

Rock goes carbon-neutral

EVAN
MILTON



inside track

This weekend's annual Rocking The Daisies festival shoots into its second year aiming at more than just music. Dubbed "Play friendly, go green", it offers a fine outdoor line-up of local and national bands, but is also striving to educate party-goers about environmental issues – and to be a "carbon-neutral" event.

Being held at Cloof Wine Estate near Darling this year, Rocking The Daisies is the first "green" music festival in South Africa, using environmentally friendly products and practices. The organisers, Complete Events, will also address the inevitable carbon emissions of such a festival by planting trees to offset its carbon footprint. The spark for the inaugural festival, held in 2006, was partly inspired by the West Coast flower season and a green festival is a logical extension.

"Tony Budden (co-owner of Hemporium) is passionate about everything green," says event manager and co-founder Brian Little.

"He opened our eyes to the opportunity of putting together a music festival that showcases the ways in which we can all translate environmentally friendly and sustainable practices into real life. We decided to run the festival using sustainable practices, from small things like tickets printed on renewable hemp paper and the issuing of biodegradable soaps to campers, to larger elements like striving to achieve a carbon neutral balance where carbon emissions for all aspects of staging the festival are kept to a minimum."

But are the Cape's music-lovers and party-goers ready for a green festival?

"The organisers were clearly ready," says Budden. "It's about the knock-on effect: even if only a hundred of the people who go to the festival take home a couple of the aspects that we're showcasing, then that's a positive change. It's about influencing people to think a little



● Newcomer pop-rockers JacSharp are one of the acts at the Rocking the Daisies festival this weekend

bit more and wonder whether, if we're going to such lengths, they shouldn't be doing something too.

"There is an international trend at festivals – Glastonbury and Reading are starting to make changes. We have an amazing chance with a fairly new festival to make a visible difference."

Budden should know. He started Hemporium 11 years ago and has seen a marked shift in public interest. "When we started, it was the counter-culture market. People were most interested in hemp because of its connotations of being

similar to a plant that can be smoked. In the past three or four years, the market has changed; people realise this is a resource that does not need pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertiliser; it's a renewable resource from which you can get clothing, housing, food, textiles."

Music-wise, European festival reggae hits Tidal Waves (Gauteng), pop-rock sensation Love Jones (Jhb/Drb) and our own Bed On Bricks, Goldfish, Rory Eliot and Max Normal played last night, but weekend patrons or day-trippers can still enjoy tonight's headliners

in the form of South African Music Award "Best Rock" winners Cas sette (Jhb), globe-trotting indie rockers The Dirt Skirts, Afro-ska pioneers The Rudimentals and hard'n heavy up-and-coming band Taxi Violence and 12th Avenue rounding off with Balkanology D. Toby2Shoes and also DJ Lapse.

Today's music starts at 10am with three-piece Nungarin, Rocking The Daisies veteran rockabilly innovators Three Bored White Guys, left-handed funk-rocker South Paw and modern rock four piece Shy Guevaras sees the return

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of reggae stalwart Rasthamie and The Warriors and features newcomer pop rockers JacSharp, who see their slot at the festival as more than just another gig.

JacSharp vocalist and keyboardist Juliet Harding says: "We try to do as much as possible to help the environment. In our band room, we've done the sound-proofing with recycled egg boxes: they work acoustically so that the neighbours don't have to listen to drums and guitars all the time, and they fit in with our wish to recycle.

The young four-piece band has further been forced to examine its principles: "We got offered free recording time in a new studio that's been built, Amankola in Wynberg. They had a toxic resin on all the wood they'd varnished. We had to say we weren't going to record there until they had removed it and resealed it. It cost them a bit of money, but we're glad we did it and so are they," says Harding.

Music tomorrow continues with a line-up worthy of the hour's drive to Darling: jazz innovators and bebop re-visitors Restless Natives start proceedings (10am), with the Boulevard Blues Band, segueing into the reggae of 7th Son and the festival closing with perennial pop-rock favourites Flat Stanley (2pm).

The festival includes comedy hours with David Newton, Mark Palmer and Paul Snodgrass (Sat, 3pm) and Nik Rabinowitz, Ndumiso Lindi and Martin Evans (Sun, 11am) and MCs Brendan Murray and Martin Kintu. Creature comforts are handled by the Hemporium Village with stalls way above the usual boerewors roll and chips: think Gourmet Burger, Noodlebosch and Rafiki's, wine tastings of the Cloof range, day-care facilities, craft market and, for those without tents or disinclined to camp, a "VIP tent" village called the Kreef Hotel.

● Rocking The Daisies ends tomorrow at Cloof Wine Estate, Darling (full tickets R295 pre-booked/350 door; Saturday only R195/R225; Sunday only R75/R75, children under 12 free. Tickets from Rafiki's, Hemporium and Levi's shops; details and online bookings visit RockingTheDaisies.com. Also see www.24.com