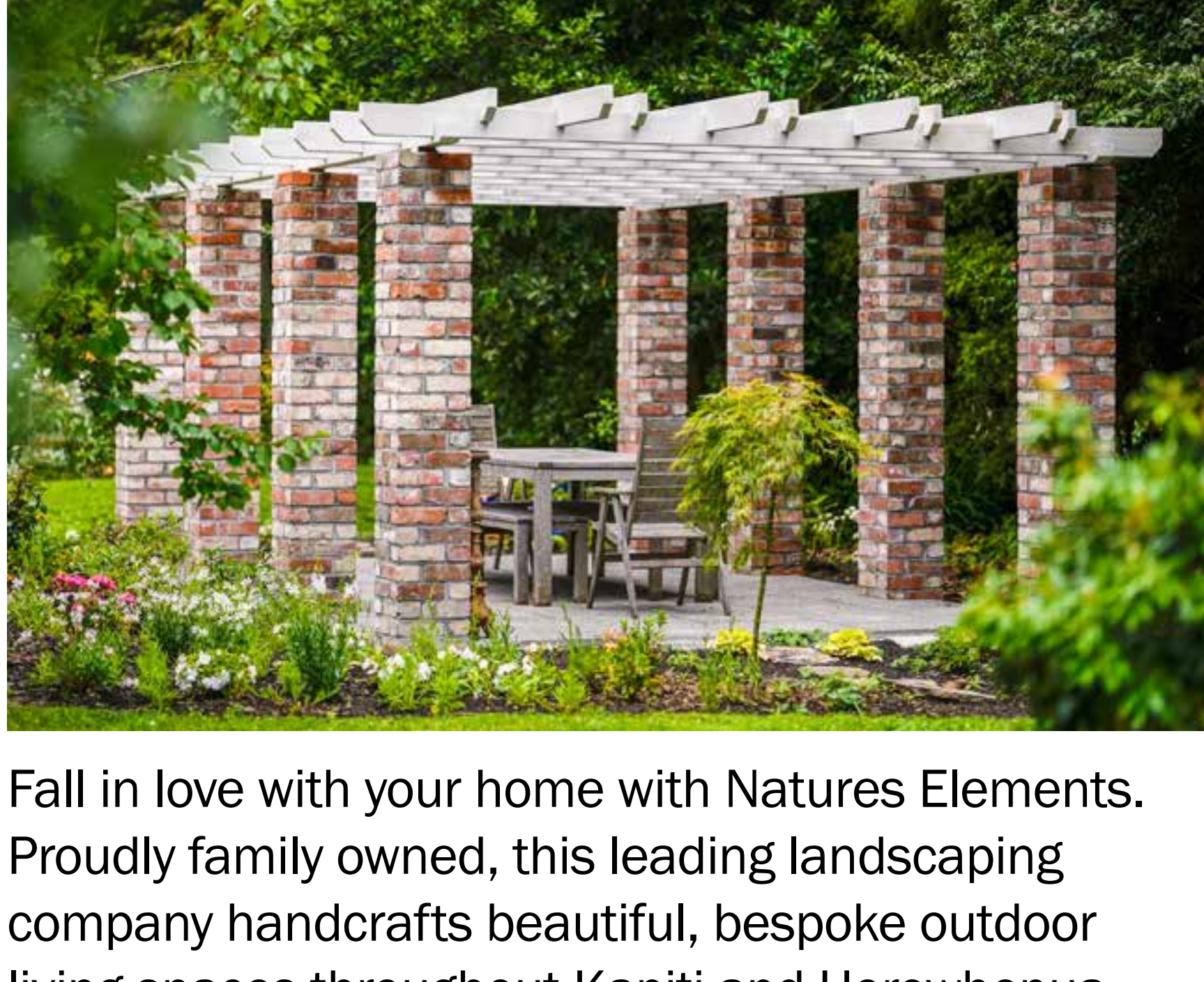
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Kaupapa of love



What do dog shows and discos, dance parties and polar plunges, parades and pop quiz nights have in common? Paekākāriki Pride! Now in its eighth year, the festival offers a packed programme over Labour Weekend between the 24th and 27th of October.

2025 will include staples from previous years, including the world's (unofficial) shortest pride parade, with new additions like a comedy show with a stellar lineup of local queer comedians; a slideshow of queer and women's 80s, 90s, and 2000s music festivals from around the world; an upbeat musical bingo event for grownups; and an exhibition of all things pride in Paekākāriki at the local museum.

Kicking the festival off on Friday at Finn's Paekakariki is the legendary Meet and Mingle, followed by a quick-fire queer quiz. Saturday sees the Rainbow Gala at Paekākāriki School, followed by the parade, a kids' disco, and a slideshow session before the 80s dance party is served as the cherry on top. Dust off the togs for the first swim of the season on Sunday and take the plunge alongside Paekākāriki Surf Lifesaving Club and local swim group The Mermaids. The puppy pride show and picnic follows and Beats by Bingo with Mistress Viv caps off the day.

"Our strength comes through unity as we celebrate everything that makes us who we are, together," Paekākāriki Pride chair Val Little says. Lift each other up and stand, march, dance, and party together for love not hate as Paekākāriki Pride turns eight.

The fight for Frankie *by Madelaine Empson*



Dust off the cobwebs from that dress that glistens with a thousand jewel beetles. Lace up the spiderweb tights, line your eyes with Cthulhu's ink, and plump your lips with lamb's blood. Button up those eyeball cufflinks and fasten your noose-tie for a fancy, freakish, frightening, and fabulous night searching for Frankenstein's bride... or groom with PopRox.

The Wellington improv company is back with the wildly anticipated sequel to their 2024 holiday romp *Ms. Christmas Bachelorette*. This time, their unforgettable improvised show will see a cast of spooky, scary, sexy guests lining up for the role of a deathtime in *Mr. Halloween Bachelor*.

Happening at The Hannah on All Hallow's Eve eve (the 30th of October), *Mr. Halloween Bachelor* features Dylan Hutton as MC The Devil and Mo Munn as Frankenstein's Monster – aka The Bachelor. Let's take a closer look at who's vying for The Bachelor's heart, totally figuratively of course. Heart-eater Jed Davies competed as the Grinch in 2024. Does Mr. Heartthrob have it in the (blood) bank, or was the previous Bachelorette's rejection more than he could handle...

Austin 'Dreamboat' Harrison will fight for Frankie's heart, and maybe even his hand. Does Mr. McDreamy have what it takes to turn this romance into reality, or will Millie 'Make-a-Move' Osborne dazzle and baffle with her bold choices, strange gifts, and questionable first-date locations? Lesa 'Hotstuff' MacLeod-Whiting is out here setting hearts alight (and hoping not to get burned herself), while Nina Hogg – winner of *Ms. Christmas Bachelor* – is your heart to beat. Can she hold onto the crown, or is she destined to fall down?

The claws will be out, the desperation palpable in this wickedly entertaining PopRoxularity contest. Don't forget the PopRoxcorn!

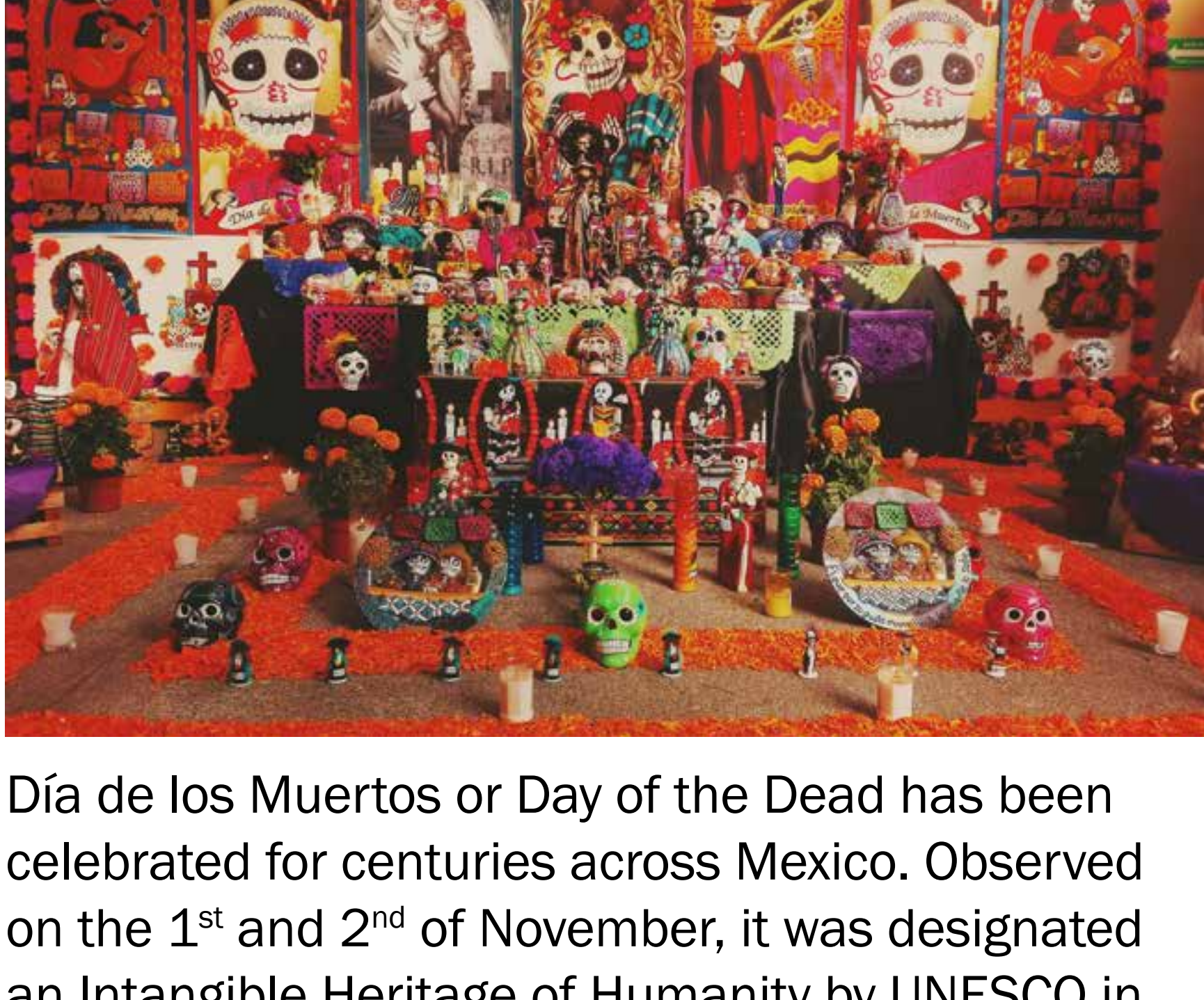


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Bring an open heart



Día de los Muertos or Day of the Dead has been celebrated for centuries across Mexico. Observed on the 1st and 2nd of November, it was designated an Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003. Without the lengthy flight to a whole new continent, you can celebrate right here in Wellington at AWHI Yoga & Wellbeing studio on the 1st of November with Claudio.

Starting the evening off with a cleansing copal and herbal welcoming, Claudio will host an opening ceremony to acknowledge the tlalmanalli (offering and altar) with a conch shell and drums. Next up, guests will be given a history of the Día de los Muertos celebration accompanied by an explanation of the altar and the main elements of an ofrenda.

On Día de los Muertos, families often set up an altar in their home to welcome deceased family members home for the evening. The altars are decorated with ofrenda or offerings that traditionally include papel picado, food, sweets, candles, marigold flowers, and photos.

Claudio will go through the traditional ofrenda elements, explaining their history and significance before inviting guests to place their own on the altar. Attendees are encouraged to bring photos or items of loved ones along, but an open heart is all that's required.

The celebration will also include sharing stories of Mexican legends and loved ones past, learning about the mysticism and spirituality of the celebration, traditional chanting, music, and atole de chocolate, a traditional Mexican drink.

King of the Keys



From bars to ballrooms, cruise ships to concert halls, Australia's Liam Cooper has wowed audiences with *King of the Keys* – a show dubbed “part concert, part party, and part celebration of the songs that shaped generations” by *BroadwayWorld*. The musical spectacular will hit New Zealand for the first time this October, bringing the energy of a stadium concert to The Opera House stage on the 30th.

Performing hit after hit from Billy Joel, Elton John, Peter Allen, Stevie Wonder, Barry Manilow, and more, TikTok-famous Cooper shines the spotlight on 15 artists, crafting what feels like “a heartfelt love letter to iconic songs and the stories behind them” (*Perth Happenings*).

“I've always been inspired by these artists – the songwriting, the showmanship, the stories,” Cooper says. “This show is about sharing that passion, having a laugh, and bringing the crowd along for the ride.”

In *King of the Keys*, a blower sends the guitarist's hair soaring during *Bohemian Rhapsody*, the band bursts into a conga line across the stage in *I Go to Rio*, and on several occasions the ensemble leap onto the grand piano to perform from above. Audiences can even get involved by voting live for who they think is king of the keys, with the winner crowned during the show's unforgettable finale.

Cooper and his all-star band fuse laugh-out-loud storytelling with powerhouse vocals and showbiz sparkle to bring a “celebration of timeless music and old-school showmanship” (*Stage Whispers*) to audiences of all ages at *King of the Keys*.

Beautifully grounded *by Jane Ross*



This month, I'm thrilled to present the second screening in the three-month trial season of the Wairarapa Cinematheque – an initiative I've launched to bring carefully curated films back to the big screen at Regent 3 Cinemas in Masterton.

This new project is about creating a space for cinephiles, film fans, and the local community to experience cinema differently – to see films that might not otherwise screen locally and to build a sense of community around those shared experiences. Essentially, it's a cultural cinema and archive – a space devoted to the preservation, restoration, and celebration of film as both art and cultural heritage.

Wairarapa Cinematheque opened in September with Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece *Rear Window*. For our second screening on the 26th of October at 7:30pm, I wanted to focus on homegrown stories that reflect who we are. This New Zealand double bill brings together two heartfelt, award-winning films.

Rochelle made me laugh out loud and moved me to tears. It captures a beautiful mix of humour and heartbreak that feels so true to life in small towns. It's about friendship, loyalty, and doing something kind – and slightly crazy – for someone you love.

Bellbird, on the other hand, stays with you quietly. It's a film that breathes warmth and humanity and has the kind of stillness that lets a range of emotions rise gently to the surface. Both films remind me of the unique impact of cinema, and its ability to hold joy and sorrow in the same frame and connect us in those quiet, still moments.

Bold, bright, and boisterous



Storming cinemas across the country as part of the Intrepid British and Irish Film Festival, a stellar mix of New Zealand premieres, festival favourites, and long-awaited returns will screen at Embassy Theatre, Penthouse Cinema, and Light House Cuba, Petone, and Pāuatahanui between the 29th of October and the 19th of November.

Opening the Wellington leg is *The Choral*, a heart-soaring period drama starring the Academy Award-nominated and BAFTA-winning Ralph Fiennes. Other centrepiece films include *The History of Sound* starring Paul Mescal and Josh O'Connor and *Spinal Tap II: The End Continues*, the hilarious sequel to the cult classic.

Films selected by Toronto International Film Festival will feature in their own category, which includes *I Swear*, the remarkable true story of Tourette syndrome campaigner John Davidson; & Sons, starring Bill Nighy as an ageing literary superstar; and *Glenrothan*, a family drama set in the Highlands starring Alan Cumming and Brian Cox in his directorial debut.

The Windows category sees dramas *Broken English*, *Words of War*, *Dead of Winter*, *Christy*, New Zealand-filmed *Moss & Freud*, *The North*, *Re-Creation*, *Islands*, and *Lollipop*. Comedies can be found in the Escape category with *Christmas Karma* and *Four Mothers* making up the lineup.

This year's documentaries shine a spotlight on the National Lottery, Gerry Adams, the World Porridge Making Championship, and icon Twiggy, while Maggie Smith is the star of this year's Revisit category.

Celebrate stories that move, challenge, and entertain at the British and Irish Film Festival.

Rossini Stabat Mater:

A mother's love

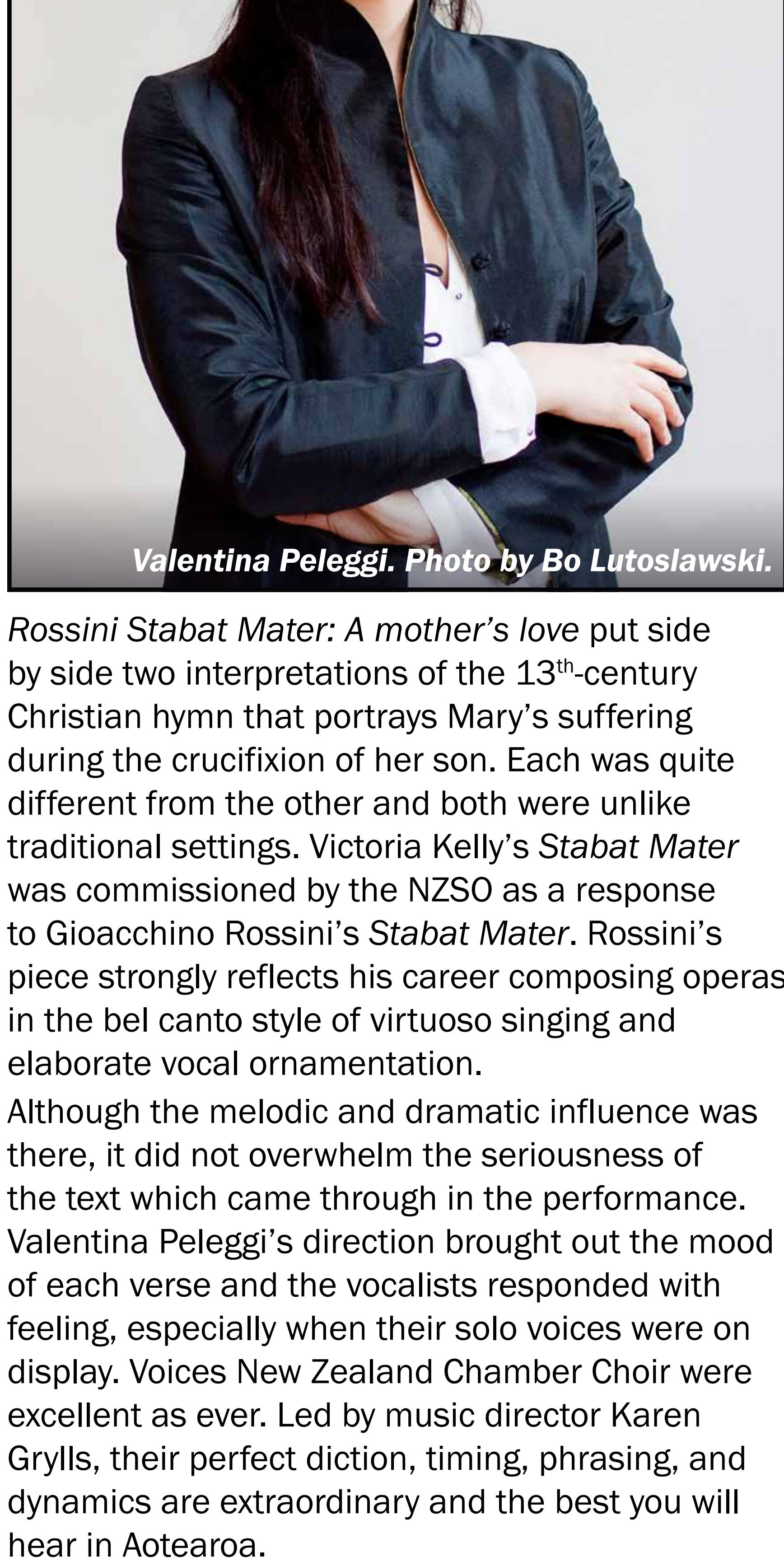
Presented by

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by Valentina Peleggi

Michael Fowler Centre, 2nd Oct 2025

Reviewed by Tamsin Evans



Valentina Peleggi. Photo by Bo Lutoslawski.

Rossini Stabat Mater: A mother's love put side by side two interpretations of the 13th-century Christian hymn that portrays Mary's suffering during the crucifixion of her son. Each was quite different from the other and both were unlike traditional settings. Victoria Kelly's *Stabat Mater* was commissioned by the NZSO as a response to Gioacchino Rossini's *Stabat Mater*. Rossini's piece strongly reflects his career composing operas in the bel canto style of virtuoso singing and elaborate vocal ornamentation.

Although the melodic and dramatic influence was there, it did not overwhelm the seriousness of the text which came through in the performance. Valentina Peleggi's direction brought out the mood of each verse and the vocalists responded with feeling, especially when their solo voices were on display. Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir were excellent as ever. Led by music director Karen Grylls, their perfect diction, timing, phrasing, and dynamics are extraordinary and the best you will hear in Aotearoa.

The world premiere of Kelly's *Stabat Mater* was an experience that lasted in my mind and body long after the performance. The music was profoundly emotional and somehow deeply, urgently visceral and beautiful all at once. In this *Stabat Mater*,

Kelly's reimagined Mary does not accept her son's sacrifice, she does not weep nor mourn, but wields a sword and saves him. Kelly's response to the eternal narrative of the suffering of women and mothers is a primal sense of rage and sadness expressed in an almost gentle, but powerfully nuanced and subtle simplicity.

Kelly wrote her own text and thanks to the vocal skill of Voices New Zealand, her perspective was plain to hear, as was the musical representation of Mary: a white crystal singing bowl, sometimes to the fore, other times absent.

Fittingly, the commission was funded by a consortium of female patrons, and honours for the evening went to a trio of women – composer, conductor, and choir director.

Christy

85 minutes

R13

★★★★

Reviewed by Alessia Belsito-Riera



Standing at the crossroads between adolescence and adulthood, nearly too old for social care but not yet self-sufficient, Christy (Danny Power) finds himself kicked out of yet another foster home and moving in with his estranged half-brother Shane (Diarmuid Noyes), compassionate sister-in-law Stacey (Emma Willis), and baby niece Charlie just a few weeks ahead of his 18th birthday.

As a viral video circulates of him beating up another boy, Christy ambles around his childhood neighbourhood on the northside of Cork, meeting family friends and relatives that remember him, tell him stories of the past, welcome him, try and lift his spirits, and attempt to lead him astray. As he begins to settle in and find a place for himself, Shane continues to remind him that his time here is only temporary.

Like its protagonist, *Christy* sits somewhere in between drama and comedy, realism and poetics, sensitivity and harsh truths. Music video director Brendan Canty's debut feature film is one of duality, juxtaposition, and liminality, where Alan O'Gorman's well-balanced story meets cinematographer Colm Hogan's natural, raw style with a script that places as much weight on a half-cracked smile as an expletive hurled like a hand-grenade. *Christy* isn't fluffed up by movie magic; it's grounded in deep empathy and gritty realism that focuses on authentic storytelling over showmanship.

As Christy sidesteps between getting involved with his rough cousins or a gaggle of rollicking local kids and a family friend's hairdressing studio, the stars' acting chops really begin to show and Gorman's script starts to shine. This teetering between paths, lives, worlds is a constant throughout the Berlin International Film Festival Grand Prix-winning film, but it's never depicted with judgement, only compassion. Where one cohort leaves a knot in your stomach, they're not presented as inherently bad. Similarly, the other group, though heartwarming, aren't perfect either. Just two sides of the same coin.

Whether you're in it for the bittersweet story or the cheeky Irish heart, *Christy* is an exquisite and sensitive slice of life – be sure to stick around through the credits for a grin-inducing homage to Canty's music video days.

Four Seasons

Presented by

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by Pekka Kuusisto

Michael Fowler Centre, 9th Oct 2025

Reviewed by Tamsin Evans



Pekka Kuusisto. Photo by Bård Gundersen.

Standing at the crossroads between adolescence and adulthood, nearly too old for social care but not yet self-sufficient, Christy (Danny Power) finds himself kicked out of yet another foster home and moving in with his estranged half-brother Shane (Diarmuid Noyes), compassionate sister-in-law Stacey (Emma Willis), and baby niece Charlie just a few weeks ahead of his 18th birthday.

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Monument

Written by Emily Sheehan

Directed by Lyndee-Jane Rutherford

Circa Theatre, 14th Oct 2025

Reviewed by Tanya Piejus

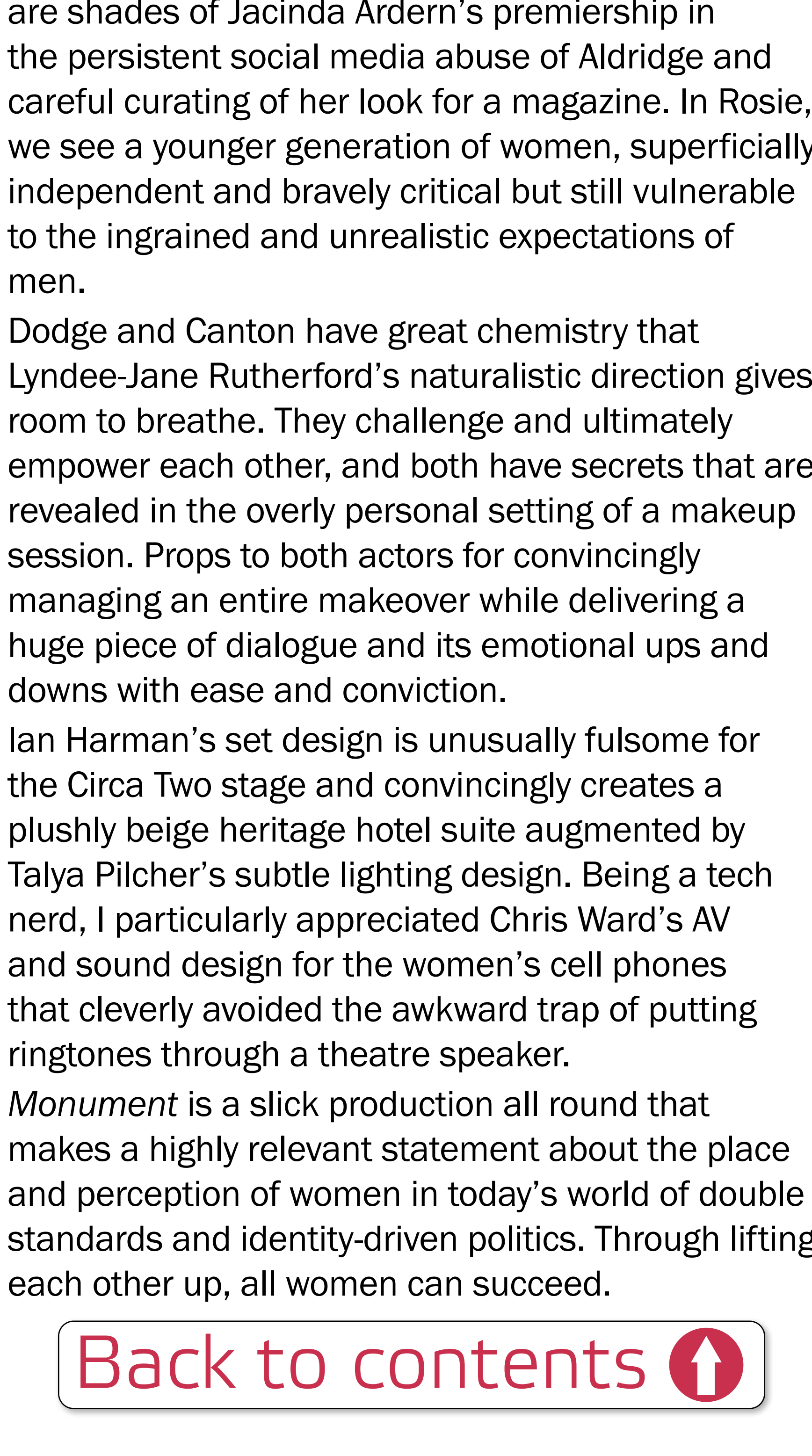


Photo by Mark Tantrum.

Edith Aldridge (Mel Dodge) comes from political royalty: the daughter of a former prime minister, now about to take the stage on her first day as a groundbreaking female prime minister. It's early. She's in her hotel room and has 90 minutes before making her inaugural speech to a waiting world. In walks Rosie (Tara Canton), a substitute makeup artist, more often seen working the cosmetics counter at David Jones but who's been plucked from obscurity because she's a whizz with a contour brush.

Over the real-time interchange between these two very different personalities, writer Emily Sheehan exposes the cultural norms expected of women, particularly those in leadership, and the increasingly blurred lines between politics and celebrity. There are shades of Jacinda Ardern's premiership in the persistent social media abuse of Aldridge and careful curating of her look for a magazine. In Rosie, we see a younger generation of women, superficially independent and bravely critical but still vulnerable to the ingrained and unrealistic expectations of men.

Dodge and Canton have great chemistry that Lyndee-Jane Rutherford's naturalistic direction gives room to breathe. They challenge and ultimately empower each other, and both have secrets that are revealed in the overly personal setting of a makeup session. Props to both actors for convincingly managing an entire makeover while delivering a huge piece of dialogue and its emotional ups and downs with ease and conviction.

Ian Harman's set design is unusually fulsome for the Circa Two stage and convincingly creates a plushly beige heritage hotel suite augmented by Talya Pilcher's subtle lighting design. Being a tech nerd, I particularly appreciated Chris Ward's AV and sound design for the women's cell phones that cleverly avoided the awkward trap of putting ringtones through a theatre speaker.

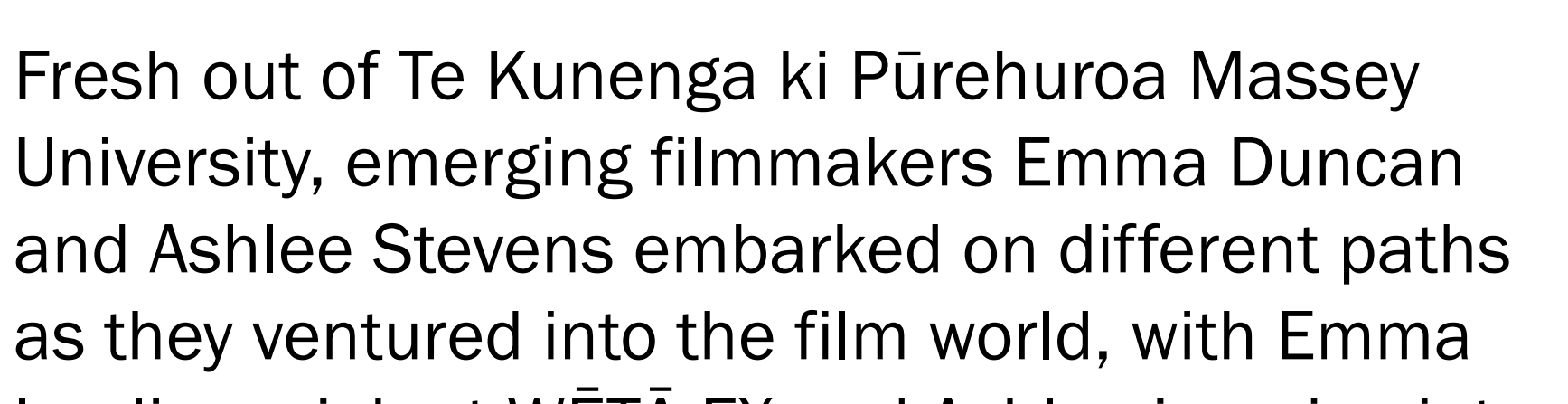
Monument is a slick production all round that makes a highly relevant statement about the place and perception of women in today's world of double standards and identity-driven politics. Through lifting each other up, all women can succeed.

Wellington Silver Screeners: Emma Duncan and Ashlee Stevens

In our Wellington Silver Screeners series, Alessia Belsito-Riera shines a spotlight on the movers and shakers working in the film capital of New Zealand.



Teiti Nepia.



L-R: Emma Duncan, Teiti Nepia, Ashlee Stevens.

Fresh out of Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University, emerging filmmakers Emma Duncan and Ashlee Stevens embarked on different paths as they ventured into the film world, with Emma landing a job at WĒTĀ FX and Ashlee jumping into contract work on big sets. But that doesn't mean they don't still collaborate with their friend Kate Chu on smaller passion projects under their own production company Three Kea Pictures.

Their latest is *Home*, a short documentary film that follows Teiti Nepia, a mana wahine who reclaims her autonomy by living on public land when she becomes priced out of Wellington's rental market. Embracing mana motuhake and art activism, she finds connection to her tūpuna and a deeper sense of home under the stars.

With recent screenings as part of Wairoa Māori Film Festival, Māoriland Film Festival, and Doc Edge Festival, I chatted with Ashlee and Emma about their journey so far and where they're heading next.

How did you get into filmmaking?

Emma: My dad is a huge movie buff, and we would watch everything growing up, and then it finally clicked that there were people making those films. From there I was just fortunate enough to grow up in Wellington where there are so many opportunities on our back door.

Ashlee: I grew up making little iMovies and Video Stars and forcing all my friends to act for me, so I always had a passion for it, but it wasn't until later when I was deciding where to go to uni that it clicked that I could actually pursue it as a career.

What do you love about it?

A: There is so much! Being able to spread amazing stories, whether they be influential or just an escape for people is really special. In terms of actual direction, I'm mostly interested in cinematography and art department, which are the very creative side of things.

E: For me, something really special is the overlooked moments in our day-to-day lives that are actually really important. We both love making stories about relationships. It's special that you can physically make something and let your work speak for itself.

Tell me about your career since graduating.

What's the journey been like?

A: Straight out of uni I was lucky to get a role on a feature film called *The Rule of Jenny Pen*. It was filmed half in Wellington, half in Taupō, which was really uncanny because I grew up in Taupō and moved to Wellington to study film. So to go back there for my first job was surreal. Then I've gone on to work on the *Avatar* pickups for the third film and a bunch of other feature film work. I jumped on *Wolfman* for a little bit and *Warren's Vortex*. I worked on them as a production runner and met so many amazing people. I've gone down the route of being on set and doing contract work from project to project, which is always so much fun, but also really nerve-wracking because you don't know when your next job's going to be.

E: I did a little bit of freelance work when I first got out of uni as the Writers' Strikes were happening and then I was lucky enough to get a job at WĒTĀ FX, and I've been there for over a year now as a production coordinator.

How do you two manage to stay motivated to make your own films when working full time?

E: It's not easy.

A: There's a little bit of pushing each other as well, which helps.

E: And remembering that feeling when you make something beautiful. When collaborations go really well, you want to nourish those. It's good for your creative practice as well.

A: It's really about being able to balance being that small cog in a big machine of paid work, but then also appreciating being leads on smaller projects and having that creative control, which is really special and fun. It fills your cup.

On that note, tell me about Home.

E: When we met Teiti, we were filming a documentary series for Barbarian Productions and Teiti was talking about her situation and instantly all three of us were like, 'We have to help her tell her story'.

A: Teiti had seen us walking around with cameras because she was one of the actors, and she approached us and pitched her idea for a film. I think what was special about it was that it wasn't just this film, it was her kaupapa and her life. Big themes in it are around connecting to your tūpuna and your land and being able to work through these tough times. It was just really special for us to be able to partly be the tool she needed to spread her message.

E: Her outlook was about hope and education. It was beautiful that at screenings she would be able to talk to it and inspire others who are unhappy and uncomfortable.

How do you find working in Wellington's film industry?

E: Film in general has its difficulties. Wellington is probably like no other, but there's something special about it. People come here to learn about film and there are great film schools, and all the history with the films that have been made here. But it is challenging and it's a lot about who you know and connections. Networking is a part of your job and it's hard when things maybe aren't paid because it sometimes doesn't feel like work but it's really just as important.

A: I wouldn't want to sugarcoat it and say you just jump from project to project. It takes a lot of passion, a lot of drive to continue – especially when there isn't a lot going on – to keep pushing for the career that you want. It is a lot about who you know and being a good person to work with because you can have all the skills, but if you're not a kind and a cool person to work with, then no one's going to want to bring you back.

How would you recommend networking?

A: There are lots of good avenues to go down, like Women in Film and Television hold events for networking. In a way, networking is your interview. On set it's more about reputation and meeting people that gets you through.

E: Going out for a coffee one-on-one, I found, because sometimes in bigger crowds it can be really daunting, so planning meetings was, I think, what got me a job. Something I wish I knew earlier was the ability to have quiet confidence and know you don't have to be the smartest or the loudest person in the room, but if you're passionate and willing to work hard, things will happen for you. And also don't be scared if you're the only girl. It happens a lot. You have the right to be there as well.

A: Especially in a lot of technical roles there seems to be disproportionate numbers of gentlemen. So, stand your ground, be confident!

Do you feel like there are more avenues for women now?

E: I think it's evolving, and I think there are conversations that are really inspiring. Even at work there are panels with amazing women in senior roles and that's really inspiring to see.

A: I agree, I think it's definitely getting better and there's more equity to it with targeted scholarships and opportunities trying to bring more women into those technical roles, which are really cool to see.

What's next?

E: We are working on a music video that is in post-production, so that's really exciting to keep the ball rolling on smaller projects. For me, just continuing at WĒTĀ and learning, learning, learning.

A: I'm starting on *Black Sheep 2*. It's so nice, the more I jump on the more I rock up and know more people there as well. So it's slowly getting more and more comfortable. I'll either be production runner or art runner. Working in the industry is pretty cool because every day is so different, you get to see so many cool things and work with such amazing minds who bring it all together.

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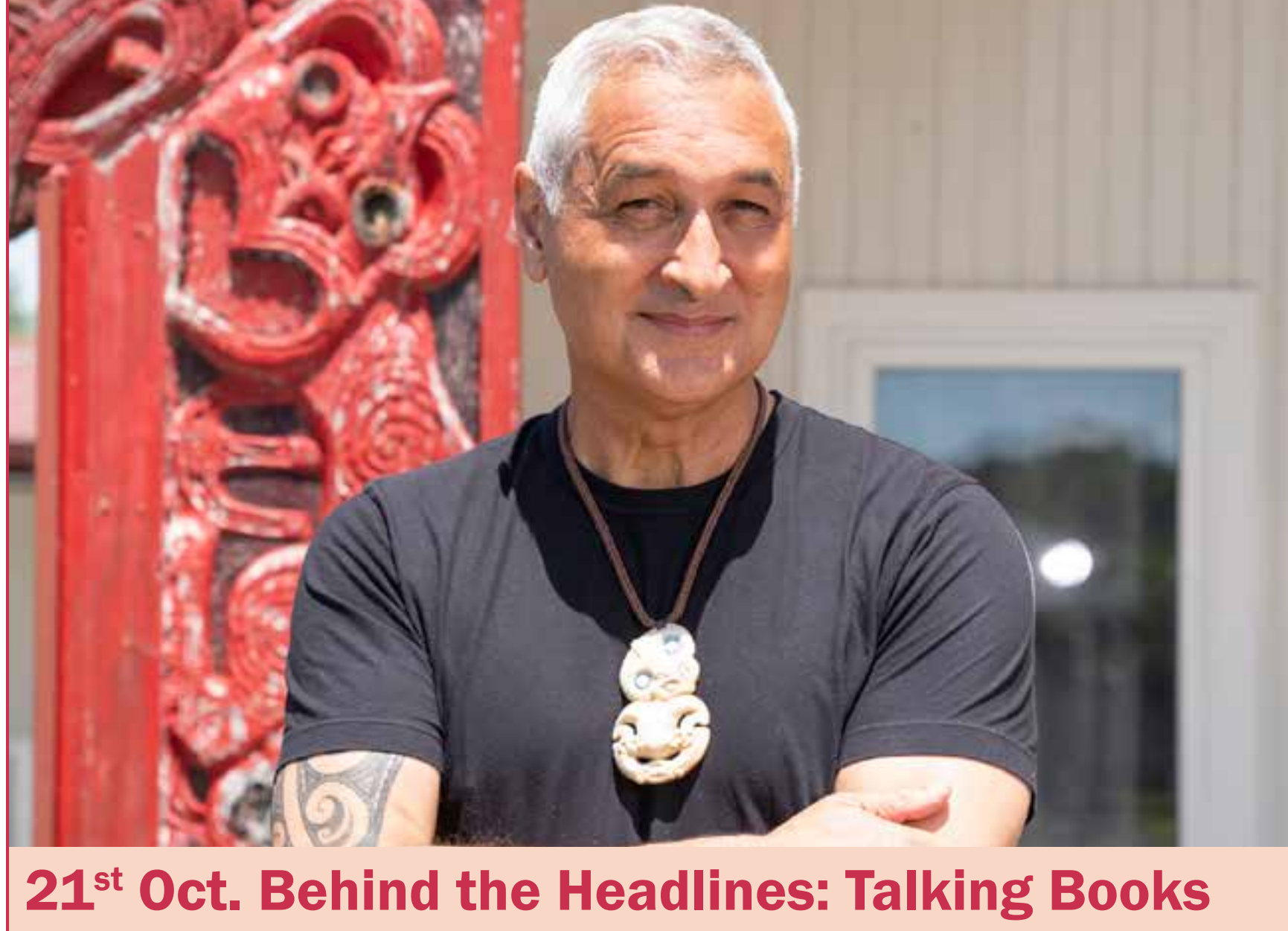


24th Oct. Benefit Show For Displaced Children Of Gaza And Ukraine:

Newtown Community Centre, Rintoul Street, Newtown – 7pm. Thousands of children have been forced to seek safety in refugee camps around the world, which lack resources for basic needs and education. Pōneke bands LUNG, S H E [pictured], Electric Tapestry, and Antu Marama come together to raise vital funds. **Photo by Paulette Mankoch-Soriano.**



29th Oct-2nd Nov. Veil into the Air: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro.* Focusing on the delicate and ephemeral nature of Japanese crafts, this group exhibition explores how perceptions intertwine as if dissolving into the air. Through expressions woven with culture, memory, and personal experience, it offers a fresh perspective of beauty shaped by the techniques and sensibilities of Japanese artists.



21st Oct. Behind the Headlines: Talking Books with Mike McRoberts:

Samuel Marsden Collegiate Auditorium, Marsden Avenue, Karori – 6pm-8pm. Hear Mike McRoberts [pictured], one of New Zealand's most respected journalists and broadcasters, talk about the books that have shaped his life at a special fundraising event for Katherine Mansfield House & Garden.



28th Oct-12th Nov. Sala Alas: *218c Willis Street, Te Aro, Wellington.* Across 32 original paintings and prints – immaculately realised in his trademark blue – contemporary British artist Todd Atticus [pictured] will reiterate a single, two-syllable lament: alas. Visitors are invited to share the catharsis of a public display of anguish, irritation, and resignation, in an exhibition both mesmerising and feverish. **Photo by Russell Kleyn.**



25th Oct. Fired Up Stilettos: Halloween!: *two/fiftyseven, Willis Street, Te Aro – 6pm.* Calling all ghouls, goblins, vampires, succubae, demons, and all-round weirdos: Fired Up Stilettos (FUS) are hosting their next strip club takeover and it's Halloween themed. Support the grassroots FUS cause that advocates for better rights for sex workers this spooky season. **Anya Rzhevitskaya.**

Photo by Jechtography.



25th Oct. Fable Part 3: A Fairytale Drag Show:

Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro – 9pm. Drag stars bring all things mythical and magical to life in a show full of your favourite legends and lore. This year's instalment turns to the darker stories, with everything from Māori atua to European vampires leaping off the page and onto the Ivy Bar & Cabaret stage.

What's on

Wairarapa

25th Oct. Jason Ireland: *Castlepoint Hotel, Masterton-Castlepoint Road, Whakataki* – 8:30pm. Covers collide at this boogie-rousing gig from one-man-band Jason Ireland.

26th Oct. Wairarapa Cinematheque Presents: Rochelle and Bellbird: *Regent 3 Cinemas, Queen Street, Masterton* – 7:30pm. Celebrate the launch of the Wairarapa Cinematheque with a screening of powerful Kiwi films *Rochelle* and *Bellbird*.

31st Oct. Halloween On The Green: *Queen Elizabeth Park, Dixon Street, Masterton* – 4pm. Fun, family-friendly, and totally free, this event is the perfect way to spend the evening dressed up for Halloween.

31st Oct. Bowloween with The Coffin Fits & Rampage: *Masterbowl, Queen Street, Masterton* – 4pm. Dress up, dance, play pinball, and bowl as The Coffin Fits and Rampage play mad music all night long.

1st Nov. Round The Vines: *Martinborough Square, Martinborough, Wairarapa* – 8am. Enjoy scenic country roads and vineyards along a 10 or 21-kilometre fun run or walk for this special fundraiser.

1st Nov. Mixtape: Halloween Rave: *Wairarapa Events Centre, Holloway Street, Carterton* – 7pm. Get spooky this Samhain with a collection of beastly bangers. Don't forget to dress up for the fiendish festivity.

Kapiti

24th-26th Oct. Paekākāriki Pride Festival: *Various locations and times in Paekākāriki.* Support the Kapiti Coast's Rainbow communities at fun pride events.

26th Oct. Kāpiti Concert Orchestra Presents: Halloween's Haunting Harmonies: *Ōtaki Memorial Hall, Main Street, Ōtaki* – 2:30pm. Dress up in your best costume to listen to the spookiest tunes performed by the Kāpiti Concert Orchestra and soloists Yuka Eguchi and Damien Eckersley.

31st Oct. C.W. Stoneking: *The Morgans Clubhouse, Paekākāriki Hill Road, Paekākāriki* – 7:30pm. Drawing on a heady blend of vintage blues, New Orleans jazz, gospel, calypso, and country and western kitsch, C.W. Stoneking conjures a sound that is both timeless and thrillingly original.

1st Nov. Laura Collins and the Big Blues Band: *St Peter's Village Hall, Beach Road, Paekākāriki* – 7:30pm. Expect blues, soul, boogie, and swing by Etta James, Aretha Franklin, Fats Domino, Ray Charles, and more.

2nd Nov. Kapiti Women's Expo: *Southward Theatre, Otaihangā Road, Paraparaumu* – 10am. Just in time for your Christmas shopping, this is the perfect chance to snap up unique gifts, connect with makers and service providers, and support local businesses.

Events

25th Oct. Vista Foundation 48Hours Grand Finals: *Embassy Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Watch the best of the best films from across the country made this year during the Vista Foundation 48Hours film challenge.

1st Nov. Plimmerton Rotary Garden Tour: *Various locations and times in Porirua.* Wander through varied local gardens to see blooms and buds of all kinds this spring.

1st Nov. Day of the Dead Celebration – Día de los Muertos: *Awhi Yoga and Wellbeing Centre, Johnston Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Take part in a traditional Day of the Dead celebration featuring history talks, storytelling, chanting, ceremonial hot chocolate, and more.

1st-2nd Nov. Wellington Go Green Expo: *TSB Arena, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 10am. Find everything you need to live a sustainable life at this one-stop shop featuring home supplies and food, clothes and wellness products, garden goodies and beverages, and so much more.

Music

22nd Oct. Lunchtime Concert Series 50th Anniversary Concert: *St Andrew's on The Terrace, The Terrace, Te Aro* – 12:15pm. Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the beloved *Lunchtime Concert Series* with Roy Tankersley, one of the initial organisers in the late 1970s who will return to perform works by Bach, Satie, and Kiwi composer Lyell Cresswell.

24th Oct. This Silent Divide: *Moon, Riddiford Street, Newtown* – 8pm. Get hyped for the release of the Wellington rock band's new EP, plus bangers from local bands Kaletta and Adult Friends.

25th Oct. Amped Up: *Brewtown, Blenheim Street, Upper Hutt* – 4pm. New Zealand's loudest night of mean metal mayhem is locked and loaded with Blindspott, Devilskin, and Shepherds Reign taking to the stage.

25th Oct. Andy C: *TSB Arena, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 5:30pm. The drum and bass legend Andy C returns for a fully immersive, high-voltage experience like the capital has never seen before.

26th Oct. OdESSA: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 5pm. Two decades ago, OdESSA kicked in the back door of the New Zealand mainstream with their explosive debut *Oak Park Avenue* – celebrate the anniversary of their indie funk record live.

30th Oct. King of the Keys: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Join Australia's piano-man Liam Cooper for a thrilling live concert paying tribute to the music of Elton John, Peter Allen, Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder, Freddie Mercury, Ray Charles, and more.

31st Oct. Downunder – NZ & OZ Experience: *Abandoned Taproom Petone, Fitzherbert Street, Lower Hutt* – 8pm. Listen to the soundtracks and radio staples of Australasia with artists from New Zealand and Sydney.

1st Nov. The Saints '73-'78: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The Saints '73-'78 carry on where the original band left off in 1978, performing material from their three incendiary albums (*I'm Stranded*, *Eternally Yours*, and *Prehistoric Sounds*).

4th Nov. Kaylee Bell: *Michael Fowler Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. New Zealand country-pop powerhouse Kaylee Bell is hitting the road with her new album *Cowboy Up*.

6th Nov. Cowboy Junkies: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. In a career-spanning show celebrating 40 years, the alt-country, blues, folk, and rock band will play big hits, fan favourites, and deep cuts.

7th Nov. NO CIGAR: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8:30pm. Breakout Aotearoa five-piece indie, surf, alt-rock band NO CIGAR have just released their hotly anticipated new album *Under the Surface*.

Performance

28th Oct-1st Nov. The Māori Sidesteps: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Te Aro* – various times. Contemporary showband The Māori Sidesteps are serving crooning and comedic goodness with a side of soulful harmonies, satirical skits, and superb song parodies.

29th Oct-8th Nov. Wellington Repertory Theatre Presents: The Great Gatsby: *Gryphon Theatre, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro* – various times. Set in America's 1920s Jazz Age, narrator Nick Carraway draws from the ghosts of the wealthy and indulgent lives of Jay Gatsby's Long Island mansion in this Ken Duncum play inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel.

30th Oct. PopRox Improv Comedy Presents: Mr. Halloween Bachelor: *The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Join Frankenstein this Halloween as he searches for his next bride (or groom).

30th Oct. Crack Up Comedy Presents: Booze & Craic: A Night Of Irish & Scottish Comedy: *Whisky & Wood, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Irish lads Alan McElroy and Queenstown-based Shane Mulvey take to the stage alongside Billy T-nominated Scots Samantha Hannah and David Stuart.

30th Oct-8th Nov. Royal New Zealand Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker: *St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – various times. Central to Christmas memories for generations of audiences, *The Nutcracker* is a timeless celebration of family, fantasy, and growing up.

31st Oct. Raybon Kan: *The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Award-winning comedian Raybon Kan celebrates his 31st anniversary in stand-up with his greatest hits show *Raybonanza*.

31st Oct. Nightmare on Cuba Street: A Halloween Drag Show: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Something wicked this way comes: a night of fright and fabulousness with your favourite local drag stars!

31st Oct-1st Nov. The Willies: A Halloween Drag Show: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Jump on your broomsticks or ride your headless horses to catch ghastly ghouls, maleficent monsters, and spooky scary skeletons on stage.

1st Nov. Ruff as Gutz Presents: Buck Scourge: Living Nightmare: *The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 8pm. This clowning show from Sean Burnett Dugdale-Martin is for people happy to not quite know what's going on and for those keen to yell at a stranger.

1st; 2nd Nov. Tom Sainsbury: *Te Raukura ki Kāpiti Coastlands Theatre, Paraparaumu; The Opera House, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Comedy chameleon Tom Sainsbury presents his new candid Kiwi comedy show *Lessons Not Learnt*.

6th Nov. Alien Comedy: *Moon, Riddiford Street, Newtown* – 8pm. Wellington's second-longest-running comedy show will feature headliner Lesa MacLeod-Whiting and MC Jundas Capone this November.

6th; 12th Nov. Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand Presents: Primarily Playing With Shakespeare: As You Like It: *Victoria University Memorial Theatre, Kelburn; Members Gallery, Sky Stadium* – 12:30pm. Be charmed by over 100 Year 1 to 8 tamariki loving their romp through *As You Like It*.

Galleries

Until 1st Nov. In Te Pō there are many beginnings: *Page Galleries, Victoria Street, Te Aro.* Saffronn Te Ratana and Ngataiharuru Taepa present a mihi to an early painting by artist and educator Kura Te Waru Rewiri.

Until 4 Nov. Never Better: *Hunters & Collectors, Cuba Street, Te Aro.* Seven women working across painting, photography, textiles, quilting, and ceramics celebrate making connections and art.

Until 4th Nov. Made to Bloom: *Vincent's Art Workshop, Willis Village, Te Aro.* Ceramic artist Josefine Grönkrans is inspired by the beauty of creation, nature, and Ecclesiastes 3:1-11.

Until 8th Nov. Out of the Blues: *Studio Te Mapunga, The Esplanade, Island Bay.* This exhibition of abstracts by Neal Palmer is the result of listening to his favourite jazz while improvising on canvas.

Until 9th Nov. New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts Presents: Spring Exhibition: *Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, Hill Street, Thorndon.* Welcome the return of warmer weather and longer evenings with a vibrant exhibition featuring a variety of mediums and responding to the optimism and new colours of spring.

21st-26th Oct. Skullduggery Art Show: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro.* Celebrate the spooky season with some creatively excellent original art depicting supernatural and horror themes.

Festivals

29th Oct-19th Nov. British and Irish Film Festival: *Various cinemas and times in Wellington.* The best of British and Irish filmmaking is back on screens across the region. Catch the curated programme in a cinema near you.

For your inclusion in the what's on listings email: whatson@regionalnews.kiwi. Close off for the next issue's listings is noon Tuesday 28 October.

To the best of our knowledge, the information provided to us regarding the above events was correct at the time of press. Our company accepts no liability for events postponed, cancelled, sold out, or otherwise adapted.

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