

## SQ Country Conversations

Conversation Starters – September 21, 2023

**Big news from Queensland's wine country. Plus catch spring fever in the country.**

### Get 'yer toes tapping at Texas Country Music Festival this weekend

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- Location: Texas, Goondiwindi Region. A scenic 3hr 40min drive west of Brisbane.
- When: Starts Thursday 21, continues Friday 22 and Saturday 23 September 2023
- They say everything is bigger in Texas. We won't dispute that with three big days of country music making this weekend a BIG weekend at the Texas Country Music Festival.
- Catch some of the biggest names in the Australian Country music scene including:
  - Brooke McClymont & Adam Eckersley
  - Hailey Jensen
  - Viper Creek Band
  - Max Jackson
  - Will Day
- More than just music will be on display with market stalls on Friday and Saturday plus free kids inflatable fun activities.
- Tickets available at the gate. For more info: [SQCT | Texas Country Music Festival](#)
- Pack more into your weekend. Make [Greenup Showcase](#) in Coolmunda a mandatory spot on your way to or from the music festival. This Saturday and Sunday, an eclectic mix of country craft and art make up this one-of-a-kind market event. We're talking local olive produce, garden art and fire pits, home paddock meats, lavender oil from a working lavender still. Plus craft classes with local artisans, music, great local food. Going the other way? Explore [Goondiwindi's Art Trail](#).

### Spring racing is on in Toowoomba – Weetwood, Clifford Park Racecourse

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- Location: Clifford Park Racecourse, Toowoomba. 1hr 40min country drive from Brisbane
- When: Saturday 23 September 2023
- Experience Audi Centre Toowoomba Weetwood a historical event over 130 years in the making.
- The introduction to Queensland's Spring Racing Carnival, be captivated by the highly competitive racing program, from rising two and three-year-old track stars to seasoned gallopers vying for Weetwood and TAB Toowoomba Cup honours.
- Join in fashions on the field, enjoy the live music and grab a hospitality package for a Grandstand view with all the trimmings. The day begins at 11am with the big race run at 5.30pm.
- More info: [SQCT | Weetwood](#)

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### Country in full bloom – flowers, food tours and the final weeks of Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers

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- Location: Across Toowoomba – 1hr 40min country drive from Brisbane.
- When: daily throughout September.
- Happenings at Queens Park Botanic Gardens:
  - Twilight muso sessions filled with acoustic tunes, perfect for picnics under the stars. Fridays and Saturdays, 22nd & 23rd plus 29th & 30th.
  - Snap the blooms from above from the Ferris Wheel, operating daily.
- Pooches welcome! Pop pup on a leash for a walk through Laurel Bank Park, Queen Park Botanic Gardens or Ju Raku En Japanese Garden. If they've been a good boy (or girl) finish your walk with a Ferris Wheel ride in Queens Park. Leashed pups welcome.
- Stop for #trEATS at the many Toowoomba cafés doing deals throughout Carnival.
- Whilst Queens Park is the main event, there's two other stand-out parks you must include on your itinerary. At Laurel Bank Park, the flowers take on an artistic theme this year tuned to 'Our Shared Planet'. Plantings and blooms artistically form the story of our native animals and habitats for which we share responsibility to maintain and rejuvenate for future generations. Over at Ju Raku En Japanese Garden the cherry blossoms are blooming. Full of colour and calm, the Japanese gardens are a picnic-worthy must-do Carnival stop.
- Visit all the gardens of this year's The Chronicle Garden Competition. Winning and entrant gardens are open 9am - 5pm this weekend from Friday through to Sunday. See which ones are where on the website linked below, or buy a copy of The Chronicle Garden Guide from Carnival Info Hubs in Laurel Bank Park and Queens Park Botanic Gardens, or the Toowoomba Visitor Information.
- Need more ideas? Jump on the progressive 'Foodie Dinner' coach – Friday 22nd, the 'Talking Pubs' progressive pub-lunch by coach – Sunday 24th and finish off with the Toowoomba Wine Show at the Showgrounds on Saturday 30th.
- If a picnic is more your style start at Picnic Point with views across the range, or grab supplies at the Toowoomba Farmers Market before taking a drive up to stunning Spring Bluff Railway Station.
- More info on [all things Carnival here - TCOF](#)

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### Big Skies Festival returns at historic Jimbour House

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- Location: Jimbour, Western Downs Region. Drive 3-hours from Brisbane.
- When: 28 September to 2 October 2023
- Head west to one of the Western Downs premier events held in the grounds of heritage-listed Jimbour House, a homestead rich in history offering a stunning backdrop.
- Big Skies is a one stop festival shop featuring experiences and events that are unique to the region including stunning long lunches, and historic Jimbour House tours to camp kitchen feasts, happy hours in an aircraft hangar, country markets and the best live music. Plus the new addition to the program, the Big Skies Sunset Dinner on Friday night.
- Some of the biggest names to come to Australian music feature as the headline acts including:–
  - Eskimo Joe
  - The Angels
  - Diesel
  - Baby Animals
  - Thirsty Merc
  - And loads more
- And this year over 700 caravanners from across Australia will add to the buzz of the event as the CMCA (Caravan & Motorhome Club of Australia) roll into Dalby for their 36th National Rally 2023.
- More info: [SQCT](#) | [Big Skies Festival](#)
- Images in the Dropbox folder – see link below



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### Coos, combat and country combine at CelticFest, Warwick

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- Location: Warwick, Southern Downs. A 2-hour scenic drive from Brisbane.
- When: Main events: 30 September + 1 October 2023. Fringe events: 29 September to 2 October.
- OK .. when we say you'll be amazed, we mean it. CelticFest brings together a celebration of the Southern Downs' rich Scottish and Irish heritage and Celtic culture. Picture professional strongmen and women battling for the Australian Highland Games Championships - Hammer throw, putting the stone and the all-time fave, the caber toss. Stand back with jaw open for combat reenactments 1000 years in the making, watch tribal belly-dancing in the Medieval Village, see the age-old art of arrow-making plus say hi to the cutest Highland coos (translate: cows) to fill your insta-worthy cup.
- Then there's the fringe events – including national championship pipe-band events, Excitement too much? ...finish off your long weekend with yoga with the parrots at Queen Mary Falls, Killarney on the Monday.
- Hosted across the region, the main events (ticketed) centre around the Warwick Showground with the Saturday afternoon and Sunday line up including:
  - Highland Games including the Caber Toss
  - Medieval battle re-enactments
  - Irish and Highland Dancing
  - Celtic Markets and Lost Trades
  - a Celtic inspired Bar and plenty more
- Saturday night is Irish night with Irish bands playing. Stay on for Sunday with more music, Celtic dancing and the Australian Highland Games Championships and Viking Battles in the Main Arena
- Pack up and go: [SQCT | CelticFest Warwick](#)
- Explore more: [SQCT | Warwick Heritage Walk](#)
- Images in the Dropbox folder – see link below

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### Winning wine, winning team – Ballandean Estate tops off an exceptional year

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- Location: Ballandean in the Granite Belt, Southern Downs
- It's been a big year (and a bit) for Queensland winery Ballandean Estate Wines, located in the Granite Belt on the Southern Downs. Starting with the launch of their Barrel Room wine lounge in June last year, a first for the Granite Belt, the team then welcomed winemaker Boxi Zhen in January bringing a minimal-intervention approach to winemaking, to the celebration of Angelo Puglisi's 80th birthday - known as 'the father of Queensland wine' and the wineries' founder.
- And now, Ballandean Estate, Queensland's oldest family-run winery was this week awarded one of the highest accolades, to be among the top 10 per cent of listings on TripAdvisor globally.
- The coveted [TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Award](#) is given to the best of the best as recognised by the people that matter most, the guests.
- "It's been a fabulous year" shared Leeanne Puglisi-Gangemi on the evening of the Queensland Wine Awards, "we are thrilled with the TripAdvisor Award, a proud achievement for our entire team, and if we can walk away tonight with another award to celebrate that would be an amazing accomplishment all round".
- Ballandean Estate is amongst several Queensland wines vying for top marks at the Queensland Wine Awards, on tonight 21 September at The Star in Brisbane.
- Full media release on the TripAdvisor Award in Dropbox – see link below.


#### Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/t/OVLhMactHOG0saVZ>


Deb Holland | Marketing Manager  
deb@sqct.com.au | 0447 321 989


Sheree Gillies | Marketing Communications Coordinator  
sheree@sqct.com.au | 0437 008 712

<http://www.sqct.com.au>

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