

MEDIA STATEMENT

R&V WINS AT NZ TOURISM AWARDS!

Music festival Rhythm & Vines has been announced a winner in the 2010 Tourism Industry Awards.

The Gisborne New Years Eve festival was awarded Best Festival/Event at the annual industry awards held in Auckland this evening (14 October 2010).

The festival was up against other finalists the NZI Sevens and the 100% Pure New Zealand Winter Games, with founder Hamish Pinkham also one of three finalists in the PATA Young Tourism Entrepreneur Award.

Mr Pinkham said Rhythm & Vines was delighted to receive the award as recognition of the festival's innovation and creativity, and thanked all those involved for their ongoing support.

"We're indebted to the many people and organizations involved in helping make Rhythm & Vines a success, not just our core team but the 2,000-odd people who work on the event, our many advocates and supporters in the wider Gisborne community, and of course those at Tourism Eastland and Gisborne District Council. Without your ongoing support the event would simply not be possible."

Now in its eighth year, Rhythm & Vines has grown from a one-day event for 1,500 "friends and friends of friends" in 2004, to a three-day extravaganza with a multi-million dollar production budget and major international acts. These include Moby, Empire of the Sun, Franz Ferdinand, Public Enemy and this year N*E*R*D, Justice (DJ set), Chromeo and Boys Noize.

With 20,000 attendees, 2,000 staff and volunteers, and 60 international and local acts, the festival contributes millions of dollars into the Gisborne economy each year.

Ranked in the Top 5 New Years Eve destinations in the world by The Times and The Guardian UK, the festival has seen its international audience grow to seven percent of ticket sales.

Gisborne Mayor Meng Foon congratulated Rhythm & Vines for winning the Award and said it had come from a lot of hard work and great vision.

"The R&V team are tremendously successful entrepreneurs, and the event itself is a turn-key event with so many benefits for our region - marketing Gisborne as the place to

be, a great holiday and work destination, a place where any dream can be fulfilled, and cementing in young minds that Gisborne could be their future one day.”

Tourism Eastland’s Kerry Taggart said everyone at Tourism Eastland was delighted with the win.

“Rhythm & Vines is New Zealand’s only locally owned international musical festival and has a huge impact on the local economy. The growth and innovation that the festival organisers have achieved over the short time the festival has been going is phenomenal.

“We congratulate the Rhythm & Vines team for their vision and for turning that vision into a reality, a great achievement for such a young group of people.

“Hamish in particular has been instrumental in the creation and continuous development of R&V from a small local event to an internationally recognised music festival.

“Well done to everyone, Gisborne is very proud of what you have achieved.”

Testament to the impact the festival has on local businesses, Gisborne famously ran out of pies and petrol after the 2008 event, while McDonalds Gisborne had the highest turnover of any NZ store over the 2009/2010 New Year period.

Accommodation has been one of R&V’s biggest challenges said Mr Pinkham, with only 2,000 hotel beds in Gisborne. To help address the shortage, co-founder Andrew Witters set up BW Campgrounds at Waikanae Beach which caters for the influx of holiday makers and hosts up to 13,000 campers over the New Year period.

Now a festival in its own right, BW entertains campers with activities such as wakeboarding and bikini competitions, and its own stellar line-up of international and local artists.

R&V Onsite Camping is also available, offering a premium R20 camping experience right next to the Festival action enjoyed by around 2,000 campers.

Another innovation, Posh and Pooh was established in 2008 to find houses for the more mature market (26+), working with Gisborne locals happy to rent their houses out over that period.

Mr Pinkham said R&V is committed to reducing its impact on the environment and has implemented initiatives including the recycling of 2/3rds of its waste, banning paper promotional flyers, use of eTickets and supporting environmental charities Keep NZ Beautiful and Sustainable Coastlines.

New this year, it is implementing a programme to become carbon neutral in three years. This involves ticket purchasers being able to offset their carbon emission by paying an

extra \$4.50 that goes towards planting a tree at a new R&V Forest in the Gisborne region.

Also new this year, the event is offering one lucky candidate the chance to work alongside Mr Pinkham and team as the R&V Protégé. The paid short-term role is an opportunity to learn the ins and outs of putting on a music festival and has the potential to turn into full time work for the right candidate.

Ends –

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