LAUNCESTON CELEBRATES 5TH BIRTHDAY FOR HARVEST FARMERS’ MARKET

harvestmarket.org.au
(http://harvestmarket.org.au)

Five years ago, Harvest market began in Launceston, set to be a hugely influential part of the food, beverage and agricultural fabric that makes up such a large part of the northern Tassie community.

To celebrate, Saturday’s market (11th February) will feature some fun activities for the kids, guest chefs Simon Bryant (who is here for Festivale), Fiona Hoski and Craig Will. And cake (shhhhh! it’s a secret).

But it’s a bit more than a birthday...

Farmers’ Markets are popping up all over Australia (and the world) building a support network for the surrounding farmers, bakers and foodie creators, while also providing a community space to come together, share food and catch up on the week.

While working on our new book Flavours of Tasmania, I’ve been so lucky to come to this market every Saturday for the last couple of months and be embraced by the gorgeous community here and what they stand for. Overwhelmed with the kindness and welcoming nature of Launie locals (a term I’ve grown to learn), in particular, those at the market, I’ve come to feel like this gorgeous market community is like family, in just such a short time.
Early morning sees a bustling car-park turned into a hive of activity with wafts of pastries, fresh coffee and crispy sourdough being served up with lashings of melted cheese. Row upon row of colourful veggies and fruits and piles of pastries and breads are dangerous for a solo traveller, with locals often asking me (as I pass with a giant basket laden with goodies) “aren’t you travelling by yourself?” We laugh, and they agree that all our eyes are far bigger than our tummies.

The market welcomes everyone from breweries and coffee roasters to bakeries and veggie growers, as well as herbs, food trucks, cheeses, organic dairy, flowers, plants and oh so much more. You can quite easily spend the entire morning here and not even realise the time. Local winemakers sit together with brekkie rolls and coffees, catching up on this year’s vintage, while loaves of bread are swapped for jars of fresh cream and yoghurt, “straight from the cows.”

It’s an absolute joy to watch this community thrive and support each other. There is a lot to be learned from the community that Harvest has created. No competition, only support, encouragement, connection and a whole lot of love and appreciation for the abundance of gorgeous produce and hard-working people who make Tassie such a food hub.

President of the Harvest Community Market, Kim Seagram (co-owner of local restaurants Stillwater and Black Cow) is excited to be celebrating the milestone tomorrow. “What started as a great idea five and a half years ago has grown into a cornerstone of the Launceston community and a must-do weekly event. The inaugural committee, wanting to set up a way for the community to support local agricultural businesses, had no idea the impact this little market would have,” she said.

“In 2011 reeling from the impact of the GFC and the collapse of the forestry industry, Launceston was facing an uncertain future. In five years Harvest has grown from 24 stalls and 1500 people through the gates to an average of 50-60 stalls and more than 4000 people through the gate each and every weekend. What has been most unexpected were the other impacts; Harvest became a business incubator, innovation hub, market testing opportunity, cellar door and farm gate, and launching pad for new businesses to set up in the city, it provides equal access for those needing this and a social hub for many. It has provided new Tasmanians with a way to share their cultural heritage with the community and cement them as part of it.”

But this doesn’t just all ‘happen’. A huge team of volunteers set up and pack down this fairly hefty set-up each week, taking the true meaning of community to new heights. This really is an inspiration and a testament not only to the passionate, hard-working nature of Launceston locals, but to Tasmania, and the gorgeous produce and people on this beautiful little island.

Happy 5th Birthday Harvest! Thank you for taking one of our Smudge team members into your family. We can’t wait to see many more birthdays in the future and eat many more croissants over the communal tables talking about wine and food. Heaven.
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