Best Ever Taste Festival Attracts Record Crowds

Fine Tasmanian food and beverage, fantastic entertainment, new initiatives and great weather all contributed to making the 2009/10 Taste Festival the most successful in its 21-year history.

Over the seven days and nights, the Taste Festival celebrated vibrant Tasmanian produce, arts, culture and sporting activities. The 21st anniversary Taste Festival, an initiative of the Hobart City Council, saw new ideas mix with past event favourites, delivering an exceptional festival program for patrons in the unique waterfront setting.

A diverse array of stallholders, presented the highest quality Tasmanian food, beverages and local produce. Taste Festival patrons were given an exclusive insight into the culinary secrets of some of Tasmania’s best chefs at the Food and Beverage Theatre. An impressive line-up of chefs delighted large crowds with free shows and tastings, demonstrating how to prepare some of Tasmania’s best produce. The most popular shows included renowned Tasmanians Paul County, Marque IV’s Justin Harris and Taste Festival favourite, Waji.

New attractions featured at this year’s Taste Festival included the extension of Kids in the Park on the Parliament House lawns to run for the full seven days of the festival. This inviting area hosted family oriented activities such as a circus and performance school, chess for young and old, Food for Thought where children were encouraged to learn about healthy food habits and preparing delicious healthy treats, plus the Leisure Dome Play Space.

The Tasting Table, where people were able to attend master class tasting sessions with Tasmanian wine-makers, were hugely successful and all sessions sold out. The Stall Awards were judged by prominent food celebrity Maeve O’Meara in company with Ben and Kirsten Edward. Record numbers of entries in the Top of the Taste Wine Awards made deciding on a winner a tough choice for judges.

This year, the Taste Festival successfully adopted the latest technology with the introduction of a Festival iPhone Application, acting as a hand-held guide to the event, giving patrons all the information they needed to enjoy their Taste experience including maps, stall menus, stage line-ups and more. The new initiative, believed to be the first of its kind in Tasmania, achieved well in excess of 200,000 downloads.

After the success of the 2009/10 Taste Festival, the Hobart City Council looks forward to a new and exciting festival experience in 2010/11.
Caravan Market Holds Wealth of Opportunities

A recent report into the caravan and holiday park visitor market has shown there is considerable potential for the development and expansion of the state’s caravan and camping offerings.

The Caravan Market Report was initiated by Tourism Tasmania following significant interest in the caravan and camping visitor market from Tasmania’s local councils and tourism industry operators. Extensive research and analysis into the sector was conducted by tourism consultants Sarah Lebski and Associates, working with the Caravan Industry Australia Tasmania (CIAT), its members and other tourism operators.

The report indicates there is a healthy demand in the caravan and camping market at the state and national level, and highlights opportunities for development and investment in caravan and camping infrastructure in Tasmania. It is now being used to support market planning, refurbishment, investment planning and decision-making by local councils and other stakeholders keen to attract investment and developments to meet the growing demand in this sector.

Tourism Research Australia estimates that at the national level, 8.4 million visitors stayed 41.8 million nights in a caravan or camping accommodation in 2007. Further research shows the caravan and holiday park sector to be one of the fastest growing tourism sectors in Australia, with an annual growth rate of more than 10% over the past 12 years. The Tasmanian market analysis found that 21.6% of interstate leisure visitors to Tasmania stayed at least one night in a caravan, cabin, or tent.

To download the Caravan Market Report Snapshot, go to www.tourism.tas.gov.au. For the full report, contact Tourism Tasmania’s Infrastructure and Investment team on (03) 6230 8127.

Local Government Joins in the Joy of Giving

Hobart City Council Lord Mayor Rob Valentine and Glamorgan Spring Bay Mayor Bertrand Cadart got into the Christmas spirit alongside thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts and scooter riders at the annual MRA Tasmanian Toy Run, held in Hobart on 5 December. Riders came from all parts of the state to Hobart with their donations for the Salvation Army. Thousands of spectators waved and cheered the riders on. Donated items are given to those who are most disadvantaged in the community.

ABOVE: Mayor Bertrand Cadart proudly flies the Glamorgan Spring Bay flag at the 2009 Tasmanian Toy Run
Deco to Digital -
Opening Doors to Tasmania’s Heritage

Autumn is a beautiful time of year in Tasmania. The golden-coloured trees add to the picturesque historic heritage that Tasmania is famous for. Autumn is also the time of year for the annual Tasmanian Heritage Festival and for Heritage Tasmania’s annual Open Doors program in Hobart.

In past years, historic heritage from the Royal Tennis Courts in Hobart, to the underground passages at the Kangaroo Bluff Battery in Rosny, have been opened to the public with great success through the Open Doors program. This year, the Heritage Festival theme of ‘Deco to Digital’ and a focus on contemporary heritage has produced some surprise inclusions in the program. Visiting venues in the Open Doors program is free but bookings will be necessary at some sites.

Heritage Tasmania Director, Pete Smith, said he doesn’t want to give too much away but he thinks that people will be pleasantly surprised by what’s on offer. “There are a terrific number of places open from 29-30 May which highlight 20th Century architecture or aspects of 19th Century heritage with a contemporary twist,” he said.

To find out more about the places on offer and how you can get to see them, visit Heritage Tasmania’s website at www.heritage.tas.gov.au from 1 April. The Tasmanian Heritage Festival will feature events around Tasmania throughout May. For full details, visit www.nationaltrusttas.org.au/heritagefestival.htm.

Cataract Gorge Secures its Position as Top Attraction

Launceston’s Cataract Gorge’s position as one of the Tasmania’s top attractions has been further strengthened with the completion of extensive upgrades and the launch of a self-guided discovery experience. Work on the Gorge revitalisation commenced in 2005 and was undertaken in four stages, starting with significant refurbishments and infrastructure improvements funded jointly by the Federal Government and Launceston City Council. The State Government also contributed $150,000 from the Tourism Promotion Plan to enable extensive visitor interpretation work to be carried out. More than 200,000 people will visit the Gorge this year.

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From France to Freycinet Festival 2010

Don’t miss the opportunity to visit Tasmania’s spectacular East Coast and join in the celebration of its rich natural history, magnificent natural beauty, abundant marine life, delicious fresh seafood and award winning wines at the France to Freycinet Festival, from 13-16 May. Just as the French did two centuries ago, people are visiting the East Coast to paint, write, sing and dance, to study flora and fauna, to tell history and share culture.

In 2010, the biennial festival will celebrate the rich marine life of the region - seen through the eyes of Francois Peron, the zoologist and anthropologist who accompanied Nicholas Baudin’s expedition to the East Coast of Tasmania in 1802. Baudin led the biggest scientific expedition ever to leave Europe and his scientists and artists produced a unique record of Tasmania and its original inhabitants before the impact of European settlement. The From France to Freycinet Festival is an opportunity for the residents and visitors to Tasmania’s East Coast to discover more about the French history of the region.

Festival events for adults and children will be held in the towns of Orford, Triabunna, Swansea, Coles Bay and Bicheno. Ticketed events include the Festival Opening Event on 13 May, a Gala Dinner on 14 May with special guest speakers who are acclaimed international experts on Baudin and Peron, The Baudin Ball in the evening on 15 May, and the Long Breakfast on 16 May. There will be free beach activities for children, live music, free lectures, exhibitions, workshops, a town parade and market stalls serving local wine and produce. Come along in your red, white and blue for a weekend of great fun and Freycinet Coast history, hospitality. You might even spot a whale or two.

For venue and ticketing information, visit www.fromfrancetofreycinet.com.au, or contact the Festival Office on (03) 6257 8755.

Beaconsfield Mine and Heritage Centre Awarded

The Beaconsfield Mine and Heritage Centre received the State Award for Heritage and Cultural Tourism at the annual Tasmanian Tourism Awards, held in Hobart. Amongst the competition for the award was one of Tasmanians icons, Port Arthur Historic Site, which has previously won the category four times and has been entered the Hall of Fame for subsequent wins. The Tasmanian Tourism Awards are designed to promote and reward business excellence in the tourism industry. They encourage and celebrate professionalism, creativity and innovation, and provide a benchmark for best practice in the tourism industry.

For more information visit www.tullahchalet.com.au.

A Jewel of the West Coast

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