

PALMYTM PROUD

ISSUE 19





Palmy Proud is produced twice a year and is a brag book of the best of Palmerston North

All our previous issues are available online at pncc.govt.nz/palmyproud

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Keep up-to-date on what is happening in Palmy through our digital channels.

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Cover photo:

Ruahine Kiwi Project

Back cover photo:

Central Energy Trust
Wildbase Recovery

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Kia ora tātou,

Our city is more than 'lifting its weight', and the perception of things on offer in Palmerston North is changing.

In this issue, we focus on Massey University's key role in Palmy and explore the ground-breaking Feast initiative, which is changing the food industry by using consumer insights. This project sets new standards for how we engage with food and consumers.

Venture into Hokowhitu, where a wine trader is enhancing our local wine scene by introducing a wide selection of fine wines from around the globe. Or grab a coffee from Fiore Coffee cart and chat to some of our city's young entrepreneurs - teenagers keen on learning essential business skills while making your favourite flat white.

Our city is also filled with amazing things for the whole family to enjoy. Our Manawatū River linear park has new outdoor forts at the Albert Street Forest, which has transformed a serene part of our city into an adventurous playground and is well worth a visit.

This issue we also honour the legacy of sculptor Paul Dibble with the newly created Paul Dibble Sculpture map, crafted by Zimmerman Gallery. This guide helps locals and visitors discover his stunning sculptures located within walking distance of our city centre Te Marae o Hine – The Square.

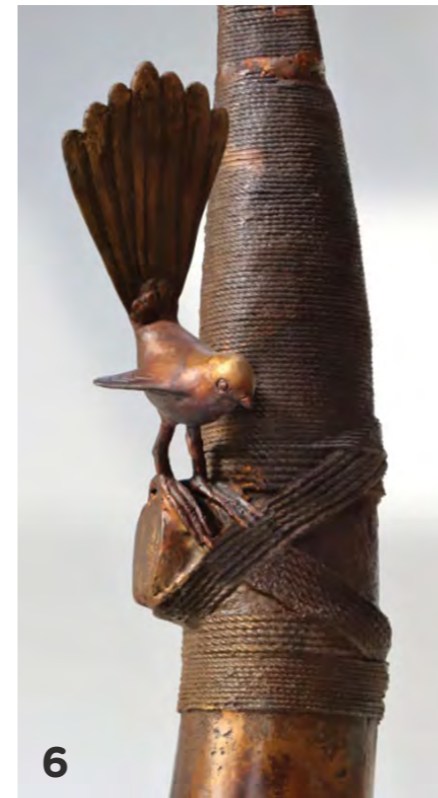
And rounding out this edition, we focus on the environment where remarkable volunteers are working to reintroduce kiwis into the Ruahine Ranges, and closer to the City, the Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre educates young and old on our unique native wildlife and species. Have a read – there is something for everyone!

Ngā mihi nui,

Mayor Grant Smith JP
Palmerston North City

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State of the art

Follow the trail and revel in the magnificence of a Paul Dibble sculpture.



Paul Dibble, a sculptor of unsurpassed reputation and expertise, passed away in December last year, leaving behind a legacy as rich in style, technique and uniqueness as his signature gilded bronze kowhai.

“He was an extraordinary sculptor. He pioneered his own techniques,” says friend and agent, Bronwyn Zimmerman, of Zimmerman Art Gallery.

At the gallery, you can find a Paul Dibble Sculpture Map, which, much like a treasure map, shows the locations of nine of the great man’s large works in Palmerston North.

Impossible Dialogue, created in 1988, can be found at Massey University; Pacific Monarch, 1992, holds pride of place outside Te Manawa Art Gallery; All Creatures Great, 1996, is a magnet for parents and kids at the city library alleyway; The Nectar Eaters, created in 2003, sits in front of UCOL; To The Other Side, 2007, is art in motion at IPU; Ghost of the Huia, 2010, is hard to miss on the busy corner of The Square and Church Street; Who’s Afraid, 2011, is, appropriately, in front of the Regent Theatre; Waiting for Godot, 2013, is, at Zimmerman House; and Dawn Chorus on the Fish of Maui, 2019, standing 5.2 metres tall, can be found at the duck pond of the Victoria Esplanade.

“There was always a distinct focus on Paul’s work on where he lived, in New Zealand, within the Pacific. Those elements always came through, even though some of the sculptures were heavily influenced by European work because that’s where all the sculptural masters we learned from came from,” says Bronwyn.

“I’d planned to do a sculpture map for Paul’s 80th birthday. I didn’t get it done by his birthday, but I got it done in the year of his 80th and we thought ‘well, we’ll launch it when his exhibition launched at Te Manawa.’”

That exhibition, titled Paul Dibble: Continuum, ran from November 2023 to March 2024; and the sculpture map is available at Zimmerman Art Gallery and isite on The Square.

But if that is not enough for Paul Dibble fans, the recently-launched website – pauldibble.com – is a work in progress that is trying to capture and catalogue all of his sculptures.

Nine sculptures stand tall and proud in Palmerston North today as a reminder of, and a tribute to-an extraordinary sculptor whose work is immortalised in the smooth curves of the huia, the bravery of the dancer and the playfulness of 10 mini elephants.

“Currently there is a team of us working on a website about Paul and his work. It’s a big project as we’re trying to complete a catalogue of all Paul’s sculptures over the decades,” says Fran Dibble, a renown artist and Paul’s wife.

“The website is for information and research, and not for selling any sculptures. We have completed several books over Paul’s lifetime, and the website will draw on images and information from those publications, as well as other records and images available to us.

“Each year Paul generally released around 20-30 different works. While some of these were unique (single edition) sculptures, most were released as limited editions, meaning more than one work was able to be made in the edition. Most works were smaller size models, but generally two or three new large sized works were released each year, as well as some medium sized sculptures.

“So, over a lifetime (and Paul’s production goes back to the 1960s, although there were less works made in the early years and many were more experimental) that adds up to a substantial body of work.

“Generally, five or six of Paul’s large-sized works were produced at Dibble Studio each year, and sometimes as many as 10. Almost all of these large works went into private collections. And many were exported to expats, New Zealanders living overseas who wanted reminders of home,” says Fran.

The website features his life and work, exhibitions, a virtual tour of All Creatures Great, a catalogue and a growing list of all Paul Dibble sculptures that can be accessed by members of the public for free starting from Auckland, through to the Waikato, Hawke’s Bay, Whanganui, Manawatu, Wairarapa and Wellington, and then to the South Island, to Canterbury and Dunedin, before ending at the Southern Stand, installed in 2006, at Hyde Park Corner in London, UK.

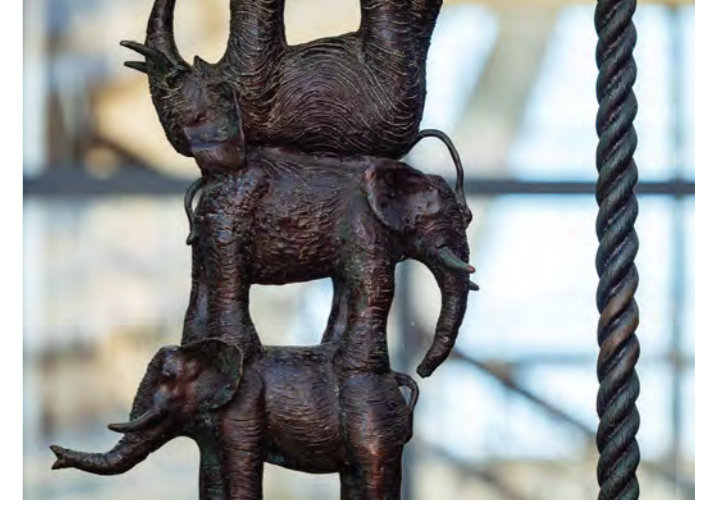
The website was launched on 20 March, on what would have been Paul’s 81st birthday, and so far the reaction has been warm, supportive and informative.

Milford Galleries remain the South Island agents for Paul Dibble sculptures, and Zimmerman Art Gallery and Gow Langsford Gallery in Auckland are the North Island agents.

“Paul was one of the very fortunate few that, in his lifetime, he could watch the value of his sculptures grow,” says Bronwyn.

“Most artists have to have a career doing something else, whether it’s teaching or they have a partner who will support them.

“Whereas Paul and Fran could focus full-time on their art. He was working, he was producing, and people kept wanting what he was producing and enjoying it and buying it. Right up until his final year, he was producing beautiful work at a really high standard.” ♡



“Paul was one of the very fortunate few that, in his lifetime, he could watch the value of his sculptures grow.”





Discovering adventure in the Albert Street forest

Along the Manawatū river Pathway.

Seven-year-old Ava beams with excitement as she clammers up a wooden structure perched amidst the trees, her eyes sparkling with wonder.

"I love coming here with my friends," she says, bubbling with enthusiasm. "We pretend we're pirates searching for hidden treasure."

Her brother, Liam, 9, nods in agreement as he swings from side-to-side on a nearby rope ladder. "Yeah, it's awesome," he grins. "We want to build a tree hut at home, but mum and dad won't let us!"

Hiding in the heart of Palmerston North lies a hidden gem that ignites the imaginations of children – the Albert Street forts. Tucked away in the pine forest to the right of the newly upgraded Albert Street river entrance along the Manawatū River pathway, these forts stand as a testament to the city's commitment to adventure and fun.

Three wooden play huts and forts are bound to the pine trees, connected by climbing ropes, swings and a flying fox. Designed for children over the age of 8, they offer an exhilarating escape into a world of make-believe, adventure and exploration.

But don't just take our word for it; young adventurers Ava and Liam say the forts are more than just a rest stop during their family's Sunday strolls along the Manawatū River pathway.



“We pretend to be on pirate ships, spaceships, Captain Cook’s ship. Sometimes we pretend we’re in the movies. Like Jurassic Park because the dinosaur footprints are just over there,” they both say, pointing further along the pathway.

Ava’s referring to a display recognising the discovery of four moa footprints in 1912. They were found by Henry Cole after a flood washed away the riverbank exposing the footprints in a bed of stiff blue clay, called papa. Initially the prints were cut out of the papa. Plaster casts were also made, and these are held by Te Manawa, the museum of Palmerston North.

The moa in question was probably a large species called *Dinornis novaezelandiae*.

The footprints measured 45.5cm wide and just over 30cm from the tip of its middle toe to its heel. The moa’s stride was 76cm.

To get to the forts and footprints, you can enter the river entrance on Albert Street and turn right. It’s the perfect spot for families to relax and unwind after a long walk along the awa (river), with wide concrete pathways, flower gardens, safety bollards, and lighting at night.

It’s the third river entrance to undergo a transformation, following Victoria Esplanade and Ahimate Reserve.

Attractions such as the forts are strategically placed along the river pathway to provide rest stops and entertainment along the way.

Large parts of the walkway are also off-leash areas for your furry friend.

So, whether you’re a local looking for a new adventure or a visitor eager to experience the magic along our river pathway, be sure to add the Albert Street forts to your itinerary.

They’re sure to leave a lasting impression on adventurers of all ages. ♡



Seeking the secrets of great taste:

Inside Massey University's cutting-edge Feast lab.

Launching a successful food or beverage product is no easy feat, but Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University's Food Experience and Sensory Testing (Feast) lab is trying to help.

Located on Massey's Manawatū campus, this state-of-the-art facility is a hub for food sensory and consumer research, boasting sensory testing booths, focus group rooms, and New Zealand's only mixed-reality immersive space for food research.

The immersive space is a standout feature that can simulate any eating scenario—from a bustling café to a tranquil beach—using 360-degree projection and ambient scent technology. This allows researchers to understand consumer preferences and the sensory properties of food, such as taste, texture, and aroma.

"Our research is consumer-focused," says Feast Director Professor Joanne Hort. "We seek to understand what influences people's enjoyment of food, from sensory experiences to packaging and labelling."

Established in 2017 by Professor Hort, an internationally renowned expert in Sensory Science, the Feast lab works closely with the food industry, offering consultancy and training. The lab supports the food industry to improve product acceptance, whilst exploring product health and sustainability credentials. Feast supports local small and medium entities as well as global companies such as Fonterra and Zespri.

Recently, Feast received \$1 million from Fonterra to develop better methods for predicting customer's responses to new food products. Feast researchers conduct studies on the impact of animal feeding practices on consumer perceptions of meat and fish, and the acceptance of plant-based alternatives.

The team aligns with Palmerston North's ambition to be New Zealand's food innovation hub and it has become a cornerstone of our city's thriving food and beverage community, while also shaping the future of New Zealand's agrifood sector. ♡



Love all things food?
Be a Feast tester!

Join us in making a difference!

Participate in sensory research and attend various studies throughout the year.

Scan the QR code to learn more.



A cup of Ambition

School Students turn Coffee Cart into profitable venture.

Nestled alongside He Ara Kotahi bridge on the banks of the Manawatū River, is a coffee cart with a difference.

Fiore Coffee is a fully functioning, profitable business that's run by a group of school students.

Intermediate school teacher, Warwick Grady mentors the group and says the idea for a student-run business was hatched out of a single conversation.

"Some former students met me in the street and asked where to find holiday jobs when you're school age," says Grady.

"I had the coffee cart, so we formed the group. Once the council permit came through, we moved to the bridge location."

Four years on, the business is going strong. Up to 16 young people are on the payroll at any one time and more are waiting in the wings. When new students start work, the more experienced ones teach them the ropes.

"As far as I know, it's one of the biggest student-led businesses in New Zealand," says Grady.

Most of the students attend intermediate and secondary schools in the city.





“They’re all busy kids who juggle their shifts on the coffee cart around their school commitments.”

Real-world experience

Fourteen-year-old Jewel Barratt-Booth has been working on the cart for five months and has learnt lots of new skills. She can now make different drinks, use the cash register, and take customer orders.

“The best thing about my job is getting to meet so many people. We’ve had quite a few people say that we’re in a great spot and that it’s a nice thing to have down at the river. I think our cart is special because it’s run mostly by teenagers. It shows that anyone can work and do what they set their minds to.”

Something for everyone

Being in such an iconic spot means there’s always plenty going on around the cart.

The group serve a mixture of walkers, runners, cyclists, kids, and dogs. Many of their customers are domestic and international tourists.

“We serve a lot of Te Araroa trail walkers, being the last coffee stop for 35km when going south. We see a lot of groups - fundraising events, challenges, weddings and parties too,” says Grady.

The students brew up all the standard coffee fare. Milkshakes and a selection of snacks are also for sale.

They’ll even whip up a treat for your family pooch. “Puppuccinos are quite popular,” explains Barratt-Booth. “They’re made with lactose-free milk, Schmackos dog treats and optional whipped cream.”

And if you’re venturing along the He Ara Kotahi pathway to visit the Urban Eels feeding platform, you can pick up some eel food from the cart too.

Fresh flowers are also available from the cart on special occasions like Easter and Mother’s Day - ‘Fiore’ is the Italian word for flowers.

The business is also part of the Kind Heart’s Coffee initiative. That means customers can pay it forward by shouting another customer coffee.

And if you fancy a cycling adventure, you can rent one of their ten e-bikes.

Business decisions

The students decided to purchase the e-bikes using some of the business’s profits, adding another income stream. With Grady’s support, they all have input into how the business is run, and how it expands.

With 42 years of teaching experience behind him, Grady revels in giving young people hands-on learning experiences.

“They will be able to look back and remember the experiences they had, successes and sometimes failures, and use them to make better career decisions. They also have the experience on their CV wherever they go in the world.”

He says it’s been exciting to see the young people grow in confidence in dealing with the public.

“Some customers order on certain days when they know a particular student is working. We appreciate the support we get from the residents of the city, local businesses, Palmerston North City Council and their staff who keep the area so clean and refreshed.”





Guardians of Ruahine

Inside the
Kiwi Rescue

Ruahine Kiwi is a conservation project with the huge goal of making the Ruahine Range kiwi friendly, and to get there the team on the ground take mighty steps each day.

A team of eight have developed and maintained trap lines covering over 23,000 hectares of the Southern Ruahine since the project began in 2021, with the intrepid trappers targeting mustelids (stoats, weasles and ferrets) and other pests that threaten our native species.





"The mahi is progressing really well, it's an exciting project to be a part of, and we feel good that we are helping out such an important taonga."

Ian Rasmussen, Ruahine Kiwi Project Coordinator, says they are working towards returning North Island eastern brown kiwi to the area, “so we need to have very low numbers of mustelids detected before we are able to release any kiwi.”

With a predator controlled environment and improved forest health, it is hoped that other species such as whio, native snails, and long-tailed bats will also thrive. The project is managed by Environment Network Manawātū through a collaboration between Manawātū River Source to Sea and Te Kaūru Eastern Manawātū River Hapū Collective (Te Kaūru).

Te Kaūru looks after the trapping work on the eastern side of the ranges, inland from Norsewood and Raniera Hauiti and Arapera Paewai are the project coordinators for that area.

“It’s about revitalising our maunga back to how it used to be,” says Raniera, “getting it back and getting rid of the paru paru, all the pests, in order to bring back the main goal of kiwi.”

Ian says funding received through the Department of Conservation Jobs for Nature initiative has provided training for the wide-spread team.

“They have gained valuable skills and working outdoors is great and something the team thrives on. We always get to eat our lunch with an awesome view.” The dream is to return kiwi to the area by 2026.

The mahi is progressing really well, it’s an exciting project to be a part of, and we feel good that we are helping out such an important taonga.”

The project has allies, receiving help from external agencies and groups, neighbouring predator control projects in the area and volunteers. The New Zealand Air Force lent its muscle, dropping 120 traps to the project area and Ryman Healthcare residents got on board, building over 1000 traps.

With Jobs for Nature Funding concluding in June 2024 the project is now looking for other funding, donations and volunteer support to ensure that it can reach its goal of kiwi reintroduction by 2026, and establish and maintain a thriving population far beyond that.

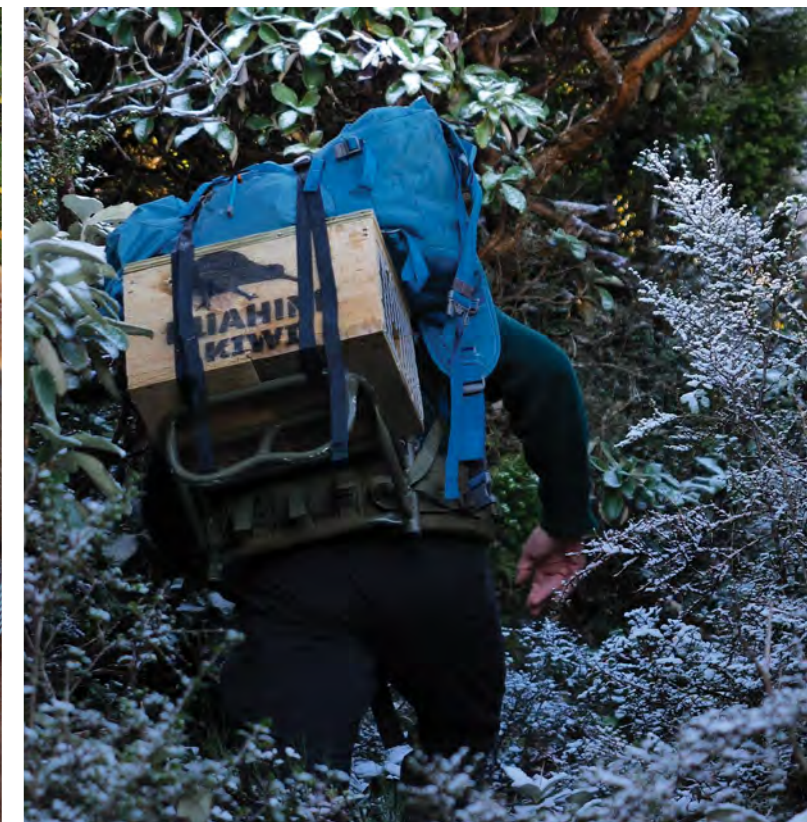
Community involvement has been a focus and it is hoped the project will increase public awareness of how having an active role in improving the environment can achieve positive outcomes. ♡



You can donate to the work of the project or get involved through volunteering by going to:

enm.org.nz/manawatu-river-source-sea/donate-ruahine-kiwi

You can also donate via a Givealittle page set up by Jennian Homes Manawatu to support the project.



Palmy's got talent

The 45th PACANZ National Young Performer Award shines a prestigious light on Palmy youth.



Palmy, often hailed as a fantastic place to raise a family, is also the perfect place to raise budding young talent.

Palmerston North City is gearing up to host the Performing Arts Competitions Association of New Zealand (PACANZ) in conjunction with the Palmerston North Dance Association and the Manawatu Performing Arts Competitions Society, from 25 to 27 October.

Prestigious youth from across the country will perform at the Regent on Broadway Theatre, the Speirs Centre & the Globe Theatre to claim the 2024 National Young Performer Award.

Since its initiation in 1977, PACANZ has been at the forefront of recognising and celebrating young talent in performing arts.

The National Young Performer Awards, initiated by PACANZ, represent a culmination of artistic excellence across eight disciplines, including dance, music, and theatre.

Today, the biennial awards continue to provide a platform for around 1000 talented youth from around the country, to showcase their skills on a national stage.

With more than 190 awards conferred since it began, the Awards have invested over \$900,000 in prize money and tuition grants back into the performing arts movement.



Saem Millward

His passion for singing started when he caught the Palmerston North Boys High School Ok Chorale choir in action at a recital.

He was awestruck and decided to join the intermediate school choir and later took up singing lessons when he began high school.

From there, his singing journey took flight, fuelled by a love for musical theatre and stage show singing.

His contribution to local performing arts has included being involved in Act Three Production's rendition of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and playing Jud Fry in the PNBHS/PNGHS 2023 Production of Oklahoma.

As he continued to grow his talent under the guidance of singing teacher Kirsten Clark, so did the opportunities. He's performed nationwide with the New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir and at the iconic St Paul's Cathedral in Wellington.

But, amidst the applause, it hasn't always been easy juggling

social events, and school assignments while keeping his vocal cords healthy.

Saem has learnt effective time management and to lean into making music when times get tough. Having previously learned the piano, he enjoys incorporating both talents together, taking inspiration from Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley as he sits down to sing.

"For anyone wanting to become a vocalist in Palmy, my only advice is to go for it! Find a singing teacher, busk in the street, get involved in theatre, anything to start your journey. Performing in front of others is a big barrier to overcome, but once you get over it, you'll have a newfound confidence as a singer."

Saem's vocals have resonated with audiences far and wide and he hopes to do it all again this October when performing at PACANZ.



Ivy Yang

Started her journey into ballet at age 5 when her mum put her into pink tights and a leotard and sent her to Maximum Dance Zone.

In the 12 years she's been dancing she's tried it all; ballet, contemporary and jazz. She says one of her favourite parts about dance is seeing it all come together onstage after all the practice she puts in.

Competing in local competitions is a highlight for sure, not just for the trophies up for grabs but for the camaraderie.

"Competitions have made me feel more connected to the performing arts community in Palmy, I've met so many talented performers through them."

One of her favourite memories she describes as a 'surreal moment' was performing in a group dance at DanceNZMade nationals in 2022 and as they were dancing, the audience waved their flashlights on their phones to the beat of the music.

However, amidst the glittering lights and the applause, Ivy has faced her battles with burnout. Struggling to balance her passion for dance with the demands of daily life and school, she's learned the importance of prioritization and self-care.

"My advice for dancers would be to allocate days where you can have a break, find another activity you enjoy so you can find time for yourself and unwind."

Ivy manages daily life by prioritising what needs to be done first. "I think dance has taught me to be better at finding time and making the most of that time whether it is for completing schoolwork, my other hobbies or relaxing at home."

Now, with PACANZ on the horizon, she is excited and grateful to be able to share the stage with other talented performers.



Camden Woodroffe

As he gears up for the PACANZ Awards his focus remains on the joy of performing and sharing his passion with the world.

For as long as he can remember, tap dancing has been a dying dance genre, but he's doing all he can to turn that around.

At 7 years old, Camden remembers trying as many dance styles as possible and one day, while waiting for his class to start he watched a tap class, gave it a try the following week and was hooked.

He swiftly found his feet at Dean Mckerras Dance Studios, later transitioning to DanceWorks Studios.

Despite facing hurdles in finding the right competition choreographer, his determination never wavered.

Now, under the guidance of Andrew Ceasan, Camden has triumphed in various competitions receiving honours with distinction in tap exams and even earning the prestigious role of head tap teacher at DanceWorks Studios.

Collaborating with fellow artists such as Kaea Rakatairi Paul and Emma Katte Johnston, he has showcased his talent at events including Missoula Day and New Year's in The Square.

Camden has also been involved in Act Three Productions, Manawatu Youth Theatre and Shakespeare Norths Productions.

Alongside dancing, he is also a keen musician and sometimes struggles to choose between his love for music and dance.

"I am a very keen musician and sometimes I have to make the tough decision between dance and music but never with tap dancing because tap has been so important in my life. I have experienced so much, in the tap world which I could never have imagined."

To those embarking on their dance journey, he offers simple yet profound advice: Be patient, good things always take time. Sometimes it's that leap of faith to try something new that could change your life forever. And if anything, keep dancing!



Madeleine James

A vocalist, who was inspired by the vocal talent in Act Three's production of Blood Brothers.

Madeleine started her singing journey at age seven and has spent the past decade refining her skills with singing teacher, Debbie Donkin, after her original teacher, Nina Peck, had to step back.

She's also grateful to Mr Jones, her Palmerston North Intermediate School teacher for nurturing her love of music and performing.

Despite the chaos of school, family and everyday life, singing remains Madeleine's refuge. Whether it's practising in the shower or belting out tunes on stage, it's her true passion.

Her talent has earned her leading roles in school and theatre productions, and she's performed at local events like Christmas in The Square and the Blues Jazz Festival.

Highlights for her have included working with musicians such as Erna Ferry and Rodger Fox and his band.

Madeleine isn't one to shy away from competition either. She's competed in the Musica Viva competition and Manawatu Performing Arts Competition Society events, earning herself the PACANZ nomination – a prestigious opportunity she's incredibly grateful for.

For aspiring vocalists, Madeleine's advice is simple: seize every opportunity. She believes Palmy offers a wealth of opportunities for vocalists of all ages and encourages others to embrace them wholeheartedly.



Uncorking Excellence

Vanessa Orringe takes the reins at Hokowhiti's Village Wine Trader

A new caretaker is picking up the corkscrew at Hokowhiti's iconic Village Wine Trader.

Vanessa Orringe has been a part of the industry for over a decade, making a name for herself at Albert Street Liquorland, and is now eager to make her mark on what is one of the most highly regarded providers of boutique wine to the city and region.

Taking on the 'mecca of wine' in the city isn't something that happens overnight. In fact it took two years from the time Vanessa shook hands with the original wine trader himself, Duncan Win, over a coffee securing the future of Village Wines, to her stepping through the door as the new owner in April this year. But it has been a journey worth the wait and preparation.

It's a leap that surprised absolutely no one that knows her, as Vanessa has spent the past 12 years honing her skills at one of a handful of boutique Liquorlands in the country. Thanks to numerous national and international trips, expos, and time spent with industry experts from across the globe, Vanessa has refined her palette and progressed quickly to be well placed to provide expert advice to anyone that seeks it.

The Future's Full to the Brim

Going forward Vanessa is hoping to grow her customer base through events and local collabs, particularly looking to reach a younger generation as they come of age to appreciate the beauty of good wine.

Alongside Matt, who worked with Duncan for 11 years, Vanessa hopes they will be part of their 'a-ha' moments as younger people understand what they like and what they love, and can be there to help with their celebrations, special occasions or for when they just want to enjoy a crisp glass of pinot grigio on a Tuesday night - just because they can! And with the current vibrant wine scene in Palmerston North, she is confident that they will be.

More than home to great wine, Village Wines is also a destination for whiskey lovers and spirit enthusiasts alike. With whiskey clubs popping up throughout the city, and Palmerston North locals avid attenders of events celebrating drinks and food of all varieties, it is clear that Village Wine is filling a gap that we would otherwise be looking online or travelling for - with the added bonus of supporting a locally owned boutique business.

As Vanessa puts it, trends come and go within the industry, a bit like fashion.

Experimenting with new flavours and spirits is always part of the gig, but it is the tried and true classics that stand the test of time and that's the style and service Village Wines offers.

Although Vanessa is full to the brim with trusted advice, she tells us it's the listening that she is most looking forward to. "Every bottle has a story that needs to be told, and while I am looking forward to doing the wine justice, I am also looking forward to hearing from our customers. New ideas? Suggestions? Opportunities to collaborate? I'm all ears!"

Vine and dine in Palmy

Thanks to businesses like the Village Wine Trader, Palmerston North is fast becoming known for its selection of luxury beverage products beyond the grape. Ebony Coffee, Brew Union and Arrosta Coffee Roasting Co. to name a few, are simply thriving in the city, offering connoisseurs a tantalizing array of beverage options to explore. From freshly batch brewed beer to expertly roasted coffee beans, Palmerston North is a treasure trove for those with a taste for the finer things in life.

The city's vibrant food scene further complements its status as a haven for vino lovers and enthusiasts of luxury beverages. Local eateries, bistros, and wine bars showcase the region's bounty, pairing exceptional wines with delicious dishes crafted from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. ♡

Quick Fire with Vanessa

We asked Vanessa for her hot take on current wine trends and what she recommends for those looking to indulge in a glass or two. Here's what she had to say:

Favourite tippie?

Bubbles, because there's always something to celebrate and it goes with just about everything.

Best buy on a budget?

Buy the best you can afford, that's my philosophy in life.

Most surprising pour?

All the lesser-known varietals - Albarino, Fiano, Carmenere and the list goes on - you tend to have more of an open mind and it's a thrill when you find a new favourite.

The one you can't keep in stock? Something just flies off the shelf!

In store tastings have proven a hit. Given the opportunity to try the wines, everyone has been really supportive of the weekly events.

If you were celebrating?

Vintage Champagne!

Newest edition?

Matt and I are constantly looking at the range and finding new gems. We also get a lot of recommendations, one being a handful of small producers in the Hawkes Bay - Swift, Amoise, Red Metal, Easthope - David and I visited them on our last trip and found some absolute stunners!

Most exotic?

Clase Azul Reposado, an ultra-premium tequila and a stunning piece of art.





Leaning into learning at Wildbase

Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery puts animals first, but walking beside that ethos is a firm belief that education is a crucial part of helping out our native species.

The centre is right in the heart of Victoria Esplanade, meaning visitors can sidestep from Palmy's well-loved gardens right into the Powerco Education wing of the centre. Just follow the sounds of quacking ducks to the pond and then listen out for the ear piercing screech of a resident Kākā.

Everyone is welcome and kids will have plenty to see, read and do even before they set their eyes on Whio, Pāteke, Kererū, Korimako, the noisy and nosey Kākā and, if they look closely enough, maybe even an ancient Tuatara.

In the background the mahi is happening. The core purpose of the centre, says manager Chris Smith, is providing rehab for the animals and getting them back into the wild.

"They go up to Massey Wildbase Hospital first and then we step in for their recovery. We are the only front-facing part of Wildbase; there is nowhere else like us, so advocacy and education is a big part of what we do here."

Visitors can view rehabilitation areas and if there is something happening with the rehab team they may get to see that and find out more. Outside people can walk through an immersive aviary, home to native birds and Tuatara, and visitors can also dive a bit deeper with educational tours.

For kids, things get extra cool with Education and Programmes Officer Brittany Adam's passionate approach to teaching the next generation about being Kaitiakitanga to our environment.





Alongside tours onsite where kids get to hear the stories of the centre's patients, its resident animals and everything in between, Brittany also works closely with schools.

"Getting the messaging right for different ages is important," says Brittany. "Kids are great at getting on board with what we teach here. If we can educate people about the challenges these animals are facing and the conservation around all of that then that's awesome. And it's a pretty cool place to do that."

Brittany gets animated when she talks about the neat ways in which Wildbase can interact with our younger generation. She says with the dedicated education programme, the centre has created real scope for kids to get engaged and new things are happening all the time.

"I've started going into classrooms and working with them, helping them to come up with something they could actually do - like set up

a trap or plant some natives and then as a reward they come and do a visit here. I keep that connection going with another visit to the school and they get to show me what they've done. It's pretty great."

And then, when the school holidays hit, Chris says he and his team see lots of those kids bringing in their family to the centre, "because they are excited by what they learnt and that's the coolest thing".

Full circle positivity in the Esplanade, right at the heart of Palmy. Wildbase Recovery is focussed on the rehabilitation of our unique taonga, with the wider outlook of education and making a better environment for them to spread their wings back into. ♡

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Friday 1pm - 4pm, Saturday 10am - 4pm, closed public holidays.

And it's free!



Volunteering is another way to get involved with Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery. People that put their hand up to help are well-loved at the centre and manager Chris Smith says it's another way of getting a deeper layer of understanding to how we can actively help our native species. Full training is provided and you can find the form here: info@wildbaserecovery.co.nz



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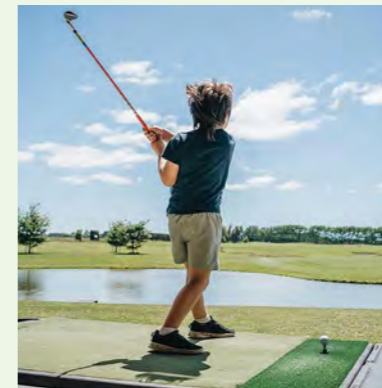
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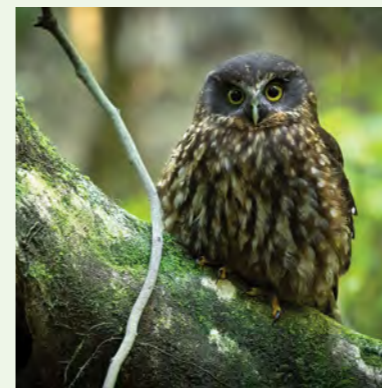
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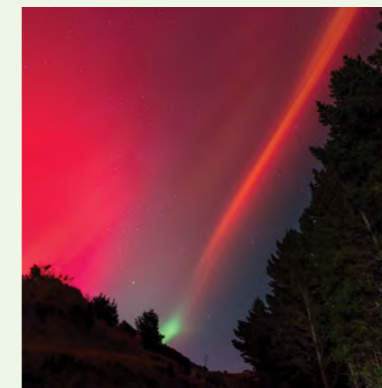
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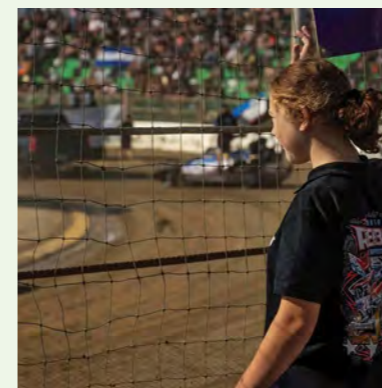
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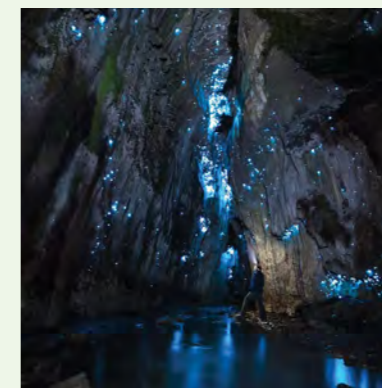
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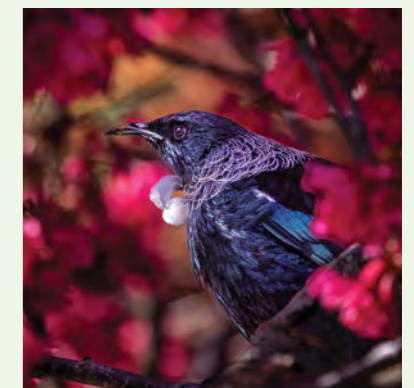
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