

Regional News

Issue 274

August 11, 2026



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News

Soulful, rare, potent



From the Crayford Jazz Dynasty emerges Hine, the stage name of Gigi Crayford (Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa, Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga), who released her debut EP *Ka Mua Ka Muri* earlier this month. Years in the making, the title comes from a traditional whakataukī, translatable to ‘walking backwards into the future’, and features singles *Over the Bones* and title track *Ka Mua Ka Muri*.

Hine is a multi-instrumentalist who grew up immersed in music and culture with her whānau. After moving back to ancestral land in Ōtaki and spending three years steeped in full immersion to reo Māori at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, her EP draws on her experiences of tracing whakapapa and connecting with pūrākau and te ao Māori. The EP was “born from the experience of being an urban Māori trying to navigate living in what can feel like a post-apocalyptic world as tangata whenua”, Hine says.

Blending Indigenous folk, jazz, sonic storytelling, and poetry, the EP honours atua wāhine including Hinetakurua, Hine Raukatauri, Hinemoana, and Hine-nui-te-pō. Deeply soulful, Hine reverberates with authentic expression through songs sung in both te reo Māori and English, with instrumentation performed by herself (autoharp, guitar, piano, taonga pūoro) alongside her brother Miles Crayford (organ, piano), her father Greg Crayford (drums), Charlie Budd (taonga pūoro), and Aslan Rowlands (guitar).

“Gigi’s soulful voice has an ancient quality that feels whole and embodied. There is a depth that is rare and potent,” renowned taonga pūoro practitioner, writer, and poet Ariana Tikao says.

Interwoven with taonga pūoro carved by Hine and drenched in noir folk sentiments, the genre-blending project echoes the emotional lyricism of Joni Mitchell, the enigmatic voice of Kate Bush, and the ecstatic, soaring moments of Pink Floyd, demonstrating the vital place music has in healing and self-discovery.

Hine is known for her captivating stage presence. She will be performing at St Peter’s on Willis on Sunday the 23rd of August with support from sonic missionary Nikau Te Huki, whose solo project goes under the alias Casual Healing.

This is where the fun begins

by **Madelaine Empson**



“In a world where everything is becoming digital and disposable, physical games, movies, toys, and collectibles feel more important than ever. They carry stories and memories,” says Arrol Lal, director of Geek Inventory and organiser of The Retro Event.

The Retro Event started in a small hall in Auckland and has evolved into one of New Zealand’s largest celebrations of retro gaming and pop culture; from a humble Charmander to a bigger, tougher Charmeleon and finally to a mighty Charizard spreading its wings across multiple venues and volumes. For the first time ever and after repeated requests, The Retro Event will set Pōneke alight, turning up the heat at the Wellington Indian Association on Kemp Street in Kilbirnie on Saturday the 12th of September.

This nostalgia expo brings collectors, families, gamers, and fans of all ages together for one huge day of retro gaming, cosplay, competitions, displays, and activities, with plenty of surprises peppered in along the way. Hundreds of local and national vendors will congregate to sell everything from consoles to comics, collectibles to cards across the worlds of Pokémon, Beyblades, Transformers, and so many more.

When it comes to the first ever Retro Event in Wellington, Arrol is “most excited about seeing families experience it together”.

“It’s more than buying collectibles or playing retro games. It’s parents showing their kids the things they grew up with, sharing those memories, and creating completely new ones together. What was our nostalgia can become the next generation’s nostalgia too.”

Arrol’s favourite feedback from Retro-rovers is when “parents tell us the event helped them connect with their kids over something they both enjoyed”.

“I hope Wellington families leave with something they can keep, share, and remember together.”

Autobots, transform and roll out to The Retro Event!

Cover: Ali Harper, Judy’s Encore.

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Not in Kansas anymore

by **Madelaine Empson**



Award-winning entertainer extraordinaire Ali Harper has portrayed Judy Garland in snippets of her solo show *Legendary Divas, Songs for Nobodies* by Joanna Murray-Smith, and British playwright Peter Quilter’s *End of the Rainbow*. She calls it a privilege, but has always felt there was more to explore.

“My passion has always been to truly understand what makes a person tick especially someone regarded as one of the greatest entertainers of all time, yet also one of the most tragic”, Ali says. “Judy Garland was not just a legend; she was a mother, a wife many times over, and a woman dealing with immense pressures right from childhood. What struck me most in my research was how much had been written about her that she herself said was false or sensationalised. That frustration and her desire to be understood made me create *Judy’s Encore* as a way to honour her resilience, her vulnerability, and her determination to be seen for who she truly was, foibles and all.”

Set in 1967, *Judy’s Encore* sees *The Wizard of Oz* star and singer ready to rewrite the narrative after the devastation of her previous Australian tour. Carrying the weight of exhaustion, expectation, and her own legend, Judy steps onto the stage once more, determined to captivate audiences and silence the critics. But as the curtain rises, one question remains: can her unbreakable spirit carry her through to the final bow?

This theatrical concert experience sees Ali perform more than 20 hits, from *Get Happy* and *The Trolley Song* to *The Man That Got Away*. Ali hopes audiences will see Judy in a new light when she brings her iconic voice, razor-sharp wit, and enduring legacy to the stage at Circa Theatre, where she first began producing her own work 30 years ago.

“Returning with *Judy’s Encore* feels like a full circle moment and I’m looking forward to re-connecting with so many who have supported me and my shows over the years.”

Judy’s Encore will turn Circa Two into the pot of gold *Over the Rainbow* from the 29th of August to the 26th of September.

The art of the Teese

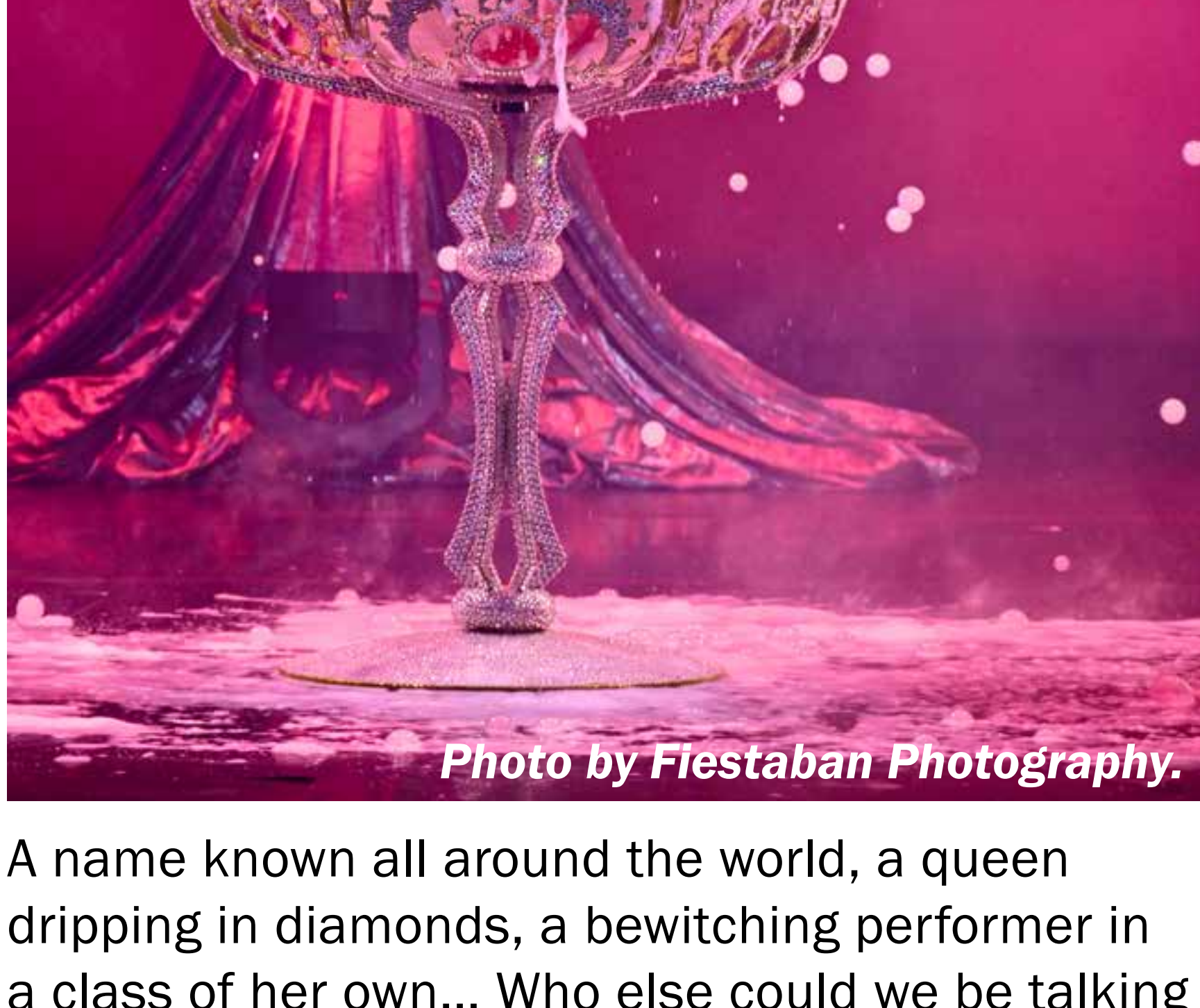


Photo by Fiestaban Photography.

A name known all around the world, a queen dripping in diamonds, a bewitching performer in a class of her own... Who else could we be talking about but Dita Von Teese?

Having made history in the artform of burlesque, Von Teese is bejewelled with unrivalled artistry and flair as a performer, creative director, choreographer, and producer. She has sold out some of the world’s grandest venues and continues to attract attendees ranging from Harry Styles and Jean Paul Gaultier to Prince Albert II of Monaco and the great Golden Age star Leslie Caron. Her spectacular stage shows, including her current residency at The Venetian in Las Vegas, feature and platform the crème de la crème of neo-burlesque performers of all sizes and gender diversities who hail from every corner of the globe and sparkle with the spirit of joie de vivre so dear to Von Teese. Her lavish and richly imaginative tour *Glamonatrix* remains the biggest touring burlesque show of all time. Now, she raises the bar yet again with *Nocturnelle*.

Inspired by the magicians of the 19th century, Von Teese says *Nocturnelle* is her “most glambitious show yet”.

“It’s where sophisticated striptease meets the spellbinding art of illusion. Learning from master magicians and diving into the secrets of vintage magic, I set out to create something uniquely enchanting... it’s the art of the Teese, plus a little trickery, and a whole lot of glitz.”

Deemed “unquestionably the modern queen of burlesque” by Dua Lipa and “an absolute legend, unbelievable” by Taylor Swift, whose music video for *Bejeweled* sees the pair perform in a giant martini glass apiece, Von Teese is unmissable live. Wellingtonians will have two opportunities to witness the collision of sensuality and magic at The Opera House on the 28th and 29th of August.

SNIPS

Heart Heroes

Every week in Aotearoa, around 12 families learn their baby has a heart condition. Heart Kids NZ is calling on everyday New Zealanders to get involved in the annual Heroes for Heart Kids campaign by holding a Hero Day or volunteering for the street collection on the 25th and 26th of September. Visit www.heroesforheartkids.org.nz for more.

New park

Work on Wellington City Council’s new park begins this August. On the corner of Taranaki Street and Frederick Street, the park will feature landscaping, native and exotic trees, play spaces and seating, public art, rain gardens to support stormwater management, and bike racks as well as two accessible public toilets.

Apply now

The 2026 NZSA Peter & Dianne Beatson Fellowship is open. Writers of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama with a literary track record who are working on a new project can apply for the \$12,000 opportunity at www.authors.org.nz until the 4th of September.



Euphoric electronica



Pola & Bryson have carved themselves out a reputation as leaders of the new wave of liquid drum and bass. Showcasing a unique blend of melancholy and euphoria through harnessing the immense power of electronic music, the UK-based duo has been dropping scene-shattering music since their debut album *This Time Last Year* was released in 2016. Fast forward 10 years and they’ve gone on to release four studio albums, several EPs and mix compilations, tour globally, receive nominations for multiple awards, and remix the likes of David Guetta, Moby, Wilkinson, and High Contrast.

Their latest album *Overgrown*, released last year via Shogun Audio, marks a pivotal shift in their journey. “The album is the evolution of us branching off to a more euphoric and club-orientated sound, which heavily influenced the album title,” the duo says. “*Overgrown* as a title also represents the relationship between the digital and organic sounds in our music, which in turn represents the contrasting factors of nature and urban environments we both grew up in.”

Performing at Meow Nui on Friday the 28th of August from 10pm until the wee hours, Pola & Bryson offer up a night of innovative and addictive tracks, further cementing their position as some of the greatest in the business. Whether you’re after a boogie or an introspective sonic experience as a dedicated fan or a newcomer, this is an electronica night worth staying up for.

Fire and ice



Monsters, battles, gods, heroes; the Norse world is made of fire and ice. Across four acts, each by a different Pōneke-based choreographer – Joana Joy, James Burchell, Trinity Maydon, and Hanna Hairil – *Winter’s Saga* journeys through ancient stories dealing with fate, destiny, and choice.

While Norse mythology has inspired books and film it is not often interpreted through dance. In Wellington Community Ballet Theatre’s production, the giant Hrungrnir insults the gods and challenges Thor, Loki the shapeshifting trickster deceives the blind god Hod, and Ragnarok is set in motion: bringing forth the destruction of the Norse world. But the show is not all war and doom, with “a few lively feast scenes”, producer Shereen Capper says.

“It’s a much bigger production than anything we’ve done before and we’re super excited to share it”. The expanded creative team includes set designer Miho Aragane, whose Yggdrasil (mythical world tree) takes centre stage; costume designer Emma Malcolm, drawing inspiration from Viking culture; and Lucas Zaner on lighting and sound.

“Norse stories don’t all have happy endings. There’s a real sense that events have been set in motion and can’t be undone,” Capper says. “We hope audiences leave having enjoyed the spectacle, but also with something to think about afterwards.”

On at The Hannah between the 18th and the 23rd of August, join Wellington Community Ballet Theatre as battles rage, heroes rise and fall, and the worlds of gods and mortals collide.

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Hot grooves for winter blues



It might be chilly out there, but there are grooves coming your way that you won't be able to sit still to. Warm up by tapping your toes to the driving rhythms, melodic brass, and alluring vocals of Niko Ne Zna

in a rare hometown show on Saturday the 29th of August at Vogelmorn Hall.

The upcoming gig isn't just special because Niko Ne Zna are finally playing here again; it's also their 15th anniversary! The Wellington Balkan brass band's longevity can be credited to live shows fuelled by unadulterated passion and filled with captivating theatrics, no matter whether they're performing impromptu on the streets or cutting loose on the global stage. Their collective chemistry has seen them regularly tour Aotearoa, sell out shows in Australia, stop the show at WOMAD in 2019, and release two full-length albums... so far. Niko Ne Zna are currently in the studio working on their third, guaranteed to have you clapping and stomping from the kitchen to the car, day and night.

Niko Ne Zna's current lineup of nine comprises two trumpets, soprano saxophone, bass and tenor trombones, sousaphone, Balkan bass drum (tapan), and snare drum, with vocalist and percussionist Nikkie Rich singing in languages spanning Serbo-Croatian, Romani, Macedonian, Greek, and English. The result is hypnotic music that draws from the Balkan region to get you on your feet from the first note to the last.

As *Elsewhere* writes, Niko Ne Zna will send you "straight to the dancefloor". Prepare for an exhilarating evening of joyful revelry.

Sultans of Swing



The Dire Straits Experience might've taken the long highway to get back here, but Wellingtonians can finally rejoice. On the 20th of August, the sound of one of rock's most legendary bands will reverb and resound through the Michael Fowler Centre.

Critically acclaimed and assembled by original Dire Straits saxophonist Chris White – a key member of the *Brothers in Arms* and *On Every Street* tours – alongside acclaimed singer and guitarist Terence Reis, The Dire Straits Experience delivers breathtaking authenticity on a journey through Mark Knopfler's platinum-selling catalogue. Audiences can expect such era-defining anthems as *Money for Nothing*, *Sultans of Swing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Brothers in Arms*, and *Telegraph Road*.

Delivering this two-hour concert spectacular is a seven-piece ensemble hand-picked from the highest levels of the international touring circuit. Over the course of their collective careers, Chris, Terence, Richard Barrett, John Maul, Michael Bramwell, Danny Schogger, YoYo Buys, and Luke Naimi have performed with the likes of Paul McCartney, Joe Cocker, Ray Charles, Robbie Williams... and Mark Knopfler himself.

Dire Straits may have disbanded in 1995, but their legacy continues to captivate audiences worldwide. The Dire Straits Experience brings the songs, the sound, and the spirit to life on *The Long Highway* tour. As Chris delights, "We absolutely loved our 2024 New Zealand tour and can't wait to be returning with The Dire Straits Experience to play for all of our friends in New Zealand. See you in August!"

The many faces of grief



Photo by Eve Hampson.

Jayme Morpeth was writing songs at 12 and releasing them on Spotify at 16. With lyrics shaped by emotional honesty and vivid storytelling, her music explores the chaos and beauty of early adulthood: love, loss, overthinking, and self-discovery.

The soft indie pop from Jayme's younger years has evolved into something grittier, more textural, moody. At 21, the Wellington-based singer-songwriter crafts guitar-driven alt-indie music whilst maintaining the essence of vulnerability that has always defined her work.

That vulnerability shimmers through her debut EP *Good Grief*. Out on the 21st of August, the emotionally charged project is an honest exploration of heartbreak, healing, and growing up. It's about youth and the loss of it as we leave versions of our past selves behind.

Good Grief comprises five tracks total, three of which have been previously released. *Gone For Good* encapsulates the pain of losing someone who has moved on, *Just To Feel It* reflects on the thrill and recklessness of partying in your teens, and *Fast Car* straddles the uncertain, delicate hope that comes with learning to trust again after a toxic relationship.

Completing the EP are two brand-new songs: *Played My Cards Right*, which asks whether love is worth the gamble, and *Hold Me*, which closes the record with a tender reflection on connection and comfort.

Join Jayme as she celebrates the new EP live at Valhalla on the 19th of August with support from Emily Alice and Kloey.

Straight for the spirit



The next instalment of the Hilltop Private House Concert series sees a folk singer with yarns, heart, and soul in spades play the homely venue on Upland Road in Kelburn on Saturday the 15th of August. Adam McGrath is widely known across Aotearoa as the lead singer and songwriter of the mythic roots band The Eastern, and for a solo career that's earned him the moniker of "national treasure" from *RNZ*.

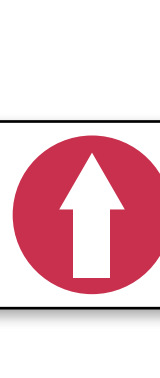
Winner of Te Manu Taki Ahurea o te Tau | Best Folk Artist at the 2024 Aotearoa Music Awards, Adam has shared stages with and opened for Fleetwood Mac, Steve Earle, Old Crow Medicine Show, Paul Kelly, Jimmy Barnes, and many more legends. Happiest by a jukebox during last call, he can mostly be found wherever he lands, spending eight months of the year travelling both the state and lost highways of the motu.

Adam plays anywhere and everywhere from lounge rooms to bars, street corners to theatres, with a million and one festival appearances in between. He cops to being "better than you thought, but not as good as he should be and yet he remains very thankful and hopes that in some way this might help him to continue paying his rent through his roundabout stories and bareknuckle approach to guitar playing".

He also "continues to write bios in the third person".

An Adam show goes straight for the spirit in all of us. He plays this Hilltop Private House Concert with his new album *Wrecker Songs* in tow.

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Whimsical unease



“Before moving to Pōneke, I lived in one house my whole life. A house my parents built for our family. Sometimes I close my eyes and check on myself back at home. It feels smaller than I remember, but she’s still there, peacefully sleeping.”

Grace O’Brien’s exhibition *when i sleep* will be held at Thistle Hall from the 25th to the 30th of August. A multi-disciplinary artist, Grace’s art takes many forms. Often exploring themes of femininity, cultural identity, and whenua through set, lighting, and costume design for the theatre as well as art department and directing for film, the show features projections, miniatures, textiles, wallpaper, and acrylic and oil paintings.

when i sleep is a “multimedia culmination of my thoughts on observation, scale, and sentimentality in my own life, investigating the perpetual surveillance of brown bodies and orientalism within Aotearoa,” she says. “A tribute to my childhood home, to me and my brother – two Indian/Irish kids growing up in rural Tāmaki Makaurau – within this work I am interested in the act of taking something whimsical, innocent, and playful and counteracting it with a sense of unease.”

With her theatre background, Grace creates spaces that are immersive and emotive, inviting audiences to move and engage freely with the works. At once whimsical and unsettling, they probe the watchful eye of technology, asking us: how much is it truly benefiting us? Who is watching us?

If you ain’t got that swing



The High Society Swingers will be swinging into Greytown for the first time on Friday the 21st of August to make a big splash at Cobblestones’ Carriage House. Led by cabaret vocalist and all-round entertainer Nicole Chesterman Kircher, the talented band will be performing your favourite music from the 1920s to today, ranging from blues and jazz to samba and pop.

Nicole has been managing and performing for the last 27 years, including in the successful retro-folk 60s act The California Dreamers and the New Zealand Pink Floyd Experience. She’ll be joined on stage by several other stalwarts of the Wellington region music scene, including Mike Duffy aka Mad Dog, a respected sound technician from Upper Hutt and core member of Newtown Rocksteady and the Capital City Big Band, walking the double bass; multi-instrumentalist James Tait-Jamieson from Manawatū blowing saxophone and vocals; Aslan Rowlands, member of TNT! Reo Māori Big Band and the Capital City Big Band on guitar and vocals; and drummer Cameron Brizzle of the Royal New Zealand Air Force Band.

Taking their cues from Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Hollywood, The High Society Swingers are so much more than just music makers, they’re larger-than-life performers. Offering up a huge repertoire of sound from across the decades, they take well-loved songs and add the High Society flavour. Head along for a night of toe-tapping, bouncing, and grooving.

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News

Advice from Alan

Retirement village financing

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



For many retirees, moving to a retirement village is an important step toward a more secure and supported lifestyle. However, the timing of selling a family home and paying for entry into a village can create financial pressure.

One solution is a retirement village access (or bridging) loan, which allows homeowners to unlock equity in their property before it is sold. This type of loan is specifically designed for people who are committed to moving into a retirement village and need short-term funding to make that move possible. Typically, borrowers must be aged 60 or over (with some flexibility where one borrower is aged between 55 and 59). The loan is secured against the family home and can be used to pay the lump sum required to acquire an occupation right in a retirement village, repay any existing mortgage on the property, or set aside funds for retirement village-related expenses through a cash reserve facility. Borrowers are encouraged to take only what they need, helping to preserve equity in their home over time.

The property must be worth \$250,000 or more. The maximum loan amount is generally capped at 50 percent of the home's value, with a minimum borrowing amount applying. Interest is calculated on the amount actually drawn down and is compounded monthly. Importantly, while regular repayments are not required, borrowers may make repayments at any time without penalty.

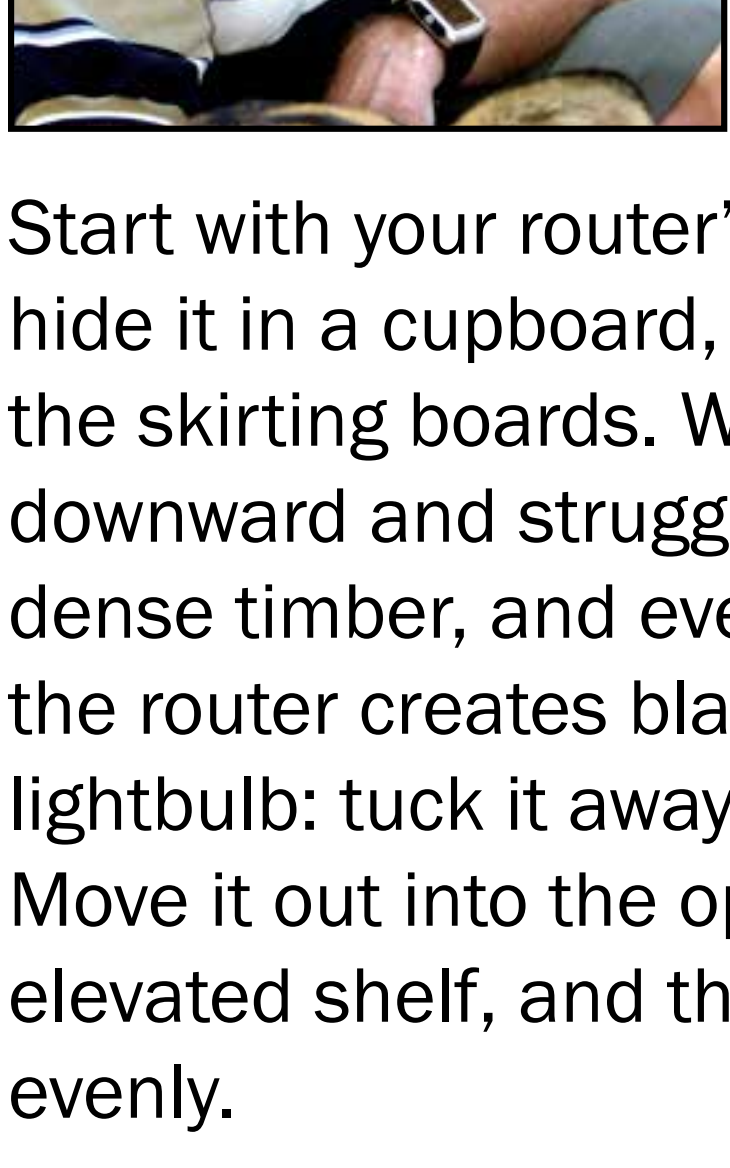
These loans are designed as short-term solutions, with the total loan (including interest) usually repayable within three years. Repayment is commonly made once the home is sold, with any remaining proceeds retained by the homeowner or their estate. To support borrowers, retirement village access loans often include key safeguards, such as limited recourse guarantees that ensure the loan repayment will not exceed the net sale proceeds of the home, equity protection options that allow borrowers to protect a portion of their future equity, and cooling-off periods that give borrowers time to change their mind after settlement.

Borrowers are required to obtain independent legal advice, and independent financial advice is strongly recommended.

Tech talks with Pat

Banishing Wi-Fi dead zones

by **Pat Pilcher**



There's nothing more frustrating than settling in with a cuppa, only to watch your movie buffer endlessly. Wi-Fi is the invisible glue of modern life, yet so many homes suffer 'dead zones' where the Wi-Fi signal dies. The good news: fixing them doesn't demand a degree in rocket science.

Start with your router's placement. Many people hide it in a cupboard, behind the TV, or down by the skirting boards. Wi-Fi radiates outward and downward and struggles with concrete walls, dense timber, and even large mirrors, so blocking the router creates black spots. Think of it like a lightbulb: tuck it away and the room stays dark. Move it out into the open, ideally on a central, elevated shelf, and the signal will spread more evenly.

Modern routers usually broadcast two bands: 2.4GHz and 5GHz. The 5GHz band is fast but weak through walls; the 2.4GHz band is slower but travels farther. If your phone drops out in the back bedroom, switch its connection to 2.4 GHz and see the difference.

If problems persist, interference from a neighbour's Wi-Fi may be the culprit. Wi-Fi uses channels just like the telly, and if your Wi-Fi network's channel overlaps with a neighbour's, dropouts and slowdowns follow. Tools like WiFi Analyzer (Android) or NetSpot (Windows) make it easy to see which networks and channels are busy. Then, log into your router's admin page and pick the least crowded, nonoverlapping channel.

Last (but not least), the building materials used in your home make a huge difference. For most timber-frame or timber-clad homes, a good high-quality router will do the job. If your home is crafted out of concrete or brick, Wi-Fi may struggle to reach every corner. In these situations, a mesh router setup is your best bet. Rather than a flaky range extender (which creates more problems than it solves) or relying on a single router box, a mesh Wi-Fi system uses two or three small router units placed around the house to create a seamless, whole-home blanket of coverage.

Dark worlds collide



Vanessa Tottle.

Two distinct worlds of dark, emotional resonance will collide at Moon Bar on Thursday the 20th of August for a show featuring two of Aotearoa's most compelling rising underground acts.

Tāmaki Makaurau-based producer and trip-hop extraordinaire Vanessa Tottle is joined by the gothic lovechild of post-punk, trip-hop, and alt-rock: Pōneke's very own trio, Tragedies.

Tottle released her debut album *Take Control* in February last year and has since released a string of singles, including her most recent song *Impact*. Tottle's sound is simultaneously 90s-rave nostalgic and fiercely futuristic. She merges hypnotic, velvety vocals with immersive instrumental layers, ethereal synths, and heavy electronic grooves.

Tragedies are known for their deeply intimate live shows, sharing music designed for grieving, healing, and processing the complexities of modern life. Consisting of Gwen Armstrong (guitar, vocals), Aimee Eastwood (drums, sequencer, synths), and Jack Cooper (bass), the band are inspired by the likes of Massive Attack, Radiohead, and The Cure. They are riding the momentum of their debut single *Ordinary*, which climbed to number one on the Radioactive.fm Top 11, and the recent release of *Taupiri*, a queer love song for the end of the world that celebrates small moments of bliss and sanctuary. Tragedies are set to release their debut album later this year.

Head down to your favourite local Newtown venue for a night that promises cinematic darkwave, trip-hop, and live electronic music designed to transport you to another dimension.

Fully booked



This year marks the first ever Aotearoa NZ Children's Book Week. Running from the 15th to the 21st of August, a series of events organised by Read NZ Te Pou Muramura will take place in Pōneke in collaboration with libraries, schools, booksellers, authors, and illustrators under the mast of this year's theme: Reading Around Aotearoa.

A recent report showed that children's reading in Aotearoa is declining. This year's lineup is designed to inspire parents, teachers, and whānau to make reading a priority in the lives of their tamariki.

The week is stacked with bookish fun, teetering too high to mention them all. On the 15th, Katherine Mansfield House & Garden hosts award-winning children's author Elaine Bickell, who will read from her beloved books followed by an opportunity for kids to ask questions about being a writer. Books on Board takes place on the 18th on the Kāpiti train line with live storytelling for preschoolers followed by an event at Porirua City Library. That evening, join Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador Kate De Goldi as she chairs a panel on why reading for pleasure matters and why strengthening our school reading communities is so important at Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa National Library Wellington.

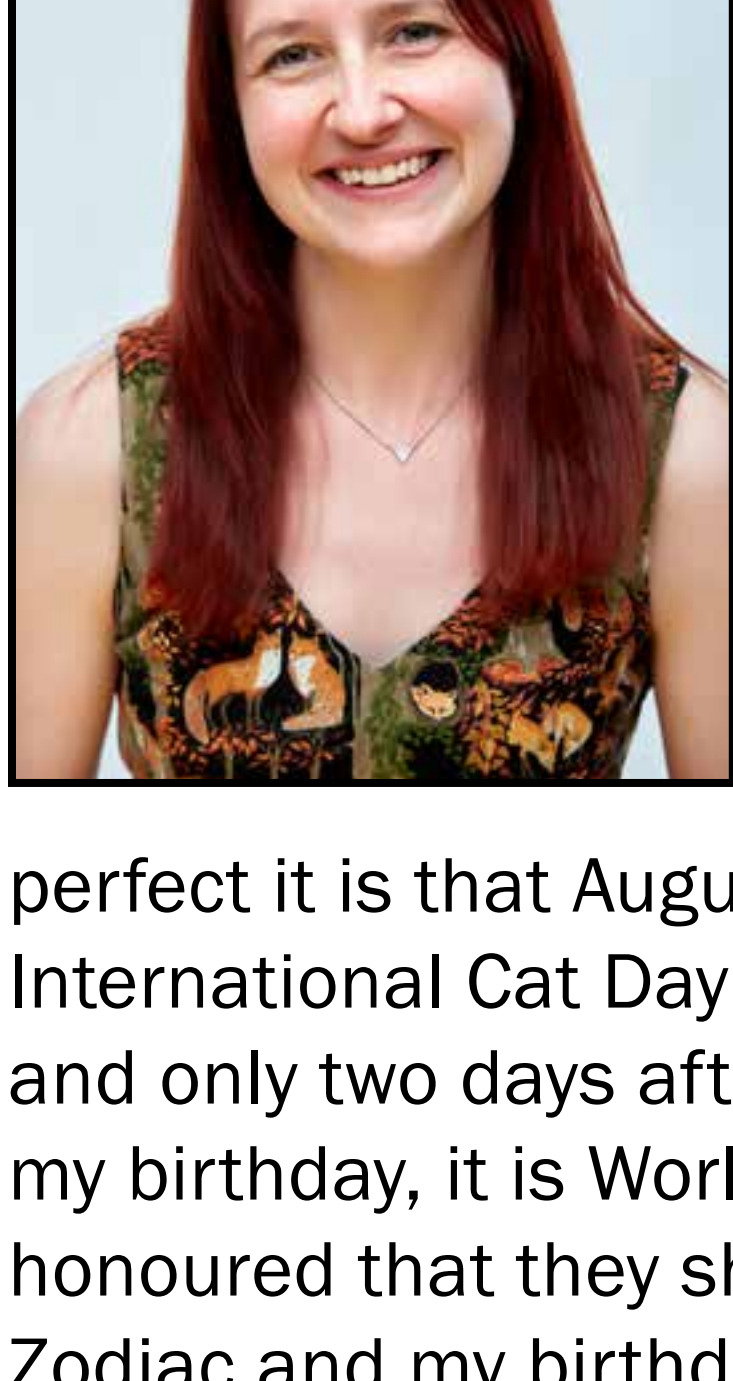
Books Alive takes place at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui on the 19th, featuring over 20 writers and illustrators – all finalists for the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults (NZCYA) – in a full-day programme featuring behind-the-book talks, live drawing, and writing and illustration workshops. Later that night, the NZCYA awards ceremony will be held at Pipitea Marae.

News

A word from Maddi...

Maddi's magic miracle month

by **Madelaine Empson**



August is my birthday month, and this year is a particularly special one: the big 3-4. Consecutive numbers! Last year was palindromic numbers, and next year is 35, which is halfway between 30 and 40. Three major birthdays in a row, how lucky am I!

It's almost spooky how perfect it is that August is my birthday month. International Cat Day is on the 8th (I love cats), and only two days after that, a mere week before my birthday, it is World Lion Day. I am a Leo and honoured that they should choose to celebrate my Zodiac and my birthday in the same month. And, get this: on the 13th of August, it is International Left Handers Day. You're not going to believe this, but I'm left-handed! I'm almost feeling shy about how many celebrations of Maddi they've scheduled in a row. Almost.

Here's the real kicker: August the 17th, the most hallowed of days, is Black Cat Appreciation Day! I have a black cat! Get out of town, this is just getting ridiculous now.

But wait, there's more. Kicking it all off on the 1st of the month is International Childfree Day (I don't have a child) and World Scout Scarf Day (I do have a scarf). Building up the bday anticipation from the 5th is International Traffic Light Day; I see traffic lights *all the time*. Not only do I drive through them (in my car), but I also stand at them (on my feet).

When my birthday has been and gone and you're feeling a bit blue, you can simply remember that the 18th of August is World Never Give Up Day and hold on till the next one.

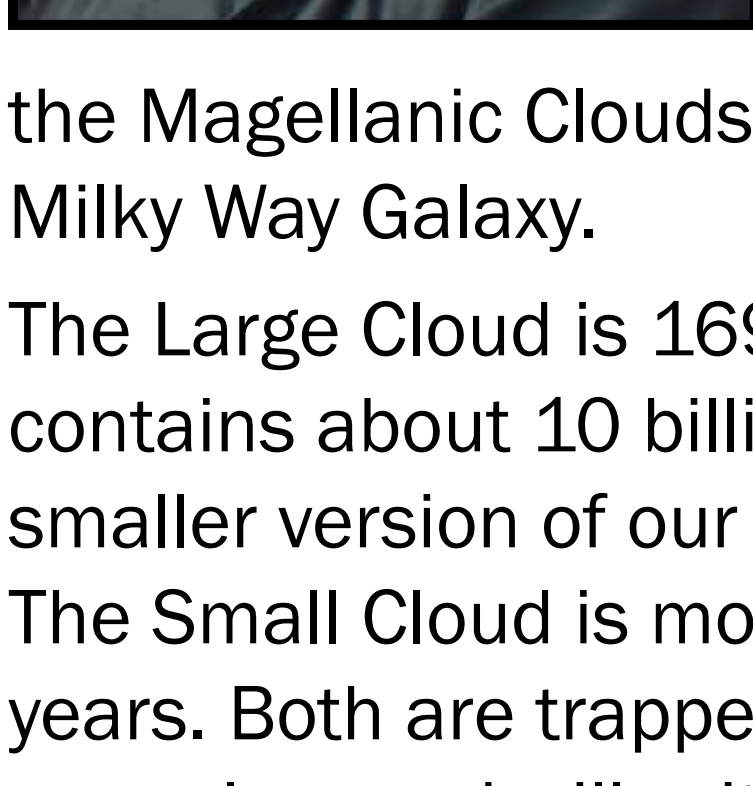
They've really got a day for everything, huh? Why not while away the rest of August by playing rock, paper, scissors on the 27th, reading comics in public on the 28th, and not conducting nuclear tests on the 29th? When all is said and done and my birthday month is over (boo), pet a whale shark for consolation on the 30th and never fear: only 11 months and it's August again. The countdown is on*.

*National Countdown Day is on March the 14th.

Cosmic conversations

The cosmic relic

by **Richard Hall, astronomical communicator**



On an August evening, the Milky Way runs from north to south with the brightest regions passing almost overhead. Looking to the southeast, you will see two glowing clouds of light that look like detached portions of the Milky Way. But, these are not part of the Milky Way. These are the Magellanic Clouds, two satellite galaxies of our Milky Way Galaxy.

The Large Cloud is 169,000 light-years away and contains about 10 billion stars. It was once a smaller version of our galaxy – a barred-spiral. The Small Cloud is more distant, 190,000 light-years. Both are trapped by the gravitational pull of our galaxy and will, with the passage of time, be assimilated into the Milky Way.

Close to the Small Magellanic Cloud, you will see a small faint ball of light that looks like a fuzzy star. This is 47 Tucanae. It was so named because in early charts it was listed as the 47th brightest star in the constellation of Tucana (The Toucan).

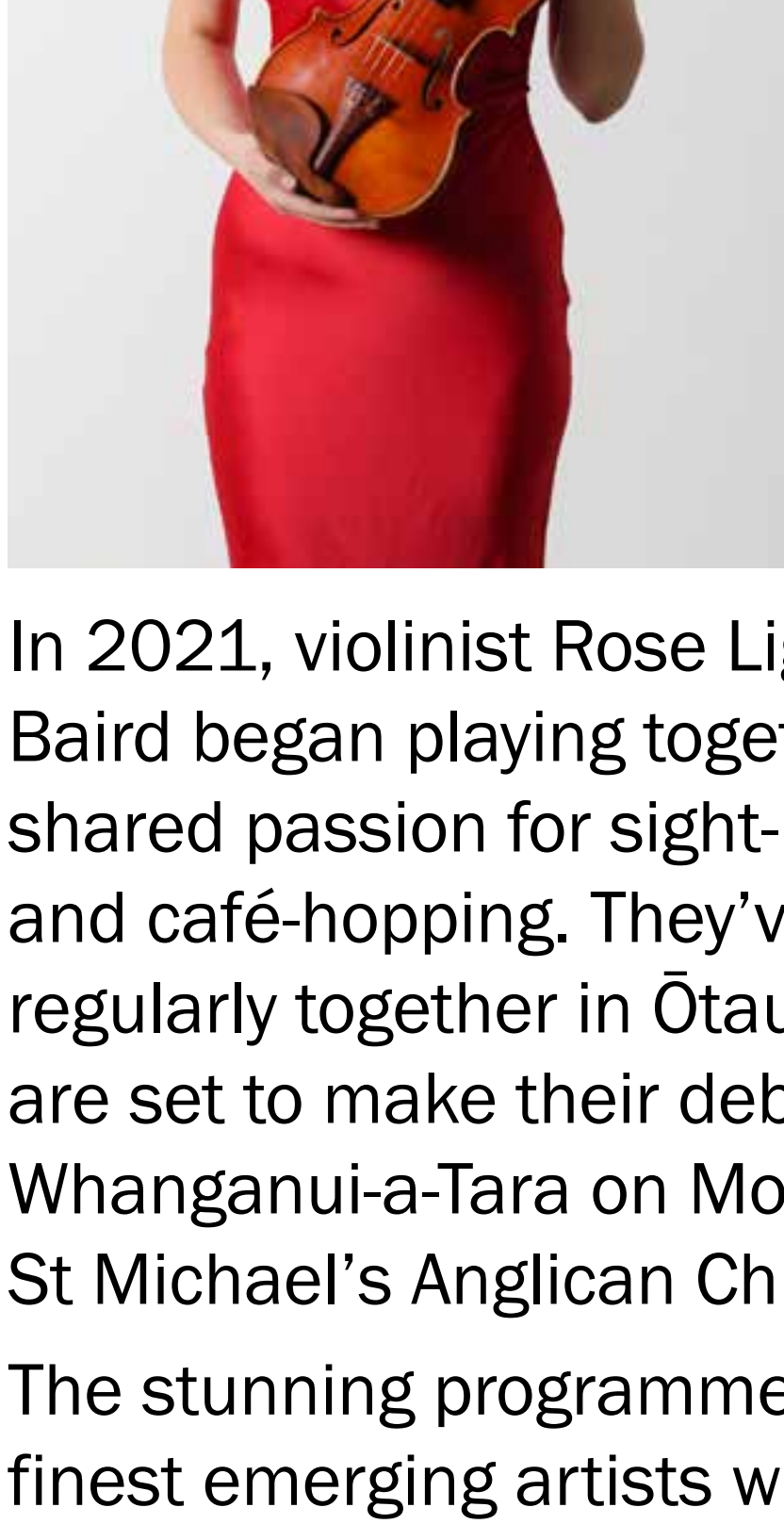
But 47 Tucanae is no star. It is in fact an ancient spherical cluster of more than 200,000 stars. In a telescope, it is one of the most magnificent of celestial wonders. The cluster has a diameter of 120 light-years and the stars crowd towards the centre to form a brilliant central blaze.

47 Tucanae appears faint in our night sky due to its vast distance of 16,700 light-years. This great cluster of stars drifts in the emptiness of space above and beyond the spiral arms of our Milky Way. From its vantage point, you would be able to look out and across the great cosmic whirlpool of stars that is our galaxy.

The cluster is so dense that the average distance between stars is only one-tenth of a light-year; approximately the size of the Solar System. Imagine what the night sky would look like from a world located near the centre of this cluster. Here the stars are 100 times closer together than in our region of space. There would be hundreds of stars bright enough to be seen in broad daylight.

47 Tucanae is one of the oldest objects in the universe. It has an age of more than 13 billion years. This is almost three times the age of the Earth and our Solar System. It is a relic, a building block, left over from the formation of our galaxy.

Soulful, graceful, tender



In 2021, violinist Rose Light and pianist Gabriel Baird began playing together after discovering a shared passion for sight-reading chamber music and café-hopping. They've since performed regularly together in Ōtautahi Christchurch and are set to make their debut performance in Te Whanganui-a-Tara on Monday the 24th of August at St Michael's Anglican Church in Kelburn.

The stunning programme from two of Aotearoa's finest emerging artists will feature romantic chamber music for violin and piano. Audiences will enjoy Tchaikovsky's deeply soulful *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, Schubert's graceful *Sonatina in A minor*, Elgar's tender *Salut d'amour*, well-loved works by Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Kreisler, and charming folk music from Europe and the Americas.

The recital is a fundraising effort for Rose's continued violin studies at Kunstuniversität Graz in Austria. Rose was this year's concertmaster of the university's symphonic orchestra and has been awarded a scholarship position in the Kunstuniversität Graz Recreation Orchestra. Over the three years she has been living and studying abroad, she has won numerous awards at national and international competitions and travelled and performed extensively.

Gabriel is an accomplished pianist and bassoonist. He has performed extensively throughout Aotearoa as a soloist and collaborative pianist and chamber musician. He is an accompanist at the University of Canterbury and is associate principal bassoonist in the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra.

Join them this August and take part in the rich, textured, and emotive dialogue between violin and piano.

Half-remembered dream



Where Honey Dreams and Gentle Hearts Meet
by **Gillian Burfield.**

For Gillian Burfield, magic isn't about fantasy. "It's about those quiet moments in nature that stop you in your tracks," she says. "The way sunlight suddenly catches a bird's feathers, blossom drifting through the air, mist softening the edge of a forest, the feeling that there is something just beyond what we can see."

Burfield's paintings draw upon the natural world, filled with animals, flowers, insects, snatches of music, and ancient ruins. In soft tones of purple, blue, and green, these creatures appear like a half-remembered dream or a distant memory – as though they might dissolve before your eyes and reemerge changed.

The mixed-media artworks are carefully layered using collage, spray paint, acrylics, and oils, each transparent layer leaving traces behind. "Some marks are revealed, others are hidden... creating a sense of history and discovery within the painting."

Light plays an important role in each painting, moving as presence and guide and illuminating the creatures to create an atmosphere of stillness and wonder. "I'm constantly observing the different ways light behaves", she says. "Light reveals, conceals, and transforms. It changes the way we experience both a landscape and an emotion."

Where Magic Lingers will be on display at Thistle Hall from the 18th to the 23rd of August. A place where reality and imagination meet, the paintings offer a chance for audiences to slow down and to leave with a renewed admiration for the world around them.

Going viral



Dr Stephanie Waller was awarded the Zonta Science Award by the Zonta Club of Wellington in June this year for her contributions to the study of viruses in native wildlife in Aotearoa and her commitment to advancing women in science. We caught up to discuss her research, her work inspiring young women and girls, and her plans to visit virology labs overseas.

What drove you towards science and researching viruses in wildlife?

I've always been interested in understanding how humans, animals, and the environment interact together. I was always out in nature, which led me to science and trying to understand those processes a bit better.

At the University of Otago, I followed what interested me and ended up in microbiology. I did my honours, then a PhD, which was where I really started looking at viruses.

Something that blew my mind in the first week is that there are more viruses on Earth than there are stars in the universe. We know less than one percent of all viruses so far, and there's a huge amount to explore and discover.

What species have you been researching and working with?

Prior to my PhD there wasn't much work done uncovering viruses in native species in New Zealand. My PhD involved trying to uncover as many viruses in as many species as possible to get a baseline understanding of what is in New Zealand and how these species evolve, particularly because they've been isolated for millions of years.

I had the privilege of working with pekapeka (long-tailed bats) and short-tailed bats. I also looked at viruses in tuatara, longfin and shortfin eels, and several mokomoko species (skinks and geckos).

Since then, I've done a post doctorate. I'm in Professor Jemma Geoghegan's lab in the microbiology and immunology department doing a range of projects. I'm looking at avian influenza surveillance, which is super relevant with H5N1 detected in New Zealand recently. I work with livestock viruses found in cows and pigs in collaboration with the Ministry for Primary Industries. Also human viruses, looking at how they are associated with cancers.

Does that mean you end up having a much broader understanding about other areas of science?

Yeah, definitely. I come at it from a virus evolution lens. But with every new topic, you're picking up new knowledge and collaborating with new people. There are two ways in science that you can go. You become either a specialist in one field, or you learn a technique that can be applied across multiple different projects. My technique is looking at metatranscriptomics [the study of gene expression of microbes within natural environments] and genomics and I can apply that across a range of areas.

What would be some of the most interesting findings?

We were really interested in tuatara because they're one of the most evolutionary distinct vertebrate species on Earth. We found hardly any viruses that appeared to be directly infecting them, which was quite unusual. We hadn't found that in any other species before. We thought potentially they do have viruses but they're so divergent to anything we know about that we can't identify them.

In some bats we found a virus similar to ones found in Australian bats. It likely indicates that long-tailed bats harboured this virus prior to coming over to New Zealand millions of years ago. That was interesting: showing that viruses can diverge with their hosts for millions of years, and that you can link that back to their evolution and how they moved across different countries.

The other aspect of the award is for championing women in science.

Who are your heroes?

For a lot of people, your heroes are found quite close to home. For me, that was my high school biology teacher and chemistry teachers.

After that, I've been extremely lucky to have had a bunch of female mentors along the way. My current supervisor, Professor Geoghegan, believed in me and all the other members of our lab and has provided us with so many opportunities to thrive and develop.

I worked with Maree Roberts on the transitional infectious disease platform, and she helped me see a clearer link between policy and science. She's still a mentor today. It just goes to show that if you have a strong community and strong mentors around you, they can help you succeed. Unfortunately, that isn't the case for everybody. While there is a lot of improvement, with a lot of female scientists coming through university, there's still a huge lack of female scientists within higher leadership. It's hard for women who are in those roles to be able to mentor everybody. They'd have to do twice or triple the amount of work to mentor all these female students.

To improve those outcomes, what have you been up to?

Over the years I've been involved in several organisations. Chiasma is a student-led volunteer organisation that links industry with scientists and students. People are going into science then don't really know how to get into jobs. There's a strong emphasis on getting female leaders within those industries to share their experiences. I've recently been involved in Inspiring the Future Aotearoa. You volunteer yourself as a mentor, and high schools can reach out and ask you to come in to spend a morning or afternoon with the students. You explain what you do, the things you like about your job, the things you don't. That work is really important, targeting young girls and showing them that there is a place for women in science.

On that note, what do you like about your job?

I like that I can help people. I do a lot of demonstrating and supervising students. It's nice to answer questions and provide information to people in a way that they can understand. I think science communication is so important. There's a lot of misinformation out there. I also like generating new knowledge. I'm often uncovering things that no one's ever discovered before.

What are you going to do with the award money?

I'm going to use the money that Zonta has given me to go over to Europe. The first visit is to the University of Cambridge to meet Dr Chris Ruis. He focuses on this very technical term called mutational spectra analysis.

After that, I'm going to the University of Glasgow to meet Professor Daniel Streicker. He focuses on modelling how viruses move between wildlife. I'm really interested in learning about what he does, particularly with avian influenza and H5N1, then try to model how the virus could potentially be spreading throughout New Zealand.

After that, I'm going to the Pasteur Institute in France to meet with Professor Sebastian Duchene. He works on looking at the evolution of viruses, which is similar to what I do, but his techniques are different.

All these techniques and tools I'll learn can be applicable not just to one virus but to all the viruses I've been working across, which is really important. The aim is to use and transfer that sort of technology to other researchers within New Zealand as well, so we can better build up our capability and capacity.

Sounds like you'll bring back a big kete of knowledge.

That's the plan. And to collaborate. It's so important in science that you're collaborating and sharing knowledge. A lot of these problems aren't just a New Zealand problem. Viruses like avian influenza, they go across borders. How one country is dealing with a situation is so important in understanding how we're going to deal with it.

I'm extremely grateful to have this award. It's going to be extremely beneficial to me, but it'll also hopefully help raise more awareness of the work that scientists, particularly female scientists, are doing in New Zealand.

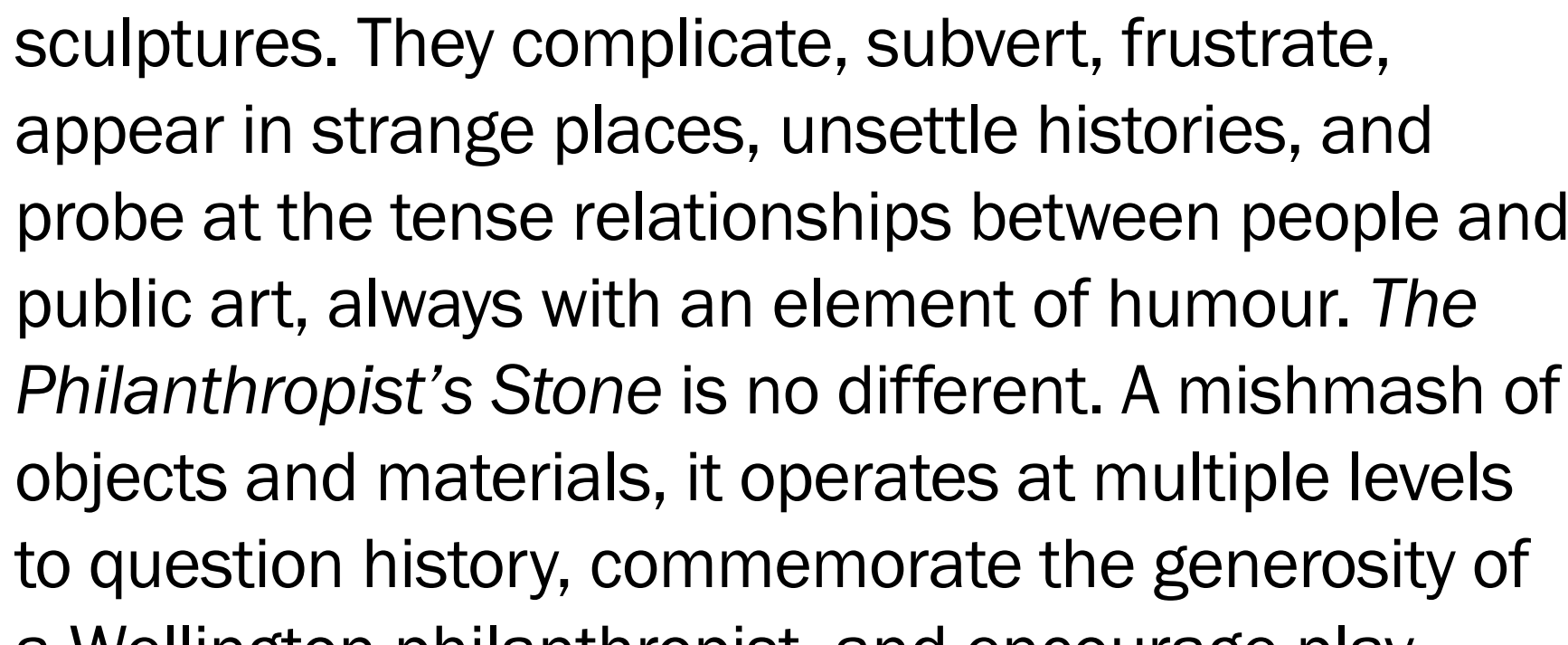
The Philanthropist's Stone

by **Isabella Smith**

In this new series, Isabella Smith talks to the artists behind the sculptures dotted around our city.



Photo courtesy of the Wellington Sculpture Trust.



Scott Eady pouring aluminium.

Photo by Thomas Lord.

Scott Eady is known for disruptive and troublesome sculptures. They complicate, subvert, frustrate, appear in strange places, unsettle histories, and probe at the tense relationships between people and public art, always with an element of humour. *The Philanthropist's Stone* is no different. A mishmash of objects and materials, it operates at multiple levels to question history, commemorate the generosity of a Wellington philanthropist, and encourage play.

The Philanthropist's Stone sits at six metres tall and looks like a child might have picked up each element and assembled them together with glue, while at the same time looking balanced and elegant. Standing atop a plinth featuring grind rails for skaters and places to sit for pedestrians, it consists of a bright sky-blue Corinthian column crowned by a lumpy gold nugget skewered with several glass-blown candles that stick out at funny angles. At night they light up lower Cuba Street like some proud, botched Lady Liberty.

Like any good art, it sparked intense debate at the time of its unveiling. Like any good arc in the life of a public work, it has since come to be loved by the city. “Artists develop a thick skin early in their careers,” Scott says. “If we didn’t, we wouldn’t keep making this stuff called art. Art sometimes pushes boundaries and buttons. If an artwork generates robust and passionate discussion, then it’s doing something.”

At the time of its creation, Scott was involving his children in his creative practice. Giving them Du-Kit clay, they created lumpy mini-sculptures that he scaled up, cast in bronze, and finished with a high-gloss paint. These forms made their way into various spaces, including the 2013 Venice Biennale, with one appearing half buried outside the Wellington City Art Gallery as though it had dropped heavily from the sky.

“Public sculpture carries an enormous responsibility and almost always depends on the expertise of others. Engineers, foundries, fabricators, and installers all contribute to and shape the final work. Some of those collaborators become lifelong friends,” Scott says. “The sculpture’s various parts were built mostly in New Zealand by a colourful cast of skilled craftspeople from Dunedin, Ōamaru, Christchurch, and Wellington. The plinth, column, capital, bronze blob, and the stainless steel and glass candles all came together for the first time during the installation in Wellington.”

Some have described the golden lump as a piece of chewing gum or something much ruder. Really, the gold leaf-covered blob (accidentally) pays homage to the goldmining prospects that first brought Thomas George Macarthy over from England to eventually become a prominent businessman and, ultimately, one of the most generous philanthropists for the Greater Wellington Region.

The stylised, hand-built capital atop the Corinthian column too marks the Victorian age in which Macarthy built his expansive business portfolio, while the glass-blown candles playfully mark the centenary of the TG Macarthy Trust – established on his death in 1912 – for which the sculpture was originally commissioned by the Wellington Sculpture Trust and Public Trust.

Very few people know Thomas George Macarthy, “yet it is likely that everyone in the Wellington region has benefited from this man’s generosity without knowing it,” the then chief executive of the Public Trust said following the unveiling of *The Philanthropist's Stone* in 2015.

Enticed by the promise of gold, Macarthy left his home, first for the goldfields in Victoria, Australia, and then for Otago in the 1860s. He acquired a brewery in the goldmining town of Charleston on the West Coast, before shifting to Wellington in 1877 where he purchased a brewery on Customhouse Quay, followed by a larger one on Tory Street. He acquired hotels and urban property and had other successful business ventures, including the Wellington and Manawātū Railway Company, the building of the Wellington Opera House, and as director of the Bank of New Zealand. A public figure, the governors of the TG Macarthy Trust after his death included and include to this day the Prime Minister, the Catholic Archbishop of Wellington, the Governor, and Wellington’s Mayor. For anyone following this series, his best man at his wedding was ‘Father of Wellington’ John Plimmer, whose warehouse Plimmer’s Ark inspired Glen Hayward’s sculpture *The Grove* located on the waterfront and discussed in issue 272.

The TG Macarthy Trust is one of the largest perpetual trusts in Aotearoa. Since it was established, it has distributed over \$85 million, with \$2-3 million dispersed annually to various non-profit organisations that help improve the quality of life for the disadvantaged and marginalised, help young people develop and realise their potential, look after and provide dignity for older people, and provide essential medical and emergency services. Just last year, the trust donated \$3 million to 700 education and community groups across the Greater Wellington Region including 206 schools, 57 play centres, 149 kindergartens, 73 kōhanga reo, nine Pasifika early childhood centres, 28 toy libraries, and 176 charities.

“I think the TG Macarthy Trust, The Sculpture Trust, and the selection committee were very brave. Perhaps they knew [*The Philanthropist's Stone*] would divide opinion, just as the [TG Macarthy] Trust has always been prepared to stand alongside people who are too often overlooked,” Scott says. “It’s great when a city does embrace a sense of ownership even if the artwork remains polarising. Wellington is well practised at this thanks to the Wellington Sculpture Trust.”

The sculpture provokes discussion, looks at colonial history, provides seating, gives skaters grind rails, and lights the street at night. But ultimately, it invites a sense of play. Even the title riffs off the first Harry Potter book, as it “ties together the ideas of generosity, transformation, and value.”

“Sculpture occupies space, so it commands attention. Good public art can take many forms. It can be beautiful or ugly, reflective, or playful. It can question our prejudices, connect deeply with the history of a place, or quietly become part of everyday life. Sometimes it does none of those things – and that’s okay too.”



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Hope for homeless families



This winter, The Salvation Army issues an urgent call across Aotearoa New Zealand. More families than ever are facing the reality of homelessness, and for many, the question of where they will sleep each night is becoming increasingly uncertain.

The Salvation Army's 2026 Winter Appeal, Hope for Homeless Families, shines a spotlight on a crisis that is both visible and hidden. Visible in the growing number of people coming through Salvation Army doors for help. Hidden in the everyday reality of children sleeping in cars, families living in cold garages, and young people moving from couch to couch, unsure where they will be next week.

Captain Andrew Wilson, corps officer at Wellington South, says what he is seeing on the frontline reflects a profound shift. "Right now, too many families are living on the edge and falling over it," he says. "We are seeing a surge in families who never thought they would need help, now facing the heartbreak of not knowing where they will sleep next."

As the cost of living continues to put pressure on households, many families are struggling to cover essentials. Rent, food, power, and transport costs are stretching budgets beyond their limits. "Parents are being forced to make devastating choices," Andrew says. "Do I pay the rent or feed my kids? Do I heat the house or keep a roof over our heads? These are not choices anyone should have to make."

Behind these decisions are real stories. Parents doing everything they can to keep their children safe and warm. Families living in overcrowded, unstable housing. Young people without the security of a place to call home.

This is the reality of homelessness in New Zealand today. It is not always rough sleeping on the streets. More often, it is hidden, unstable, and exhausting.

The Salvation Army sees the human toll every day. Families arrive overwhelmed by financial pressure and emotional stress. Many have exhausted every other option before reaching out for help.

The Salvation Army frontline teams are there to provide practical assistance and wraparound care, walking alongside people as they take steps toward greater stability.

Donations to the Winter Appeal help provide food for a family in crisis, financial mentoring, practical help, and emotional support for people to rebuild their lives.

But this appeal is about more than meeting immediate need. It is about restoring hope.

"People are not just reaching out for help," Andrew says. "They are reaching out for hope, for a sense that things can get better. No child should have to face winter hungry, cold, or without a safe place to sleep."

As temperatures drop and pressures rise, the need is urgent. But so too is the opportunity to respond with compassion and action. Help ensure that everyone has a safe place to call home. Please give at www.salvationarmy.org.nz/winter. Thank you.



**Give hope
to homeless
Kiwi families.**

This winter, many families brace themselves for the cold, challenging months ahead.

Hot, nourishing meals, winter clothing, sufficient bedding, and warm homes are simply beyond their reach.

This winter, you can provide food support, practical help, and emotional care to those who are struggling.

Please donate today.

**SalvationArmy.org.nz/
Winter**

Call 0800 53 00 00



Te Ope Whakaora

My bucket list

The Wellington career coach



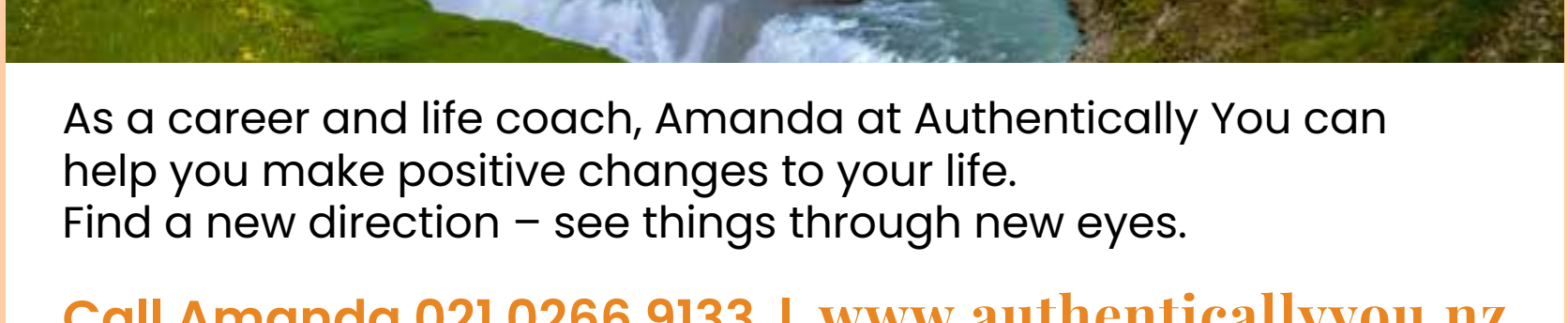
Amanda Satterthwaite is a career and life coach based in Wellington. After many years of working overseas and in government, she decided to take a different career path that would empower others seeking positive change in their own lives. Amanda now coaches her clients to find a better career fit, clarify and work toward big life goals, and overcome challenges.

At Authentically You, Amanda creates a safe space for her clients to uncover blocks, find new direction, and move forward with confidence. Through her relaxed sessions, specialised career coaching tools, and tools for establishing healthy practices, Amanda's clients discover purpose, gain healthy habits, and achieve their goals.


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Unlock the value

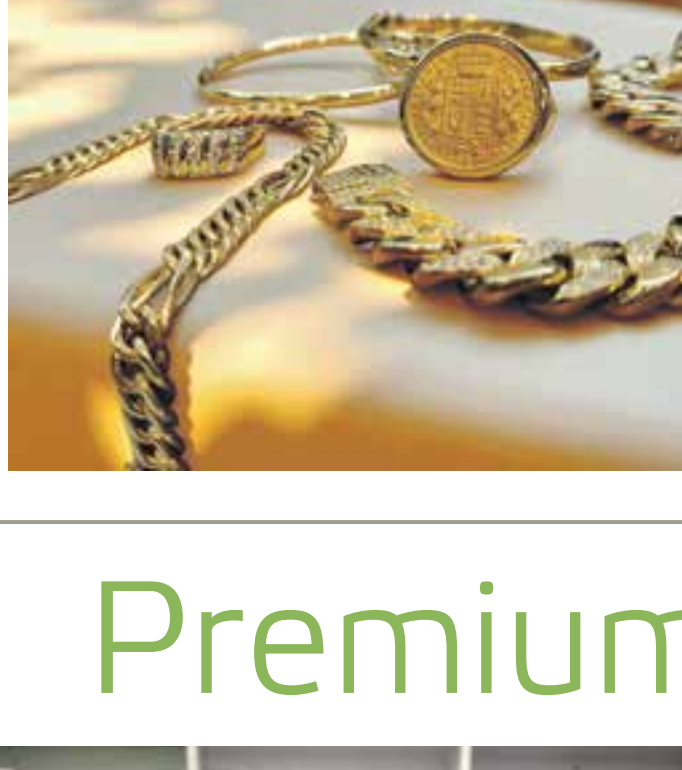


Jewellery inherited from a bygone age often ends up gathering dust in an old forgotten drawer. Fashions come and go and some never return, which is why The Gold Exchange, located in The Old Bank Arcade, offers a solution to those family heirlooms that you don't know what to do with. Their experienced team value and purchase unwanted items as well as repair and remodel pieces you want to breathe new life into.

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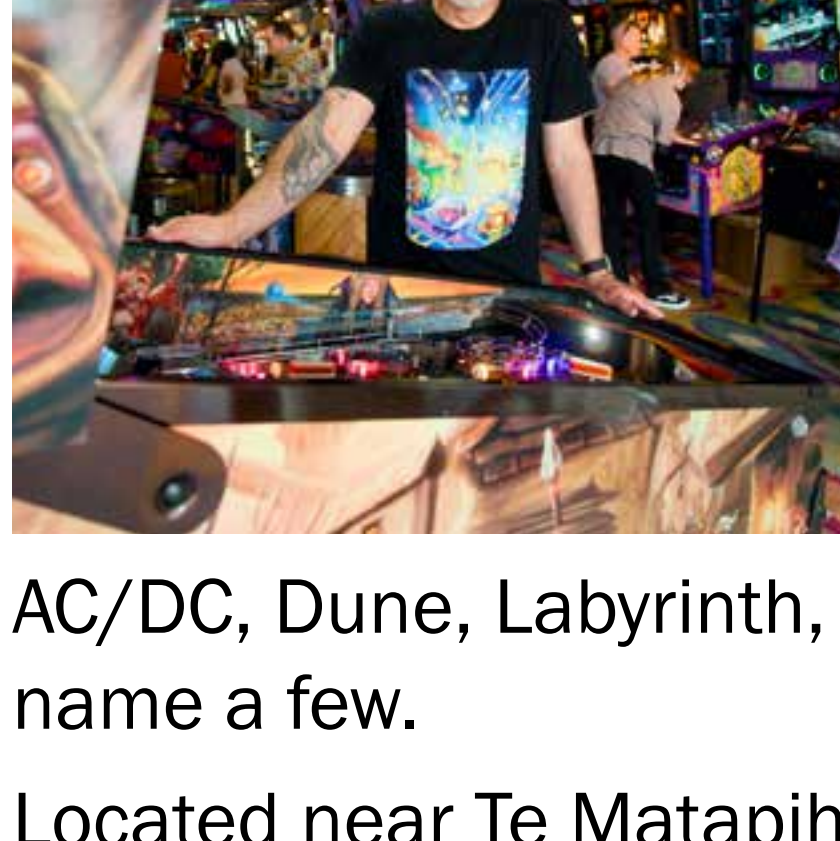
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Arcade dreams



Ye Olde Pinball Shoppe is Aotearoa's only dedicated pinball arcade. Packed with classic and modern pinball machines, each one tells a different story, taking players into the worlds of Pokémon, King Kong, James Bond, AC/DC, Dune, Labyrinth, and Pulp Fiction... to name a few.

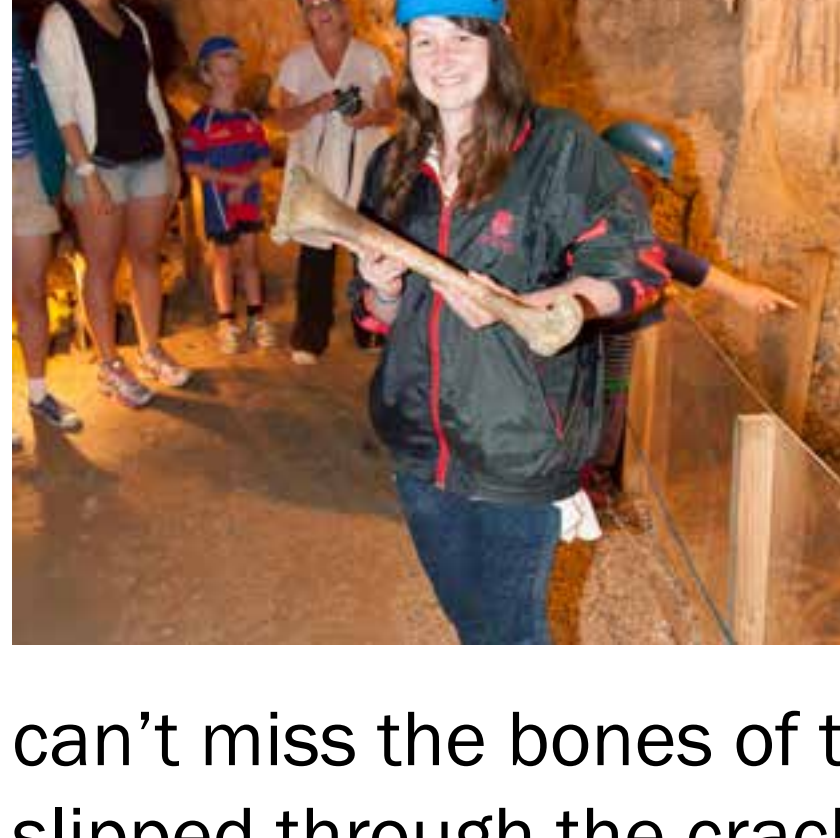
Located near Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Wellington Central Library, the arcade features over 20 unique machines and a bar stocking locally crafted beer. You can hire Ye Olde Pinball Shoppe as the venue for your next event or explore their range of brand-new pinball machines available for purchase. Bring back the dreams of your youth.





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Bond Street, Wellington - close to the new library

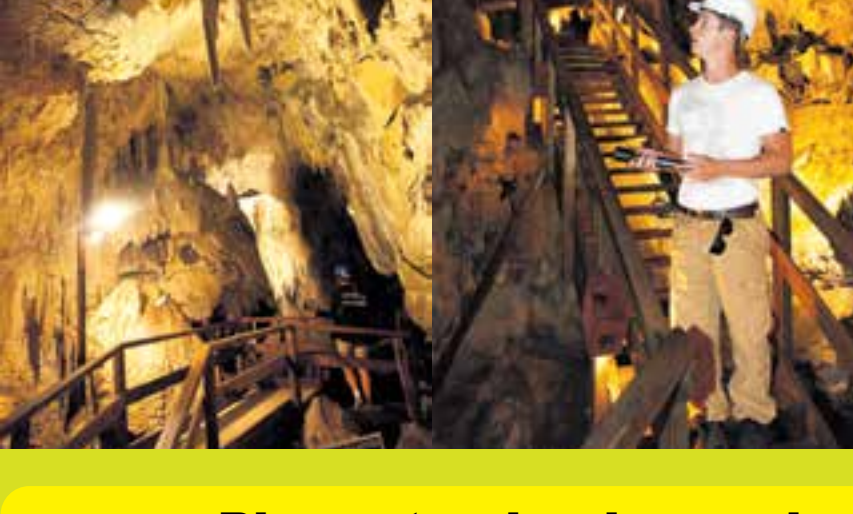
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Every Stansborough textile is produced in small batches, traditionally woven and carefully hand-finished. Once a design has sold, a waiting list is often created for future production, although most customers are delighted to wait for something so unique, authentic and sustainably crafted. Made from 100% pure New Zealand wool, these exceptional textiles also provide outstanding warmth and comfort.

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Events

The tastiest day out



Wellington, get ready to loosen your belt. The Wellington Food Show is back at Hnry Stadium from the 28th to the 30th of August, and this year's lineup is cooking up more sizzle than a Bunnings BBQ.

Headlining the action is one of TV's favourite double acts. Celebrity chefs Colin Fassnidge and Manu Feildel will be firing up the pans live in the Cooking Theatre every single day of the show, dishing out their signature recipes and the kind of kitchen secrets you simply won't find online. Whether you're chasing a showstopper dinner party trick or just want to watch them cook live in person, this is unmissable viewing for any home cook.

But the drama doesn't stop at the stove. Simply walking through the doors puts you in the running for some seriously big prizes. Attend the show and you're automatically in the draw to win a Mazda CX-30, with extra entries up for grabs once you're inside. Buy and register your tickets and you could also win a trip for two to New Caledonia.

With over 100 exhibitors, artisan producers, Hancocks Cocktail Masterclasses, and the MorningCider Street Food Alley complete with Beats By Bingo, it's easy to see why this event has become a capital institution.

Three days. Two chefs. A car and an island getaway up for grabs. This isn't just a Food Show, it's the capital's tastiest day out and it's not to be missed.

It's all about ideas



It's nearly that time again! Spring is just around the corner, which means the iconic Wellington Home and Garden Show is coming back to Hnry Stadium. It's the perfect opportunity to get stuck into those projects you've been putting off or simply find some fresh inspiration for what's next.

The Wellington Home and Garden Show returns from the 4th to the 6th of September, bringing hundreds of exhibitors together for three days packed with ideas, advice, and inspiration. Whether you're building, renovating, landscaping, or looking for ways to improve your home, you'll find plenty of experts ready to share their knowledge. Explore options for insulation, painting, roofing, kitchens, outdoor spaces, and more. Compare products, ask questions, and discover solutions all under one roof.

There's plenty to enjoy beyond home improvements too. Take your time browsing artisan food and drinks, boutique spirits, homewares, crafts, wellness products, and unique lifestyle finds.

Make a day of it with free 'Ask an Expert' sessions, including the chance to hear from Peter Wolfkamp, 'The Resident Builder' from Newstalk ZB's *Sunday Mornings with the Resident Builder*. Bring your questions and get practical advice from one of our best-known DIY experts. Plus enjoy great food and coffee, giveaways, show-only specials, and a chance to win a major prize.

The Wellington Home and Garden Show is the perfect place to explore ideas, connect with local businesses, and leave with plenty of inspiration for your next project.

Visit www.homeandgardenshow.co.nz



The Food Show

28 - 30
August 2026

Wellington
Hnry Stadium

See what's cooking at foodshow.co.nz

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FOOT NOTE

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4-6 SEPT
HNRY STADIUM
FRI & SAT 10-5, SUN 10-4

Name

Address

Phone

Email entries to: admin@regionalnews.kiwi or post to:
Competition, PO Box 15163, Miramar 6243.
Entries close Tuesday 25th August 2026.

Be in to win one of 3 double passes to



The Food Show

28-30
August 2026
Wellington
Hnry Stadium

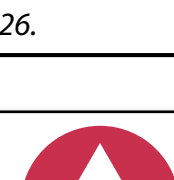
Name

Address

Phone

Email entries to: admin@regionalnews.kiwi or post to:
Competition, PO Box 15163, Miramar 6243.
Entries close Thursday 20th August 2026.

Back to contents



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Small towns of New Zealand



Ōtaki



Eketāhuna



Woodville



Paraparaumu



Photo by Caleb Smith.

Waikanae



Feilding



Photo by Jet Productions.

Carterton



Masterton



Marton



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Small towns of New Zealand

Ōtaki

They're not lying when the locals tell you Ōtaki has a micro-climate. It can be storm clouds and heavy rains further down the coast, but blue skies and a day spent in the garden in Ōtaki. On a clear morning, views of the Kaikōura Range to the south and both Mount Ruapehu and Mount Taranaki to the north create a unique sense of place in this charming seaside town.

But there is so much more to Ōtaki that sees locals stick around and people from the capital move there in droves. With three supermarkets, schools for all ages, a fantastic library, public pools, sports clubs, health clinics, and community markets, Ōtaki has all the amenities in one place, while being well connected to larger urban centres via Transmission Gully and the Kāpiti Expressway.

Ōtaki is known for its strong Māori identity.

Wander down Main Street and you're likely to hear coffees ordered in te reo Māori at any one of the many laid-back cafés on offer. Te Wānanga o Raukawa attracts students from across Aotearoa, breathing life into the streets and revitalising Māori language and mātauranga (knowledge).

Ōtaki is home to the Māoriland Film Festival, one of the world's leading celebrations of Indigenous cinema, attracting global audiences to the coast each year. Every March, the Kite Festival fills the sky with flying creatures on Ōtaki Beach and the weekend-long Matariki celebrations fill the streets with music, food trucks, and community events.

Whether you're after a seaside bach, a place by the river, a townhouse with a lemon tree in the garden, or a lifestyle block in the foothills of the Tararua Range up the gorge, Ōtaki can accommodate every dream.

Population: 7,490

Known for: bilingual town of Aotearoa

Climate: warm, temperate climate

Location: 50 minutes to Wellington, 18 minutes to Levin



Functions & Events

Just a 45 minute drive north of Wellington, and south of Palmerston North, our site is ideal for hosting all kinds of conferences and functions. We have a number of rooms and areas suitable for parties of all sizes.

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We have to date hosted a number of large festivals and concerts, including the Māoriland Film Festival, Kiwi Grooves, Whakairo Whakaaro Carving Symposium, the Matariki Mardi Gras and the Demon FMX Full Throttle motorbike show to name a few.



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Small towns of New Zealand

Woodville

Since Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway opened last year, Woodville has experienced a small revival, with the 20-minute drive to Palmerston North bringing a surge of new life, activity, and possibility. Located in the foothills of the Tararua Range, Woodville is a picturesque little junction town that connects SH1 and SH2 in the lower North Island. While business has been booming since the new road, the charming little village is still as quaint, quiet, and characterful as ever.

With a mixture of town houses, heritage homes, and lifestyle properties – all significantly cheaper than the national median housing price – Woodville is a great option when considering your next move. Whether you’re a growing family, retiring, down or upsizing, looking for more space, or after a little more peace and quiet, there is something that suits every chapter.

Woodville is a key rural servicing hub with plenty of job opportunities in agriculture, forestry, and clean energy production. The town’s proximity to the Tararua Range means having access to fantastic hiking, fishing, and hunting opportunities too.

Population: 1,680

Known for: horse breeding

Climate: windy with mild summers and frosty winters

Location: 20 minutes from Palmertson North, two hours from Wellington



Woodville Primary School | Te Kura o Woodville | Years 0-8

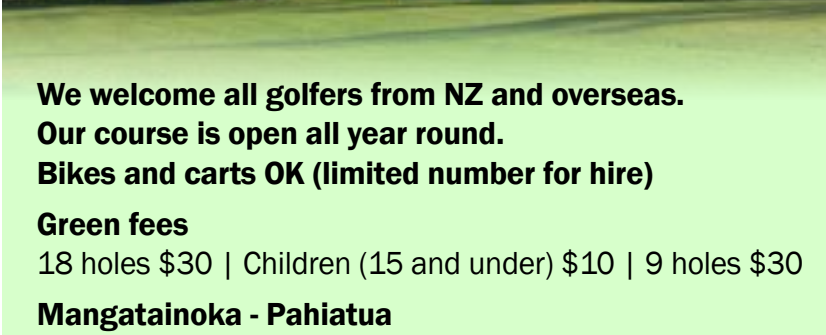


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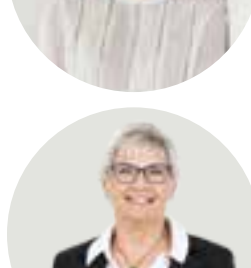
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Eketāhuna

Eketāhuna translates to ‘run aground on a sandbank’, named thus as it marks the furthest point that Māori waka could paddle up the Makakahi River, on the banks of which the township now resides.

Eketāhuna is a charming village with about 580 people living in the township itself. Surrounded by beautiful pastoral landscapes, the area is anchored by the agricultural industry. However, residents of Eketāhuna are proud of their town. With a wide range of community organisations and initiatives, they work together to find local and creative solutions to diversify the economy. The town has flourished with cafés and stores selling fine woodcraft and carpentry and is known for its country hospitality. Its proximity to larger hubs like Masterton and Palmerston North paired with its significantly more affordable housing prices means that Eketāhuna has become a viable option for commuters looking to enjoy cheaper living costs.

Replete with a good healthcare centre, primary school, swimming pool, and police, ambulance, and fire services, Eketāhuna makes for a quiet lifestyle with loads of space.

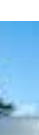
Population: 1,620

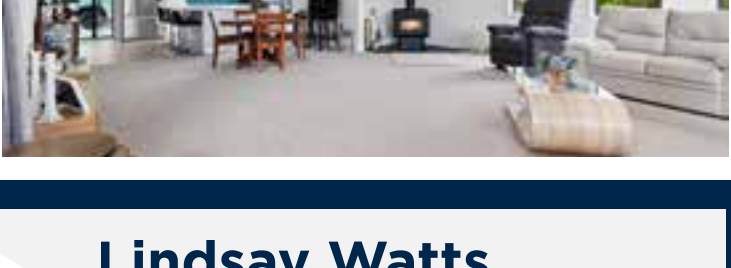
Known for: exceptional golf club

Climate: mild summers and chilly winters

Location: 30 minutes from Masterton, 50 minutes from Palmerston North

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Small towns of New Zealand

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Small towns of New Zealand

Masterton

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One of the most affordable towns in the North Island, Masterton caters to every lifestyle, whether you're after a town house, beach house, first home, homestead, or lifestyle block. With loads of schooling options and a growing economy, it is the perfect place to raise a family, start a business, and put down roots.

While Masterton's agricultural roots run deep, the economy is diverse, with plenty of job opportunities in infrastructure, construction, healthcare, social work, energy, and retail. As work becomes more decentralised, it's never been easier to start a new chapter in a small town while gaining employment elsewhere.

Masterton is home to the international Golden Shears festival. The town springs to life when thousands of spectators flock to witness Aotearoa's premier sheepshearers. With two cinemas, theatre venues, music venues, galleries, and loads of restaurants, bars, and cafés, the town is abuzz even when the sheep aren't getting shorn.

Masterton was named New Zealand's most beautiful city by Keep New Zealand Beautiful in 2017. It's easy to see why when you visit Queen Elizabeth Park. Located in the centre of town beside the Waipoua River, it is considered one of the best family parks in Aotearoa. Wander down leafy paths and discover an incredible playground, a lake filled with ducks where you can hire paddle boats, a skate park, mini golf, a miniature train, and plenty of sun-soaked spots to have a picnic with the family on. Sitting on the doorstep of the Tararua Range, escaping into nature couldn't get any easier, with plenty of opportunities for hiking, hunting, and fishing.

There are so many reasons why city folk from Wellington are packing their bags and heading east. Whether they're after a slower pace, better weather, affordable living, or to be closer to beaches, bush, and farmland – Masterton truly has it all.

Population: 22,600

Known for: sheep-shearing capital

Climate: hot summers, crisp winters

Location: 90 minutes to Wellington



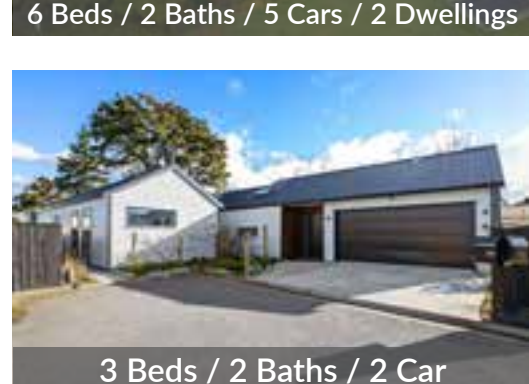
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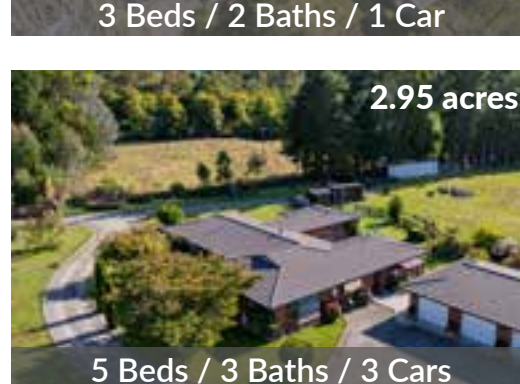
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Small towns of New Zealand

Carterton

In the heart of Wairarapa, Taratahi Carterton has a certain country serenity that is hard to ignore. Turn down any given road off Main Street and it's not long before you're driving through peaceful pastoral scenes dotted with old homesteads and dreamy lifestyle blocks. Those large Wairarapa skies, hemmed in by the Tararua Range to the west and the promise of beaches over the rolling hills to the east, makes nature feel that little bit closer.

With a functioning train line, Carterton is just over an hour from Wellington and a short 15 minutes to Masterton, the largest town in the region. Its convenient proximity to other centres paired with its house prices that are significantly lower than the national average makes Carterton the ideal place to move for more affordable living and a more relaxed country lifestyle. The economy of Carterton is mostly driven by manufacturing, agriculture, and construction, with plans for widespread regional growth promising plenty of job opportunities.

Carterton has loads of options for early learning centres and primary schools, and older kids who wish to spread their wings can attend intermediate and senior schools in other parts of Wairarapa. Luckily, there are multiple modes of transport that make the region highly connected and easy to move around.

Wairarapa is known for its wonderful weather and Carterton is no exception. With hot summers, lovely crisp winters, and plenty of beaches and rivers nearby, the lifestyle that this country village affords makes for a tightknit, inspired, and outdoorsy community. Carterton is full of artists, sculptors, and potters who choose Wairarapa for their home. The annual Wai Art Show is held in Carterton every September, exhibiting the wealth of artistry in the region. It coincides with the annual Carterton Daffodil Festival, where bunches of daffodils are sold as the town welcomes the springtime and comes to life with street performers, food trucks, music, and dance.

In Carterton, the calendar is full of other events bringing the community together to support local. With plenty of clubs, sports teams, and societies, and loads of coffee spots to meet at, moving to Carterton not only means a more peaceful and spacious lifestyle, it means community, security, and adventure.

Population: 10,300

Known for: Stonehenge Aotearoa

Climate: dry, warm summers, cool winters

Location: 80 minutes from Wellington,
15 minutes from Masterton



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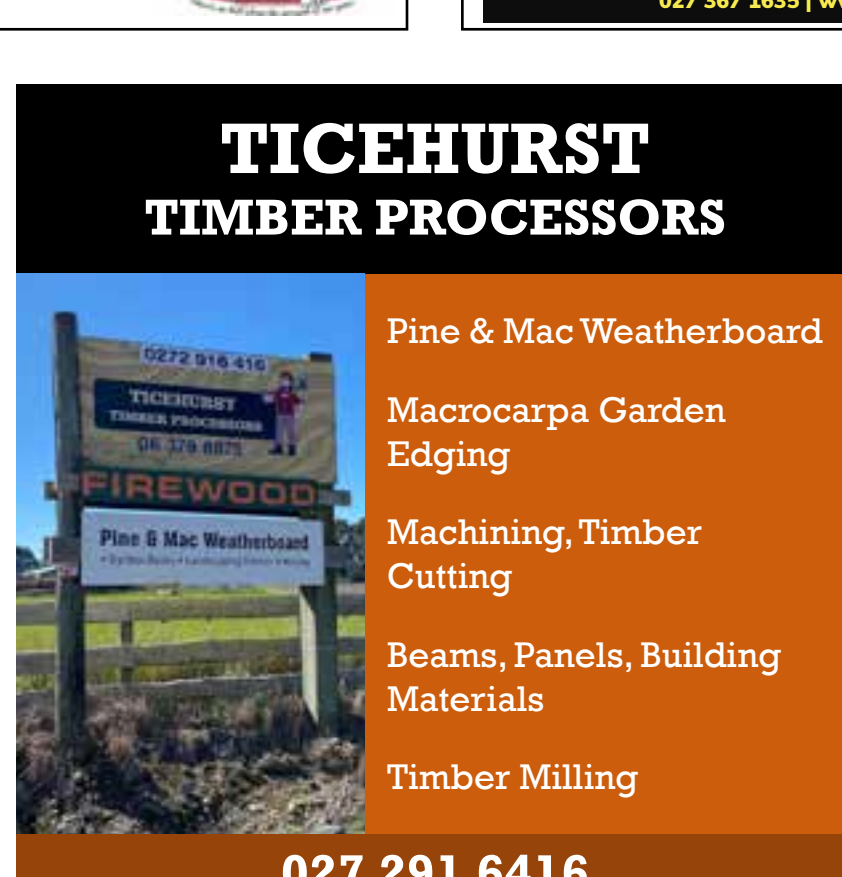
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Small towns of New Zealand

Marton

All roads lead to Marton, so says the old adage. Drive along SH1 and you'll notice several turnoffs to the vibrant rural town. Tūtaenui Marton is the heart of the Rangitīkei District. Being the agricultural hub of the region, the Marton train station was also once a busy junction where the line connecting Whanganui to Palmerston North met the line heading down to Wellington.

These days, despite the train line vanishing, the little town is still bustling, full of Victorian era homes and homesteads and lovely gardens. The main drag Broadway is lined with heritage Victorian and Art Deco buildings, giving the place its character and charm. With a number of cafés, locals are spoilt for choice when it comes to excellent coffee. The tight-knit town hosts a number of events each year, including the Marton Country Music Festival, an annual market day, and the Rangitīkei Heritage Weekend.

Affordable and quiet, Marton is a great place to move and get away from the city. Housing prices are significantly lower than the national average and come with a lot more space. Workers enjoy the local employment base – with several significant employers across food production, manufacturing, primary industries, technology, and local government – and easy connections to nearby centres like Palmerston North and Whanganui. With several public and private schools in town or nearby, it's also a great place to raise a family.

Situated near the braided Rangitīkei River, Marton is surrounded by rolling, verdant farmland in every direction. Keep going west and 24 minutes later you'll find yourself at Turakina Beach. Part of Te Araroa Trail, the wild black-sand stretch is where the mouth of the Turakina River meets the Tasman Sea and driftwood washes up especially for the kids to build a fort. With the Ruahine Range framing the area to the east, there are plenty of ways to enjoy the outdoors, whether it be tramping, hunting, fishing, heading north to the Central Plateau, or taking a half-hour trip down the road to visit the picturesque Whanganui township.

Many families have stayed in Marton for generations, favouring the quietude, community, big skies, and pastoral landscapes. Why not take one of many turns and check it out yourself?

Population: 5,598

Known for: heritage homesteads

Climate: long, hot summers and mild winters

Location: 35 minutes from Palmerston North

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"I was living in a lifestyle village worrying about the maintenance of that place and realising that as you got older, you were going to need more help. I looked around and thought, I want something that's going to keep me safe so my kids can just relax and not have to worry," said Bonnie.

With her loyal dog, Flash, by her side, Bonnie has found joy and companionship in her serviced apartment, fully embracing this fresh chapter and new friendships.

"This place, it's got a bit of magic. It feels like you've arrived somewhere where everybody's buoyant, like I'm on holiday on a cruise. Every day you can have fun," said Bonnie.

"It's just so vibrant. You wake up in the morning and there's noise and life going on. You want to hear this place. They're laughing, joking and enjoying themselves. And really, where else do you see that at eight or nine o'clock in the morning? I can be sitting outside my place, and somebody will come along and

say, 'Hello Bonnie, how are you?' And invite me along to an activity. It's the availability of company, all the time. That's what I like about it. Everybody's so nice." Surrounded by a vibrant community, Bonnie feels confident knowing her future is secure thanks to caring and supportive staff.

"The staff are so empathetic and caring, they sort of ooze it. You can see by the looks on the Nurse or Manager's face, how much they really do care. That's the part that I like, you'll get a bit of sympathy when you need it, and you get care when you need it."

Knowing she's in the right place and busier than ever, Bonnie encourages others to make the move while they can still enjoy everything village life offers.

"For us older ones, if you don't do something about it sooner rather than later, you don't have the same options. So, think about it and think about what's best for your family. Do it while you can enjoy it."

Want to see what serviced apartment living could look like for you? Pop into Summerset Boulcott or Summerset Waikanae for a chat with the sales team, or find out more at summerset.co.nz

Small towns of New Zealand

Paraparaumu

Living in Paraparaumu means sacrificing nothing and gaining everything. Nestled beside a picturesque beach, Paraparaumu has grown into a bustling town, with Coastlands Shopping Centre boasting over 50 stores, as well as banks, a cinema, a theatre, and an aquatic centre.

With a wealth of schools to choose from, an array of medical care centres, great public transport and cycleways, and only a short 40-minute drive to Wellington, the reasons for calling Paraparaumu home are endless. The job market is varied and houses are cheaper than in the capital, making it a great place for a growing family, to retire, to upsize or downsize, or to buy your first home.

People want to feel safe and connected in their community, and Paraparaumu caters to both those feelings in droves. Neighbours look after one another on the coast, and with the sleepy, verdant Kāpiti Island framing the vista out to the west, living there feels like you're tucked into your own personal paradise. With the amenities of a big city and the feel of a small village, Paraparaumu is the perfect place to start your next chapter.

Population: 29,000

Known for: unofficial capital of Kāpiti

Climate: mild coastal climate

Location: 40 minutes from Wellington

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Waikanae

With spectacular sunsets and views to Kāpiti Island, life in Waikanae is pretty idyllic. Only 45 minutes north of Wellington by car or train, this seaside town truly has the sunny microclimate that locals are famed for boasting about. Waikanae offers more space, a slower pace, and real community without having to forgo any of the benefits of the city.

The township is bustling with a range of fantastic schools, public amenities, healthcare centres, galleries, supermarkets, restaurants, and cafés. While Waikanae may be known as a retirement destination, its thriving arts community and busy calendar make it an attractive place to raise a family or buy a first home. Young people are tempted by the possibilities of a stress-free commute from a place where their dollar stretches further, affording them bigger houses sitting on larger plots of land.

The wide leafy streets, beach promenades, and excellent nature reserves make for the perfect stroll with whānau and friends, while the Tasman Sea is excellent for local water enthusiasts who spend their weekends surfing, sailing, and kayaking.

Population: 13,600

Known for: excellent weather

Climate: warm, temperate coastal climate

Location: 45 minutes from Wellington

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Waikanae

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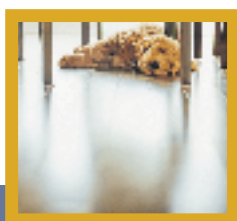
- > Installation
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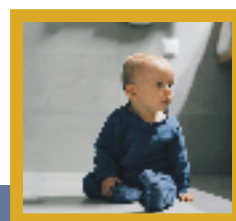
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Small towns of New Zealand

Feilding

Famous for its gardens, Edwardian architecture, and picturesque rural landscapes, Aorangi Feilding has been crowned Keep New Zealand Beautiful's 'Most Beautiful Town' a whopping 16 times. With wide streets that form a neat grid radiating out from the town square, it is a beautiful place to take a stroll, with many of its amenities and eateries in walking distance from one another.

Speaking of hospitality, over the years Feilding has become renowned for its country cuisine, with a vast range of cafés, bakeries, and restaurants to choose from. The award-winning weekend farmers' market fills the square and brings locals and out-of-towners alike to purchase from the vendors selling local produce and artisanal cheeses, honey, and chutneys.

With large sections and an average house price lower than the national median, Feilding is the perfect place for first home buyers, growing families, or people ready to retire somewhere peaceful.

Feilding's economy is constantly growing and diversifying. The Manawātū region is the food basket of Aotearoa and home to the largest stock sale yards in the Southern Hemisphere, supplying agriculture and produce across the country and around the globe. A number of manufacturers and exporters operate their businesses in Feilding, and as the population grows, so does the number of small locally owned and operated businesses. Commuters often make the most of the quaint and tranquil lifestyle that Feilding affords, with Palmerston North just 20 minutes south on SH54.

Feilding has a number of great primary and secondary schools to choose from, with many more close by, including reputable boarding schools in neighbouring Marton.

Forming the eastern border is the Ōroua River which runs through Timona Park, and the beautifully maintained Feilding Golf Club. With picnic areas, local favourite swimming spots, pathways, cycleways, and sports fields, the park is a hive of activity year-round. With the Ruahine Range nearby, there are fabulous hiking, fishing, and hunting opportunities in the breathtaking mountainous region. Under two hours of driving sees you on the Central Plateau near Ohakune and the ski fields.

The rural heart of the Manawātū, Feilding is a special place with a resilient, friendly, and creative community. It might steal your heart someday too.

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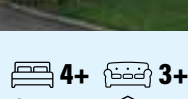
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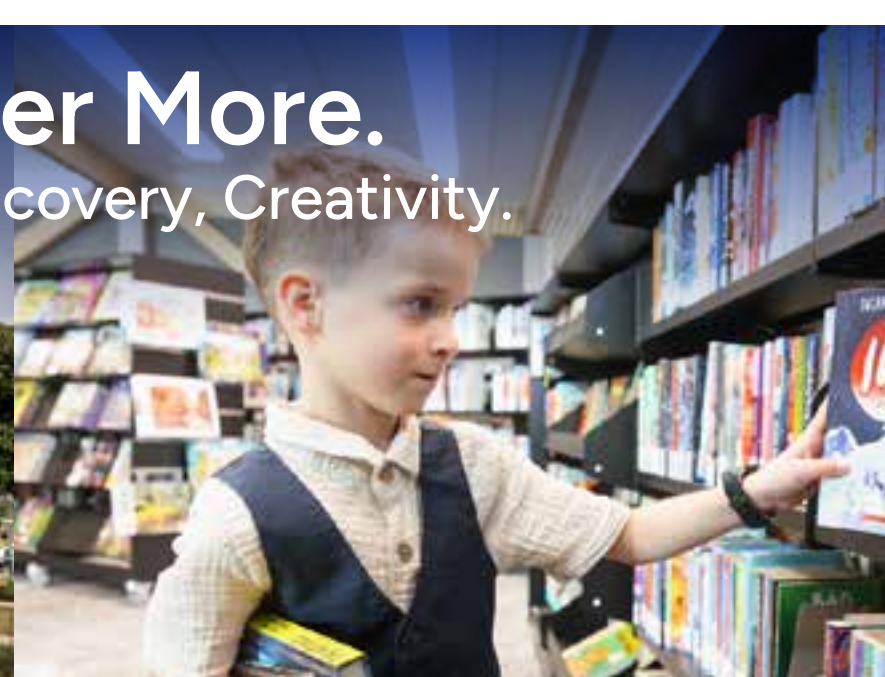
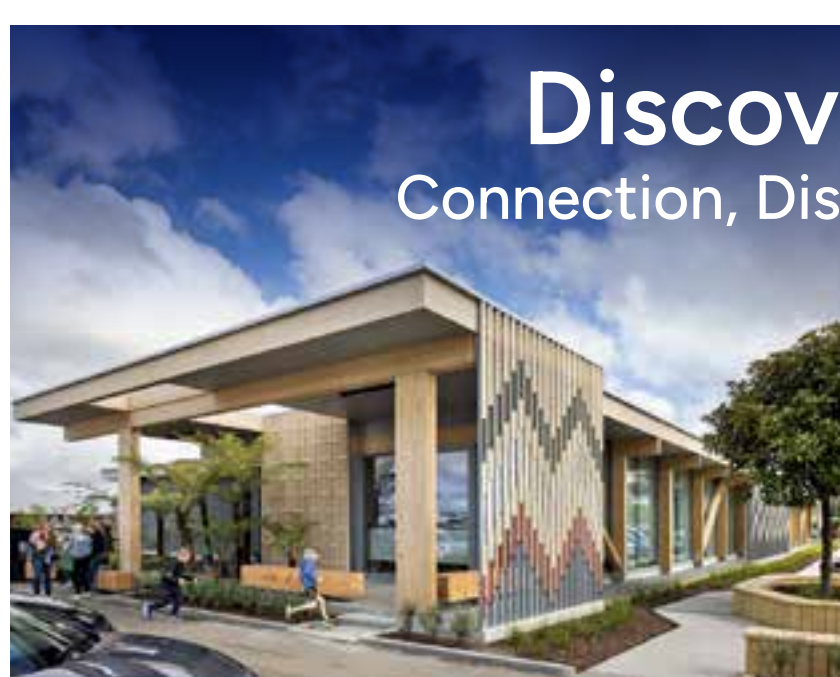


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NZ adventures

How lucky we are



Abel Tasman.

From snow-capped mountains, alpine lakes, and glaciers to nikau palm-studded forests, black-sand beaches, and golden grassy plains, the sweeping landscapes of Te Waipounamu are world renowned for their incomparable and varied beauty.

Families looking to catch a few rays head to the Tasman Region to kayak in the crystal-clear waters of the Abel Tasman. For breathtaking vistas and awe-inspiring hikes, adventurers visit the fiords to witness glassy lakes, towering peaks, and ancient rainforests. To journey back in time, historians visit the Jurassic landscapes of the West Coast, where ghosts from the gold rush days reside.

If tourists are catching long-haul flights from the other side of the world to visit these sites, why aren't we making the most of our own backyard? This winter, take a special trip closer to home where the budget doesn't have to stretch as far. See what the rest of the world is talking about when they tell us how lucky we are.

Precious taonga



Blending traditions from the Solomon Islands and Aotearoa, master carver Steve Gwaliasi and his team of kaiwhakairo (carvers) create precious taonga from pounamu, bone, and shell in the heart of the West Coast, Hokitika.

Bonz N Stonz stock hand-crafted pendants, earrings, bracelets, and rings, each with a story of the shape and where the stone has come from. If you can't find the perfect piece, they offer commissions to create something unique to your vision. For those wanting to try their hand at carving, the talented team offer workshops that assist you from designing the piece all the way through to polishing the finished product. Visitors are also welcome to bring in pounamu that require repairs or restringing to restore the mana and beauty of their taonga.

Drawing from mātauranga Māori and kastom (Solomon Island traditions), each piece is full of Pacific wisdom and the spirit of Aotearoa.

Adventure awaits



Photo by Fraser Clements.

At the heart of the wild and wondrous West Coast is Hokitika – nestled at the mouth of the Hokitika River, looking out over the tumultuous Pacific Ocean, with a shawl of emerald and ivory mountains at her shoulders.

Natural beauty abounds in Hokitika's vicinity. From long, sandy beaches to cascading waterfalls, azure glacial lakes to deep gorges slicing through the Earth, outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy tramping, biking, and all-round exploring. There are plenty of adrenaline-inducing activities to partake in as well.

Beautiful and quirky with history, culture, experiences, and a busy events calendar to boot, Hokitika is a place the whole whānau will love. Start your excursion downtown, perusing the boutiques, meandering through the museums and galleries, and sampling some adventurous West Coast kai from the many restaurants and cafés.

At dusk, find yourself down by the seashore to catch a spectacular sunset behind the iconic driftwood sign.

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The Ground Will Not Hold



The Ground Will Not Hold. Photo by Stephen A'Court.

At the heart of Bowen Galleries lies the remnants of a ritual. A constellation of mushroom-shaped handmade beeswax candles stands twisted and charred in the shape of Aotearoa. On the walls, photographs preserve a fleeting moment where these same candles once formed the New Zealand flag, whose Union Jack and Southern Cross are formed in flames.

The Ground Will Not Hold is transdisciplinary artist George Turner's latest exhibition. On at Bowen Galleries until the 15th of August, it brings together a year of studio research into contemporary land use in Aotearoa.

A series of oil paintings depicting young, geometric pine forests lie west of the ritual, titled '*To the Greatest Extent Practicable*' after the vague legal phrasing used in the Conservation Amendment Bill that seeks to open conservation land to economic development. Fungus-like platforms made of wind-felled pine protrude out of them, each holding a single unlit candle.

George's art resides within a state of tension.

"I'm interested in materials and symbols that refuse to stay in one place," they say. "Fire can be destructive, but it is also warmth, memory, transformation, or offering. A candle not lit still holds the possibility of fire."

"Beeswax is natural and beautiful, but it also carries ecological fragility... A mushroom can suggest decay, but also survival and transformation. For me, the works sit in that unsettled space where something can be beautiful and damaged at the same time. That feels honest to how I experience the whenua."

George's work often interrogates Pākehā identity, post-humanism, ecological instability, and colonial inheritance. *The Ground Will Not Hold* confronts the fantasy of clean, green, wild New Zealand, and the Pākehā identity formed out of this selective idea. "In Aotearoa, I think we often imagine nature as something limitless, a kind of endless green backdrop to our national identity. But that image doesn't hold."

The exhibition title nods to a line in *The Second Coming*, an apocalyptic poem written by Yeats in the wake of global devastation from WWI. "I wanted to bring it down into the ground itself," George says. The exhibition "is about the failure of the structures we place on top of land: national symbols, property, plantations, laws, myths of wilderness, even ideas of home. So, when I say the ground will not hold, I don't mean one dramatic collapse. I mean the slow failure of a national fantasy."

Further tension lies in the materials themselves.

"Wax melts and changes; photography fixes and preserves," they say. "One is stable, the other pretends to be stable. But both are fragile in their own way."

A pair of photographs titled *National Heat* immortalise candles burning as though in a vacuum, grounded only by the reflection of the glowing flames beneath where they stand, the same way in which inner conflicts of identity and nationhood are mirrored in the monoculture pine forests that imitate wilderness.

"Our rivers, forests, coasts, national parks, and conservation areas are all shaped by histories of colonisation, extraction, introduced species, and ongoing human intervention... The ground breaks when the stories we have used to stabilise ourselves stop working. What comes after that is uncertain."

Unsettling Nairn Street



The Space Beneath the Floor, by George Turner.

Photo courtesy of City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi.

Unsettling Nairn Street, on until the 31st of

October, features seven artists – Heidi Brickell,

Paula Collier, Riki Pirihi, Isabella Lepoamo,

George Turner, Daniel Unverricht, and Erica van

Zon – responding to the ground-floor rooms of

Nairn Street Cottage. A City Gallery Wellington Te

Whare Toi pop-up exhibition, each artist engages

with the site's materiality and the layered

narratives embedded within the walls and the

whenua upon which it stands.

"As a house museum, the space has already been written and rewritten several times, and the artists' works add another layer to that," co-curator Emma Ng says. The land beneath was once associated with Te Aro Pā before the New Zealand Company divided Wellington in 1,100 one-acre sections. Plot 53 was purchased by William and Catherine Wallis, where, in 1858,

William built the cottage that the family would

live in for three generations. In 1980, it became

Wellington's first house museum, with each room

furnished to take visitors on a journey through

time from 1857 through to the late 1970s.

Van Zon's food sculptures play with the kitchen's

kitsch 70s imagery, built above a site where

iwi once grew and gathered kai. Collier creates

tension between native and introduced plants

with a web of branches in the nursery. In the

washroom, Brickell's installation feels like the

nearby culverted waterways are "swirling up into

the room".

The title is borrowed from Richard Shaw's book,

The Unsettled: Small stories of colonisation,

which inspired Ng and co-curator Megan

Dunn to learn the histories that shape their

neighbourhood, with both curators living near the

cottage.

"Shaw highlights the tension in our language:

'the word 'settlement,' with its connotations of

quiet domesticity, homeliness, and gentle order,

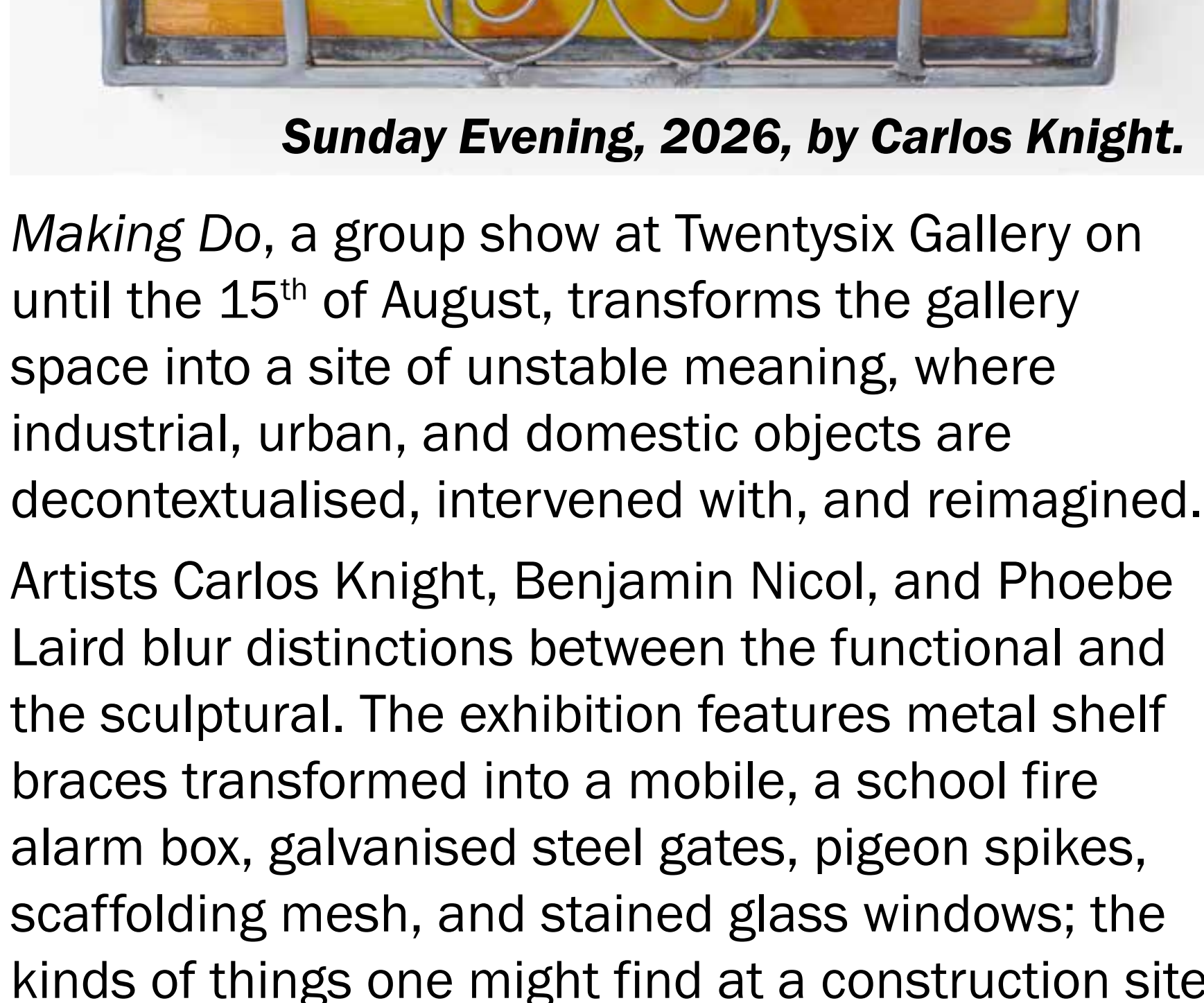
is doing an awful lot of invisible work'", Ng says.

"Yet the settlement history of Aotearoa is full

of events and encounters that are profoundly

unsettling."

Industrial language



Sunday Evening, 2026, by Carlos Knight.

Making Do, a group show at Twentysix Gallery on until the 15th of August, transforms the gallery space into a site of unstable meaning, where industrial, urban, and domestic objects are decontextualised, intervened with, and reimagined.

Artists Carlos Knight, Benjamin Nicol, and Phoebe

Laird blur distinctions between the functional and

the sculptural. The exhibition features metal shelf

braces transformed into a mobile, a school fire

alarm box, galvanised steel gates, pigeon spikes,

scaffolding mesh, and stained glass windows; the

kinds of things one might find at a construction site

or in an empty parking lot or forgotten store room.

"I'm drawn to working with found materials as

they capture events, people, and place. The city

is constantly changing (regardless of whether you

notice it or not) and they act as a measure of that

change, growth, and decay", Phoebe says.

Benjamin grew up on building sites playing with

scrap material. "The offcuts I use are far from 'end-

of-life", he says. "I think that's why Carlos, Phoebe,

and myself have been drawn together in our

making. We make up a sort of beginning, middle,

and end of materiality."

Each of the artists in their own way explores

consumption, capital, and labour; gathering

destroyed and discarded objects and transforming

them, rather than generating more and new

materials. By relocating them to the gallery space,

the lifespan of these materials is extended. What

is invisible in urban landscapes now commands

attention, telling stories of what is lost and found

through the language of industry and construction.

"These objects are witnesses of people's impact

on them and place," Phoebe says, while Benjamin

tells me, "No longer do I think of [the materials]

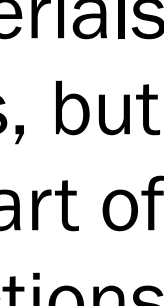
as the construction waste I found them as, but

they take on their new adoptive lives as part of the

gallery, now with new movement and reactions to

the viewer."

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Burger Wellington

by **Todd Hatten**

The theme for this year’s Burger Wellington is ‘Word of Mouth’, so in that spirit, here are a few of the creations I tried during the first week of the festival.

Fork & Brewer offer a secret Carolina Reaper hot sauce addition, only if you ask for the burger “just how Jimmy likes it”. The chicken is encased in a beautiful, crunchy batter, brined in a limited-edition koji rice ale.

As usual, Burger Liquor brings the fun, with an accompanying Dr. Seuss-inspired book, written and illustrated in-house. I’m a sucker for sweet elements in my burgers so the ham jam definitely hit the spot, and the patty was smashed to crispy perfection.

Vonuts’ entry transports us to a German midwinter Christmas with their unique dessert burger, featuring speculaas and candied rosemary, with a dark chocolate cookie taking the place of the patty. Don’t wait for a recommendation from a friend, social media, or even from me – get out there and try some burgers, and become the word-of-mouth inspiration for the people in your life! I’ll be back next issue with my full coverage and to crown my winner for 2026.



Fork & Brewer

20 Bond Street, Te Aro, Wellington

★★★★★ *“Heard It Thru The Grain Brine”*

Fork & Brewer koji rice ale-brined chicken thigh, with soy and sesame coleslaw, pickled cucumber and carrot, pickled red onion, crushed peanuts, charred corn, coriander-lime salsa, smoked pineapple, and mandarin aioli in a milk bap, with shoestring fries and ketchup.

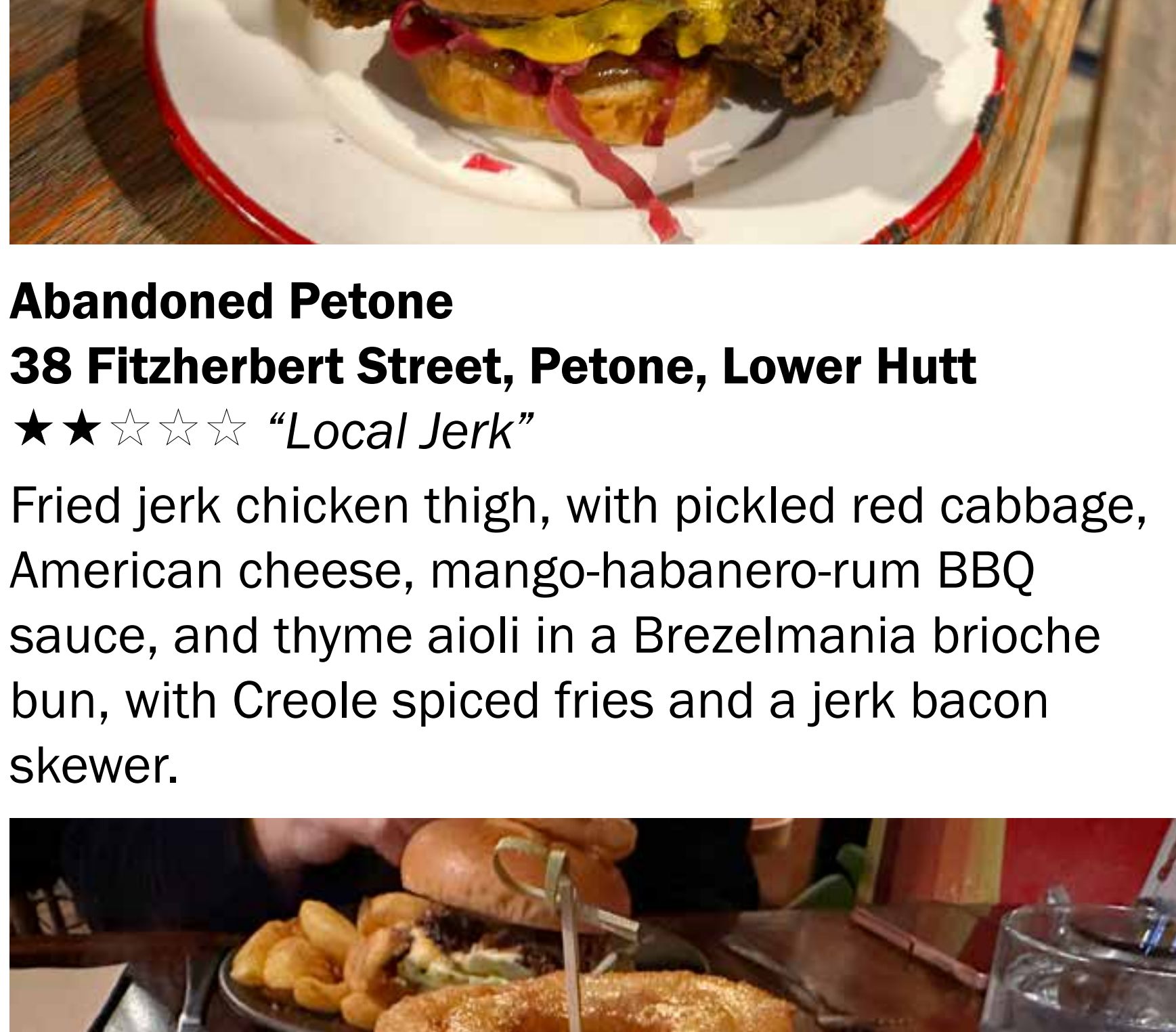


Vonuts

148 Willis Street, Wellington Central

★★★★☆ *“Plum’t-based”*

Speculaas and Whittaker’s dark chocolate cookie patty, with caramelised custard, Commonsense Organics plum jam, and candied rosemary in a housemade maple-glazed black sesame donut bun, with cinnamon and sugar donut sticks and wild berry sauce.



Burger Liquor

129 Willis Street, Te Aro, Wellington

★★★★★ *“Green Eggs and Hamburger”*

Conscious Valley smashed beef patty, with Supreme Coffee and Woody’s Free Range Farm ‘red-eye’ ham jam, bread and butter pickles, and green peppercorn béarnaise in a Brezelmania potato bun.

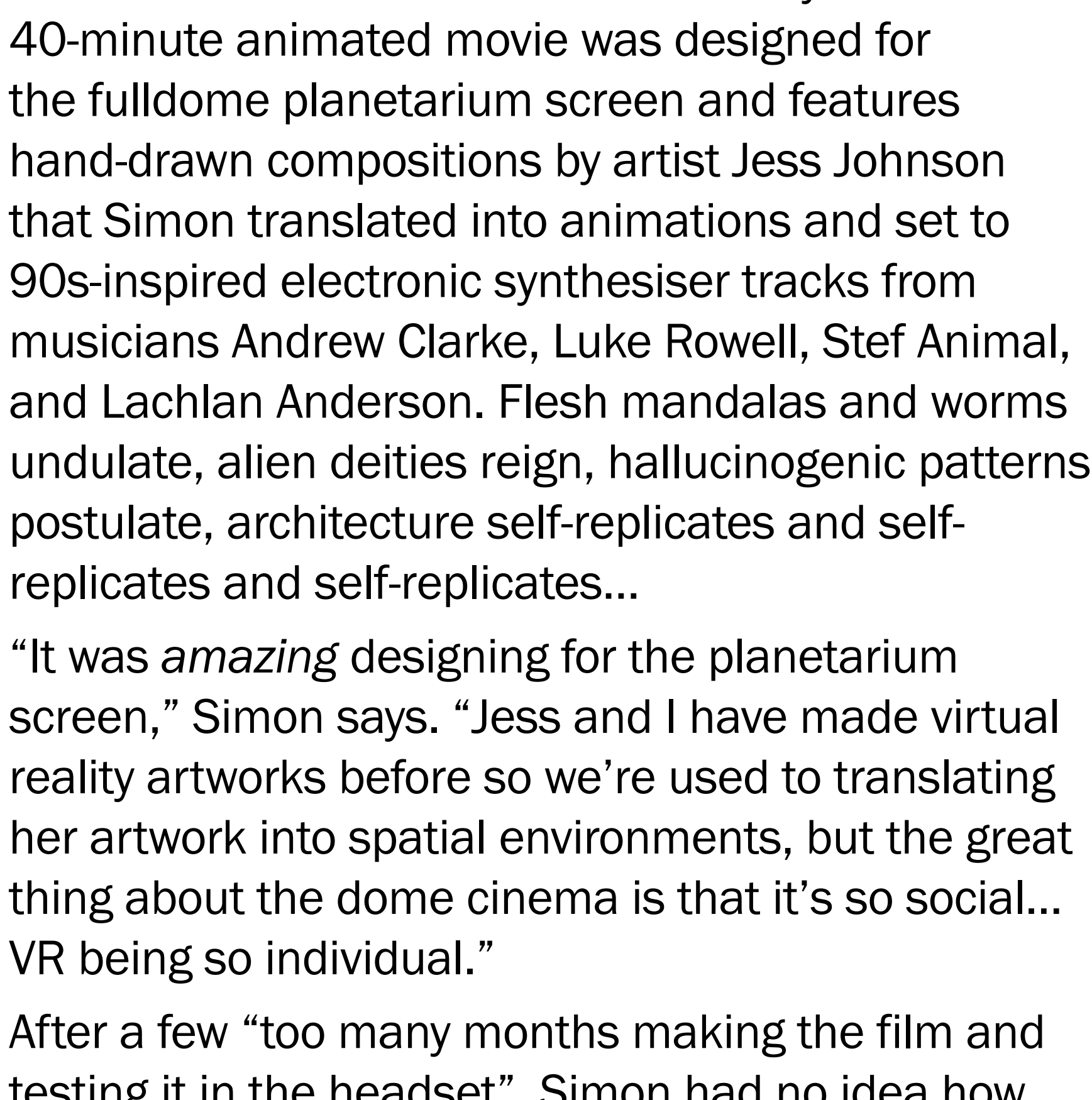


Abandoned Petone

38 Fitzherbert Street, Petone, Lower Hutt

★★☆☆☆ *“Local Jerk”*

Fried jerk chicken thigh, with pickled red cabbage, American cheese, mango-habanero-rum BBQ sauce, and thyme aioli in a Brezelmania brioche bun, with Creole spiced fries and a jerk bacon skewer.



Beach Babylon

232 Oriental Parade, Oriental Bay, Wellington

★★★☆☆ *“My Preciouuusss”*

Harringtons ale-braised beef cheek and smoked glazed pork belly, with Kāpiti cheddar fondue, ale-battered onion rings, iceberg lettuce, pickled green tomato, chilli jam, and green-shire aioli in an umami buttered potato bun, with paprika-kale ash salted rustic chips.

Into the wormhole

by **Madelaine Empson**



XYZZY (pronounced ‘zizz-zee’, rhymes with Lizzie) “was conceived as a musical film, or like a whole album’s worth of music videos, one after another”, director and co-creator Simon Ward says. The 40-minute animated movie was designed for the fulldome planetarium screen and features hand-drawn compositions by artist Jess Johnson that Simon translated into animations and set to 90s-inspired electronic synthesiser tracks from musicians Andrew Clarke, Luke Rowell, Stef Animal, and Lachlan Anderson. Flesh mandalas and worms undulate, alien deities reign, hallucinogenic patterns postulate, architecture self-replicates and self-replicates and self-replicates...

“It was *amazing* designing for the planetarium screen,” Simon says. “Jess and I have made virtual reality artworks before so we’re used to translating her artwork into spatial environments, but the great thing about the dome cinema is that it’s so social... VR being so individual.”

After a few “too many months making the film and testing it in the headset”, Simon had no idea how XYZZY would look in fulldome cinema. Luckily, the first test blew him away – “such a wide field of view and magical immersive realism at that scale”.

Simon says the “fantastic” name was conceived by Luke, who knew it from Colossal Cave Adventure.

In the text-based early computer game, ‘XYZZY’ is a magic word that, when typed, instantly transports the player to another part of the game.

“Really perfect for the 40-minute wormhole into the world Jess has created with her art.”

The soundtrack of the award-winning planetarium film is being released on vinyl with a special event at Space Place on the 15th of August. As well as live music performances from Stef Animal, Eyeliner (Luke Rowell), and Lachlan Anderson, audiences can enjoy planetarium screenings of XYZZY that wrap up with an artist talk from Simon.

A scorching smorgasbord

The capital’s premier open-mic comedy competition, the Wellington Raw Comedy Quest, is heating up.

Out of six heats that took place at The Fringe Bar every Thursday from the 2nd of July to the 6th of August, we have the complete list of competitors proceeding through to the semifinals. Roll your drums, please...

Congratulations to Ralph Hilaga, Jay Tiemann, Bronson Toghill, Leia Brooke, Emma Jean, Ben Tafau, Elijah Cairns, Burke Louis, Guanny Liu-Prosee, Elliott Lam, Beck Ward, Paul Sinclair, Archie Smith, Scott Murphy, Malcolm Morrison, and Leo Hollbrook.

The semifinals will turn The Fringe Bar into a scorching hot BBQ of raw talent on Friday the 21st of August with MC Brendon Green [pictured], and on Friday the 28th of August with MC Neil Thornton. From there, the comic contestants will take the stage at the regional final on Saturday the 5th of September at The Hannah, with potty-mouthed national treasure Justine Smith as MC. The Wellington winner and runner up will be flown to Auckland to compete in the National Raw Comedy Quest final later this year.

Comedian Jerome Chandrahasen of Humorous Arts Trust, which has been running the comp annually for more than 15 years, says, “Some of the biggest names in New Zealand comedy have come through the Raw Quest and I can’t wait to see what incredible rising comedy stars join us this year.” Let the comedians cook!

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Beating the meter



Urban Rainwater Harvesting is the new normal. With universal water metering rolling out and municipal costs hitting \$7.79 per cubic metre, a typical family of four is now flushing money down the drain. Using roughly 1,000 litres daily, monthly bills can quickly sting.

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Resplendent mosaics



Jane Santos' intricate mosaics are inspired by her surroundings. She uses hand-cut porcelain, ceramic, and glass tiles to craft her mosaic panels, depicting Wellington's urban landscapes, heritage buildings, flora, fauna, and people in rich, resplendent colour. With incredible attention to detail, Jane creates textured and expressive forms that capture the spirit of her subjects, making the mosaics feel alive.

Originally from the UK, Jane comes from a long line of artists, makers, and creatives. But art was always a part-time focus while she pursued her career in education. Upon moving to Kāpiti Coast, she retired in 2002 to pursue mosaics full time.

Jane has exhibited across Aotearoa, in Australia, and in England. As well as taking commissions and selling her work from her own studio, she can be found in select galleries and online at www.janepsantos.com, where you can peruse her beautiful collections.

Local tree whisperers



Elite Arboriculture are your Kāpiti Coast tree whisperers. Taking pride in keeping trees healthy and happy, Elite Arboriculture's arboreal expertise comes down to a passion for the trees they work with, excellent safety-first services, and friendly customer service.

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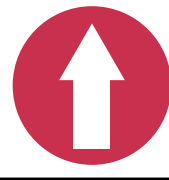
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Puzzles

5					4	6		2
				8	5			
7		2					1	
	4							5
	6			1			2	
9							4	
	9					2		7
			5	9				
2		1	3					9

[illegible]

Across

- 1 - Sorriest (anag) (8)
- 5 - Comes together; coheres (4)
- 9 - Sacred song (5)
- 10 - Painting medium (7)
- 11 - Unfriendly (12)
- 13 - Flashing light (6)
- 14 - Flowering plant with a prickly stem (6)
- 17 - Sensory system used by dolphins (12)
- 20 - Deadlock (7)
- 21 - Bits of meat of low value (5)
- 22 - Children (4)
- 23 - Unequal (3-5)

Down

- 1 - Tears open (4)
- 2 - Data input device (7)
- 3 - Sleepwalking (12)
- 4 - Choice (6)
- 6 - Happening (5)
- 7 - Barely (8)
- 8 - Able to use both hands well (12)
- 12 - Starlike symbol (8)
- 15 - Ate quickly (7)
- 16 - Television surface (6)
- 18 - Wished (5)
- 19 - Delighted (4)

Larger than the



Photo by Kynan Cowley-Hunt.

The guest list is full. The paparazzi are waiting. Your Juicy tracksuit is acceptable formal wear. Bunny Holiday, Wellington's eternal It Girl, performer, and producer invites you to Bunnywood: her very own cinematic universe inspired by Hollywood, Y2K, pop culture, reality television, and the larger-than-life world of celebrity.

Bunnywood: 10 year Dragiversary celebrates

10 years of Bunny. It is her love letter to the city, the bars, and the community, friendships, and opportunities the dysfunctional family that is the Wellington drag scene has provided.

Wellington drag has always been “weird,

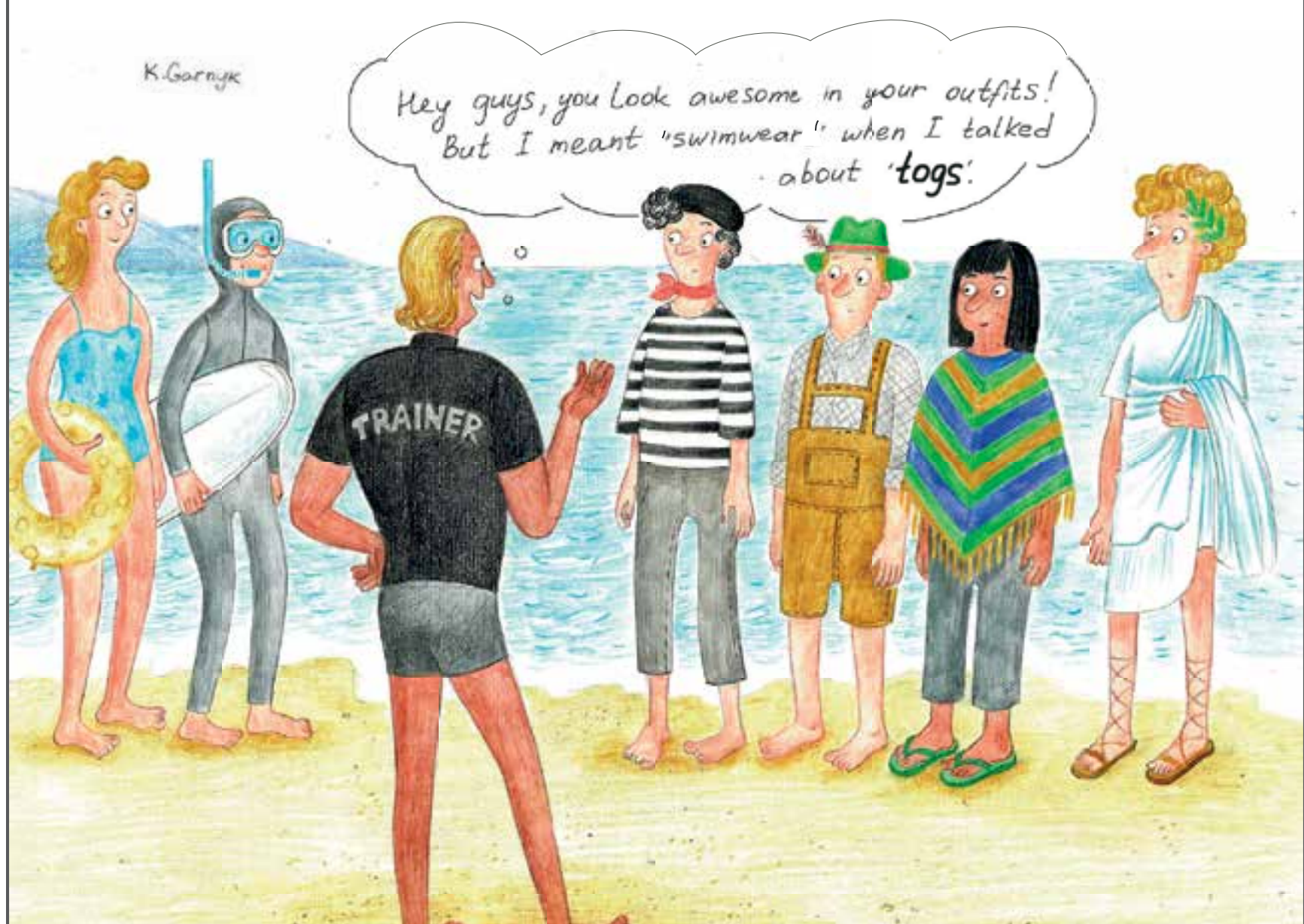
glamorous, political, ridiculous, and heartfelt all at once,” Bunny says. “I think that’s what gives it such strong main character energy. We’re dramatic, we’re opinionated, we’re slightly underfunded, it’s probably raining, and somehow we’re still going to turn up in a rhinestone outfit and put on an amazing show!”

Hosted by best friend and ride-or-die collaborator Anna Diction, Bunny will be joined by many other iconic performers who have shaped her journey.

the show is less like a retrospective and more like a celebration of the community that has grown alongside me. Bunny Holiday is inseparable from Wellington, and I genuinely don't think she could have become who she is anywhere else."

On Saturday the 29th of August, Ivy Bar and Cabaret

will transform into Bunnywood, featuring bombshell performances and enough blonde ambition to land on the cover of Cosmo. Expect big costumes, comedy, glamour, nostalgia, and a healthy dose of chaos.



Feel free to get in touch with cartoonist Kate Garnyk

Packed to the rafters



Still from Emergence, directed by Brett Davis.

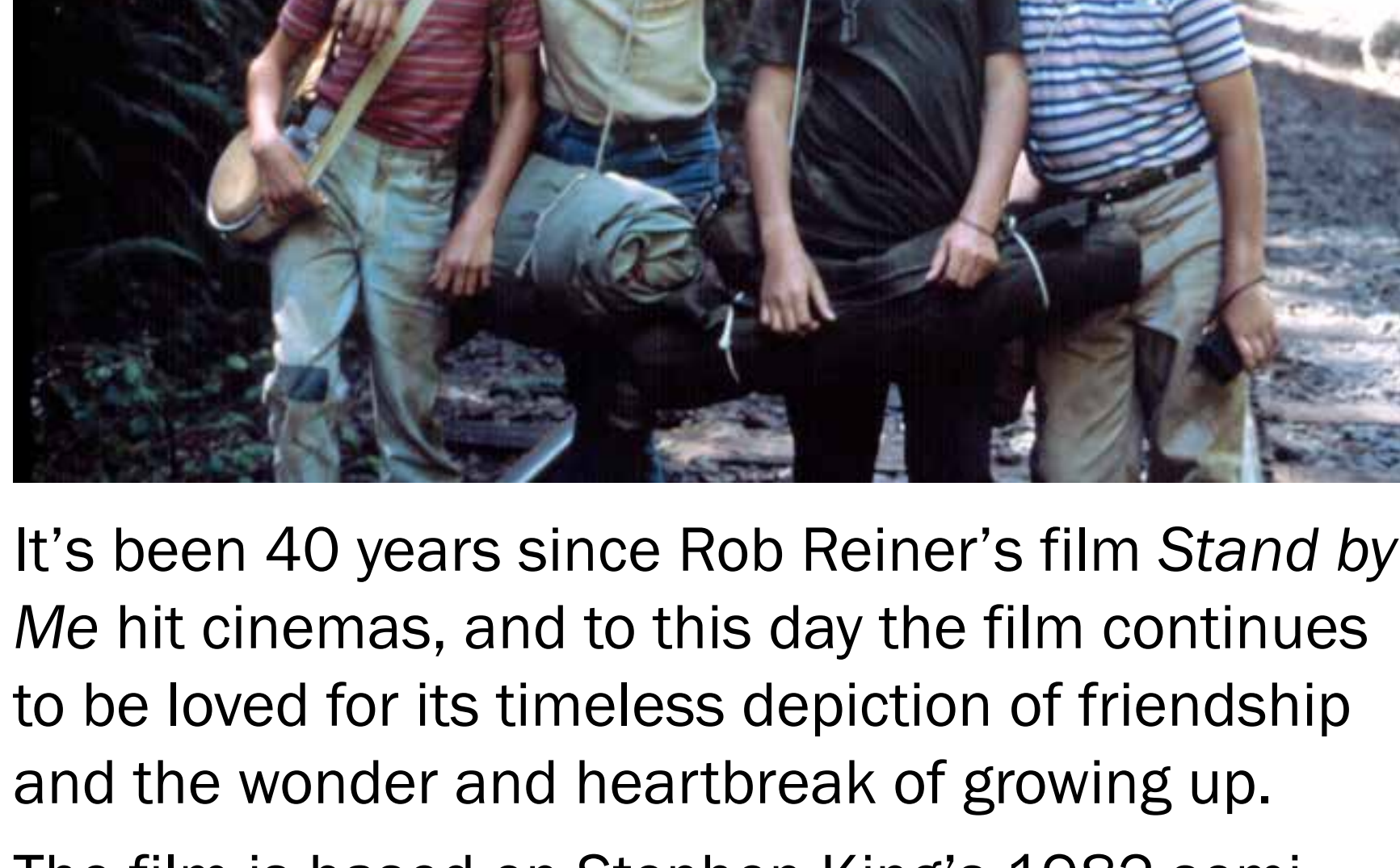
The International Packraft Film Festival returns for its second season with a lineup packed to the rafters with adventure. Hosted by Packrafting Association of NZ (PRANZ), this year’s festival features two hours of visual storytelling demonstrating the innovative and inspiring ways packrafting enthusiasts explore the waters of our world. For unfamiliar readers, a packraft is a lightweight, durable, inflatable boat that can easily fit inside your backpack.

The films trace rivers across the map, from the USA, China, and Patagonia to Russia and Montenegro, as well as three shorts from rivers in the South Island of Aotearoa.

Plunge into the heart of Russia’s Altai Mountains on a legendary whitewater rapid where split-second decisions must be made in Andrei Borisov’s *Altai Adrenaline: Dancing Through Turbinny Rapid*. Yak, a former expert kayaker became a paraplegic and hopes to find freedom packrafting the Buller Gorge in Deane Parker’s *Riverbound: The storybook has just begun*. Packrafters explore snow leopard conservation in China in Luo Yan’s *Guardians of Siguniang’s Biodiversity: Quest for the Snow Leopard*.

The winner of the 2025 Judges Choice Award Huw Miles returns to screens with *Jerry on the Jerry*, which follows packrafters as they make a second attempt at an unnavigated section of Jerry River in Fiordland. On at the Tararua Tramping Club Hall on Wednesday the 19th of August, head along if you’re a novice, an expert, or just paddle curious.

Adventure, loyalty, courage



It’s been 40 years since Rob Reiner’s film *Stand by Me* hit cinemas, and to this day the film continues to be loved for its timeless depiction of friendship and the wonder and heartbreak of growing up.

The film is based on Stephen King’s 1982 semi-autobiographical novella *The Body*. It follows four 12-year-old boys – Gordie, Chris, Teddy, and Vern – as they set off into the wilderness along a railroad track in 1950s Oregon to look for the body of a missing boy named Ray Brower who was hit by a train while out picking blueberries.

To celebrate the film’s 40th anniversary, Wairarapa’s Film Talks, organisers of film events including the Wairarapa Film Festival and Cinémathèque Wairarapa, are hosting a special screening on Friday the 14th of August at Regent 3 Cinemas in Masterton.

“*Stand by Me* captures that moment when childhood begins to slip away and friendships become some of the most important relationships we have. Although it’s set in 1959, its themes of adventure, loyalty, courage, and growing up remain timeless,” Film Talks director Jane Ross says. “What makes it a cult classic is that we see ourselves in those four boys, remembering our own friendships and the moments that shaped who we became. 40 years later, it remains honest, funny, deeply moving.”

Audiences are invited to attend a *Stand by Me*-inspired dinner experience at Café Strada before the film starts, featuring Oregon Americana-style main meal and dessert options.

German immersion



On the last Friday of every month from August to October, German Culture Club Wellington in collaboration with Goethe-Institut New Zealand are hosting Jugendkino at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library: German movie nights for kids aged 12 to 18 who are learning or speaking the language.

Kicking off the series on Friday the 28th of August is the 1998 film *Run Lola Run (Lola rennt)* directed by Tom Tykwer. The avant-garde, high-octane thriller follows Lola (Franka Potente) who must obtain 100,000 marks (old German currency) in 20 minutes to save her boyfriend Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu). Considered a gem of pop-art futurism, it is filled with twists and turns propelled by a kinetic energy and driving techno track.

The film will be played in German with English subtitles to encourage teenagers learning or speaking the language to immerse themselves and meet others whom they can practise conversing with. The movie will be followed by a delicious abendbrot supper, a typical meal consisting of sliced bread, various cheeses, spreads, cold cuts, and fresh vegetables.

German Culture Club Wellington is a non-profit, volunteer-led organisation that hosts traditional cultural events year-round. The Goethe-Institut is a non-profit cultural organisation that fosters international cooperation and promotes knowledge of German language abroad. Keep an eye out on the German Culture Club website for what films will be screening at the next Jugendkino events taking place on the 25th of September and the 30th of October.

Millennial renters’ nightmare



Over recent years, Aotearoa has developed its own brand of horror. Cannibal stoners, suburban vampires, carnivorous sheep. Written, directed by, and starring Ōtautahi-raised filmmaker Conor Bowden, *The Ungrateful Tenant* is a silent film that draws on black-and-white classics to introduce audiences to something even more hellish and frightening: landlords, real estate agents, and bad flatmates.

All shot on iPhone, *The Ungrateful Tenant* follows a frustrated and anxious millennial renter enduring a gauntlet of disastrous flatting situations. After kicking a problematic flattie out, he finds himself unable to keep up with rent and out on the street searching for a place to live. A lifelong renter with a dream of home ownership, the protagonist is thrust into the chaotic Auckland rental market where he must fight for his rights and sanity in a world stacked against him.

Drawing from his own experience as a renter, Bowden illuminates the contemporary housing crisis using filmic language from centuries past paired with slapstick comedy and modern millennial drama.

The Ungrateful Tenant marks Bowden’s debut film. It features a glorious cast of Aotearoa actors – including Tim Earl, Carmel McGlone, and Justin Rogers – and was produced in collaboration with Sports Team, who brought the stoner-comedy *The Weed Eaters* to screens earlier this year. The film made its premiere as part of the Auckland Whānau Mārama New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF) and will be screening during the Pōneke NZIFF on Friday the 21st of August at Roxy Cinema followed by a Q&A with Bowden.

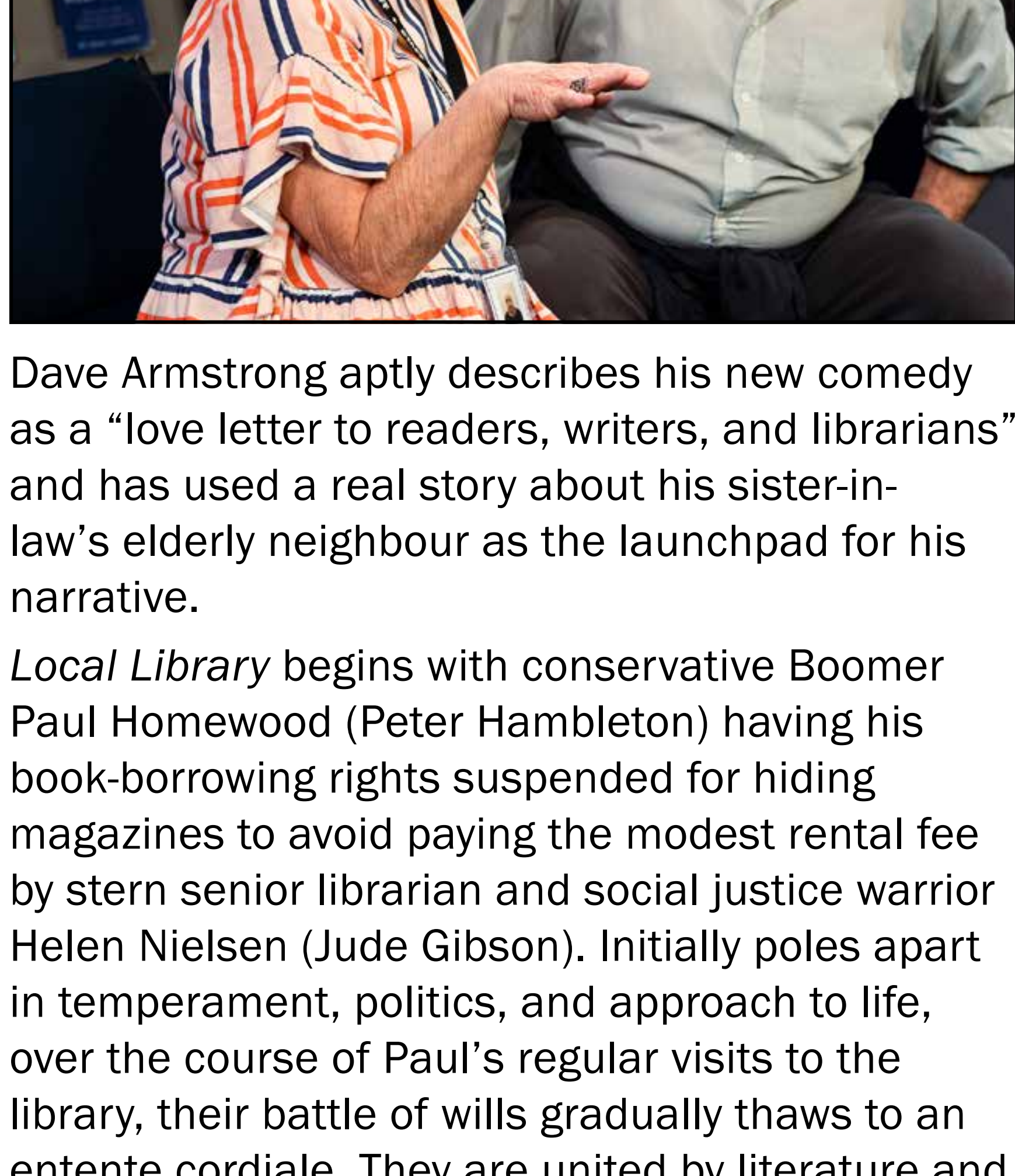
Local Library

Written by Dave Armstrong

Directed by Conrad Newport

Circa Theatre, 25th Jul 2026

Reviewed by Tanya Piejus



Dave Armstrong aptly describes his new comedy as a “love letter to readers, writers, and librarians” and has used a real story about his sister-in-law’s elderly neighbour as the launchpad for his narrative.

Local Library begins with conservative Boomer Paul Homewood (Peter Hambleton) having his book-borrowing rights suspended for hiding magazines to avoid paying the modest rental fee by stern senior librarian and social justice warrior Helen Nielsen (Jude Gibson). Initially poles apart in temperament, politics, and approach to life, over the course of Paul’s regular visits to the library, their battle of wills gradually thaws to an entente cordiale. They are united by literature and loneliness, discovering they have more in common than they would ever have thought.

Hambleton and Gibson are a charming pairing with great chemistry. Hambleton’s old-man shuffle and wonky tie (costume design by Sheila Horton) are a visual delight, while his butchering of “terrio Mowri”, stubborn northern English accent, and ridiculously anti-woke posturing are deliciously cringe-inducing. Gibson’s staunch librarian of 40 years’ standing, struggling not to be ousted from the best thing in her life, is believably vulnerable beneath her tough shell. They spark off each other beautifully and carry the 90-minute duologue with the panache of the seasoned pros they are. Conrad Newport’s delicate direction never gets in their way.

William Smith (lighting, set) and Azarael Ballard (sound) of Tungsten Projects Ltd have taken great care with the technical design. Their realistic setting has a suitably institutional feel with its community notices, stand of graphic novels, and neatly Dewey Decimalled books. The lights in the rows of shelves and above the issues desk creatively change the mood during scene transitions, accompanied by lively and suitably chosen music that bookends each chapter. The barking of Paul’s ever-changing company of dogs even comes from the right place behind the library entrance; attention to detail that will delight theatre nerds.

Witty and current with a deeper vein of meaning below the laughs, *Local Library* is bibliophilic bliss for anyone who loves a heartwarming story.

Geriatric Drift

Directed by Nina Hogg and Mo Munn

Presented by PopRox

BATS Theatre, 31st Jul 2026

Reviewed by Zac Fitzgibbon



Being greeted by Shrewsbury-loving pensioners with a speedometer projected in the background (projection design by Nina Hogg) really sets the tone of *Geriatric Drift*. What follows is a story about four retirees on a journey to Northern Poland to obtain \$20 socks, a rare and coveted item, for one of their great-great-great granddaughters.

Geriatric Drift is a parody of the global smash-hit franchise *Fast & Furious*, which, after 12 films, doesn’t seem to stop giving. What sets this show apart from these racer films is that this crew has lived long enough to be up to their 80th sequel.

The show is completely improvised, with the cast asking for audience prompts to shape the story early on. All six performers – Hogg as The Rock, Dylan Hutton as Dominic Torretto, Tara McEntee as Letti, Jed Davies as Vince, Isaac Thomas as Paul Walker and others, and Austin Harrison as an additional character called Dmitri – have mastered the craft of improvisation. This results in a performance so cohesive, it feels like you genuinely are watching (yet another) *Fast & Furious* sequel.

Adding to the illusion that these characters are well beyond their ruby anniversary, ageing stage makeup (largely by Hogg) and costumes (individually sourced) truly transform the young cast into old-timers crossing the ocean to find socks.

Whilst these geriatrics are far from their rest home, they certainly know how to take the spotlight. The lighting design (Hogg) helps keep the focus on the characters, further immersing us in the comedy and highlighting the wild narrative.

The design allows us to use our imagination to figure out all the crazy settings we’ve been transported to.

Geriatric Drift features hilarious improvisation that is sure to get you off your rocking chair. Watch out: things can get too fast, 2 *Old*, 2 *Furious* with quips that will make your false teeth fall out and a story that gets more chaotic and unhinged as it goes along. Here’s hoping these senior citizens hobble back to BATS ASAP.

Becoming an Anecdote

Written and directed by Mitchell Botting

BATS Theatre, 4th Aug 2026

Reviewed by Numi Stössner



On entering the Dome in BATS Theatre, I immediately notice dozens of typed paper sheets hanging from the ceiling. They remind me of memories scattered throughout the mind. This first impression proves to be right, as the performance I am about to witness is, in short, a meditation on remembrance. It is my first time watching a solo performance and I’m not sure my attention will hold over 90 minutes with one actor alone. But how wrong I was.

Becoming an Anecdote is writer and director Mitchell Botting’s attempt to tell the tragic story of the death of his lost love. The second-person play is a recollection of Mitchell’s own memories spanning decades, navigating the complex relationship between himself (performed by Stevie Hancox-Monk) and “you”. Through time jumps between 2006, 2015, and 2024, Mitchell revisits selected moments before, during, and after “your” death, allowing the viewer to witness a defining period of his life. Next to these personal flashbacks, the performance also lets the viewer question the reliability of the narrator by showing how memories are shaped by humans and distorted by time.

This play manages to be as entertaining as it is heartbreaking. The reenactment of past conversations is supported by quotes projected on the wall, lighting effects, music, and interactive recorded voices. Hancox-Monk perfectly portrays the conflicting emotions connected to an impossible situation, captivating the awestruck audience until the end.

I leave full of questions and lingering thoughts, and I think that is exactly how I am meant to feel. All in all, this “fabricated memoir” is a brilliant interplay of heartfelt script and outstanding acting, showcasing the complexities of love, grief, and guilt. It is a beautiful homage to a long-lost love and also a reminder of the rippling effects of death on the ones left behind. This was a truly moving experience that I will not forget any time soon. If you have the chance to see it, don’t hesitate!

The Invite

107 minutes

R16

★★★★

Reviewed by Isabella Smith

For anyone expecting a mature exploration of polyamory and non-conforming relationships, this film isn’t for you. For those wanting to laugh out loud, physically cringe, and immerse yourself in a tense, fast-paced comedy-drama testing what happens when a rocky marriage brushes up against the hot, atypical love between two eccentrics still in the throes of their honeymoon phase, then please go see *The Invite*.

Directed by Olivia Wilde, a decidedly unhappy married couple Angela (Wilde) and Joe (Seth Rogan) invite their upstairs neighbours Piña (Penélope Cruz) and Hawk (Edward Norton) to a dinner party. Destined from the start to be doomed, the evening doesn’t unfurl; it spirals, explodes, collapses, and drags itself exhausted to bed.

Angela and Joe embody all the tropes of a marriage on thin ice (nit-picking, passive aggressiveness, complacency, blame) while Piña and Hawk flaunt their passion with loud banging and growling through the ceiling every night and lots of heavy petting on the sofa after dessert.

Cruz, as usual, is an onscreen magnetic force. Norton pulls off his moderately sleazy character effortlessly. Wilde is so tightly wound and anxious it makes you hold your breath. Rogan truly comes into his own in his spectacular performance of the down-and-out music teacher who was once in a rock ‘n’ roll band, undercutting the evening’s proliferating absurdities with incredulous one-liners that let a breeze into the claustrophobic atmosphere.

A four-piece chamber comedy, the simple premise makes for a film filled with dialogue, taking place in the intimacy of a few rooms in Joe and Angela’s recently renovated apartment. Nothing tells you that the audience is gripped more than hooting and hollering from somewhere out back of the theatre. The sharp command of tension had the audience at the film’s mercy, cleverly building and releasing in all the right moments. Pair this with the fact that everyone who has ever been in a relationship is most likely witnessing aspects of their own foibles on the big screen, and I imagine viewers come away feeling very seen – or rather – exposed.

I didn’t love the ending; it tied too neat a bow around the evening. At the same time, endings are hard and it’s difficult to know where to finish...

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Party Boy

Written by Breton Dukes

Te Herenga Waka University Press

Reviewed by Tineke Buser



Breton Dukes' breakthrough novel, *Party Boy*, delves into the harrowing effects of toxic masculinity and its inclination for self-destruction. Rather than offering a sympathetic antihero or a straightforward villain, Dukes presents a man trapped between a bleak present and an even bleaker past.

On the verge of turning 50, Marco faces his midlife crisis with the emotional maturity of a volatile teenager. Bitter, sexually frustrated, and clinging to the faded glory of his youth and masculinity, he turns to alcohol and pharmaceuticals to numb his mounting inadequacies. As his high-school years resurface to haunt him, Marco must decide whether to take responsibility for his prior actions as a school bully, or to drown them in substances.

Amid the turmoil of his youth, his adult life has been put on the back burner. Unable to uphold the responsibilities of a part-time job and fumbling as the stay-at-home dad, Marco's desperation to be seen as the stoic male stands in constant conflict with the realities of his shortcomings. In the place of reason, addiction becomes his "burning ray of confidence" – one that slowly sets fire to his world.

This downward spiral becomes the perfect vehicle for exploring the pressures of traditional masculinity and the damage it inflicts. Throughout the novel, Dukes examines the extent to which men internalise rigid gender expectations and the consequences of treating vulnerabilities as weaknesses.

We see this further emphasised through the pulsing, intrusive nature of Marco's insecurities and thoughts. Combining short, staccato lines with a polished, stream-of-consciousness style, Dukes jerks the reader deep into the psyche of a man who is balancing everything and nothing.

Its frantic rhythm mirrors the raw desire to fix the irreparable; to watch, hopelessly, as your ego goes cold in your hands. As unsettling as it is compelling, *Party Boy* is the type of book that lingers.

Not because it comforts, but because it refuses to look away.

Watching Television in a Love Motel

Written by Haro Lee

Te Herenga Waka University Press

Reviewed by Margaret Austin



The title of this first collection by Haro Lee is provocative – redolent as it is of short stays, hurriedness, and possibly secrecy. When these are backgrounded by the activity of watching television, we get poems that sing, shout, celebrate, and rebel: all the elements of

troubled tempestuous youth. Haro Lee may be troubled, but her experiences also cause her to confront herself with astonishing honesty. And it's this that makes her work so compelling.

The section *Daytime Television* starts us off. *How to Refill a Disposable BIC Lighter* has the writer and a friend holed up with cocaine and companionship. "For five short days / we're adrift on something so / magical. It's a girls' world / in this filthy apartment." Laughter, grief, and confession abound, and the writer is left with the eponymous lighter as a precious souvenir.

We progress to *Primetime Television*. If I wasn't primed already, *From These Gutters, My Mother* would shock me with its graphic images. We read of a "Botticelli belly" and "This mistake she makes / with the father, the one / who enters growing girls / without clumsy" and what the baby after arriving is subjected to.

I really enjoyed *Needing Religion at Nineteen*. Our writer admits to her dissatisfaction at being born in the Year of the Rat – that is until she sees an exhibition of Banksy's rat series and what he has to say about it. "OK, I'll take that for why I'm here then", she declares. Self-doubt and longing for assurances – not least of an afterlife – predominate. Once again, frankness is paramount and appealing. "So when it's my time to go / I can say that I tried."

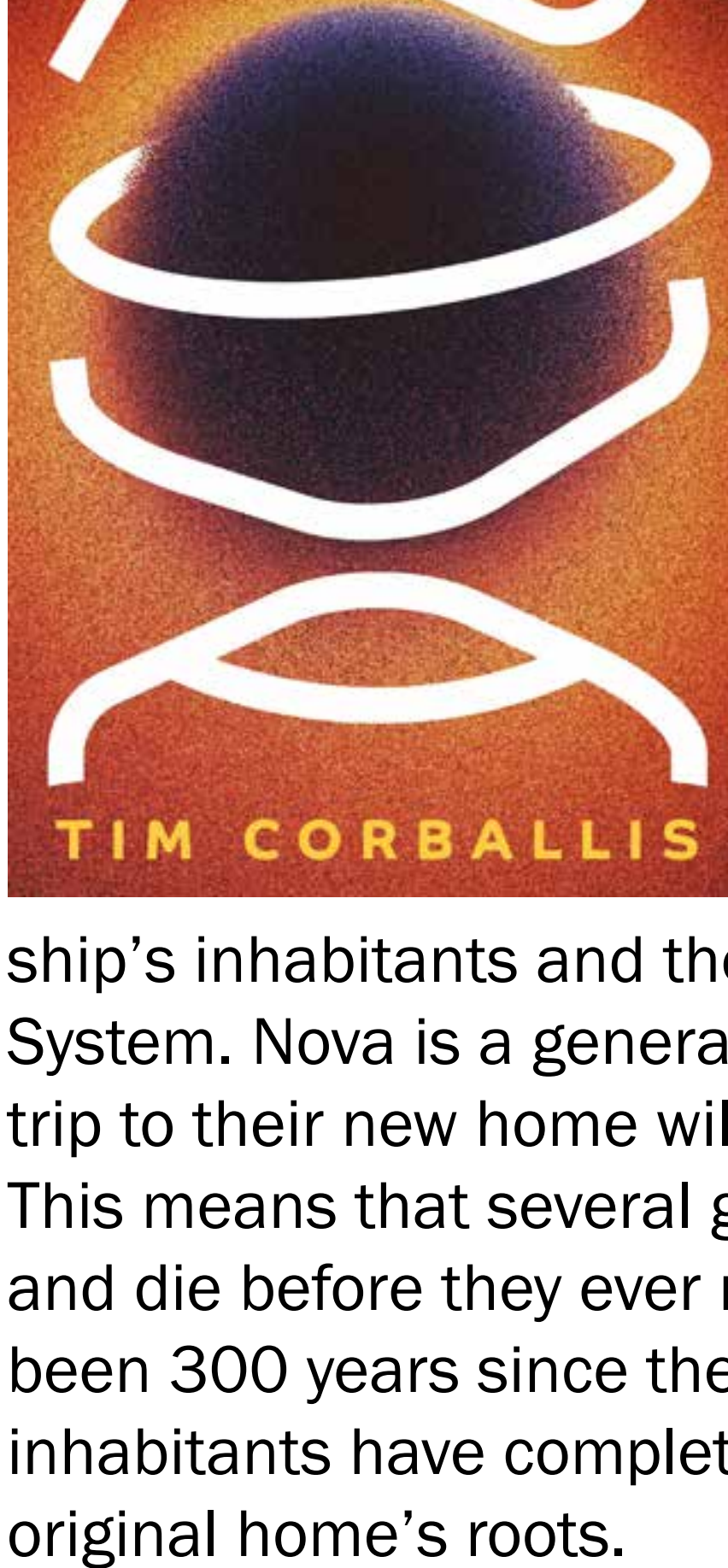
Graveyard Slot is a lengthy narrative recounting Lee's life in a small neighbourhood in Seoul, capital of South Korea and home to her beloved grandmother. Detailed, graphic, and touchingly nostalgic – if ever there was material for a TV documentary, this is it!

NOVA

Written by Tim Corballis

Te Herenga Waka University Press

Reviewed by Kerry Lee



From New Zealand author Tim Corballis comes this new novel *NOVA*, which explores issues we do not normally see in science fiction.

Set on a self-contained spaceship named Nova that is hurtling away from Earth and on its way to a new home on the star Telos, the novel explores the lives of the

ship's inhabitants and the AI running everything, System. Nova is a generational ship, and the entire trip to their new home will take 60,000 years.

This means that several generations will be born and die before they ever reach Telos. In *NOVA*, it's been 300 years since the ship left Earth, and its inhabitants have completely lost touch with their original home's roots.

Unlike other science fiction novels that see AI systems running amok or taking over the world, *NOVA*'s AI wants to understand the humans around it and struggles to do so at times.

A lot of novels treat supercomputers or AI as just machines, but System feels genuinely alive and, if I did not know any better, just as flesh-and-blood as the other characters. In fact, System became my favourite character. Its conversations with Kalla, a human with her own problems, make up the bulk of the story as they talk about topics and themes ranging from consciousness to the human condition.

While the other human characters are interesting and well written, it was Corballis' rendering of System that made me think as no other science fiction novel has before.

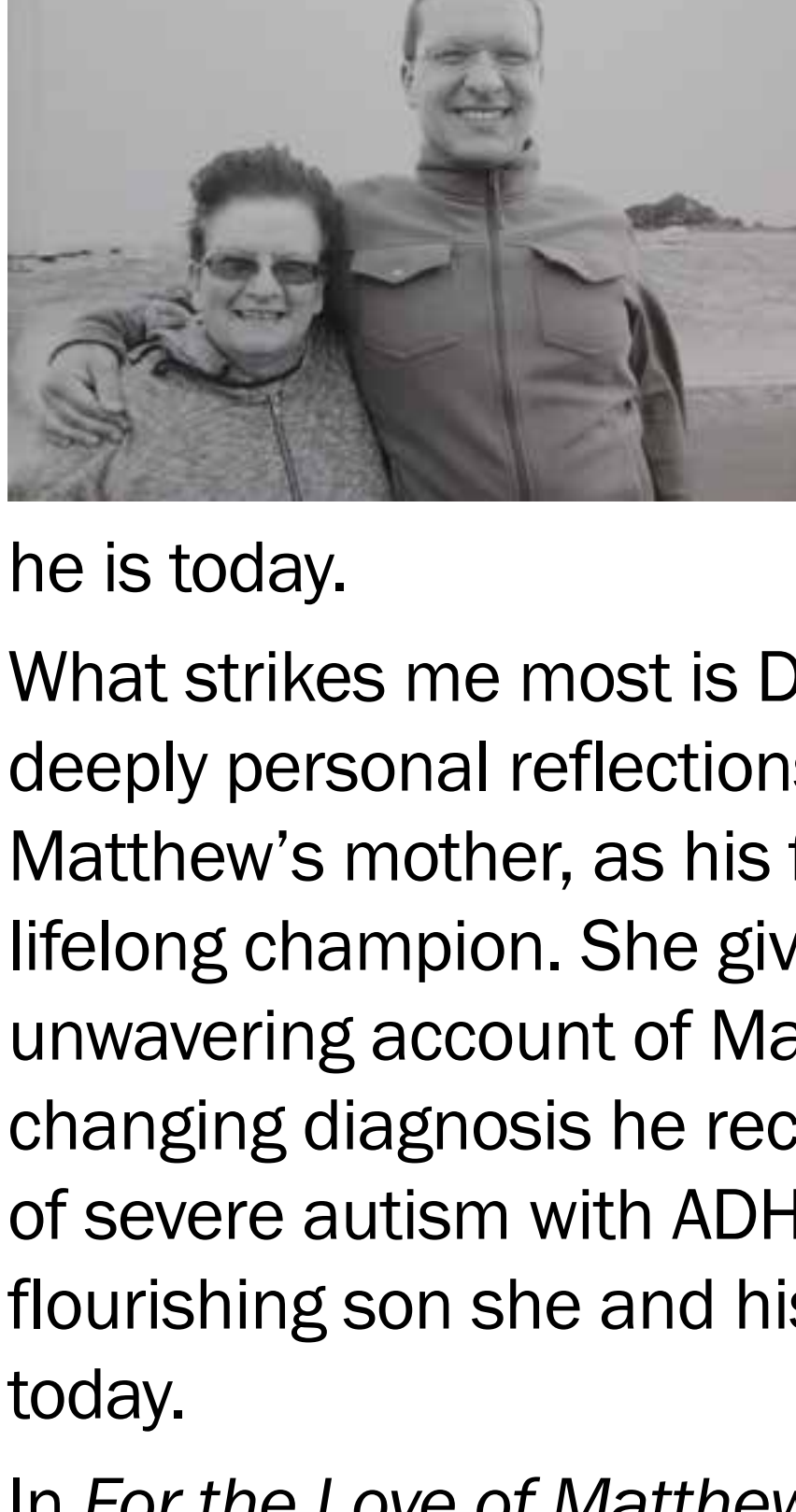
Be warned: this is not *Star Trek* or *Star Wars*. *NOVA* will make you think about things you do not normally associate with science fiction, and that may put younger readers off. I believe it's a novel for the more mature reader out there. I may have been in the *Star Wars* camp when I picked it up, but I stuck with *NOVA* and found it a fantastic read.

For the Love of Matthew

Written by Maria Di Leva

Altomare Publishing

Reviewed by Jo Lucre



For the Love of Matthew is one mother's story about her son Matthew. Maria Di Leva says she wants it to give hope to other parents out there who may be raising a child with special needs. In her memoir, Di Leva recounts Matthew's story, from his early childhood right through to the 30-year-old man

he is today.

What strikes me most is Di Leva's heartfelt and deeply personal reflections of her journey as Matthew's mother, as his friend, advocate, and lifelong champion. She gives an honest and unwavering account of Matthew's life, from the life-changing diagnosis he received as a young child of severe autism with ADHD, to the independent, flourishing son she and his wider family know him as today.

In *For the Love of Matthew*, a strong and insightful Di Leva explores Matthew's potential every step of the way, whether navigating the school years, a time on medication, or different plans and strategies – like supporting him to catch the bus on his own, which consistently and importantly grew Matthew's independence and widened his opportunities.

It is very apparent throughout the book that Matthew is part of a tight-knit family and peer group. It is especially rewarding to read about how he has experienced the world his own way. He was selected for the 2023 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Berlin, where he proudly brought home a silver and bronze medal. He's found a passion for hip-hop and a stable routine of keeping busy with work at New World and flatting independently.

Often, it is the people who stand behind you – who believe in you, fight for you, and push open doors that would otherwise remain shut – that make the intangible tangible. Matthew has achieved his own goals and independence, with the support of a loving family and a mother's unwavering love.

By all accounts, the journey has not been easy. But Matthew's mother hopes that this book

"demonstrates that with faith and love, the impossible is possible."

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING PUBLIC REVIEW AND INQUIRY

TO: Firearms licence holders,
affected families, and
witnesses

FROM: LandsAirWater Counsel
isayso.net

DATE: 1 August 2026

REFERENCE: FIREARMS-REVIEW-2026-01

Firearms licence holders, affected families, and people with relevant records,

We are gathering information for a public review concerning firearms licensing, suspension, revocation, search, seizure, storage, return, disposal, and related Police or Firearms Safety Authority processes.

Concerns have been raised that some affected people may not have been given clear written reasons, the lawful authority relied upon, complete itemised property records, review or appeal information, or a fair opportunity to respond before firearms or related property were removed or retained.

In carrying out this review, we are seeking documents, timelines, notices, decision records, and first-hand accounts that can be checked against the underlying law and agency records. This process is evidence-gathering. It does not make findings against any person or agency at this stage.

Against that background, this public review raises serious questions.

The issue is not simply that firearms matters were reported or acted upon.

The issue is what was relied upon, what was independently verified, what contrary information was available, what records were created, and whether the affected person was given the information needed to understand and challenge the decision.

Accordingly, identify and provide:

- 1.** every Police or Firearms Safety Authority letter, notice, email, risk assessment, decision record, or reason relied upon;
- 2.** every source of information relied upon before suspension, revocation, search, seizure, retention, disposal, or refusal to return property;
- 3.** every person, officer, agency, or organisation from whom information was obtained or to whom information was supplied;
- 4.** what lawful authority was relied upon for any search, warrantless attendance, seizure, storage, retention, disposal, sale, surrender, or forfeiture;
- 5.** whether any inquiry was made into ownership, licensing status, custody, storage, compensation, or third-party interests in the firearms or related property;
- 6.** whether any inquiry was made into disputed facts, unsupported labels, risk categories, "fit and proper" concerns, or contradictory dates before action was taken;
- 7.** whether the affected person was invited to respond before final action was taken, and if so, the date, time, method, and substance of that contact;
- 8.** whether an itemised seizure list, property receipt, storage record, return record, disposal record, or chain-of-custody record exists;
- 9.** what review, appeal, complaint, or disclosure rights were explained, and when they were explained; and
- 10.** any records showing delay, missing documentation, incomplete disclosure, or differences between what was said and what the written records show.

People providing information may ask for names and identifying details to be treated as confidential. Please do not send identifying details about other people, or material that may prejudice active court proceedings, unless a confidential intake process has first been arranged.

This review forms part of a wider public accountability process. Nothing sent in response should be taken as limiting any rights, remedies, review processes, complaints, or court steps available to affected people.

Thank you

LandsAirWater Counsel

Public review intake: claims_2@tangatawhenua.org

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THE CROWN**
A PUBLIC REVIEW INITIATIVE



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What's on



29th Aug. Sam Manzanza's Afrobeat Band:

The Rogue & Vagabond, Garrett Street, Te Aro – 9:30pm. Infectious high-energy rhythms and soulful melodies define this Afrobeat sensation. Featuring a lineup of the grooviest sonic explorers in Wellington, their hot, spicy, tribal beats will keep you moving your body to chase the winter shivers away all night long.



19th Aug. Johanna Gruskin and Gabriela Glapska:

St Andrew's on The Terrace, The Terrace, Te Aro – 12:15pm. Flautist Johanna Gruskin [pictured] and pianist Gabriela Glapska join forces at this St Andrew's on The Terrace lunchtime concert to deliver a recital featuring Olivier Messiaen's *La Merle Noir*, Franz Schubert's *Variations on Trockne Blumen*, and Ernst von Dohnányi's *Aria for Flute and Piano*.



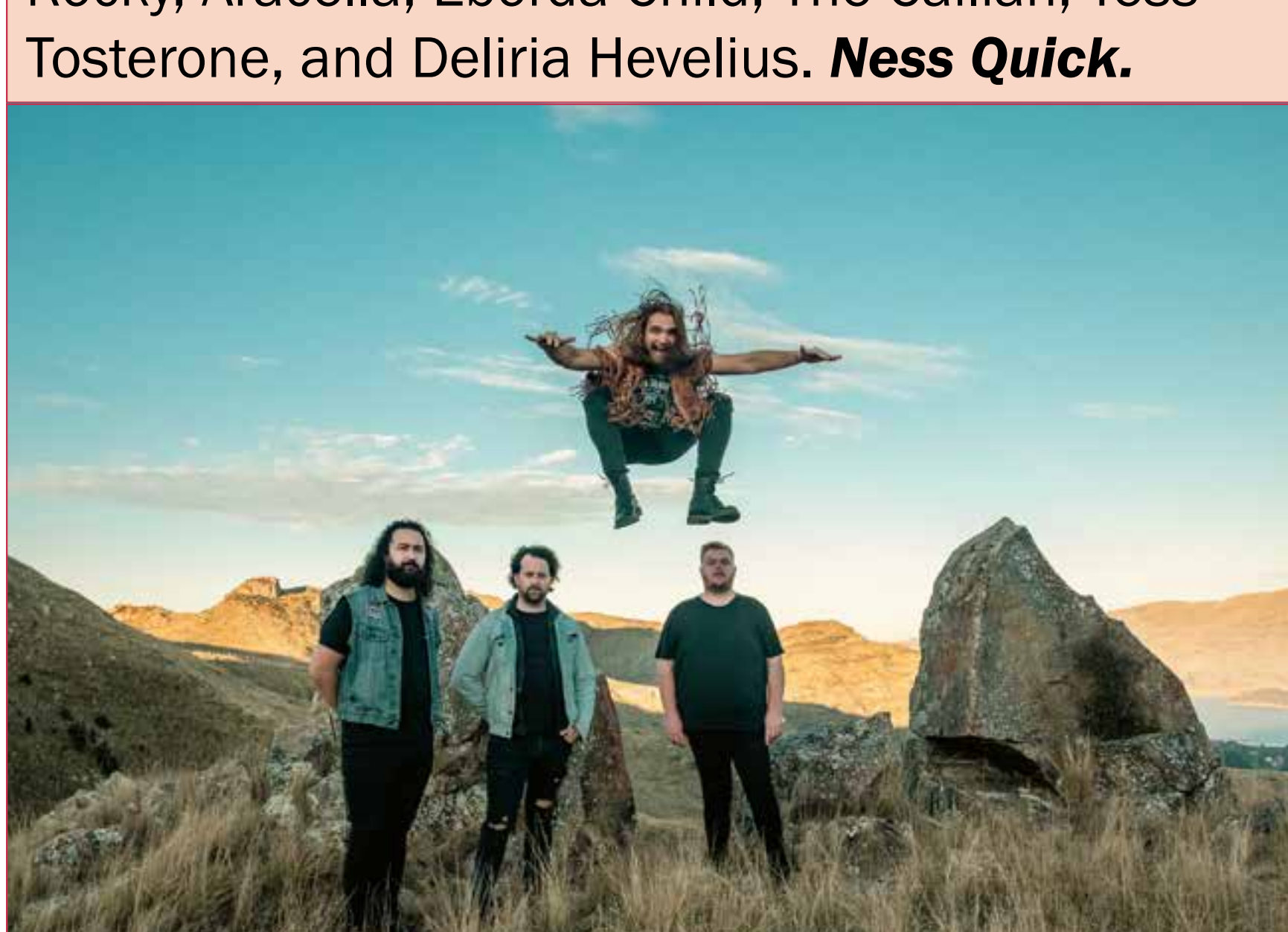
27th Aug. Fight Club:

The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro – 8pm. Four comics battle across three rounds of ruthless, ridiculous debate: two rounds in the first half, a desperate losers' bout for the coveted booby prize, then a final face-off between the victors. Hosted by Emma Jean as Jeff the Ref and Katy Borrows as Kath the Dominator, the lineup includes Austin Harrison, Meaghan Fisher, Nina Hogg, and Megan Connolly.



22nd Aug. Lil' Freaks:

Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro – 10pm. Created by local powerhouse producer Ness Quick, *Lil' Freaks* is designed to showcase all the diverse talent that calls Wellington home. At this show, alternative creatives can do whatever they'd like! Catch host Ness Quick alongside Fetishini, Faux Femm, Rocky, Aracella, Eborda Child, The Cailiah, Tess Tosterone, and Deliria Hevelius. **Ness Quick.**



22nd Aug. Pieces of Molly!:

Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro – 8pm. Fresh off the release of their latest single *Alligator*, rock 'n' roll outfit Pieces of Molly stomp into the capital along their three-stop tour for a rip-roaring, raucous Valhalla show alongside local Pōneke heavy hitters Dead Queens and epic rockers Dream State Empire. Get ready for a rowdy time! **Photo by Tessa Burrows.**



22nd Aug. Burlesque Baby August:

The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro – 7:30pm. Catch a glimpse of Wellington's newest talent at this cabaret show featuring performers of all levels and abilities. This fun, fabulous, and feathered show highlights just how vast and varied the capital's performance scene is – not to mention the overwhelming amount of talent out there!

Courtney Lamour.

What's on Wairarapa

14th Aug. Stand By Me: *Regent 3 Cinema, Queen Street, Masterton* – 6pm. Celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Stand By Me*, the classic movie adaptation of the Stephen King story following four young friends as they embark on an adventure along railway tracks, through forests, and across rivers searching for a missing boy in the summer of 1959.

21st Aug. High Society Swingers: *Cobblestones Heritage Village, Main Street, Greytown* – 7pm. Purveyors of all eras of jazzy, bluesy riffs, High Society Swingers are keen to get Greytown grooving.

Kāpiti

23rd Aug. The Zimmermans: *St Peter's Village Hall, Beach Road, Paekākāriki* – 7:30pm. New songs and old favourites from across Bob Dylan's seven-decade career make up a programme of folk, rock, blues, gospel, Americana, and more.

30th Aug. Kāpiti Chorale Presents: American Art Songs: *St Paul's Church, Langdale Avenue, Paraparaumu* – 3pm. As 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, KCO will explore a selection of American high choral music spanning more than two centuries.

Events

15th Aug. India Day: *Lower Hutt Town Hall, Laings Road, Lower Hutt* – various times. Celebrate Indian traditions, heritage, and community at this cultural event featuring food, entertainment, music, art, and a performance from Gurnam Bhullar.

15th Aug. Wellington Women's Refuge Ball: *Ersikine Chapel, Avon Street, Island Bay* – 6:30pm.

This fancy dress fundraising ball featuring The Beatgirls and The Uptakes supports Wellington Women's Refuge, which provides advocacy, safety, and support for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

15th Aug. XYZZY: *Space Place at Carter Observatory, Salamanca Road, Kelburn* – 8pm.

Celebrate the release of the XYZZY soundtrack on vinyl at Space Place alongside the award-winning planetarium show and a talk from video artist Simon Ward.

19th Aug. International Packraft Film Festival: *Tararua Tramping Club Clubrooms, Moncrieff Street, Mount Victoria* – 6pm. From long expeditions to first descents to snow leopard conservation, this year's International Packraft Film Festival will delight and surprise viewers of all ages and interests.

19th Aug. New Zealand Book Awards For Children & Young Adults: *Pipitea Marae, Thorndon Quay, Pipitea* – 6:30pm. Celebrate the contribution New Zealand's children's authors and illustrators make to building our national identity and cultural heritage.

28th Aug. German Culture Club Wellington and the Goethe-Institut New Zealand Present: Jugendkino – German Movie Night for Teens: *Te Matapihi ki Te Ao Nui – Wellington Central Library, Victoria Street, Te Aro* – 4:30pm. Catch a fantastic Deutsche feature film while enjoying delicious German-style abendbrot snacks for supper.

28th-30th Aug. The Wellington Food Show: *Henry Stadium, Waterloo Quay, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. Hundreds of food and drink exhibitors, plus celebrity chefs and masterclasses, collide in Wellington for a tasty smorgasbord of a weekend.

Music

15th Aug. Adam McGrath: *Hilltop Private House Concerts, Upland Road, Kelburn* – 7pm. 2024 Aotearoa New Zealand Folk Artist of the Year Award-winning musician Adam McGrath returns to Wellington after a stint touring alongside *Come Together: Born To Run* Bruce Springsteen concerts.

16th Aug. Shaskey & AKL MADZ Present: Codependence Tour: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The *Codependence* EP explores how life shapes who we become through grief, ambition, love, bad habits, and friendship.

18th Aug. Rivers of Nihil: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Pennsylvania's progressive death metal progenitors Rivers of Nihil make their first voyage to Aotearoa for a show as epic as their reputation.

19th Aug. Jayme Morpeth: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Joined by the very talented Emily Alice and Kloey, Jayme Morpeth presents her new EP *Good Grief* for the people of Pōneke.

20th Aug. The Dire Straits Experience: *Michael Fowler Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. The internationally acclaimed seven-piece tribute band will perform the music of Dire Straits with stunning authenticity, world-class musicianship, and full concert production.

20th Aug. Vanessa Tottle and Tragedies: *Moon, Riddiford Street, Newtown* – 9pm. Two distinct worlds of dark, emotional resonance collide for one unforgettable night starring Tāmaki Makaurau singer, songwriter, and producer Vanessa Tottle and Welly-based trio Tragedies.

23rd Aug. Hine: *St Peter's on Willis, Willis Street, Te Aro* – 6:30pm. Gigi Crayford as Hine presents the debut EP *Ka Mua Ka Muri*, a musical journey tracing the threads of whakapapa, exploring relationship to atua, pūrākau, and the transformation of learning an ancestral tongue.

23rd; 30th Aug. NZTrio Presents: Space Jump: *Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui – Wellington Central Library, Wellington Waterfront; Greytown Music Group, Greytown* – 7pm; 4pm. Experience the dynamic energy of Fazil Say's *Space Jump*, vividly portraying a thrilling ascent and descent with vibrant rhythms and textures.

24th Aug. Rose Light & Gabriel Baird Recital: *St Michael's Anglican Church, Upland Road, Kelburn* – 7:30pm. Featuring romantic and classical favourites as well as beautiful folk music, this exquisite recital will help fund Rose's continued violin studies in Graz, Austria at the University for Music and Performing Arts.

27th Aug. Between the Lines: Outsider with New Zealand String Quartet: *Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui – Wellington Central Library, Victoria Street, Te Aro* – 5:30pm. This monthly music and literature series invites audiences to listen, think, and talk.

28th Aug. Pola & Bryson: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Always striving to inspire, innovate, and experiment, Pola & Bryson's fourth studio album *Overgrown* showcases collaborative electronic tracks.

28th; 29th Aug. Sea Shanty Society: *Abandoned Taproom Petone, Lower Hutt; Raumati South Memorial Hall, Raumati* – 7pm. Singalongs and nautical games accompany the new album release party of Wellington's saltiest seafaring singers.

29th Aug. Niko Ne Zna Live: *Vogelmorn Hall, Mornington Road, Brooklyn* – 5:30pm. Drawing inspiration from the rich musical traditions of the Balkans and beyond, Niko Ne Zna combine soaring brass, driving percussion, passionate multilingual vocals, and original compositions to create a spectacular live experience.

30th Aug. Dolfín-Lin Duo: *St Andrew's on The Terrace, The Terrace, Te Aro* – 3pm. A chance meeting in Italy in 2021 sparked a partnership between Hungarian cellist Balázs Dolfín and Chinese-New Zealand pianist Tony Chen Lin. Catch them live in Wellington this winter.

Performance

18th-23rd Aug. Wellington Community Ballet Theatre Presents: Winter's Saga: *The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – various times. Blending contemporary dance and physical theatre, *Winter's Saga* brings Norse mythology to life.

21st Aug. Tofiga – Fresh Since Ages Ago: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. This collection of hilarious skits brings back comedian Tofiga Fepulea'i's family of characters like Auntie Tala, Uncle Sam, Kung Fu master Tavita, and new characters with support act content creator Laban Miller.

21st; 28th Aug. Wellington Raw Comedy Quest Semifinals: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Witness the rising stars in Wellington's stand-up comedy scene as they vie for a place in New Zealand's national comedy championship.

28th-29th Aug. Nocturnelle: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 8:30pm. The ever-reigning queen of burlesque Dita Von Teese unveils her bewitching new vision: an exquisite blend of old-Hollywood allure, theatrical magic, and the high-art stripscapes she's known for.

29th Aug. Bunnywood: 10-year Dragiversary: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Celebrate Bunny Holiday's 10-year dragiversary with a night featuring bombshell performances and enough blonde ambition to land on the cover of *Woman's Day*.

29th Aug-26th Sep. Judy's Encore: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. It's 1967 and Judy Garland is back, ready to re-write the narrative and reclaim her legacy after the heartbreak of her previous Australian tour in this epic performance starring award-winning entertainer Ali Harper.

Galleries

Until 15th Aug. Making Do: *Twentysix Gallery, Constable Street, Newtown*. An orchestration of the industrial, the urban, and the domestic takes centre stage in a group exhibition featuring Carlos Knight, Benjamin Nicol, and Phoebe Laird.

Until 16th Aug. The Ground Will Not Hold: *Bowen Galleries, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro*. In their new exhibition, George Turner explores nationhood, inheritance, and ecological instability.

Until 30th Oct. Unsettling Nairn Street: *Nairn Street Cottage, Nairn Street, Mount Cook*. Inspired by author Richard Shaw's trilogy exploring his Pākehā whakapapa and its relation to colonial legacies, this exhibition invites seven contemporary artists to respond to the ground-floor rooms of Nairn Street Cottage.

18th-23rd Aug. Where Magic Lingers: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro*. Gillian Burfield's paintings draw the viewer into spaces suspended between memory, nature, and dream. Flowers bloom and fade, wild creatures emerge from shadow and light, and fragments of ruins and temples appear like echoes from another time.

25th-30th Aug. When I Sleep: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro*. Grace O'Brien's interactive painting exhibition is inspired by her family home.

Festivals

Until 23rd Aug. Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival: *Various locations and times in Wellington*. Immerse yourself in groundbreaking stories at one of New Zealand's most beloved and biggest film festivals.

Until 31st Aug. Visa Wellington On A Plate: *Various locations and times in Wellington*. This month-long festival sees Greater Wellington transform into a foodie's paradise with everything from special meals to workshops, activations to epic parties on the schedule.

15th Aug. MDIOC Onavirunnu: *Indian Culture Centre, Nelson Street, Petone* – various times. Celebrate the spirit of Onam with Kerala's rich traditions, delicious food, and vibrant cultural performances at this traditional Indian Onam festival and Sadhya feast.

21st-22nd Aug. Beervana: *Henry Stadium, Waterloo Quay, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. Expect fresh pours from legendary breweries, one-off festival beers, delicious eats, roaming entertainment, hidden surprises, and the kind of weird and wonderful mayhem only Beervana can deliver.

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

Tuesday 18 August

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.

Regional News

Connecting Wellington

Answers to the puzzles on page 32

5	3	9	1	7	4	6	8	2
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Where Magic Lingers
Solo Exhibition by Gillian Burfield

Thistle Hall Gallery, 293 Cuba Street, Te Aro, Wellington
18-23 August 2026

Hours: Tues-Thurs 10am-6pm | Fri & Sat 10am-7pm
Sunday Closing Event Midday to 3pm

Gillian B. 

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=SEMIFINALS=

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FRI 27 AUG
FRI 28 AUG

=FINAL=

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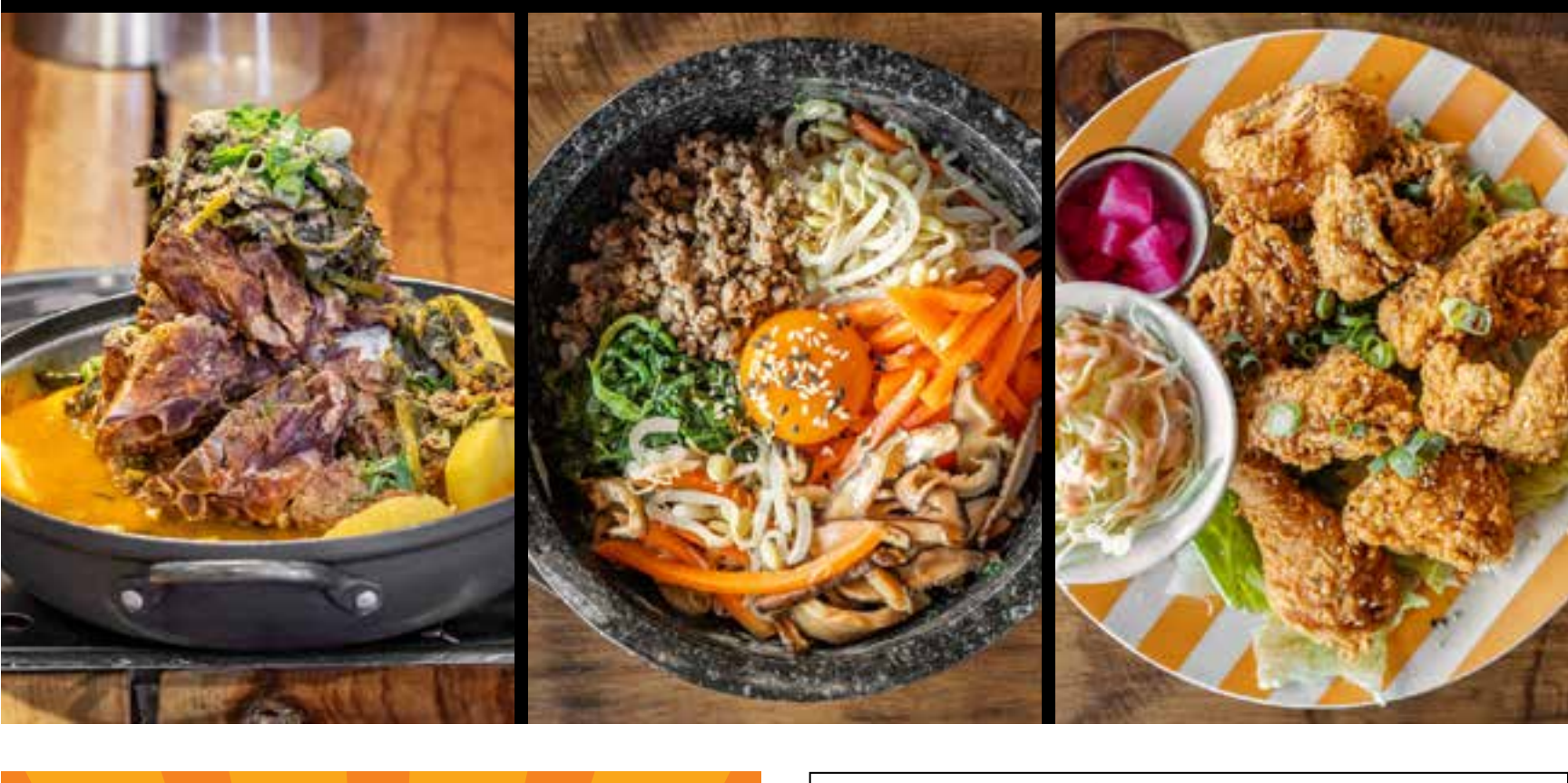
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WHEN I SLEEP



Interactive Installation & Exhibition
by Grace O'Brien | 25-30 August, 10am-6pm
Thistle Hall Community Venue
293 Cuba Street, Wellington

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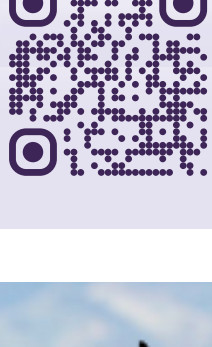
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racecoursemotel@xtra.co.nz

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2 positions available - Kapiti and Petone

We offer:

- competitive rates of pay, including full pay parity
- well-being leave,
- long-service leave,
- childcare discounts,
- paid First Aid certification.

Our team at Magic Sparks understands the importance of working in a place that respects each other, our environment and ourselves.

- Would you like to join a team that values everyone's ideas and contributions?
- Are you looking for potential leadership opportunities?
- Do you see yourself growing and sharing your ideas with other educators – come and join us!

Our mentorship programme offers both 'on the job support' and online learning support as well as

regular mentor meetings/non-contact to inspire and motivate you on your journey as an early childhood professional.

If you are interested in joining our team or would like additional information, call Mark on **021 927 519** or send your CV and Cover Letter for immediate consideration to mark@magicsparks.co.nz

All qualified applicants for the role require Provisional or Full certification with the Teaching Council and valid NZ Residency or Citizenship. We are no longer an Accredited Work Visa Employer and cannot support a work to residency application or an application from overseas.

Apply online at www.trademe.co.nz/a/jobs/education/early-childhood/wellington/kapiti-coast/full-time/listing/6045797349

www.magicsparks.co.nz

School holiday activities

**GOLDFIELDS
MINING CENTRE**
CENTRAL OTAGO

State Highway 6, Kawarau Gorge, Cromwell

GOLD PANNING, CHINA TOWN, SELF-GUIDED WALKS, GUIDED TOURS, AND GIFT SHOP NEAR CROMWELL & QUEENSTOWN

Mining for gold was reliant on water power from water races high in the hillsides overlooking the site with numerous sluice guns carving out vast areas of the hillside.



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