



For immediate release
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The 'husband and husband' founders of Nanna Kerr's Kitchen, an organic restaurant in New South Wales' Hunter Valley have announced their next project 'Pokolbin Pride' the first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Festival in the popular wine region.

The purpose of the festival is to

1. provide a fun and safe umbrella for the LGBTI community living in the Hunter Valley region to connect and celebrate everything that the area has to offer
2. raise awareness amongst the national and international LGBTI community about the Hunter Valley as place to visit
3. provide a space for Hunter Valley LGBTI owned and friendly organisations or businesses to share their story and promote themselves

The idea is the brainchild of Matthew (Matty) Kerr, brother to supermodel and business woman Miranda Kerr.

Matty and his fiance, Jimmy Wright, a former Board Member of Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, moved to the Hunter Valley in June 2015 having quit corporate careers to pursue their dream of running an organic restaurant.

"We have had a great year in the valley," reports Matty "setting up the business has been a phenomenal experience and I have never worked so hard in my life. Moving from a city like Sydney to the relative quiet of the countryside is just what we wanted but it's been tough to meet new friends whilst establishing the business. Jimmy and I were on a camping trip recently and talking about all the festivals and events in the Hunter region and I commented that there should be one for 'the gays'".

Two weeks later the pair had registered the trading name Pokolbin Pride and set-up a number of social media accounts; now with almost 3500+ followers on Facebook the inaugural festival is scheduled for 20th-24th October 2016.

“We are in the process of identifying and signing up interested businesses, partners and performers to make the event happen and be something that the whole of the Hunter Community can be proud of regardless of sexual orientation or gender” says Jimmy “and we will be announcing the full calendar in early July.” The website pokolbinpride.com.au has lots more information about how to stay in touch, participate or support the festival.

The festival has already started to take shape...

Local musical duo [Mel & Jade](#) and Hypnotist [Wayne Donnelly](#) are the first of many performances already confirmed, “there are many more in the pipeline and we look forward to a mix of local grassroots talents and a few well-known names,” says Wright.

A dinner on opening night at Nanna Kerr’s Kitchen demonstrates the festival has a serious side too. Louise Heslop, Principal Solicitor at Cessnock family law specialists [Oliver Campbell Heslop](#) will host and be delivering an informative talk on the state of surrogacy in Australia.

“We are in the process of organising a progressive comedy show with a number of wineries and a venue to host a couple of top secret main events,” adds Kerr “it’s going to be well balanced”.

Wineries will be providing exclusive access tastings and special deals throughout the weekend, accommodation partners will be deals to visitors coming for the festival and local business and creators will be showcasing their products, knowledge and skills through stalls and special events.

The couple have already signed up Macquariedale Organic Wines as a founding partner. “We are excited to be working with Jimmy & Matty on the Pokolbin Pride project it’s going to be a great addition to the Hunter region’s festival calendar by bringing the local community together and encouraging more visitors from elsewhere in the country,” says Ross McDonald owner of Macquariedale.

“Our vision is to create a festival of events and activities across the Pokolbin area that everyone can dip in and out of as they please; giving people the opportunity to explore and visit multiple venues over the five days. There isn’t going to be a one big fenced off area with wristband access that costs hundreds of dollars to get into,” promises Jimmy Wright.

“Our recent survey confirms that no one wants a dance party in the vines which we are pleased about,” commented Kerr, “this project is about creating something completely inclusive, informative, fun and accessible that represents the whole LGBTI community as part of the wider community.”

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