

FOUND

REGIONAL

A LIFE MADE BY MADDIE

THE NEW BEGINNINGS ISSUE



ISSN 2653-5696



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IN CONVERSATION
WITH LOREN RYAN

BORN ARTIST
GEMMA KING

TIME OF YOUR LIFE
ALYKAT CREATIVE

THE RIVER REVIVES
OSTERIA FIUME

Advancing the Armidale region

Council, in partnership with the NSW Government is delivering on its commitment to provide infrastructure that supports a vision for growth and jobs over the next decade.

We have addressed the critical infrastructure for this growth including a water security package that is bold and achievable. This will tie in with our efforts to boost tourism, improve our amenities and inject life back into our economy. The right vision and strategies for success are starting to happen.

It's time to become a region of significance once again. A region that delivers the basics exceptionally and efficiently and is thriving and competitive in all aspects.

Mayor Sam Coupland

Water security stage 1

Malpas Dam wall upgrade

\$27 million funding announced for the upgrade of the region's main water supply Malpas Dam. Doubling capacity. The first step in our Water Security Strategy.

Puddledock Dam pipeline

\$11.5 million funding for the upgrade of a pipeline from Puddledock Dam to the Water Treatment Plant.

Open spaces revitalisation

\$3 million grant to undertake stage 1 of the Armidale Creeklands Master Plan, transforming the city's parklands along Dumaresq Creek.

Old Armidale Courthouse

Gifted from the NSW Government as a cornerstone for CBD revitalisation plans.

Agriculture

Guyra & Armidale saleyards redevelopment

\$5 million grant to undertake upgrades at the Armidale & Guyra saleyards. Agriculture is a cornerstone economic powerhouse for the Armidale region and needs the infrastructure to support graziers.

Eco-tourism

Dumaresq Dam Conservation Area redevelopment

\$3.9 million grant to complete a substantial redevelopment of one of Armidale's best kept secrets.

New England Rail Trail

\$5.4 million Federal Government grant to commence construction of a section of the Armidale portion of the New England Rail Trail.



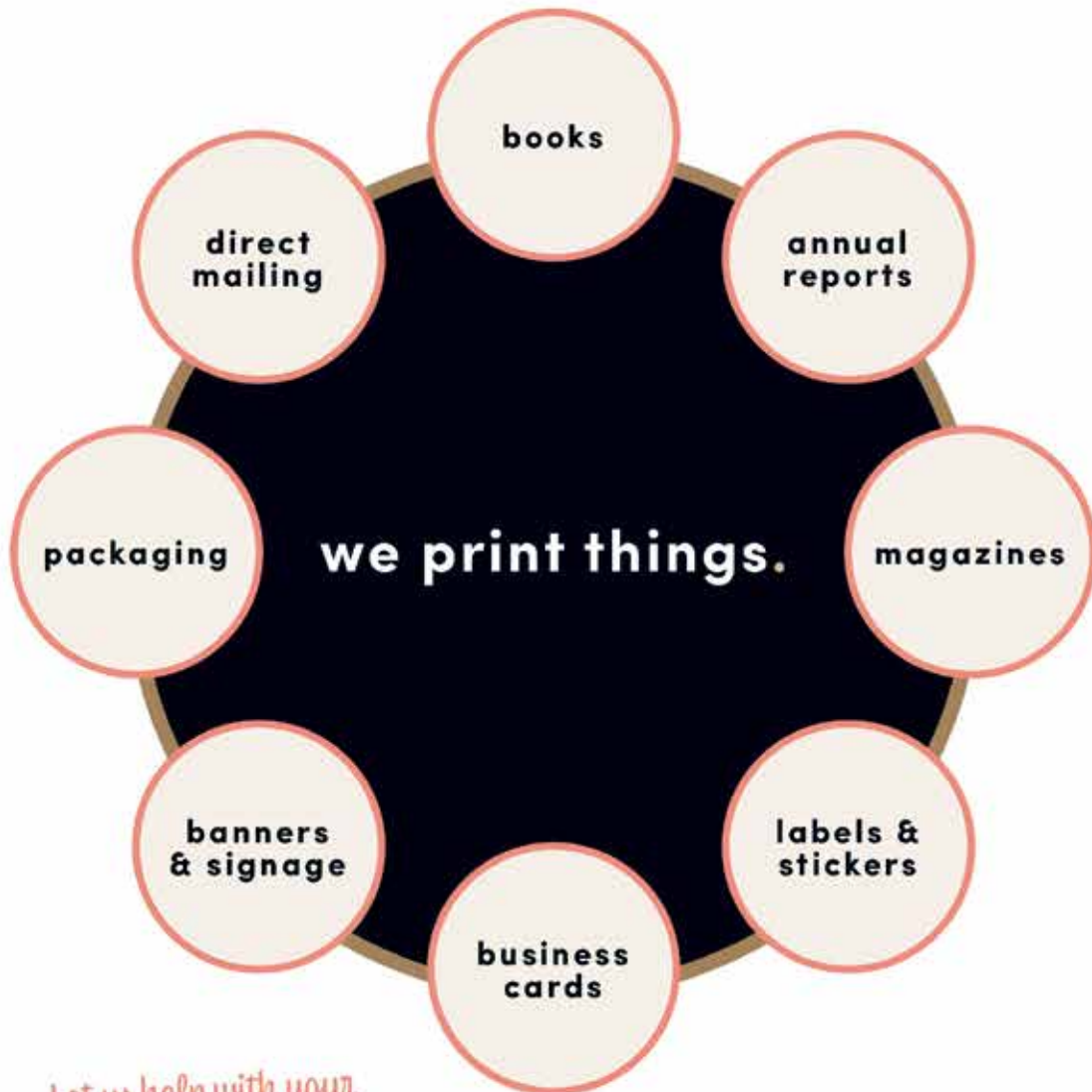
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Regional Council

www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au

Artist impression of the Dumaresq Dam Conservation Area redevelopment

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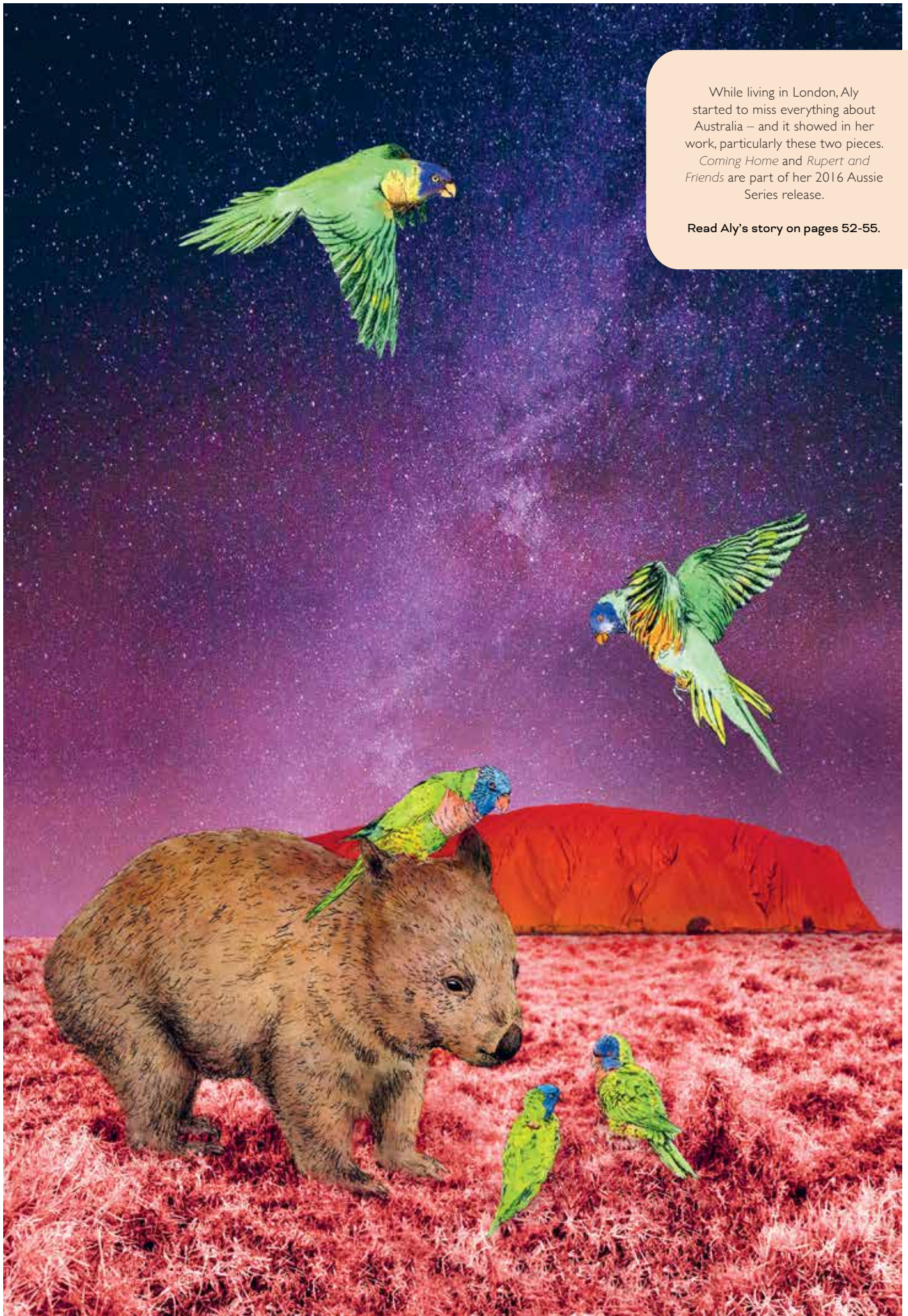
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**'COMING HOME' AND
'RUPERT AND FRIENDS'**

By Aly Pearson,
Alykat Creative,
Coffs Harbour NSW





While living in London, Aly started to miss everything about Australia – and it showed in her work, particularly these two pieces. *Coming Home* and *Rupert and Friends* are part of her 2016 Aussie Series release.

Read Aly's story on pages 52-55.

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Coombsy from The Welder's Dog, Tamworth

Meet The Team

These five humans have lived their lives throughout Australia, England, South Africa and France. These days you'll find them in Armidale, Tamworth and Newcastle. They drink local gins and craft beers, black coffee and Yorkshire tea, green smoothies and chocolate milk. We should drink more water. All are proud parents. None are elite athletes. We believe in real conversations, authentic storytelling, heartfelt design and photography that steals your soul. If anyone's offering group salsa classes, we're here for it. One of us folds fitted sheets like a magician, another is a closet war documentary enthusiast. One of us dances to Kate Bush most Saturday nights, the other is a UK-football podcaster. Then there's the one who uses the words 'golly' and 'groovy' like they're going out of fashion... merch to follow soon.

We love the life we live.

We love what we do.

We love this magazine... and we hope you do too.



JEN
HEAD
STYLIST

TALIA
ART
DIRECTOR

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MARKETING
DIRECTOR

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DIRECTOR

STEPH
EDITORIAL
DIRECTOR



EDITOR'S LETTER

Hello and welcome to the inaugural issue of *FOUND Regional* magazine! We're chuffed to bits to have you along for the ride – and what a ride it's been. In the space of three months we built this beauty from the ground up. But while the physical pages have been 12 weeks in progress, this has been a dream in the making after more than 15 years in publishing. Yes, it's been something I've wanted to do for myself and my family for years, but it's something I wanted to do for regional readers too.

For too long the life we lead in regional towns has been considered a back-up plan, a move we'll make for a while until an opportunity in the big smoke comes along. These days, that couldn't be further from the truth. I didn't accidentally move home to Armidale after spending 18 years away in cities like Sydney and London. My regional move was planned, considered, intentional, and the life we lead here is joyous, fulfilling and rewarding.

We have a huge opportunity to contribute something real in our beautiful towns – and we want to share the stories of the people out there already doing it, in so many incredible ways across a whole range of industries. These people deserve their time in the spotlight, they deserve to watch their stories be shared far and wide and to feel seen for what they do. That's why *FOUND Regional* magazine is here and we couldn't be more excited for the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

So thank you, from the bottom of our regional lovin' hearts, for picking up this first issue. And here's to our advertisers and stockists who jumped on board before these pages became reality. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as our team enjoyed creating it.

Steph x

STEPH WANLESS
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, learn and work, the Anaiwan people, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend our respect to the Yaegl people to the north and the Gumbaynggirr people to the south, and all the Aboriginal people of this beautiful land we're lucky enough to call home.

*

LAVINNIA INGLIS

With thanks to Lavinnia Inglis for sharing this incredible artwork, Guwa Gundi Djagun (Uncle's Country), designed in remembrance of her late uncle Stephen Mark Blair. Lavinnia is a proud, contemporary Gumbaynggirr artist and jewellery maker who enjoys painting unique pieces including footwear, sporting equipment, gaming consoles and more.

"The patterns signify my uncle's connection to country and our waterways. Uncle Steve would often take us kids out on the water, whether it be freshwater or saltwater, in his boat to go fishing, swimming, or just for a ride."

good news

Look for the good, the helpers, the folks who are here to make the world that little bit better.

Like the London Fire Brigade trialling animal masks to save pets from smoke inhalation, the people who fought for five years to see the Aboriginal flag fly permanently on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and the investigator who reunited a 101-year-old woman Dutch woman with a painting stolen by the Nazis in WWII.

Look to the Clean Up Australia Day volunteers who have contributed to a 30 per cent decline in plastic waste on Aussie beaches in the past six years, and the team planting a whopping 150,000 trees on private properties across New South Wales to create habitat highways for koalas.

Look to Italy using ex-Mafia properties to house Ukrainian refugee families, and the incredible humans behind a new blood test called Galleri that can detect more than 50 different types of cancer in a single blood draw.

Look to Bette Nash from Boston who was recognised as the longest-serving flight attendant by the *Guinness World Records*. At 86 years old, she's been serving customers in the sky for nearly 65 years and started at a time when cigarettes were handed out to passengers.

Look to Enzo Romero from Peru who, after watching *Star Wars – The Empire Strikes Back*, was inspired to develop his own prosthetic hand made completely out of recycled plastic bottles.

Look to not-for-profit Matter of Trust leading the circular economy by reusing hair and fur donated from salons and pet groomers to create mats and oil booms to clean up oil spills, and the search and rescue team who freed a man trapped in a pool table at a Coffs Harbour pub.

**That's a whole lot of good.
Cheers to that.**



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Financial Planning

Certified Financial Planner and Chartered Accountant, Matt Meehan, is an expert in Accounting, Business Services and Financial Planning.

Drawing on this knowledge, Matt provides high-level strategic financial solutions unique to you. Focusing on your current needs and future goals, his areas of expertise include:

- Investment & Wealth Creation**
- Superannuation & Retirement Planning**
- Personal Insurance**
- Business Planning**
- Estate Planning**
- Self-managed Superannuation**



BEHIND THE LENS

Armidale, NSW

JAMES RUSSELL

"I don't take many self portraits – but when my daughters and wife get fed up with me harassing them to sit for me, sometimes it's all an addicted photographer can do. I actually think it's a good thing for those who take photos to spend time in front of the lens – to experience and feel what our subjects feel. It's a fantastic, humbling, learning experience."

@jamesrusphoto
jamesrussellphoto.com

FOUND X FOUND





9.

LATEST PRODUCTS AND FOODIE FINDS

1. BABES IN THE BUSH, BARRABA

Your one-stop shop for an extensive range of gifts and homewares from well-known brands such as Thomas Cook Clothing Co, Eb and Ive, Toshi, Ugg, Robert Gordon and LaVida Trading. Popular pieces this spring include this divine cane furniture teamed with a pair of gorgeous gardening gloves.

babesinthebush.com.au
@babesinthebush

5. HUMBLE ESPRESSO, TAMWORTH

This exquisite, humble joint has got a whole range of cravings covered. We're talking Nutella hazelnut eclairs, bacon benedict on a toasted croissant, pancakes with chocolate honeycomb butter and none other than The Cat's Pyjamas by Seven Miles coffee. Owner and Tamworth local Julie Ferguson will be ready and waiting in this iconic, recently revamped east Tamworth location.

@humbleespresso

weekly, so be sure to check the specials board!

pipspastry.com.au/shop
@pips_pastry_gunnedah
(Thursday 7.30am-12pm)

9. TISH FACO, BELLINGEN

What began as a humble pop-up food truck has grown to become Tish Faco Cantina, a Californian/Mexican fusion restaurant whipping up locally-grown goodness inspired by the produce paradise of Bellingen. The team takes advantage of fresh goods wherever possible, while the owner's own verdant garden inspires seasonal specials in both food and drinks.

tishfaco.com.au
@tishfaco



10.

2. BRISK TRADING, GUYRA

Bring on the cocktails! Kip&Co's stunning new range of glassware is lighting up the shelves at Brisk Trading. Handmade, mouth blown, the range includes tumblers, wine glasses, coupes, champagne glasses and candlestick holders in three incredible colour combos.

brisktrading.com.au
@brisktrading

6. KANE & CO

Need something fancy for your feet? Look no further than Kane & Co's extensive range of retro socks. They're made from 80 per cent premium Australian cotton so they're extra soft, fast drying and seriously durable.

kaneandco.com.au
@kane_and_co_aus

10. PEACH & WOLF FAMILY BAKER, COFFS HARBOUR

This brand new artisan, family-owned bakery serves up seriously drool-worthy pastries, Wednesday to Sunday from 7am. From classics like the cultured butter croissant and cinnamon roll to savoury goodness known as 'Will's forearm sausage roll'. Add to the mix a divine collection of sourdough loaves (available in 2kg size!), including their signature sour, seeded sour, super fruit sour and Turkish (Sundays only). Treats a plenty and laughs to boot.

@peachandwolfbakery

3. THE NEW ENGLAND COLLECTIVE, ARMIDALE

Jones & Co's Tourist Dreams vases are coming in hot. The three, wheel-thrown clay vessels feature hand-painted motifs synonymous with the brand's three favourite holiday destinations: Hawaii, Paris and Ibiza.

newenglandcollective.com.au
@thenewenglandcollective_

7. THE ATHLETIC CLUB, SAWTELL

Wine, cocktails, Guinness - that's how The Athletic Club rolls. Pouring from 4pm daily, (happy hour running from 4-6pm!), these guys are masters of the classics. You name it, they're on it - the margarita, Aperol spritz, or a Brick Lane Backyarder. The team's also been known to host Aperitivo Masterclasses, where you're shown how to make the perfect aperitivos all perfectly paired with matching canapes.

@theathleticclubsawtell

11. MANNY'S ON MARSH, ARMIDALE

At its heart, Manny's on Marsh (located above Armidale's iconic Whitebull Hotel) strives for farm-to-table dishes by sourcing fresh local produce. With talented head chef Giuseppe at the helm, you'll find a whole range of authentic Italian cuisine. Heads up - Wednesday is pasta night, where Giuseppe and the team deliver a new pasta each week for just \$20.

@mannys.on.marsh



11.

4. THE MOUNTAIN MERCHANT, DORRIGO

Do you love the concept of an endless summer? Smelly Balls reusable felt air fresheners will take you back to a warm summer evening drive, the sun setting behind you as palm trees sway in the evening breeze. Inspiring you to never stop discovering new places, Smelly Balls will have you dreaming up your next adventure in no time.

themountainmerchant.com.au
@themountainmerchantdorrigo

8. PIP'S PASTRY, GUNNEDAH

Launched in early 2022, Pip's Pastry is the place to go on Thursdays in Gunny for a tasty almond croissant, sourdough cinnamon scrolls and sourdough bread, rounded off with a Botero. The team also creates a whole range of danishes

FOUND X FOUND





2.



5.



1.

REGIONAL GIGS, PLAYS AND EVENTS

1. TASTE TAMWORTH

**Saturday 10 – Sunday 18
September 2022**

See why the Tamworth region is fast becoming a must-visit destination for foodies at the annual Taste Tamworth Festival. Drawing visitors from across New South Wales, the event is a long weekend celebration of local food, wine and produce.

This year's calendar of events includes...

Saturday 10 September

- Sweet Street
Fitzroy Street Plaza
- A Taste of Sunset
Kitty Crawford Estate

Sunday 11 September

- Long Lunch
The Pavillion Function Centre

Friday 16 September

- Laneway Pop Up
Fitzroy Street

Saturday 17 September

- High Tea in the Gardens
Tamworth Botanic Gardens
- Kids' High Tea in the Gardens
Tamworth Botanic Gardens

Sunday 18 September

- Taste in the Park
Bicentennial Park,
Tamworth

Tickets on sale now! Tickets not required for 'Sweet Street' or 'Taste in the Park'.

[destinationtamworth.com.au/
event/taste-tamworth](https://destinationtamworth.com.au/event/taste-tamworth)
[@taste.tamworth](https://taste.tamworth)

2. BLACKVILLE ARTS AND MARKET DAY

Sunday 16 October 2022

A great day out for the whole family! The Blackville Arts and Market Day is a boutique, artisan market

held on the Liverpool Plains shining a spotlight on quality stores and art from across NSW and beyond. This year is set to feature a fashion show and live performance from singer songwriter Sarah Leete. The best bit? It's a not-for-profit community raising funds for Blackville Public School and Tamworth Family Support Services.

blackvillemarkets.com
[@blackvillemarkets](https://blackvillemarkets)

3. COFFS HARBOUR BUSKERS AND COMEDY FESTIVAL

**Coffs Harbour LGA
Wednesday 28 September –
Sunday 2 October**

**Armidale, Beardy Street Mall
Tuesday 27 September
2022**

After 20-plus years of putting fun and laughter onto the streets of Coffs Harbour, the 2022 Coffs Harbour International Buskers and Comedy Festival enters its 21st year. Bursting at the seams with ideas, flavours and new energy, this feel-good event is one for the whole family. Most shows are free to the public, but as always, bring some money for the hat!

coffsharbourbuskers.com
[@coffsharbourbuskersfestival](https://coffsharbourbuskersfestival)

4. DORRIGO FOLK AND BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

**Friday 21 – Sunday 23
October 2022**

The Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival embraces the diverse origins of folk, bluegrass, and old-time country music. Each year the program features a combination of regional artists with a fresh realisation of music, alongside well-versed

performers from across Australia and overseas.

A not-for-profit event run completely by volunteers, the festival is held at the Dorrigo Showgrounds on Gumbaynggirr Country.

dorrigofolkbluegrass.com.au
[@dorrigofolkbluegrassfest](https://dorrigofolkbluegrassfest)

5. ARMIDALE SPRING GAMES

**Friday 30 September –
Sunday 2 October 2022**

The Armidale Spring Games brings people of all ages together to celebrate the diversity and togetherness that the world of sport provides. Hosting three sports in its inaugural year (hockey, football and cricket), the event showcases some of the region's premier sporting facilities located in the heart of New England, while providing participants, supporters and families the opportunity to experience the beauty, charm and sophistication of the city of Armidale.

armidalespringgames.com.au
[@visitarmidale](https://visitarmidale)

6. RELISH MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

**Friday 30 September –
Sunday 2 October 2022**

Relish Music and Arts festival is held deep in the Bellingen Valley at Homelands, one of the O'G Hippy communes from the township's vibrant bohemian past. Soak up three days and three nights of camping, music, art workshops and river swims on the beautiful banks of the crystal-clear Bellingen River, with the mountains towering above covered in Gondwana Rainforest.

relishbello.com.au
[@relishbello](https://relishbello)

IN PICTURES AT BENDEMEER RODEO

WORDS Steph Wanless
PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Terry

1.6 SECONDS OF ECSTASY

Australia's rodeo community is fuelled by generations of families, friends made on the road, and young ones watching from afar, eager to climb the ranks. It's a scene Abbie Miller, a breakaway roper from Singleton, and Brittany McVicar, a barrel racer from Tamworth, have been part of since they were kids.

"I train four to six hours a day, four nights a week," says Abbie. "I compete in at least two events most weekends, often travelling for hours at a time across state borders. When my time and effort pays off, I'll rack up an Australian-record-breaking 1.6 seconds on the clock. If someone ever said to me I couldn't do it anymore, I'd do everything in my power to change that."

It's a feeling, Abbie says, is unlike any other – and one that fellow rodeo competitor Brittany is grateful for daily.

"Before every event, I remind myself how privileged we are to be there, to have the opportunity to compete in this sport with our horse and celebrate all we can do alongside our family and friends – that's the mindset for me," says Brittany. "It's in my blood, too. Both my parents have competed in rodeo all over Australia, along with all four of my grandparents. I can't remember a time when horses weren't by my side. It's an honour to compete with a horse you've bred, raised and trained yourself, it's a connection like no other. The adrenaline kicks in, our pace builds and we give it our all." *

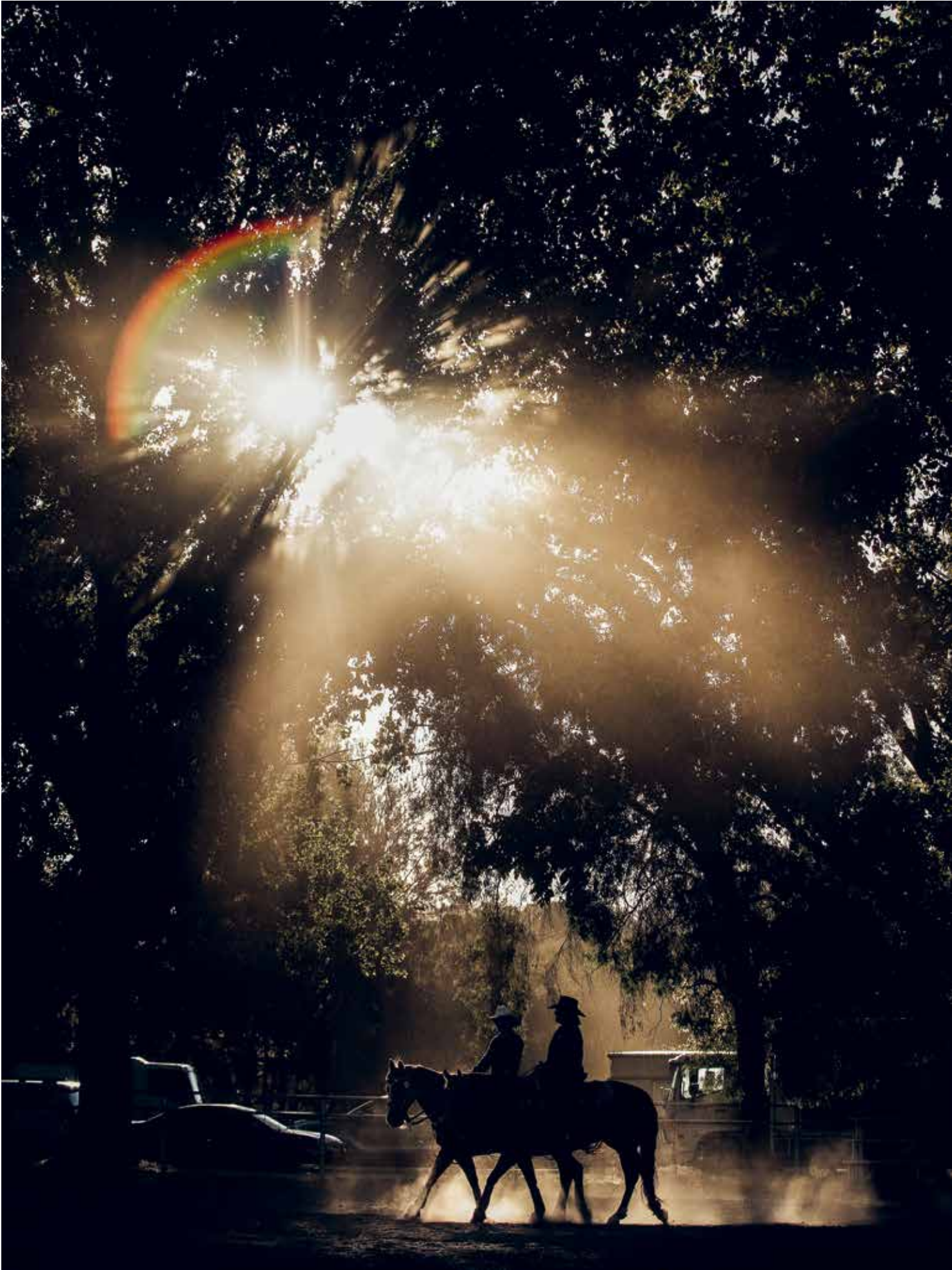














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*



4 THINGS DESIGN HAS TAUGHT US...

With Melissa and Anthony Killen
Killen Furniture + Kitchens
PHOTOGRAPHY Studio LJ
INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE Richards Stanisich

OUR HOMES ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR EVERYDAY EXISTENCE AND WELLBEING

The past few years have been profoundly enlightening, albeit forced upon us as a result of the pandemic, and the construction industry has been a place of huge activity. People are investing in home renovation and new home projects that are, more closely than ever before, a true reflection of who they are and how they live – and that's incredibly exciting.

BESPOKE DESIGN MATTERS

It's not a buzzword, it's not something that should be overlooked, it's crucial to the design process from start to finish. Your experience and the end product should be completely unique to you; your needs and wants, your budget and your vision. The process is a creative and collaborative one where all the components need to line up for a successful production (just like a hit musical!).

SLOW DESIGN SHOULD BE CELEBRATED

Kudos was once given to how 'cheaply' a build or renovation could be achieved, but the new standard is shifting toward how sustainably-driven and enduring it will be. Our environmentally-sustainable practice produces cabinetry and furniture that will last. Slow design is inherent to our philosophy, where strong consideration is given to the longevity of a project both in function and aesthetics. Ultimately, we feel compelled to help reduce the waste and landfill that comes from a lack of planning, forethought and a consumerist approach to buying where a 'cheap' product or trend item is given precedence over something that requires a bigger investment in time, money and effort.

BEAUTIFUL DESIGN IS FOR LIFE

We should feel free to live in, on, among and beside all forms of beautiful design. Our pieces are created with high-quality materials and craftsmanship, hardware with a lifetime warranty and design that promotes the longevity of the product. Do we think our kitchens and furniture pieces are beautiful? Absolutely. But they're not 'wall art', they're not something to be seen but not touched. They are for living. They are practical and robust. And we're proud to create thoughtful, authentic, livable spaces and investment pieces that will enrich our clients' lives for many years to come. *

Welcome to the stage



TIME IN THE SPOTLIGHT WITH MUSICIANS,
PERFORMERS AND ACTORS FROM STAGE
AND SCREEN.



A LIFE MADE BY MADDIE

How wise words from a design teacher, the bright lights of New York City, and a ridiculously expensive pair of statement earrings led Maddie Fleming to her dream life, back home in Armidale, NSW.

WORDS Steph Wanless
PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Terry

There was a time when Maddie Fleming guarded three cow costumes with her life. One stuffed in a suitcase at the back of her wardrobe, a second on rotation at the dry cleaner and a third lying in wait at the *Sunrise* studio.

Yes, Maddie was once Channel 7's very own cash cow – a role she juggled alongside guest greeter and junior producer at Australia's number one breakfast show. It was time well spent, a big smoke adventure that saw her fetching Miley Cyrus a Slurpee one minute, and jumping on a plane the next (cow suit in tow), ready to surprise a jackpot winner on their doorstep by 5am.

It was a far cry from what she describes as a "magical childhood" in regional NSW.

"I grew up on my family farm, 'Hilltop', in Black Mountain – it was such a fun upbringing. We roamed wild and free, lived without electricity, and lapped up open plan living," says Maddie.

"For as long as I can remember my brother and I shared a half wall between our rooms, it probably came up to my shoulder, so we could talk to each other whenever we wanted."

Among sibling chats and paddock adventures, Maddie's days were spent pursuing her passion for athletics, design, and a longing to create something uniquely her own – something formed with her own two hands.

"I was never an academic soul, but I loved all things design and can distinctly remember something my design teacher told me in year 10. She said: 'You can do anything you want in design. You can copy something you've seen or someone else's work, but that's not true design. But if you create something with your heart, your brain and your hands all together, that's the moment you design something real'. From that second onwards, it's all I ever wanted to do." »

ASSEMBLE STUDIOS.



Introducing Assemble Studios, a creative space to assemble, learn from and inspire one another. The love child of photographer Lauren Boundy (@_studiolj_) and mindset educator Grace Hull (@grace.hull.mindset.education), the studio is Armidale's go-to destination for workshops (sip and sculpt, paint and pinot and tea-making to name a few), as well as co-working, pop-up shops and photoshoot hire. (psst... we even shot these incredible cover story images there!)

1/160 BEARDY STREET.
@ASSEMBLESTUDIOS_



A LIFE BY DESIGN

After her *Sunrise* adventure in Sydney, Maddie made the move to New York – a long-held dream that saw her land back in live production, while also working at an Australian cafe in Nolita, Lower Manhattan.

Once again, she found herself juggling multiple roles, this time for stadium shows led by none other than Bruce ‘The Boss’ Springsteen.

“It was wild – I’d be racing around these huge stadiums in a golf cart, delivering random things to hundreds of people, all the time listening to Bruce doing his soundcheck in the background,” she says.

“Our crew was responsible for catering and after-show parties, that meant making sure up to 1000 people were fed daily, checking Bruce, his wife Patti Scialfa and the band’s riders were fulfilled, and sourcing random circus-themed products for an after-party. It was exciting, for sure, but I was working horrifically long hours... it wasn’t as glamorous as it sounds.”

After working in live events for a year in America, Maddie reached a turning point – one knew she needed to take control of for the sake of her health.

“I was diagnosed with epilepsy when I was 16, and after working on the Bruce shows up the east coast, as well as a number of other live events and theatre performances in New York, I knew I couldn’t realistically live this life for the long-term – my health just wouldn’t cope,” says Maddie.

“BUT IF YOU CREATE SOMETHING WITH YOUR HEART, YOUR BRAIN AND YOUR HANDS ALL TOGETHER, THAT’S THE MOMENT YOU DESIGN SOMETHING REAL’. FROM THAT SECOND ONWARDS, IT’S ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO.”

“I also never got to see my partner Ben, who lived in LA at the time, so it was taking me down a road I didn’t want to go down. My lifestyle was shit. My health was shit. It was time to reevaluate.”

Maddie moved to LA in April 2017, focused on her health and took a moment to figure out her next move.

Then came the lightning bolt. Strolling the streets of LA, looking for something to elevate her outfit for a black tie event she was attending that week, Maddie spotted a pair of earrings through a boutique window and fell in love... hard.

Then she saw the price tag.

“I thought nope, no, definitely not – this is not something I »

"LIVING THIS LIFE
GIVES ME THE SPACE
AND TIME TO FOCUS
ON DESIGNING
AMAZING PIECES
AND SEEING WHERE
THAT TAKES US."



can afford," she says. "But I thought I could make them, I could do it myself. So I tried, and I tried, for a good few months I tried and watched multiple YouTube tutorials on how to make earrings.

"I launched an Etsy store and Made By Maddie was born. Looking back now, I can't believe I ever thought what I created was okay... but it worked, actually, it went bonkers. It became a family business, a career that simply wouldn't have been possible without Ben's support and business knowledge.

"I love the fact it's something we've grown together, something that supported our move home to Armidale, and something I've designed with my heart, my brain and my hands."

A PIECE OF PARADISE

In October 2017, Maddie and Ben flew home to Australia. Their goal? To build a family, a home and a lifestyle first, then weave their careers around those magical moments.

"Armidale has played a huge part in that – it was affordable, beautiful and gave us the opportunity to design our own piece of paradise. Never in my wildest dreams did I think we'd be sat here in our perfect family home, with two gorgeous daughters, our dog Dudley, a big backyard, treehouse, firepit and veggie garden. But it's everything we could ever wish for, it's ours, and it's where Made By Maddie has grown up too.

"Living this life gives me the space and time to focus on designing amazing pieces and seeing where that takes us... I have so many exciting things planned for Made By Maddie's future, and if the past is anything to go by, it's going to be a wild ride." *



DIVINE INSPIRATION

Maddie's designs bring a little ray of sunshine into everyone's life – but where does she draw her inspiration from?

"I love the design process – my inspiration comes from fabrics, fashion, and places I've been. That's where limited edition pieces like the Mexican Collection and Cuban Collection come from. But I'm also hugely drawn to colour and pattern, that's often how my design process begins. I have every paint swatch available at Bunnings and turn to them regularly when I'm trying to recreate the perfect 'Cuban green', 'Red lips' or 'Terrazzo'.

"Design is a huge passion of mine too, so I'm always reading about design trends, flicking through *Vogue* to see what catches my eye, and listening to webinars about upcoming fashion trends for 2023. While polymer clay has been my number one material for a few years now, I'm excited to be moving into different materials and seeing where that takes us!"

Want to see what happens next? Follow the Made By Maddie adventure: @madebymaddiestore





*
**A MADE BY MADDIE
SUBSCRIPTION BOX?!**
Yep, you read that right. Maddie has launched a monthly earring club so you can gift yourself a surprise set of statement earrings at the start of every month. A-mazing. Choose from danglers, studs, or both, and Maddie will send you exclusive, one-of-a-kind designs unavailable for general sale, teamed with another surprise gift. Turns out dreams really do come true!
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*



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IN CONVERSATION WITH...

LOREN RYAN

THE GAMILARAAY MUSICIAN ON
LIFE, MUSIC AND THE POWER
OF WINANGA-LI,
GIRR NHAMA DHIRRABUU...



LOREN RYAN

GEE SHE'S DEADLY!

The Tamworth-born singer is sharing her Gamilaraay language far and wide. Her two favourite phrases? Winanga-li – to know, to love, to acknowledge, to see, to understand. Girr nhama dhirrabuu – gee that's deadly!

As told to Steph Wanless

I'd sit outside The Tudor, listening to the bands through the open window. The music poured out as the sunshine poured in. Growing up in Tamworth, some of my fondest memories are of the country music festival. Every year, mum and dad would take us down the street to watch the buskers and listen to the bands. I grew up watching my uncles and grandfather play guitar, they lived out at Walgett. We'd travel there a few times a year – grandfather would sit on the steps and play songs, my uncles would join in and my cousins were on bass and drums. It was kind of a male thing... girls never really touched the guitar. **But after one visit, I begged mum and dad to buy me one.** I saved up for ages. Any change I had from my school lunch money, I saved. I finally reached \$100 and went to the music shop with dad – that day I walked out with a \$200 guitar in my arms and didn't put it down for two weeks straight. I learnt everything on my own, with a little help from YouTube, and before long could play a few of my favourite songs. **I was 13 years old and man was I shy.** I'd sing for hours on end, alone in my room... my parents listening at the bedroom door. But after a year, I worked up my brave by going to the PCYC – that's where a lot of blackfellas hung out, it was a safe space for us. I saw a karaoke competition on the school holidays event calendar and signed myself up. I won a \$50 gift voucher to a surf shop... but the best was yet to come. **I didn't know at the time, but Roger Knox was in the crowd.** He was hanging out with his grandsons and had listened to me play. At the end of the comp, he invited me to do a gig with him. Obviously I said yes! So I learnt a couple of his songs and got up on stage with him at Wests Diggers. I was so green. I'd never really sung with a band before and had to borrow some of my sister's clothes for the gig... but I was there, singing with Poppy Roger and Buddy Knox was in his band too. Uncle Buddy was like, "show me how you'd go singing this song..." so I showed him three or four songs that I knew. He said, "You go alright. If you want some help building your ear, your pitch and your repertoire, I'll help ya." **Uncle Buddy mentors a bunch of kids now, but I was the first.** He didn't get any money for it, he just wanted to help. He'd come over every Sunday, mum and dad would put a feed on for him. Then we'd sit in the lounge room and play music for hours. Sometimes I'd go over to his place too, we'd watch performers on YouTube and study their stagecraft. I went from this kid who had crucially bad pitch, to become the performer I am today. Uncle Buddy saw I had potential,

I had good vocal control, I just needed to develop my ear. With his help, my confidence grew and by high school, I'd started combining my music with our traditional language, Gamilaraay. **They sat a group of us down in year seven and told us that our language needs us.** They said that it's our responsibility to learn it, carry it, teach it and share it. I really, really took that to heart, and took that on as my responsibility to be a custodian of the language. My love for music meant that I learnt the language quickly through song, and by year nine I was assisting in teaching other kids too. I'd go around to Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, the William Cowper Campus and a bunch of daycare centres, teaching kids through song. I'd share songs I'd learned, but also started developing resources of my own. I love performing original songs and covers in our language, but it also makes me really proud to know they're being used as learning tools too. Because I want everyone to feel like they have ownership of the language, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. **Our language is for everyone and the foundation of the language comes from the land, spirituality, law and all things interconnected.** And so for anyone living out here in country, anyone who goes and sits by the river, stands in a paddock or lies under the shade of a tree – language is all interconnected through these experiences. I want everyone to feel like the language is theirs and to use it. That's what I love about performing in our language too, the way it brings us all together. I love the feeling of being on stage, it's super addictive. It can sort of make your life feel like a rolling musical – it puts a soundtrack behind your life, each moment connected to a song. I'm able to relive these moments every time I perform, and connect with someone in the crowd who might be feeling the same – it's the human connection I love most. Now, since Star Maker, I'm on the up and up – I want bigger things. **For the first time, I feel like I have the permission to be myself, so I'm really leaning into that.** From now and into the future, you're going to see a tonne of authenticity, rule breaking, really outside the box stuff. I'm recording a new album too, set for release in 2023. I'm going to call it *My Boring, Sexy, Thrilling Life* – I heard someone say that in a movie once, and I knew that was it. It's going to be really fun, deep, kind of wild and outspoken. There will be no fear, because I'm doing this on my own – I'm an independent artist and a solo mum, so I'm going to do it my way. *



ALBUM LOVE

Loren's first album, *Songs for Charlie*, is a tribute to her daughter – featuring her favourite songs *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* and the *Hokey Pokey*, as well as four original tracks. The album incorporates words and verses in the Gamilaraay language and the musical backing of the didgeridoo and clapsticks.

Loren's second album, *My Boring, Sexy, Thrilling Life* is due for release in early 2023. Until then, lap up her stunning vocals in compositions like *Little Darlin'* and *Flame Trees*, by Cold Chisel.



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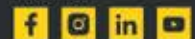
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BORN ARTIST

Walcha artist Gemma King has been obsessively drawing since the moment she could hold a pencil. Today, her work captures the ever-changing mood of the New England landscape through her preferred medium of linocutting.

WORDS Steph Wanless

“I can distinctly remember my first moment of awe – I was watching Baz Luhrmann’s *Strictly Ballroom*... the colours, the movement, the ageing, sun-drenched Aussie faces, 80s makeup and style, the colloquial humour and drama. The beautiful nonsense of it all.”

Walcha artist Gemma King went on to watch Baz’s masterpiece “an embarrassing number of times”. To this day, she finds herself stealing time to mix inks in an effort to recreate the canary yellow of Liz Holt’s ballroom gown. For Gemma, it was a turning point in the way she viewed the world – an awakening of colour, design and boldness that complemented her joy-filled, artistic childhood.

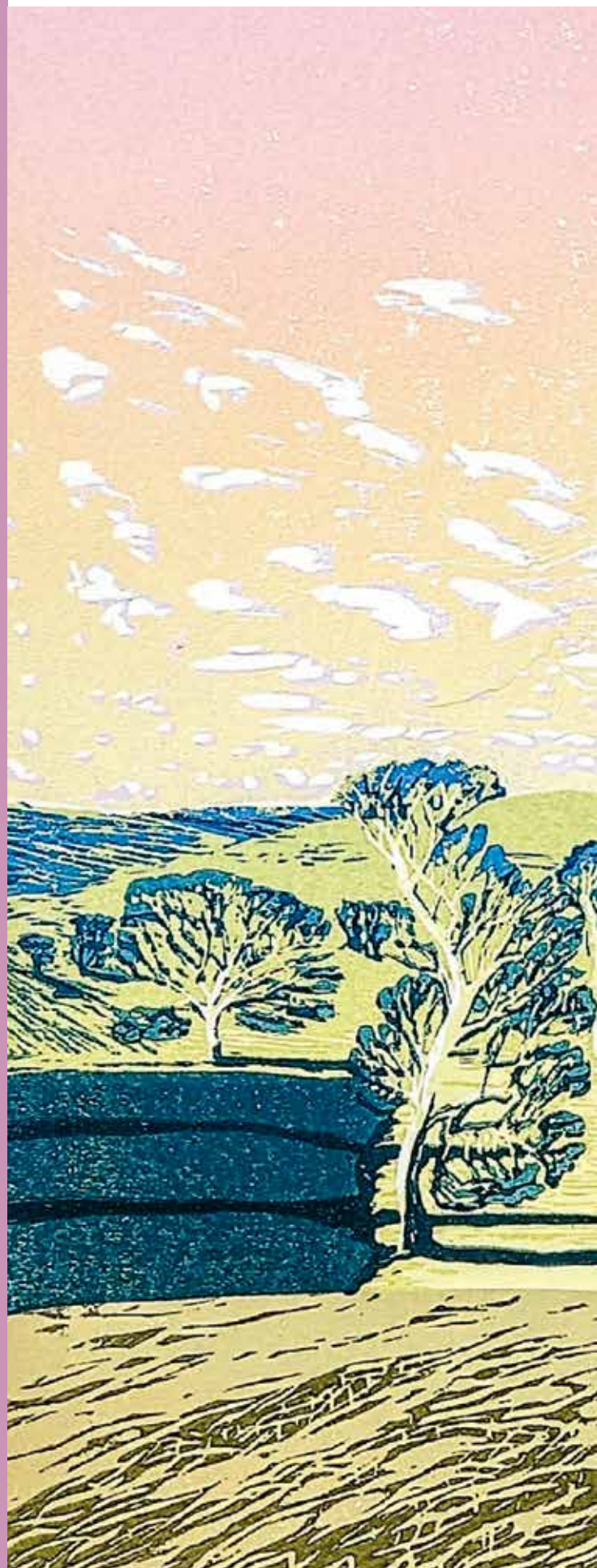
“Growing up, I loved being surrounded by art in my home – I was drawn to it from a young age and have reportedly been obsessively drawing since I could hold a pencil,” she says.

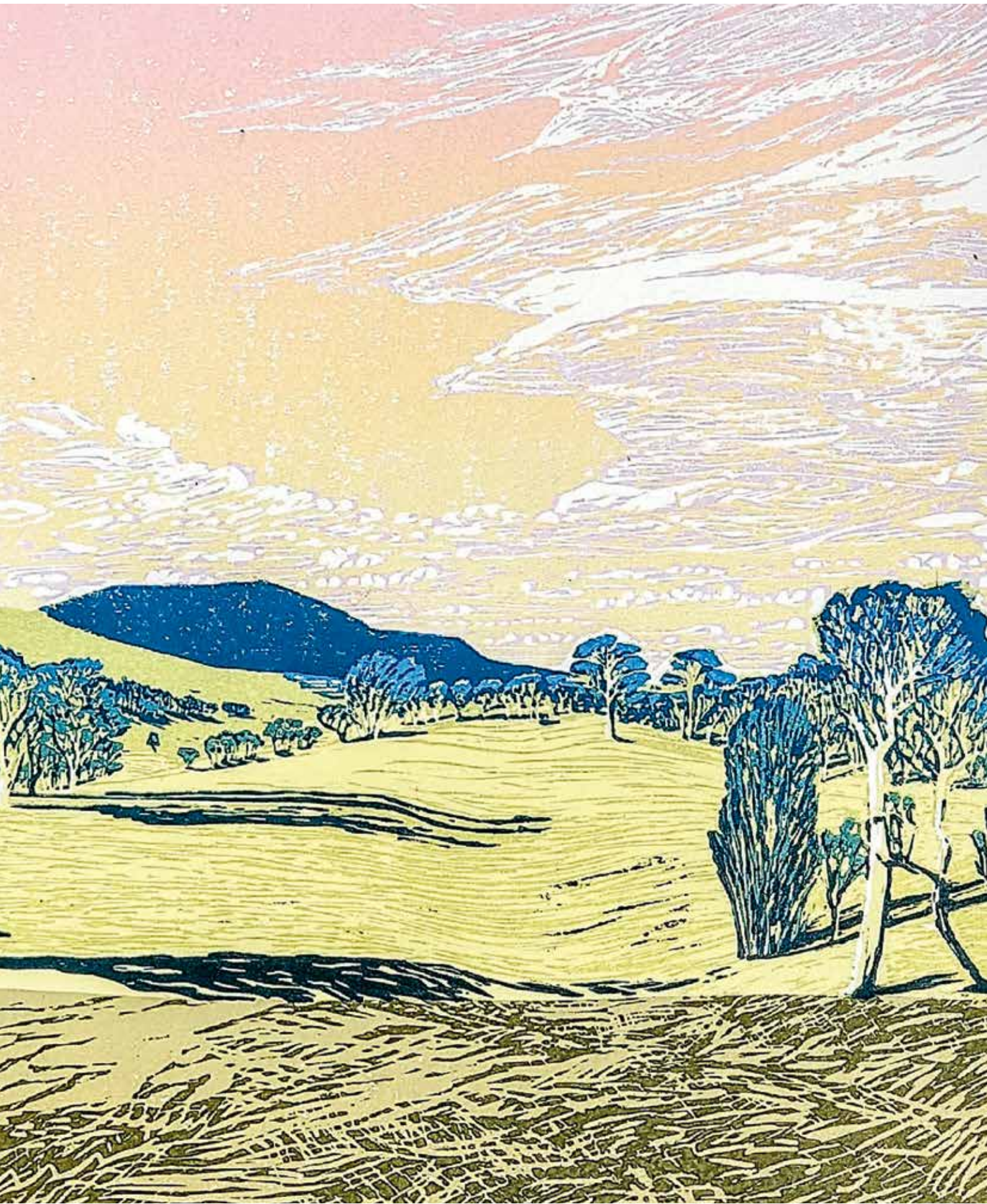
“My parents, artist Julia Griffin and sculptor Stephen King, encouraged me early on – the fact they knew how hard it would be and still gave me the confidence to try was all the validation I needed.”

REGIONAL INSPIRATION

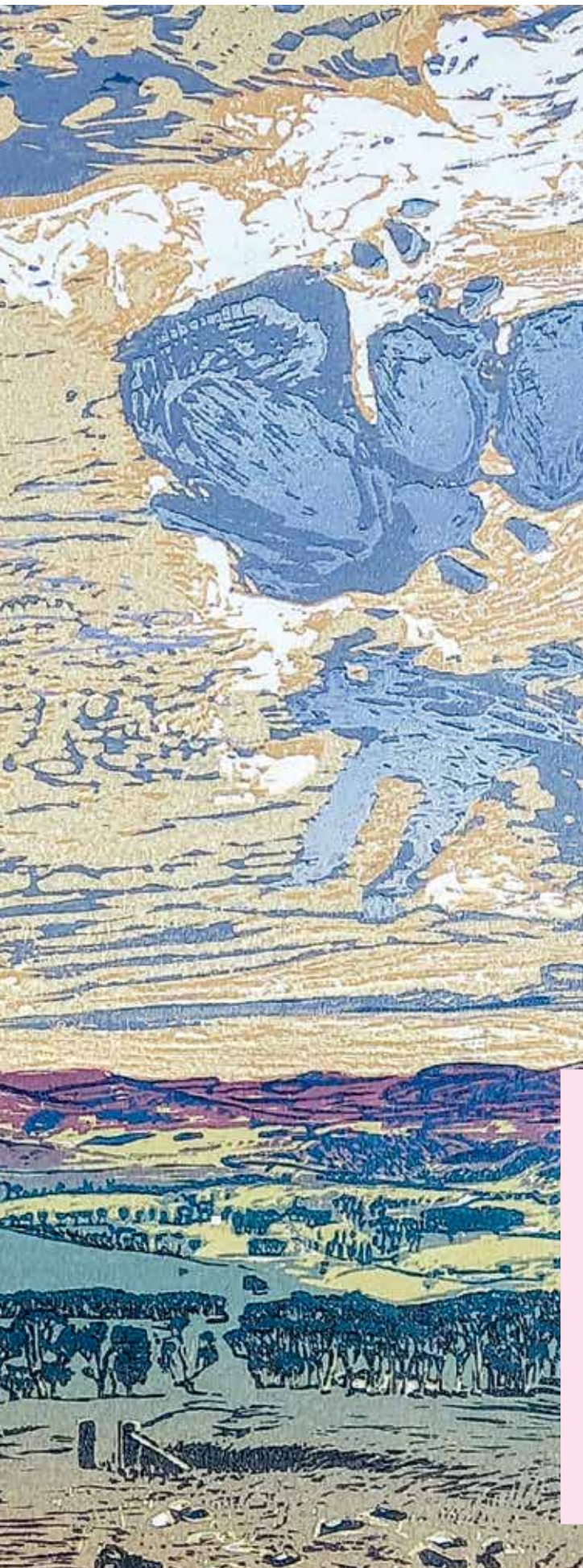
Following school, Gemma went on to study at the National Art School in Darlinghurst, where she graduated with her Bachelor of Fine Arts in printmaking in 2011. Today, her main disciplines include linocutting, carved wooden sculpture and charcoal drawings. Her work is often inspired by her regional landscape and can change dramatically depending on light, season, rain and wind, with linocutting in particular giving her the opportunity to depict the one landscape in an array of moods.

“I think everyone tried linocutting at school, but I just never got sick of it – I could always find new ways to challenge myself within the process,” says Gemma. »









"My recent exhibition at Weswal Gallery, Body of Water, for example, is a new suite of one-off jigsaw single plate reduction linocut prints that respond to the New England's familiar rolling pastures. The work's palette and structure have been simplified, brightened and sharpened, while using thicker ink, more layers and introducing jigsaw to the reduction process has allowed me to touch on the sense of volume, density and boldness seen in this drought-free landscape.

"All of my prints are one-off works and reflect the ever-changing moods of the views I visit regularly on my mustering travels through my home."

"I LOVE WHAT I DO – THE COLOUR, THE QUIET, THE INK, ORDER, PAPER, FORM, RHYTHM AND SHAPE."

Aside from linocutting, Gemma still finds time to draw and can often be spotted with a compressed charcoal pencil in her hand. She's also been inspired by her father to delve into sculpture.

"Dad taught me everything I know to do with constructing an image out of a block – I'm hugely influenced by him in that discipline, but it can be difficult on my hands," says Gemma.

"So I'm looking for a new medium to approach sculpture in a less heavy-handed way that won't hurt my body so much!"

Whatever medium she chooses, Gemma finds herself drawn to art at every opportunity. To her, it's a chance to ground herself, reconnect with her regional landscape and draw on the creative energy that's flowed through her veins since she was a young girl, riding horses with her cousins and visiting granny's house for tea.

"I love what I do – the colour, the quiet, the ink, order, paper, form, rhythm and shape. There's so much about being an artist that I will always love, it's completely indulgent for all the senses and I couldn't imagine doing anything else." *

FINDING GEMMA

Gemma King's art is available privately through her website... gemmajeankingartist.com

And at Sydney's Piermarq Gallery...
piermarq.com.au

You can follow her evolving body of work [@gemmakingart](https://www.instagram.com/gemmakingart) and see her next exhibition, alongside fellow artist Paula Jenkins, at Tamworth's Weswal Gallery this November. She will also be exhibiting with her mother, Julia Griffin, at Tamworth Regional Art Gallery in 2023.



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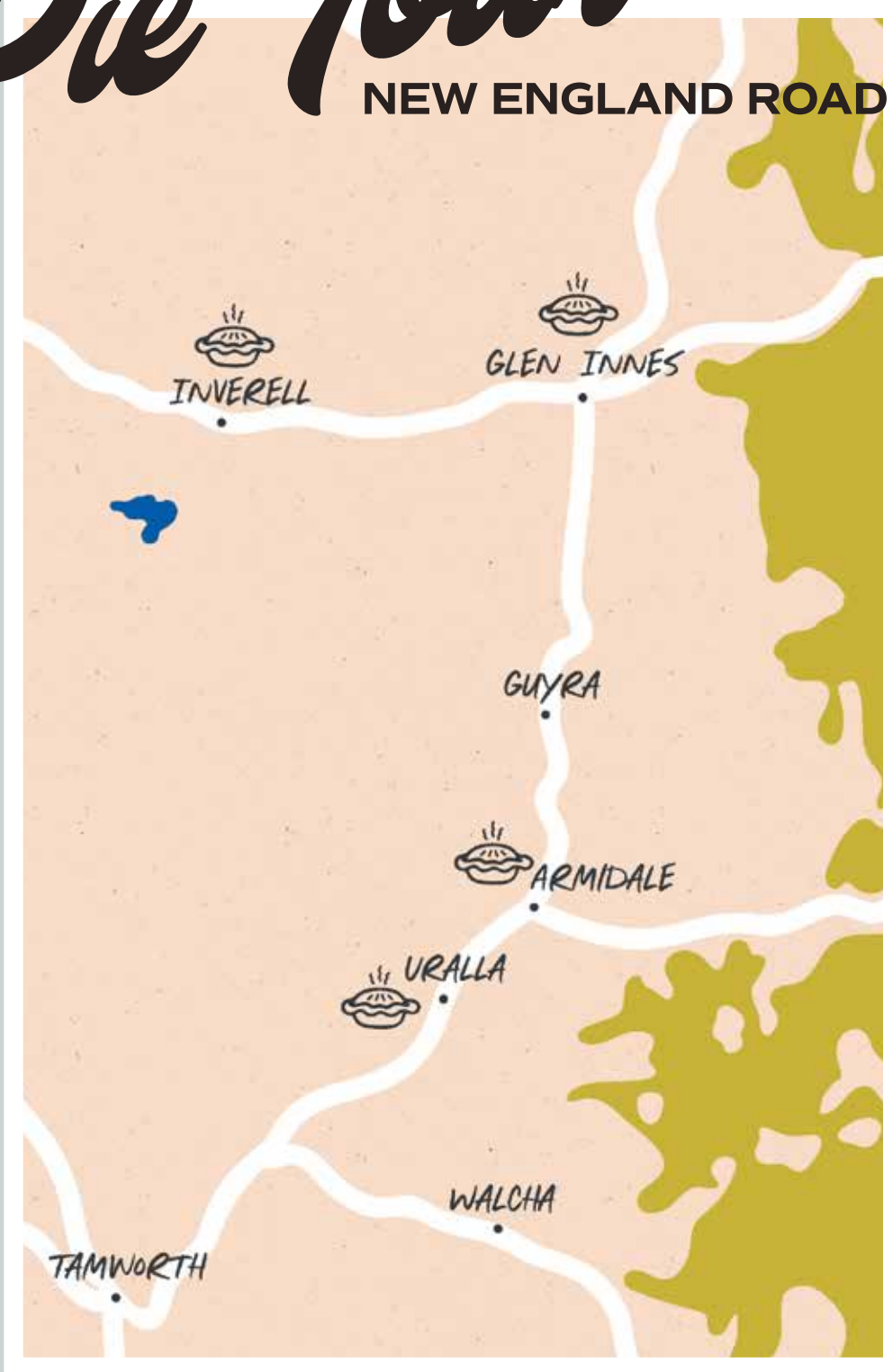
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Pie connoisseur Alan Hollebrandse samples the delights at 1. Inverell's Macintyre Hot Bread Shop, 2. Armidale's Goldfish Bowl, 3. Uralla's The Pie Mechanic, and 4. Glen Innes' The Glen Pie Shop

THE PIEFATHER

Alan Hollebrandse's love of pies began when he was a teenager in Sydney, where he grew up. He'd spend long days at the Sydney Cricket Ground, sitting in what was then known as the Sheridan Stand.

"Besides having a great view, it also had the uniqueness of the pie shop underneath – the aromas would drift up during the morning," he says. "The biggest decision of the day would come when there were 10 minutes till the lunch break and one had to make a call – stay and watch what was happening out on the field, or leave and perhaps miss something vital, but gain prime position in the line to get a Sergeant's pie and the free tomato sauce. Inevitably, on most occasions, I took the pie line."

MACINTYRE HOT BREAD SHOP INVERELL

Plain Beef "This is a solid classic, a beef mince pie. The pastry's edging is smooth all the way around and the first taste is impressive. The texture of the mince is even and well supported by the rich gravy within – the contents are evenly distributed too, filled corner to corner, no gaps. There's an almost spicy taste to the beef, which very much adds to the overall flavour. This is a good working man's pie that will fill you on the go."

THE GOLDFISH BOWL ARMIDALE

@goldfishbowlbakery

Chunky Steak "First impressions are good – the top is well browned with an interesting mix of herbs. It feels sturdy, smells good and the pastry is light and flaky. Inside there's a generous serving of beef, which is tender, evenly sized and wrapped in a very thick and tasty gravy. It's a really lovely pie, served in a great cardboard box making it a perfect takeaway option and is very, very moreish."

THE PIE MECHANIC URALLA

@thepiemechanic

Free Ranger "The thigh meat used in this chicken, pea and tarragon pie is a great call – it really adds to the interesting mix of vegetables and the sweet gravy within. It's an unusually deep pie, with a very generous filling in your classic tin foil packaging. The top crust is rustic, evenly baked, with a sprinkling of sesame seeds, while the body pastry is soft, tasty and easy to negotiate. It's a great tasting, good looking pie."

THE GLEN PIE SHOP GLEN INNES

Chicken Mornay "Straight away you can see this pastry is very flaky and beautifully even. It's interestingly identified by the crescent pastry piece on the pie's top, and I assume the yellow pastry signifies that it's chicken. Inside are bite-sized, tender chicken pieces surrounded by a very tasty, solid mornay sauce. It's certainly a very hardy pie and a great meal." *

TIME OF YOUR LIFE

ALYKAT CREATIVE GALLERY & STUDIO

Despite growing up in Coffs Harbour, Aly Pearson was never much of a beach girl. Instead, she'd stroll across the road from her childhood home to the Creek Walk. It was here she felt at peace; grounded. It was here she had permission to slow down, to softly dwell in the light of dusk and simply be.

WORDS Steph Wanless

Aly, a contemporary illustrator, graphic designer and educator, always knew she was lucky to call Coffs home – and today, after a number of adventures away, she's happy to ground herself on Gumbaynggirr land once more. Here's how her travels from Coffs Harbour, around the world and home again, unfolded...

1997-2002

Location: Coffs Harbour High School, Coffs Harbour

Aly is the first to admit she wasn't overly academic or sporty at school – but she did excel at art. "Choosing Visual Arts as an elective in high school, where we had set projects and the HSC body of work to focus on, made art a more serious option for me. I started collecting pieces of design I was drawn to – like postcards, snippets from my favourite magazines and organic, hand-drawn elements. I especially loved pairing these with sharp, clean designs and lots of white space."

2003

Location: Blacktown to The Rocks, Sydney

A couple of years out of high school, Aly completed a business admin apprenticeship, moved into an apartment with her sister in Sydney, and took the first office job she could get. »

THE STUFF DREAMS ARE MADE OF: DEVA CACAO AND SWIFF

Aly recently seized the opportunity to recreate an entire look for Tamworth boutique chocolate brand, Deva Cacao – the exquisite results of which led them to win a Good Design Award and being named a finalist of just six in the *frankie* magazine 2021 Good Stuff Awards.

Word travels fast and, soon after, Aly was asked to design the cover artwork for Coffs Harbour's Screenwave International Film Festival (SWIFF). The results are equal parts innovative, weird and adventurous – everything the client asked for and more.



"A year in I realised I was working for a nothing job – I felt like I had so much more to give, to learn, to live! My sister asked if I'd heard of graphic design, she said her friend was studying it and makes cool shit on the computer for a job. I looked it up and holy moly – this was exactly what I wanted to do."

2005

Location: Commercial Arts Training College, The Rocks

There was no time to waste. Aly began studying graphic design at the Commercial Arts Training College – she describes it as one of the most amazing times of her life.

"Life was good – catching the train to The Rocks each day, learning from young creatives in a small class of 10 people who were either similar to me or even stranger and better. It was incredible. After never thinking I'd go back to studying, the environment there was relaxed, positive and progressive. I finally learnt how to use my drawings with those clean, contemporary elements and white space, too."

2011

Location: Fitzroy, Melbourne (via Coffs Harbour)

Aly's a straight shooter – she'd been through a breakup and needed a reset. So she snuck back home to Coffs to take a breath, before setting off to Melbourne for something bigger and better.

"I'm pretty sure this was my quarter life crisis. It took me a couple of years to find my groove in Melbourne, but I bloody love that city and lived in Fitzroy, where all my favourite things were at my fingertips. I was selling my prints at some super trendy shops and had a good run of some of the big markets. But typical me, I wanted more. I was about to turn 30 and had always wanted to take advantage of my access to a UK Ancestry Visa."

2014

Location: London, United Kingdom (via Edinburgh, Scotland)

See ya Melbourne, hello Edinburgh. With no real plan, Aly arrived in Ye Olde Edinburgh to discover there were fewer creative opportunities than she'd realised. After a fairly significant freakout and a Facetime chat with her folks, she redirected her journey to London.

"To be honest, becoming another Aussie in London was the last thing I wanted to do. But I landed a job, a place to live and started my life from scratch... again. Only this time, I wasn't as patient. If I didn't like something, I changed it. I was in my thirties now and wasn't wasting time with shitty housemates or jobs – it was that ballsy frame of mind that led me to apply for a part-time graphic design teaching role at Shillington College. To my surprise, I was offered the role full-time. The next two years were a blur of awesome experiences, extreme stress and inevitably, longing for home."

2016

Location: Brunswick, Melbourne... again (via Coffs Harbour... again)

It was Christmas time when Aly's feet landed on Coffs soil. She lapped up the downtime, took a chance to breathe and considered her next move. She wasn't ready to give up her city life just yet, so before long, she returned to Melbourne.

"I still felt I needed to be in a city to be a respected creative – I know that's not true now, but I wasn't ready to admit it then. I took a part-time teaching role at Shillington, but soon found the Melbourne life I'd left behind years before was no longer there. Friends had moved on, the constant public transport and anonymity of city life stood out like a sore thumb and cemented my craving to finally head back to my hometown. I craved the down-to-earth pace of life, the opportunity to be close to my parents and friends and, ultimately, to feel seen as part of the Coffs Harbour community."

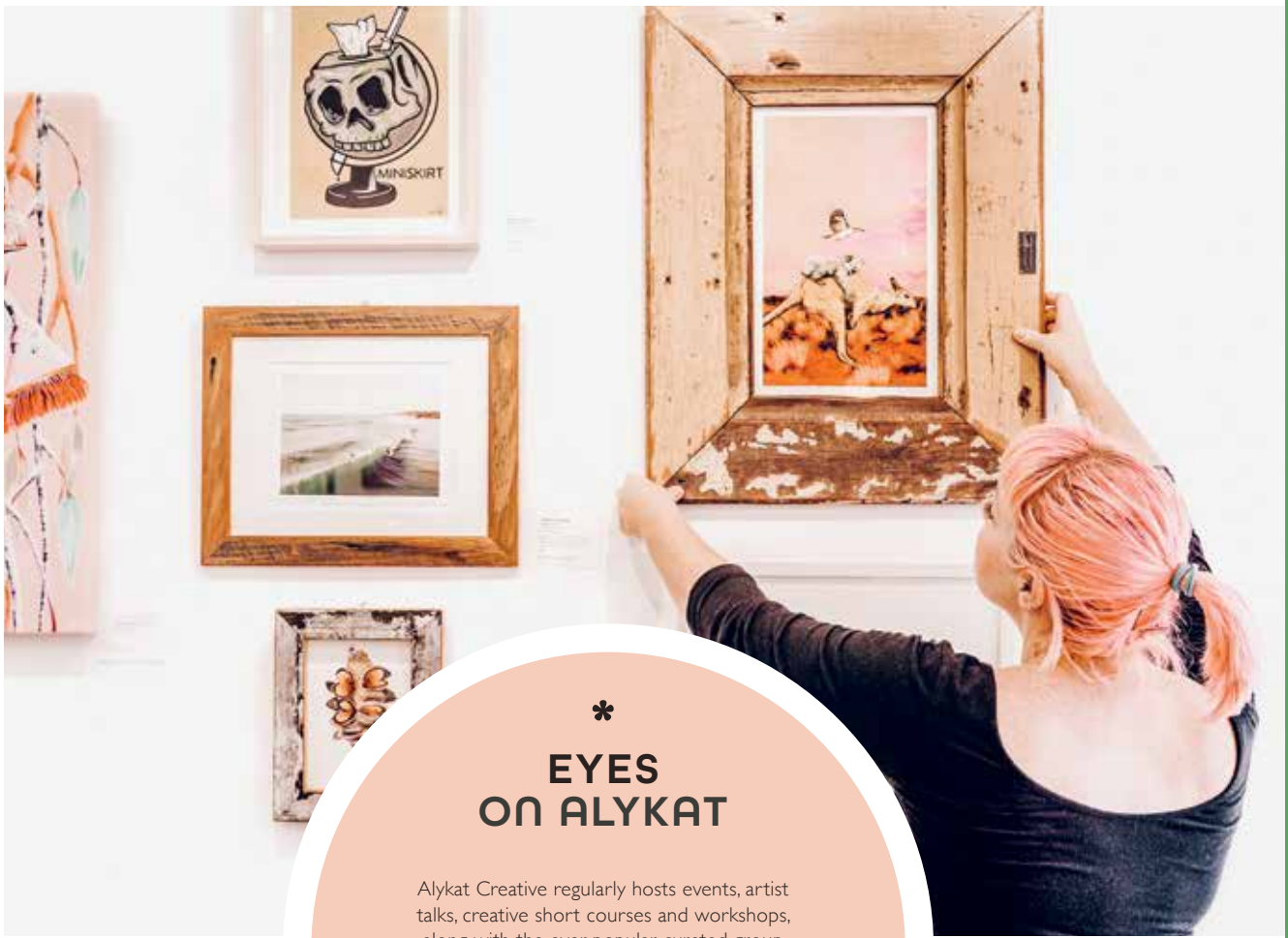
2018

Location: Alykat Creative Gallery & Studio, Coffs Harbour

Aly's decision to move home – for real this time – was an easy and exciting one. She wanted to become an active member of the local creative community, so when she saw a little non-profit gallery in a laneway looking for volunteers, she signed up.

"Twelve months later I'd taken on their social media and reached out to local artists offering both solo and group exhibitions – I even held my own solo show, too. During Covid, I was forced to cancel six months' worth of artists, but it also gave me some perspective and a chance to remember my worth. I used the lockdown to build a business plan and, long story short, Alykat Creative Gallery & Studio was born. We've painted the building to create a real Alykat vibe and when crowds turn up to our exhibitions, it's honestly exhilarating. People glow with excitement in this space – together we're celebrating local artists in a graffitied, back laneway in the heart of my hometown. It might have taken me a while to get here, but now I can't imagine being anywhere else." *

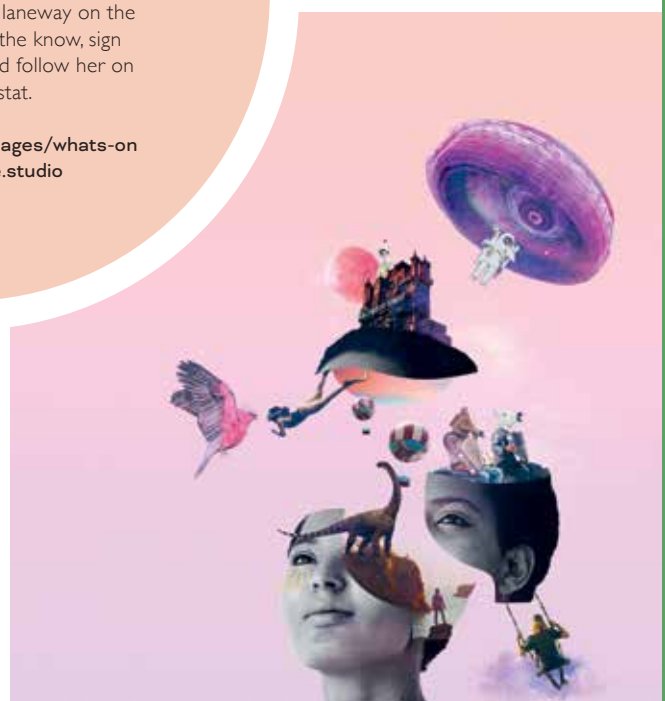




EYES ON ALYKAT

Alykat Creative regularly hosts events, artist talks, creative short courses and workshops, along with the ever-popular curated group exhibitions, in the artiest laneway on the coast. To be the first in the know, sign up to Aly's newsletter and follow her on Instagram... stat.

alykatcreative.com.au/pages/whats-on
[@alykatcreative.studio](https://www.instagram.com/alykatcreative.studio)



Psst... keep your eyes peeled for Aly's dream event, currently being planned. 'PRINT'S NOT DEAD' will be an exhibition of the best illustrators, designers and artists who love print in all its glory. The vision? A laneway fair with stalls, food trucks, live music and industry talks... Watch.This.Space.



THE WELDER'S DOG

BORN OF MATESHIP & FRIENDSHIP
WITH A WHOLE LOT OF HEART



ESTABLISHED 2014

2014

A WELDER'S DOG WELCOME TO JAMES AND PHOEBE CROFT

While new owners of The Welder's Dog, Inverell, might be fresh to the bar game... they've been watching the brand's journey from the sidelines since day one.

As far as storylines go, the tale behind the new owners of The Welder's Dog, Inverell, doesn't get much sweeter.

Inverell High School sweethearts, James and Phoebe Croft, are beaming with excitement when we pull up a pew at the bar, their baby daughter Elkie giggling nearby, equally thrilled to be on this new adventure. Without a doubt, it's a thrilling time for the young family – and they're in it for keeps.

"This just feels right," says James, whose older brother Tom is co-founder of The Welder's Dog brand. "We're not a couple of blow-ins, we're all in. I've always been so proud to say my brother owns The Welder's Dog, so when the opportunity came up to join him on that journey we leapt at it."

PLANS IN MOTION

As a highly-experienced project manager who most recently worked with Armidale Regional Council, Armidale Hospital and the University of New England, James will be putting his skills to good use by showcasing the flexibility of the space.

"We have an incredible building at our disposal here and are very lucky to have fantastic accommodation like the Oxford on Otho by Emilie and Brett Tomlinson of Brett Tomlinson Building, who also led The Welder's Dog build, right upstairs," he says.

"There's a cafe opening next door soon, as well as plans to establish a function space and a stunning beer garden – the perfect spot for live music and other events. We'll be putting as much energy into it as possible and making it a really useable space for the whole community, and not just in bar hours."

Phoebe, who will be using her skills as a teacher to grow the venue's workshops, events and social media presence, is also chomping at the bit to refine her beer-pouring technique.

"That side of things is completely new to me, but I love craft beer and I'm keen to learn more," she says. "Ultimately our passion lies in the town and the people. We love Inverell so much, from the moment we left I knew I wanted to come home one day. My heart is here, and now we're back we want to make The Welder's Dog a happy place for everyone who walks through the door."

STAYING TRUE

While new and exciting plans are in motion, rest assured – if it ain't broke, James and Phoebe won't be fixing it. The current Welder's Dog team will be right where they've always been, while James intends to be behind the bar as much as possible, getting to know people and hearing their feedback.

"We've got a great crew here, along with a fantastic brand thanks to Tom and Dan," he says.

"They're real goers – they don't overthink things and they're not scared to make mistakes. They dive in with their whole heart and we'll be doing the same. We're investing in the town and we want to build something good for the whole community."

"We feel like we've been a part of The Welder's Dog story from the start," adds Phoebe. "Tom was living with us in Newcastle when he first started running ideas by us for the brand – we knew then it would be something great, and we're so proud to be a part of it."

Co-founders Tom Croft and Dan Emery will be fully supporting James and Phoebe from The Welder's Dog homebase in Armidale, supplying beers, merchandise and planning shared events across each location, such as music tours and trivia.

"I'm really looking forward to helping them and watching them put their own flavour on the place," said Dan. "They're returning locals themselves and real people's people, so the Dog is in excellent hands. It's had its fair share of difficulties trying to juggle everything from a distance in some pretty wild economic times, so when they approached us it felt right straight away. I can't think of a nicer couple to take on the reins in Inverell – we're stoked."

"I couldn't agree more," adds Tom. "I could see their enthusiasm for the brand from day one, way back when we were brainstorming names in Newie. It's especially exciting to welcome my brother into the crew too – together with Phoebe, they've got the same, passionate mindset as Dan and I. Without a doubt, they're the best new owners for our Inverell Dog." *



OXFORD ON OTHO

BOUTIQUE ACCOMMODATION IN THE CENTRE OF INVERELL, NSW
SCULPTED FROM THE BONES OF THE OXFORD HOTEL

OPENING THIS SUMMER



GOING PUBLIC



GOOD HUMANS DOING GREAT THINGS,
AND HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THEM
IN THEIR MISSION.

THE RAINBOW CLUB

When Matt Mulligan was in high school, NSYNC topped the charts, mobile phones were the size of bricks and Facebook was just a glint in Mark Zuckerberg's eye. This I know because I was there with him – we graduated from Armidale High School (now Armidale Secondary College) together in the year 2001. Looking back, it was a completely different world to the one we live in today. Not just because NSYNC have disappeared off the face of the earth, but because Matt often felt uncomfortable in his own skin as a gay student.

Thankfully, times have changed – but there's still so much further to go. Matt is leading the way in that change, having returned to our old stomping ground as an English teacher. Here he shares his story of why he created The Rainbow Club in 2019, a safe space for Armidale Secondary College's LGBTQIA+ community.

As told to Steph Wanless

"When I returned to Armidale Secondary College as a teacher, the first thing I wanted to do was make a safe space for the Rainbow kids. Because there are times when, even now, I'm exposed to homophobia in this world. But I'm a strong person, I'm determined and I'll keep going no matter what. But I know what it feels like to be a kid struggling to find their place, so I wanted to give them some power, a voice, a place to be who they were always meant to be.

"I had a meeting with the Principal and that's how The Rainbow Club began. We meet every fortnight and there's usually between 20 and 40 of us, both LGBTQIA+ students and supporters. We have a stall every Harmony Day, where students sell anything from crocheted rainbow hearts and clay pendants, to pronoun badges and fairy bread. We plan to go big for Wear it Purple Day this year and we're also getting a mascot, Rosie the Rosella, who we'll feature in videos to teach other school students about homophobia.

"News of The Rainbow Club has even reached Sydney – last year, we hosted NSW Deputy Police Commissioner Gelina Talbot and local police. As they chatted with our members about their experiences, I realised the true impact the club has had on the kids' lives. One of my seniors had come out as trans when I first formed the club and I overheard him talking with Gelina. He said he'd been kicked out of home at the time and The Rainbow Club was the only place he felt safe, where he felt like he belonged.

The Rainbow Club's banner, which features the words 'We are the change', was sewn by Matt's former student, Jackson Cook.

houseofjackson.com.au

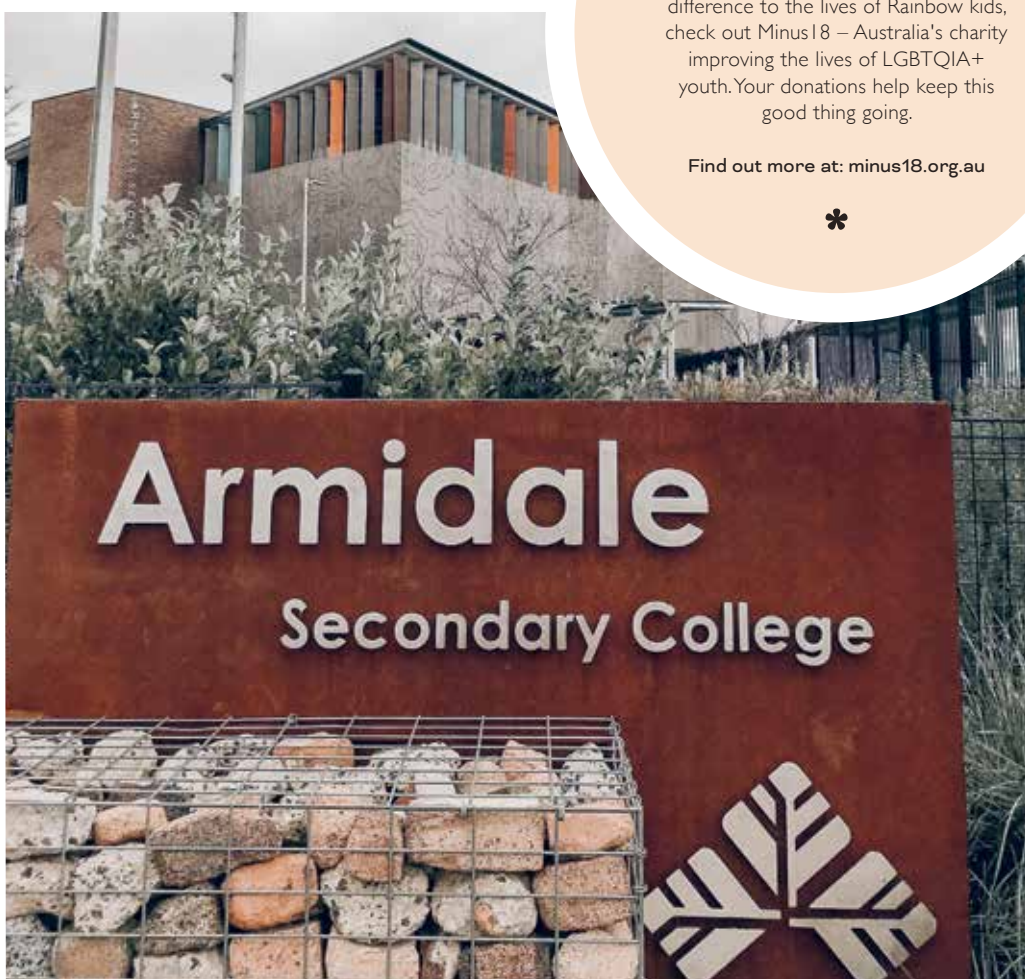


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**LGBTQIA+
CHAMPIONS**

If you, like Matt, would like to make a difference to the lives of Rainbow kids, check out Minus18 – Australia's charity improving the lives of LGBTQIA+ youth. Your donations help keep this good thing going.

Find out more at: minus18.org.au

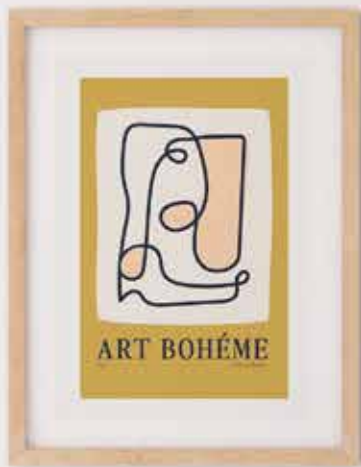
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"THE RAINBOW CLUB WAS THE ONLY PLACE HE FELT SAFE, WHERE HE FELT LIKE HE BELONGED."

"These days, I've noticed a real difference in the playground – in terms of the visibility of our Rainbow kids. There's no hiding in the library, or sitting in corridors. These kids are out there, laughing and smiling in the Plaza and the quad, unashamedly wearing their pronoun badges, or their identity flags, and it all feels right. It's also been wonderful to see members of the club return each year, and watch them become role models for the younger students. To me, it's a wonderful thing that these students are looked up to and respected for the strength they have shown in being their true selves.

"The Rainbow kids are confident, resilient and prepared to meet the challenges of their learning journey with fortitude. I couldn't be more proud of them." *



IN THE FRAME



WITH NERAM

A CURATED GLIMPSE INTO THE ART WORLD
WITH ARMIDALE'S OWN NEW ENGLAND
REGIONAL ART MUSEUM.

WINTER BLOOMING FESTIVAL 2022

It may be spring, but at NERAM we are still celebrating the coming together of community, people, ideas and creativity that was Winter Blooming 2022.

WORDS Rachael Parsons
WINTER BLOOMING PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Terry
neram.com.au
@neramuseum

Conceived in 2019 by co-producers, University of New England Sociologist Christina Kenny and NERAM Director Rachael Parsons, Winter Blooming aimed to address the lack of visibility, events, spaces and services for the New England Region's LGBTIQAI+ community. The inaugural Winter Blooming Festival held in that same year was a celebration of diversity, community, and culture and established the festival's focus on LGBTIQAI+, First Nations and multicultural arts, culture, communities, and allies.

Due to Covid lockdowns and restrictions, the festival had to be cancelled in 2020 and 2021, but after three years of planning was successfully and joyously hosted on 15-17 July this year.

"I am thrilled that we were (finally) able to hold the Winter Blooming Festival again in 2022," says NERAM Director Rachael Parsons. "It felt like something truly important and powerful occurred across the three days, with people coming together, finding community, exploring issues and ideas meaningful to them, expressing themselves and their culture in words and images and through music. For NERAM, supporting and celebrating diversity is one of our core values – every day. Winter Blooming allows us to loudly declare it and hopefully connects with people who may otherwise not have known that NERAM is a safe space for them."

The festival included vital, challenging, and enlightening discussion that shared a diverse range of lived experiences and knowledge from migrant diaspora, Indigenous, queer, and gender-diverse people. Creative workshops including a Still Life and Sex Toys drawing workshop facilitated by Kim Leutwyler, who creates paintings of LGBTQ+ identified and allied people and who was at the time of festival a finalist in both the 2022 Archibald and Sulman Prizes, was a Winter Blooming highlight. The sharing of multicultural food and opportunities for people to come together, socialise and find community were also essential parts of the festival program.

The festival culminated in a night of celebration and performance including drag by former local Armidale lad

THIS PAGE

1. Winter Blooming crowd. 2. Winter Blooming co-producers Christina Kenny and Rachael Parsons. 3. Winter Blooming drag artist TT with Russel Cook and friend.





1.



2.



3.

turned Bearded Sydney Drag Artist (on occasion) Amber Rosé and Moree-based Gamilaraay Queen and comedian TT. The night saw moving spoken word performances by Gomeroi poet and storyteller Rob Waters. Ezidi traditional musicians, Farhan and Hozan Altimo, and local folk music group, The Rocky Bottom Girls also played to the sold-out crowd.

"Winter Blooming is an exciting opportunity for all kinds of communities to come together from across the New England," says Christina Kenny. "We were thrilled to host guests from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Moree who shared their diverse experiences with art, activism and building cultural change within their communities. It was also a great opportunity for UNE scholars to share our work with the wider community. 'Meet the Heteropessimists' was a provocative and entertaining session presented by a research collective I'm a member of, with Jennifer Hamilton (English), Felicity Joseph (Philosophy), Matthew Allen (History)."

The Winter Blooming Festival was produced by New England Regional Art Museum and University of New England with support from Create NSW, the Australian Museum and Galleries Association, ACON and the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council, the Comfort Inn City Centre Armidale, and Cassandra Hunt Design. *

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. PAT LARTER: GLITTER

Running until: 25 September 2022

Pat Larter was a painter, photographer, collage and performance artist and one of the leading figures in the international mail art movement, devising the term 'femail art'. Her work is provocative, often focused on gender and body politics and full of outrageous humour. *Glitter* showcases Larter's vivacious and luminous paintings full of glitter and metallic paint, texture and audacious colour.

Pat Larter *Boppin' and Shakin'* 1994. Acrylic on board. Courtesy Diane Larter.

2. STRONG

Running until: 16 October 2022

Featuring artwork by Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Hilarie Mais, Barbara McKay, and Aida Tomescu, *STRONG* illuminates the vital artistic contributions made by women artists in Australia, recognising five women artists whose practice is known to include large-scale abstract painting or sculpture and who have had enduring careers and impact.

Aida Tomescu, *The Open Wounds of White Clouds*, 2019, oil on Belgian linen. 190 x 153 cm. Courtesy the artist and Fox Jensen.

3. SAMANTHA DENNISON: CLOSE TO HOME

Running until: 25 September 2022

Samantha Dennison is a contemporary realist painter who lives and works in Albany, WA. Known for her realist still life oil paintings, Dennison's work reflects her search for space and stillness in the details of the everyday. *Close to Home* is Dennison's first solo exhibition at NERAM and has been produced in collaboration with AK Bellinger Gallery.

Samantha Dennison, *Red Poppy Still Life*, 2022. Oil on canvas. Courtesy the artist and AK Bellinger Gallery.

THE INVERELL ART PRIZE 2022

Opening night 6pm, 8th October
Exhibition concludes 14th November



PHOTOGRAPHY Hannah Puechmarin



(02) 6722 4983
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MY DIGS



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RETREAT OR RENOVATION PROJECT.

BARRINGTON ECO HUT

Alice Nivison and Richie Northcott, the designers behind Barrington Eco Hut, describe it as “a humble 14-square metre, off-grid cabin perched on the banks of a highland river, nestled beside a dense casuarina woodland and enveloped by the sound of rushing water.”

We describe it as “heaven”. Here’s the lowdown...

PHOTOGRAPHY Rachel Mackay



GETTING THERE

Driving is where it's at. Unlike some off-grid cabins, the Barrington Eco Hut invites you to park close to the door – which is especially handy as you'll need to BYO all food and bevies to this remote site. As a very basic guide on the directions front, you're looking for 'Cobark'. For those travelling from the big smokes of Sydney or Newcastle, head north-west. If you're visiting from our own New England region you're going to want to head south, then inland from Gloucester. Given the lack of mobile reception, best dig out the old map book.



THE STORY

The cabin's owner had a very specific brief for Alice and Richie – “to build an off-grid cabin that was simple, sustainable and moveable”. Yep, you read that right, this bad boy has moves. The unique wilderness escape was designed to ‘go with the flow’ alongside the river below... the ‘flow’ being its ability to move up the hill and avoid rising waters. Smart. While plenty of architectural projects can take years to be completed – this design and building process was ready to roll in around six months.

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ECO WARRIOR TALES FROM ACROSS THE LAND,
SHOWCASING THE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES BUSINESSES
ARE BUILDING FROM THE GREEN GROUND UP.

MIRU MIRU BUBBLE TENT

Mirumiru Bubbletent Glamping invites you to sleep below the Milky Way and wake to a view of Mount Mackenzie. A truly unique experience that's not only beautiful on the outside, but has been sustainably designed to nurture what lies beneath, too.

WORDS Steph Wanless
PHOTOGRAPHY Sera J Wright

Cathryn van der Walt was lying beneath Tokyo's stars when the idea came to her. There, in an open-air hot springs bath in the heart of the financial district, she was overcome by a single thought.

"If I can star watch here, I can star watch anywhere." And so, her journey to Mirumiru Bubbletent Glamping began.

SHINY BUBBLE

'Mirumiru' is both a Māori and Japanese word meaning 'shiny bubble'. It captures the place Cathryn's vision was born, her New Zealand-based, stargazing memories with husband Brad (who's of Māori heritage), and the 'bubble-shaped' design of Tenterfield's most unique, five-star luxury glamping accommodation.

What's more, the bubbletent concept is influenced by the land on which it sits, is environmentally resilient and entirely sustainable.

"These were the guiding set of environmental principles I talked about at length with the Paris-based designer," says Cathryn.



A NEW START AT SONNY'S

The regionally-focused Sonny's Bakery has a new lease on life thanks to two thrill-seeking Sydneysiders.

WORDS Steph Wanless
PHOTOGRAPHY Louise Brown Photography

When Anthony Daniel and Jess Sfeir jumped out of a plane in Swansea NSW in June 2021, they had no idea it would be the start of them leaping into a whole new life.

A surprise anniversary gift from Anthony, the thrill-seeking experience also gave the couple a chance to break free after Sydney's Covid lockdown was lifted. When they touched earth again, news broke of another impending lockdown. Rather than return to their Sydney apartment, they made a call to head further north, visit Jess' parents in her hometown of Tamworth, and wait it out for a week.

"That week turned into two, which turned into a month, which turned into three months – until now, almost a year later, we've moved permanently to Tamworth and are the proud new owners of Sonny's Bakery," says Anthony.

"It was a huge opportunity to live a whole new life, we were free to leave the house, go without masks the majority of the time and ultimately reduce our expenses. By September I'd been made redundant and Jess was able to work remotely, so when the opportunity came up to invest in a local business, we jumped at it."

DIVING INTO THE UNKNOWN

From leaping out of a plane to diving into business ownership, in an industry neither Anthony or Jess had any prior experience of, the couple undoubtedly have guts. But they bring more to the table than sheer determination and seriously good Portuguese tarts – their combined business nous built over years working in real estate and marketing, an eagerness to learn and a hugely supportive family combine to create something special at Sonny's.

"People thought we were crazy, but everyone has to start out somewhere," says Jess.

"Our mentality from day one was to jump right in, give things a go and learn along the way. I'd never baked before in my life, but all our parents love to cook. Good food was always on the table in our homes, so I really believe it's in our blood.

"Now I've become weirdly obsessed with bread and pastries and regularly end my day scrolling through online forums about yeast and hydration. I also use YouTube and learn a lot from dad, who used to be a baker in Lebanon. He's shown me the power of throwing a recipe out the window, being guided by taste and trialling different ingredients until we get it just right."

Clearly, the system works. Sonny's almond croissants and Portuguese tarts sell out daily, encouraging Jess to regularly increase bake numbers while adding to their delicious offering. Out front, Sydney boy Anthony is relishing the opportunity to connect with a regional community, chat with his regulars and master the perfect cup of coffee.

"Honestly, moving from the city to the country was a bit scary for me, at least to begin with – but working in a cafe was the best thing I could have done. I've met so many great people and get to chat about their life, listen to their stories and serve them a great cup of coffee," says Anthony.

"We're so happy to have a large loyalty base and, for me, it all comes back to the coffee. My passion for it has gone next level and I'm all about getting it just right. That means combining a good barista with a great recipe and understanding that multiple variants may change during the process, such as the weight inside a group head, how hard it's packed, the extraction time, the heat it's shooting out at and the coarseness of the grind."

Of course, the quality of the beans is also crucial – but that's not something Anthony has to worry about. Sonny's Bakery has secured Tamworth exclusivity with Will & Co beans, a Bondi-based business that sources their product from the finest coffee growing regions around the globe. As for the results, they speak for themselves. Since taking on the business in October last year, Sonny's has consistently grown in an uphill direction.

"It hasn't been easy," adds Jess. "But it's been a beautiful challenge, and one I'm so happy to experience in my hometown."

"Our business philosophy is to do the simple things right," adds Anthony. "We want to give our customers something consistent, from the coffee to the pastries to our bacon and egg roll, we want people to know that they can come to us for the same quality product time and time again." *





*
**SONNY'S
CATERING AND
EVENTS**
Did you know Sonny's Bakery also offers catering services? Plans are also well in motion to host in-house events such as baby showers and birthdays, extending into their beautiful outdoor space. If you'd like to know more, get in touch with Jess and Anthony today.
sonnybakery.com.au
[@sonnybakery](https://www.instagram.com/sonnybakery)
*







THE RIVER REVIVES

Osteria Fiume, which means ‘river’ in Italian, is the vision of restaurateurs Fiona Richardson and Megs Black. Together they’ve created a space that invites you to come as you are, enjoy a humble meal and, ultimately, leave revived.

WORDS Steph Wanless
PHOTOGRAPHY Fiona Richardson

It all comes back to the water, as most good things do – gumboots in puddles, a grommet’s first wave, bad vibes off a duck’s back. The oceans, the seas and the Waterfall Way.

And the Bellinger River, on the banks of which our story begins. It’s here Fiona Richardson and Megs Black have brought their very own kind of thirst-quenching, soul-lifting river, or ‘fiume’ as the Italians would say, to life.

Osteria Fiume swung its doors open to Bellinger locals and guests countrywide in April this year. Like Italy’s traditional osteria owners, Fi and Megs invite you to come as you are, sit at their table and be revived, restored, refreshed by their humble fare.

“That’s what it’s all about for us, creating a venue people are comfortable to walk into, share flavours and stories, and connect with one another over food,” says Megs.

“That’s why our name, ‘Fiume’, not only represents the river we’re so lucky to call home, but also our names ‘Fi’ and ‘Me(g)’, with ‘u’ the customer at the centre of it all,” adds Fi. “It took us 30 seconds to come up with that name and now that we’re here, it feels so right.” »



So whether you're in shorts and a t-shirt, your best Sunday dress or boots fresh off the farm, you're invited to the heart of the home, where head chef Megs leads with a tail to nose, paddock to plate philosophy.

"I don't do fancy cooking or fine dining, I let the produce speak for itself," she says. "I think your palate remembers more than your eyes, that's why I always try my best to support and highlight what's on our doorstep. Right now we're using mushrooms from Coffs Harbour, fresh seafood off the coast of South West Rocks and even citrus from our next-door neighbour. Finding your local flavours, keeping it simple and sharing it with your community is what I love most about Italian cooking – that's what we're doing here."

BACK TO BASICS

Megs and Fi honed their 'keep it simple' philosophy in their first venture together, as custodians of the heritage Ambermere Inn, nestled in the Blue Mountains' foothills. Originally a Cobb and Co Inn dating back to 1845, the venue was first restored by Fi's family in 1990, and again in 2016 when Megs traded a long-standing career in some of Sydney's finest establishments for a regional adventure.

"I'd been innkeeper since 2010 and was very emotionally connected to the place," says Fi. "By the time we decided to sell it had been in my family for 30 years, so it was time to turn over a new chapter. But they were happy times that saw us breathe new life into the building. When Megs arrived, we did a complete restoration, stripping it back to its roots."

While working together, the duo realised they shared the same inspiration, dreams and goals – they complemented each other both personally and in the workplace, and ultimately took on the property as a couple in business, and in life.

"But it was the dogs who fell in love first," says Fi. "They got

on so well we thought we better give it a go – before we knew it we'd refurbished the restaurant, added an antique store and gallery, a barn used for events and 23 vegetable beds bursting with fresh produce for the kitchen."

"It was a big undertaking, but one we're proud of to this day," adds Megs. "We worked hard to bring it back to what it originally was, a caretaker's inn – a place to stop, refresh your horses, stay for the night and enjoy a meal. There was a small wine list, local beer, a menu that drew on a lot of game, preserves and braising – ultimately it reflected what would have originally been on offer, and that was a joy to create."

A NEW STORY TO TELL

While leaving Ambermere in November 2021 was a life changing moment for the couple, Fi ensured a few special pieces travelled with them to the banks of the Bellinger River – fragments of Ambermere's soul now sit within Osteria Fiume's walls.

"We brought the restaurant's main table, the pendant light fittings from my Dad's barn and a painting of Ambermere by Australian artist Jane Canfield hangs above our fireplace," says Fi, who led the design of Osteria Fiume in just six short weeks.

"It has good bones and a story to tell as the original bank of NSW built in 1926. Those are the things that are really important to both of us and ultimately drove us to bring it back to life, just as we'd done for Ambermere all those years before."

As Megs' food nourishes the body, Fi's design revives the soul. Classic Colonial elements combine with rich green walls, divine marble tables and dark timber floors. Linen curtains create confetti of sunlight, before night falls and dimmed spotlights guide you to your table. This is the place where humble fare is shared, stories are savoured, and belly laughs linger, all on the banks of the Bellinger River. *



*
**TUTTI A
TAVOLA, SI
MANGIA**

Everyone to the table, it's time to eat!

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Friday – 12-10pm
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PAVLOVA

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY Jen Drew
@adventuresofjen

Or PAV, as we Aussies lovingly call it.

Sweet, crispy meringue shell, pillowy centre, whipped cream and fruit piled on top. It's like eating a delicious cloud.

Screams 80s and 90s family BBQs. Solid Aussie Christmas favourite. Named after a Russian Ballerina and may or may not have been invented in New Zealand (debate still rages on.. I'm team NZ. I'm pretty sure it's just another Russell Crowe situation...).

For all of the PAV connoisseurs among us, you may notice there's no kiwi fruit to be found. Well, there's a reason....

It's just weird.

Kiwis and whipped cream aren't meant to be friends. They'll tolerate each other... like at a dinner party at opposite ends of the table when there's lots of wine on offer, but that's as far as it goes. Not snuggled up and getting all handsy on a pav. Controversial? Perhaps.

Strawberries? That's a given. Passionfruit? Also a given. Berry coulis? Now you're getting fancy. Even a rose water pistachio number if you're feeling extra.

100 years (ish) of the humble PAV and still going strong. *

MY SMALL BIZ & Me



Q&A TIME WITH BUSINESS MINDS FROM A WHOLE RANGE OF INDUSTRIES, DISCOVER HOW THEY GOT THERE, DID IT, BOUGHT THE T-SHIRT.

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Den Hanrahan & the Rumrunners
Gallie & Paddy Montgomery - Genni Kane
Glenn Skuthorpe - Honeyfields - Kate Oliver
Kaurna Cronin & Band - Kerry Fields - Lucy Wise
Luke Byrnes & the Big Scrub Revival - Lyrebird
Melbourne Songwriters Collective - Michael Waugh
Mickey & Michelle - Montgomery Church
Mothers of the Nation - Mountain Folk Cafe
Newbury Fog - Pascal Latra - San Miguel Fraser
Shnook - Smith Allen Peterson - The Blue Creek Boys
The Double Dole Stringband - The Morrisons
The Pitts Family Circus - The Rocky Bottom Girls
The Sunburnt Celts - The Weeping Willows
The Whitetop Mountaineers
We Mavericks - Wild Thyme

www.dorrigofolkbluegrass.com.au

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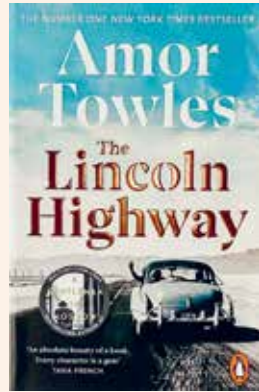
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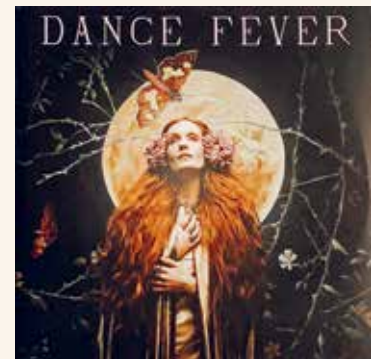
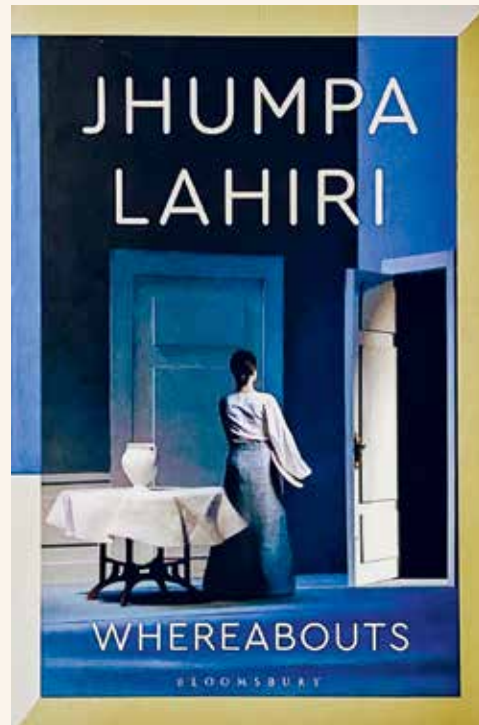
STAFF PICKS

BOOK: WHEREABOUTS BY JHUMPA LAHIRI

Thoroughly enjoyed by one of our book clubs, *Whereabouts* is set in an unnamed Italian town and follows the daily life of a middle-aged Italian woman. A novel in vignettes, each chapter is a postcard from an everyday landmark such as “In the bookstore” or “At the beautician” and offers a muted portrait of urban solitude marked by an undercurrent of longing. Lahiri’s narrator, who deliberately fills her quiet life with routines and rituals, writes, “Solitude: it’s become my trade. As it requires a certain discipline, it’s a condition I try to perfect”. Jhumpa Lahiri is based in Italy, wrote this book in Italian and translated the book herself. She was born in the UK to Bengali parents, moved to the US as a child and then moved to Italy as an adult. She is now the top translator of Italian fiction to English in Italy. She has also won the Pulitzer Prize for her book *The Lowland*.

MUSIC: COMING HOME – LEON BRIDGES

Leon Bridges is a 25-year-old musician from Fort Worth, Texas who beautifully mixes classic soul and R&B to create something completely fresh. Leon caught the attention of the public and industry after notable Texas blog Gorilla vs. Bear premiered two songs that quickly went viral, amassing over one million combined plays, as well as plays on numerous US radio stations and UK’s BBC Radio 1.



UNPLUGGED WITH READER'S COMPANION

THE BOOKS...

LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY BY BONNIE GARMUS

Stories of pioneering women in traditional male areas, in the years before second-wave feminism started, are growing in popularity. Enter *Lessons in Chemistry*, a revenge comedy set in the 50s and 60s about research chemist Elizabeth Zott. The story explores her difficult life as a single mother and feminist during a period when misogyny was dished out in abundance by men – and even some women. Elizabeth takes on a role as a tv cooking show host, but is determined to do it her way – as a scientist. She presents *Supper at Six* as a motivational and educational program for housewives across the country.

Despite being forced into a traditional mould, she remains calm throughout and is absolutely determined to be her genuine self. Along the way she finds her soulmate in rower and Nobel Prize winning scientist Calvin Hobbs, and plots revenge against those who made her life difficult over the years. To top it off there's a quirky pet dog, called Six-Thirty, who provides us with unexpected insights into the behaviour of humans who cross his path. This feel-good, big-hearted comedy invites us to take a peek at life for women in the recent past.

Sometimes, when you read a really fabulous book, it's difficult to find and settle in with a new read. I think that would be the case after *Lessons in Chemistry* – but then I started *Perfect Golden Circle*. I felt so lucky, two special stories in a row.

PERFECT GOLDEN CIRCLE BY BENJAMIN MYERS

Perfect Golden Circle combines beauty with comedy and touches on topics as diverse as war, the environment, history, hope and friendship. We meet two characters in 1980s southern England who, in this story, were the creators of the crop circles about which there was much speculation in the news at the time.

One, Calvert, a traumatised returned veteran who scouts out the useable fields and the other, Redbone, an old punk musician and the designer of the crop circle patterns. They are good friends and yet they seem to know very little about each other. Apart from the farmers, the UFO spotters and the media hordes, Benjamin Myers focuses on the creative act of forming the circles in the midnight light and the relationship between the men, their own views and their philosophising about the environment, society and life.

LINCOLN HIGHWAY BY AMOR TOWLES

An American road story set in 1954, *Lincoln Highway* shares the story of two brothers, 18-year-old Emmett and eight-year-old Billy. Written almost as a Homeric epic, the plot begins with tragedy. Emmett is released from juvenile detention after 15

months to discover both parents have passed away and the bank has foreclosed on the family farm.

Emmett's plan is to pick up Billy and travel to California to start a new life – but plans are turned upside down when two of Emmett's friends from juvenile detention appear. A tender, heartwarming story of family and the bonds that cannot be broken. The star of the book is Billy, who reminds us of the real value of truly seeing. Author, Amor Towles, has written one of our store's favourite books, *A Gentleman In Moscow*.

THE MUSIC...

DANCE FEVER – FLORENCE & THE MACHINE

Dance Fever was recorded predominately in London over the course of the pandemic, in anticipation of the world's reopening. It conjures up what Florence missed most in the midst of lockdown – clubs, dancing at festivals, being in the whirl of movement and togetherness, and the hope of reunions to come. The album sees Florence at the peak of her powers, coming into a fully realised self-knowledge, poking sly fun at her own self-created persona, playing with ideas of identity, masculine and feminine, redemptive, celebratory, stepping fully into her place in the iconic pantheon.

IN OUR OWN SWEET TIME – VANCE JOY

In Our Own Sweet Time is the stunning third album from much-loved Australian singer-songwriter and ARIA-award winner, Vance Joy. Written mostly during the pandemic and fuelled by old friends, new memories and finding love in a not-so-hopeless place, the album centres on the idea of creating a life – and a world – with someone. *In Our Own Sweet Time* features popular hits *Missing Piece*, *Don't Fade* and new single *Clarity*. "I'm always drawn to the idea of timelessness or that shared moment that takes you out of the chaos outside," Vance says. "If the world is crazy, you can retreat somewhere. It's always hard to think of the right title but I think that sums up the album perfectly." *

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RACECOURSE: REINVENTED

Think you know horse racing?
Think again.

What says 'springtime in Tamworth' more than a day out at the races?

The beautiful sun, the freshly-cut grass, the bright, colourful attire – not to mention enthralling action on the track – means it's a great day out, whether you're a racing enthusiast or novice.

Or, even if you don't know one end of a horse from the other.

"The great thing about Tamworth in the springtime is you see a real want for people to get out and about," says Michael Buckley, General Manager of Tamworth Jockey Club.

"We've been seeing our races, particularly those feature race days, really well attended by people who just want to catch up with friends and family, get the workforce together, and enjoy being able to be social again."

And it's that desire to get out and about – after the past almost three years of Covid – that's set to drive a must-attend calendar of events at Tamworth Jockey Club over the coming months.

"There's a whole host of people coming to the races," says Michael. "There's the members who come regularly and have grown up with racing in their lives.

"However, there's also an emerging, younger group of people who are discovering what a day at the races is really like. It's a lot of fun, it's colourful, you can get dressed up in your best dress or suit, and have a really enjoyable day out."

Key dates in the diary for Tamworth Jockey Club over the coming months are the Melbourne Cup Race Day on 1 November, and the Tamworth Cup, which takes place in April.

"They're always big days, and that's when you see the racecourse in its full glory," says Michael. "As well as the racing, there's fashions on the field, great food and drink options and a whole lot of entertainment too."

How you experience race day, of course, is up to you – with various hospitality options, from fine dining to on the track, while for Melbourne Cup the Aussie Night Market food stands may also make an appearance.

A DIFFERENT SIDE TO RACING

While race meetings are, of course, Tamworth Jockey Club's bread and butter, the facility has an awful lot more to offer the region's people and businesses. And if you've never thought of holding a function at the Jockey Club, you might want to think again.

Complete with manicured lawns, rose gardens, a historic grandstand and a modern function centre, Tamworth Jockey club is a must-see venue.

"It often surprises people when they first come here and see just how good our facilities are," says Michael.

"From corporate events and tradeshows to night markets, bridal expos to weddings, the spaces we have here can work for so many events, large and small."

The Trackside Marquee is a popular option for both private and race-day functions, while the venue's thoroughbred event option is the modern, 250-seat, fully air-conditioned function centre, situated on level one overlooking the racecourse.

Catering is provided by chef Shaun Abra and his team from Every Occasion Catering – a relatively new addition to the Tamworth Jockey Club crew.

"We're very excited to have Shaun here – he's a highly experienced chef who's worked in restaurants in Queensland, and he has that great ability to cater for a range of different dining requirements.

"Whether it's finger food or high-level fine dining, he's brilliant.

"On our big race days, the seafood options in the pavilion are really popular – we get fresh prawns and oysters from the mid-north coast and Newcastle, and they're always delicious." *



SAVE THE DATE

Melbourne Cup:
Tuesday 1 November 2022

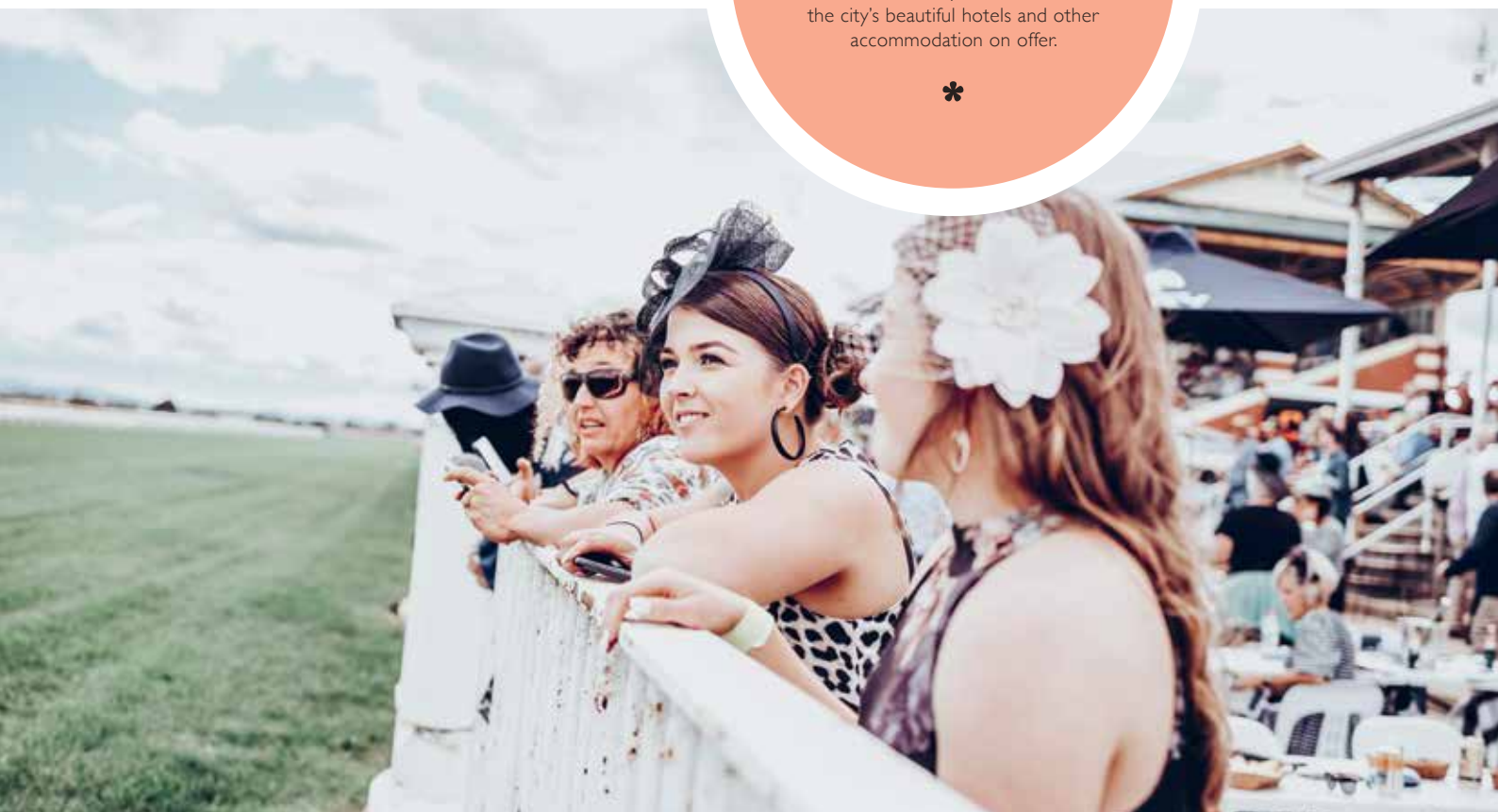
Tamworth City Toyota Tamworth Cup:
Friday 21 April 2023

To buy tickets online, visit
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TALES FROM THE BAR

WITH BEN 'COOMBSY' COOMBES

THE WELDER'S DOG, TAMWORTH

theweldersdog.com.au
[@theweldersdog_tamworth](https://www.instagram.com/theweldersdog_tamworth)

"I have plenty of stories, although some aren't appropriate for publication.

There was this one time though, ages ago, this gentleman was denied entry into a pub because he wasn't wearing footwear.

"Luckily, that night the local meat tray raffles were on and the shoeless guy purchased the meat tray off the gentleman who'd won. Before you know it, he'd created a set of steak sandshoes which were then deemed footwear. The previously excluded gentleman was then allowed entry as he adhered to the dress code!"



DID YOU KNOW?

Coombsy uttered the very words that inspired the naming of The Welder's Dog brewery and bars? One day, after a particularly brutal session at the races, Coombsy said to founders Dan Emery and Tom Croft...

"Mate, I was as blind as a welder's dog yesterday!"

The rest, as they say, is history.





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